

Cued Behaviors

These behaviors are prompted with a verbal cue and/or hand gesture. Each cue is paired with a specific response and should only be used once to prompt the desired behavior. Dogs need to practice and proof these behaviors in order to have consistent responses. Correct responses should be reinforced to maintain accuracy and fluency. If a dog gives an incorrect response to a cue, it is often due to insufficient motivation or lack of understanding.

Verbal Cue	Gesture	Intended Behavior	When to Use
Dog's Name	None	Dog makes eye contact	To get dog's attention
Sit	Closed hand, lifted towards chest	Dog sits with rear end and front feet on ground	To keep the dog's feet still/ to put the dog in a more polite position
Down	Open hand, palm facing down, downward motion	Dog lays down with rear end, chest, and elbows on ground	To encourage the dog to relax/ to keep the dog stationary/ to put the dog in a less intimidating position
Relax	Open hand, rotated from palm up to palm down	Dog flops into a side down with shoulder and hip on the ground	To put the dog into belly rub position! / to encourage the dog to calm down
Stay	Open hand, stop sign gesture	Dog maintains intended position until released	To keep the dog still for a period of time around distractions
Wait	Sidestep in front of the dog, hand open, palm facing dog, fingers facing down	Dog stops moving forward and waits until released	To prevent the dog from crossing a threshold (doorway, car door, etc)
Come	Bend down and pat front of thighs	Dog comes to caller and makes contact with hands	To get the dog close enough to touch
Free	Optional	Dog is released from previous behavior	To end a stay or wait behavior and allow the dog to get up and move
Drop It	Extend hand under dog's mouth to catch dropped item	Dog spits item out of mouth	To remove appropriate or inappropriate items from the dog's mouth

Leave It	Guide dog's nose away from distraction	Dog looks away from distraction, back to handler	To redirect the dog's focus back to the handler and away from the distraction
Get It	Point towards item or offer item to dog	Dog puts intended item in mouth	To pick up, grab, or retrieve an item
Look	Dramatically look towards distraction	Dog looks at intended distraction	To show the dog something they may be otherwise startled or distracted by
What's This	Point and tap with finger on item	Dog investigates intended distraction	To encourage the dog to investigate something they are unsure about
Let's Go	Pat leg on heel side/walk away from dog to encourage following	Dog catches up to a heel position	To change directions while walking on leash/ to encourage the dog to catch up/ to start walking forward
Turn	Pat leg on heel side/ turn and walk to the left	Dog turns to the left while maintaining a heel position	To turn to the left while walking on leash
Stop	Stop walking/lift closed left hand towards left shoulder	Dog stops and sits, facing forward, in heel position	To keep the dog still and attentive after stopping while walking on leash
Heel	Pat leg on heel side/walk forward	Dog comes back into a heel position	To reposition the dog to a heel position when ahead of handler
Up Up	Pat intended location	Dog jumps up (4 feet) onto intended elevated area	To get the dog to jump up onto an elevated area (car, scale, furniture, etc)
Off	Point away from elevated area	Dog goes back to the ground after being on elevated area	To get the dog off of an elevated area and put 4 feet on the floor
Place	Point towards intended item (Bed, mat, etc)	Dog goes to and settles on intended item until released	To encourage the dog to relax and stay put in a designated location (when handler is sitting down, when handler leaves momentarily, when dog needs to refrain from greeting, etc)

Shake	Extend hand mirroring desired paw, palm up, below dog's chest	Dog offers paw while sitting	To give the dog a positive way to interact with a new person without invading their space
Target	Extend open hand, palm facing dog's nose, thumb up	Dog touches target hand with nose	To redirect dog's focus to handler/ to give the dog a specific location to put their head/ to encourage the dog to follow their nose to a specific location/ to interact with a new person without invading their space

Captured Behaviors

These behaviors are not prompted by the handler, but may be prompted by the environment. Capturing a behavior involves reinforcing a desired behavior the moment the dog offers it. This often creates a default behavior for the dog and the dog will offer the behavior more and more frequently. It is important to reinforce the dog for making good choices on their own, rather than the handler needing to prompt every correct response.

Exercise	Environmental Cues	Intended Behavior	When to Capture (examples)
Say Please	Handler has control of something the dog wants	Dog offers a sit and gives handler eye contact voluntarily until they gain access to the resource	Whenever the dog wants access to a resource such as food, bone, toy, access to outside, greeting a new person, etc
Settle	Handler relaxes their posture (shifting weight, sitting, laying down) and takes a deep breath	Dog offers a down and gets progressively calmer while in their settle spot	When handler is standing still for a long duration in public, sitting at desk, lounging on the couch, etc
Check In	Distraction enters the environment	Dog looks at distraction and voluntarily redirects their attention to handler (possibly multiple times)	When a dog walks past, truck backfires, siren goes off, kids run by yelling, squirrel, etc