



TOUCH

REDIRECTING YOUR DOG'S ATTENTION

“Touch” is a simple skill that teaches your dog to touch your finger, fist or a pointing stick on command. You can even have fun adapting the touch command to teach advanced skills such as turning off a light switch, ringing a doorbell or coming to the heel position. However, the purpose of this handout is to teach touch as a skill to help redirect the attention of a reactive dog.

1) Begin by holding a few highly enticing rewards such as cheese pieces or Zukes treats between your fingers, right down by your knuckles and then make a fist so that your dog can smell the treat between your closed fingers. If you prefer to use just one finger, rub a smelly treat on the tip of that finger.

2) Put your fist or finger approximately 6 inches from your dog's nose as you say “touch!”

3) Your dog will naturally be curious about the smell and will touch your fist/finger with his nose. Immediately reward him with a treat.

4) Repeat this 6 or so times per session but do not repeat so often that your dog loses interest in the training.

5) If you have trouble interesting your dog in your fist/finger after a while, try these tricks:

Rub a more interesting scent on your fist/finger.

Move away and then call your dog to you as you present your fist.

6) Once your dog fully understands the touch command, begin adding challenges such as presenting your fist/finger and walking backwards as he pursues it before stopping to let him touch. Or hold your fist/finger just above his reach so that he must jump up to touch it.

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