
Golden Retriever Rescue of Wisconsin, Inc.

Teaching Dogs**GRRoW Hotline: 888-655-4753**

We encourage you to take a class with a trainer who understands dog training without using corrections, discipline, dominance, and punishment. All dogs can be trained effectively by using dog-friendly techniques. Please see the Association for Pet Dog Trainers website for guidelines on choosing a dog training professional: (<http://apdt.com/trainer.htm>). We encourage you to begin to teach your dog good basic house manners. Please read on for tips:

About Treats

If you haven't worked with treats before you are in for a treat! When using treats, make sure that you use them generously when you are teaching a new behavior, but when you begin to get the response that you want, begin to give them out on an intermittent basis, and then slowly eliminate. You do not necessarily have to eliminate treats altogether, we all like being paid and rewarded, including our canine pals! The mistake that can be made is rewarding the dog every single time, and then you get a dog who expects a treat even after they have learned the behavior. Once they learn, keep them guessing – think “slot machine”.



Make sure that the treat is something **really** good like pieces of cut up hot dog, chicken, cheese wiz, liver, steak, etc. The cookie type of treats work for some dogs, but some dogs will not be motivated by a dry cookie so get out the stuff that motivates. The treat might also be a tennis ball or a favorite toy! Figure out what motivates the dog.

Dogs are Situational Learners

Practice all of these commands **separately** and in a variety of places. While the dog is in front of you, on the left side of you, right side, in the living room, kitchen, bathroom, den, deck, back yard, front yard, etc. Each time you change the environment the behavior will need to be “re-taught” until then the dog includes the environment in their learning experience. Eliminate as many distractions as possible when learning something new. Once the dog has lots of practice in lots of different environments and begins to obtain consistency he/she doesn't really know SIT, DOWN, STAY, etc. Slowly add distractions, set the dog up for success not failure. Happy Teaching!

Important Basic Behaviors and How to Teach Them

Attention (*attention is needed before learning can take place*)

- Bring a treat to the dog's nose.
- Say dog's name
- Say, “Watch Me” and at the same time, glide treat to the bridge of your nose between your eyes.
- As the dog looks at your eyes (the treat), PRAISE and give the treat.
- Make sure you give the treat before the dog looks away. (Otherwise you are rewarding for looking away)

The Sit

- Begin with food treat in front of dog's nose.
- Raise the dog's head by lifting the food up and backward until he/she “falls” into a sit.
- As the dog is moving into the sit, say, “Sit”.
- Do not hold the treat up too far from the dog's nose or the dog will jump for it.
- When the dog sits, reward him/her with the treat and PRAISE. Release the dog by saying, “Okay” or “Free” and step away from the dog.

The Down

- Begin with the dog in the sit position.
- Show the dog the treat; hold the treat in front of the dog's nose and...
- Say "D-O-W-N" in a drawn out way. Continue bringing the treat to the floor and pull the treat out in front of the dog along the floor-slowly. (Drawing an "L" in the air)---don't move your hand too fast; keep that treat in front of the nose...
- When the dog has his/her elbows on the floor reward him/her with the treat and PRAISE "Good Down".
- Release by saying, "Okay" or "Free" and step forward from the dog.

The Sit/Stay

- As the dog is moving into the sit, say, "Sit".
- Put your right hand in front of your dog's face (closed palm) and say, "Stay"
- Step with your right foot and pivot directly in front of your dog
- Pause for a second and pivot back
- Step forward with the left foot and give your release command "Okay".

"Come"

- Make sure the area is escape free - Inside or fenced yard
- If you don't have an escape free area, use a long lead.
- Squat down low and call your dog. Reward with lots of Praise and treats.
- If the dog looks at you like you are from Mars, begin to run in the opposite direction, most of the time the dog will "chase" you (chase response) and he will come running. When he gets there – Reward Big time! (Repeat, repeat, repeat)
- Very Important - NEVER call your dog to you for discipline or for anything that the dog perceives as unpleasant - eg. Bathing, nail clipping, going back into the house, etc. ---For those things, just go and get the dog.

Practice: "Leave It"

- Hold a treat in palm of left hand
- Have Reward treat in palm of right hand
- Open Left palm so the dog can see and smell forbidden treat, when dog expresses interest in forbidden treat say "Leave It"- close palm
- When the dog looks away, immediately Praise and give the Reward treat from RIGHT hand
- Never let dog have the treat from the left hand. What you are actually teaching is a head turn from the object that is "forbidden". "Leave it" should eventually produce a head turn from the object of interest. Slowly progress by putting the "forbidden treat" on the floor next to you where you can cover it with your hand-if need be, until you are farther and farther away from the treat and the dog reliably "leaves it".

Dashing out the Door *(once the dog has learned stay)*

- You may have your dog sit, down or stand.
- Put your right hand in front of your dog's face, say "Wait".
- Open the door; walk through, give release command - "Okay" to allow the dog through
- Practice through many different doorways (the bedroom, bathroom, living room, etc.)



Walking on a Lead

We recommend using a Gentle Leader or Sporn Halter for dogs that pull on their lead when walking. We do not allow choke collars or pinch collars on foster dogs. If you need a gentler leader or sporn halter for your foster please contact the person who trained you in our Foster care procedures. It is unrealistic to expect a dog to follow at your heels while outside on a leisurely stroll. Please reserve the heeling exercise for "the ring" and/or when you might be in an area where there are many dogs and people.

Teaching the basics of sit, down, come, and stay are wonderful tools to have in your toolbox.

Many behavioral problems can be solved, by utilizing these basic commands. Many problems can be avoided by concentrating on teaching what you **would** like the dog to be doing rather than what you would **not** like the dog to be doing.