

Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue

Golden Rule Training

Teach Your Dog to Sit

1. Pick a release word you and your family will agree on and use consistently, such as "okay", "release", or "free." The release word lets the dog know they can move about freely.
2. Use the focus cue to get your dogs attention.
3. Take 2 treats and hide them behind you back, one is for the sit and one for the release.
4. For the sit:
 - a. Use the food lure technique to show the dog you want them to sit. Say "sit" one time, wait 2 seconds, then lure her into position.
 - b. Lure by taking a treat between your thumb and fingers so the dog can smell the treat and hold it in front of their nose.
 - c. Guide your dog into the sit by moving the treat toward the top of her head, arching it up over her nose so that she has to raise her nose straight up to follow the treat.

Most dogs will follow the treat with their eyes and track it with their noses, causing their muzzle to point straight up. Usually, when a dog's nose goes up, the rear will move down toward the floor.

5. As the dog sits, give them the treat and say "good."
6. Then release the dog by tossing the treat to the side while saying your release word.
7. Practice 4 times.

Teach Your Dog to Stay

Once your dog has mastered sit cue, you're ready to teach her to stay on cue. She will learn that when you say "Stay," she should maintain whatever position she is in until you release her with the release word.

The stay is quite useful to us, but not easy for some dogs to learn. Use good treats, such as little cubes of chicken, low-fat cheese, bits of sliced hot dog and freeze-dried liver. When teaching your dog the stay, you're asking her to do something that may not make much sense to her. You're asking her to stay somewhere while you leave her side, which is something dogs never ask of each other unless they don't particularly like each other. So reward her well!

Find a quiet place to train where your dog won't be easily distracted. You may need to use a leash and step on the end by the handle so you have both hands free.

1. Put a bunch of small treats in both hands and hold them behind your back.
1. Stand front of your dog and say "sit", as the dog sits, wait 3 seconds and say "stay", and then give her one treat from each hand rapidly as you say, "stay, stay, stay, stay" for a few seconds. Then release her with your release cue and toss a treat to the side so she follows the treat.
2. Repeat this exercise, slowly stretching out the time that your dog must stay between each release cue and the delivery of a treat.
3. To increase the duration, ask your dog to stay for two seconds. Then increase to five seconds. Then try for ten seconds, and so on.
4. If she breaks the stay, say "eh-eh" and put her back into a sit and start over.
5. Remember to use your release word once the dog is successful and to finish the exercise.

Increasing Distance

Your goal is to teach your dog to stay while you move away from her a little at a time. After you and your dog have mastered the sit and sit-stay, you can start to move away from your dog, creating distance. Remember to progress slowly, which helps your dog gain confidence and be successful.

Gradually increase the number of steps you move away from your dog, always coming back to her to deliver treats while she holds the stay. Remember to end the stay by saying your release cue and give her a treat.

As you take more steps away from your dog, you can start to increase the time you ask your dog to stay while you're away from her. During the stay, return to your dog and give her treats. For example, take two steps away from your dog, pause for three seconds, say "Good" and return to give her a treat, take two steps away from your dog again, pause for three seconds, return to reward, pause again, and then release your dog. This will build the duration of the stay.

Increase Distraction

Your goal is to teach your dog to stay in different places. Once your dog has mastered the "stay" in familiar and quiet places, then practice the cue in busier places to increase the focus and distraction. Because your dog will find holding a stay in new and distracting places difficult, start with very short, easy stays and build from there. First, practice the stay in different rooms of your house. Don't ask your dog to stay for very long, and don't move very far away from her.