

Clicker training means using a sound (a click) to communicate with your dog. Clickers have been in use for more than forty years. The method is best known from the world of marine animal training where people need a way to communicate with animals like dolphins and orcas that can't be controlled by physically forcing them to do things.

How does it work?

It is fabulously simple. First we teach the dog that the click means he has won a treat. Then we use the click to tell the dog when he has done something we like.

Essentially: When your dog does what you want him to do—like a sit or a down—you click and give him a treat. This gives your dog **instant, specific** feedback. A dog needs immediate pointers to help him understand what behavior he is being rewarded for. A clicker is the perfect tool for this.

Charging the clicker or marker word* ... teaching your dog that click means treat.

The purpose of this exercise is to teach your dog (*by association*) that the sound of the click means something wonderful is coming. The most important thing to remember is not to give your dog any signal other than the click that a treat is coming. (For example, be careful not to reach for a treat, point the clicker toward him, or reach toward him with the treats.)

- Prepare about 75 small, high value treats (i.e. string cheese, hot dogs, freeze dried liver treats. Whatever the dog finds highly rewarding.)
 - Example, for a medium to large dog, a regular size hot dog should yield 60-100 pieces.
- Settle yourself comfortably with your dog near you.
- In one hand, hold about 15 treats.
- With your clicker in the other hand, click and give a treat (C/T) from your hand 10 times--be sure to click **before** giving the treat.
- Get about 20 additional treats in your hand.
- Click and deliver the treats by dropping them on the floor.
- Repeat this process (both delivering from your hand and onto the floor), while walking around. Vary the number of treats in your hand each time.
- You will know you have completed this process when your dog startles slightly and looks for the treat when she hears the click. This is when you can start training with it!

*** If you prefer not to use a clicker, choose a marker word (such as "yes") to tell your dog a treat is coming. Perform the above exercise using your marker word wherever you see "click".**

Training Tip:

Some dogs are startled by the sound of the clicker. If your dog shows any signs of discomfort (shies away, leaves the room) wrap the clicker in a towel or a sock to muffle the noise. Try again, and when your dog clearly shows he enjoys the exercise, unwrap the clicker a little at a time.

Clicker rules:

- ✓ Click only once.
- ✓ If you click you **must** treat.
- ✓ Train yourself to insert a count or a word before you hand over the treat: Click. One, one thousand. Treat.
- ✓ The clicker is not a remote control. Don't use it to call your dog to you.