

Placement Exercises

Placement Exercises

The purpose of placement exercises is to teach the dog to move from one place to another on cue to prevent the conflict and potential aggression that can occur when using physical force to move the dog.

Move Here

Choose a cue that you'll use when moving your dog from one place to another. For this explanation I'll use "here." Show your dog an enticing treat, give your cue "here" and using the treat lure your dog to the desired location and put it in a sit stay or down stay until released. Repeat. With repetition your dog will learn to move upon request without resistance.

Go To Your Bed

Having control over your dog is important no matter where you are, even at home. The "Go To Your Bed" exercise will help you prevent your dog from escaping or molesting your guests when answering the door. It also helps to keep your dog calm and under control during meals, when you have visitors or when you just need to relax.

To be fair to your dog, it's important to provide plenty of exercise and make sure all its basic needs are met before asking it to control itself for any length of time or in areas of distraction. (See "*Meeting Your Dog's Basic Needs*" Handout). You may choose to use this exercise only until your dog is calm or for longer periods of time.

The length of time your dog will be able to relax on its bed will vary from dog to dog and will increase over time if you are consistent with your training. It's important to be fair and have realistic expectations in order to set your dog up for success. Puppies have a very short attention span and cannot be expected to control themselves for long periods of time. Older dogs with little or no training, fearful, stressed and anxious dogs will need to be trained gradually from the ground up. If your dog is fearful, stressed or anxious, these problems need to be addressed first. A blocked-off area or exercise pen is a better alternative when you can't train or if you desire control for longer periods of time than what's realistic for your dog.

Placement Exercises

Preparation

Place your dog's bed, a comfortable mat or blanket in an area that's draft free and out of the line of traffic yet close to where you'll be sitting. The idea is not to isolate your dog but to have it with you while calm and under control.

Begin this exercise with your dog on leash to set yourself up for success then remove the leash as your dog achieves success.

Practice this exercise when you're relaxing, reading a book, watching a movie or your favourite television show making sure your focus is solely on your dog at the beginning. Start with very short exercises to ensure success and release your dog at the end of each repetition. Then gradually build to a fair and realistic length of time, distance and level of distraction.

Procedure

- With a sweeping motion, point to your dog's bed while giving the "go to your bed" cue. With repetition your dog will recognize the sweeping motion as your hand signal.
- Lure your dog to its bed using a tasty, aromatic treat.
- Give your "down" cue and signal or lure your dog into a down position on its bed.
- Using the exercises presented in Book Three – Basic Training Manual gradually teach your dog to lie down and hold its position until released. Begin by staying with your dog, gradually increasing the length of time, then distance from your dog followed by movement around the room.
- Then practice putting your dog in a stay on its mat while you sit in your chair and gradually build the length of time before releasing it. Remember to allow your dog to set the pace, reward it often enough to keep it playing your game and release it before it gets up on its own.

References

Dr. Ian Dunbar, Seminar notes Puppy Training 1990
International Animal Studies Behaviour Course 1994
Dr. Ian Dunbar, Basic Training Video Series, TVS Television, 1992
International Animal Studies Obedience Training Course 1994
Jean Donaldson, The Culture Clash 1996