

Default Stand: Troubleshooting

Exercise 3.1

What If My Dog Repeatedly Offers A Sit or Some Other Behavior?

Try a different treat placement! Dropping a treat on the ground is often very effective treat placement for dogs who have a strong reinforcement history for sitting, lying down, or offering other behaviors. Eating from the ground tends to encourage the dog to remain in a stand position, giving you the opportunity to click right after he swallows the previous treat.

What If My Dog Will Stand, But Won't Look at Me?

If eye contact is too difficult for your dog, you can make this exercise easier by breaking it down: instead of requiring a stand with eye contact, try clicking an approximation of the behavior you want. For example, you can click for head oriented to you, nose pointed at you, or eye glance at your chest level. You can try delivering the treat on the ground or by hand off to the side of your dog, so the dog must turn his head or drop his head to access the treat. As he lifts his head up or turns back toward you, you can click for this approximation of the behavior.

By asking for smaller bits of behavior (smaller than the goal behavior of eye contact), you can obtain a higher rate of reinforcement. This will help your dog quickly offer the next repetition, and then the next, and so on.

What If My Dog Just Stares at My Hand or Treat Bag?

As you learned in the mechanical skills section, make sure there are no early movements of your hand toward your treat bag or pocket. Keep your hand still and in a *neutral* location either behind your back or stationed on your stomach (not *in* the bait bag). Your hand should only move from its stationed position *after* you click. Hands have minds of their own, so practice this – without your dog - in front of a mirror or better yet, capture your practice on video so you can review it!

I Need More Help!

If you've tried a few sessions on your own and need some coaching from your faculty instructor, please send a 30s to 1minute video clip for feedback. Your instructor is here to help you succeed!