



The Name Game

- 🐾 This is a good one to work on during commercials or anytime you have a few extra minutes of waiting time.
- 🐾 Prepare a large number of small treats ahead of time. Depending on how pushy your dog is, you can hold them in your hand or a bait pouch or set them in a bowl near you. Get your clicker ready.
- 🐾 You can begin this exercise with your dog sitting or lying down or standing. You can sit or stand. It is easier, though, to have your face and your dog's face a little closer together.
- 🐾 The idea of the exercise is to teach your dog to make eye contact with you out of their own desire to do so. To do this, you "shape" the eye contact by marking the thing your dog is doing that is closest to what you want—her looking at you. So it might be that at first you mark your dog for looking at your feet or for turning in your direction or for anytime that she is not facing away from you. Once you have marked for this a few times, you can wait for something a little better. Maybe instead of looking at your feet your dog looks at your knees—this is better, so mark it. Now you won't settle for anything less so you don't mark for looking at your feet anymore. In this way you will slowly get or "shape" your dog to look you in the eyes.
- 🐾 When your dog does look you in the eyes, mark and "jackpot" by spilling a bunch of treats. Remember that she doesn't know what you want yet just because she did it once (or even a few times). She just got lucky. So keep working at it.
- 🐾 If your dog seems bored or distracted, try to mark more often by lowering your standards. The more you mark at the beginning of the exercise the more "hooked" into the game they'll be. So you have to set your sights low at first and treat often.

Adding the Name

A little later...

- 🐕 When your dog is obviously “getting it,” that is, she gets her treat and immediately looks at you again, over and over, you can begin to shape a longer watch by holding out a second before you mark. Then after a while you hold out for two seconds before the mark, and so on. This way you can build a nice, long watch.
- 🐕 Also, once your dog clearly has the trick down, you can add her name so that you can ask for the eye contact when you want it. To do this, warm her up by doing the exercise as you normally would. Then, a second before she looks at you (you should know that she will because you are in a pattern: look, mark and treat, look mark and treat, etc.) say her name. When she looks up, immediately mark and treat. Repeat.
- 🐕 After a few successful sessions try using her name when your dog is not warmed up to see if it has become part of her vocabulary yet. Stealthily get a handful of treats, walk up to her while she’s occupied (not with anything of terribly high value), say her name and, if she looks at you, jackpot her with a nice handful of goodies.