

USING EFFECTIVE REWARDS

The first goal to train your dog is to figure out what your dog considers a high value food reward. Different dogs have different ideas of what treats they like the best. To get the most out of marker training, you need to determine what your dog likes the most.



Treats should be large enough to motivate your dog to want another one, yet small enough that the dog does not take minutes to eat. Sometimes, treats are too small to be effective training tools for some dogs. If a dog eats a treat so quickly that he loses focus, you may want to increase the size of the food treat. Using a larger treat may result in your dog staying focused and engaged for a longer period of time.

The concept of using treats is not to "feed your dog", but rather to offer a reward that has a high enough value that it keeps the dog engaged. When treats are too large, they can slow down training because we have to wait for the dogs to chew them completely. In this situation, we need to reduce the size or change the treat.

At No Leash Needed, we prefer soft, meaty treats that do not break easily. Otherwise, your dog will start paying attention to the floor than you! When you pick a reward that your dog loves, he will stay engaged. Buying these treats by the "log" is very cost effective as they can be cut into small pieces and stored in your refrigerator for later use.

While using treats, figure out what your dog loves because then you can find out what motivates them the most. Avoid treats/rewards that cause your dog to get too distracted and lose focus making him unable to think. If this happens you need to drop down to a lesser value treat in training.

If you are training in an area with high distraction, use the highest value treat because this will help offset the distractions. There is also no harm in using different levels of treats in a training session. Use a higher value treat reward for a really good or really quick effort and a lower value reward for a mediocre effort.

Assign Values to Various Treats



For more information on using treats/toys as rewards, check out:

<http://leerburg.com/markers.htm>

DVD: The Power of Training Dogs with Food – Michael Ellis