

The Name Game

Otherwise Known As "Pay Attention When Asked!"

It is simply impossible to train a dog that is not paying attention to you. The Name Game will create a dog that pays attention when you ask, which really is the dog's job in a training relationship. Once you get a dog's attention, you are already half way through the training process!

The Name Game creates a reflex (or a conditioned response) to a verbal cue. The end goal is to have your dog immediately look at you when you say his name, because he will have learned that you saying his name means that the chance of earning some sort of reward is at hand.

1. Start playing the Name Game when your dog is already interested in you, and when you are in a low distraction environment like your kitchen or living room.
2. Say your dog's name **once** in a clear tone.
3. Using a clicker or a praise word (yes, yay, etc.), mark the second your dog turns to look at you; as you work on this exercise, gradually shift from treating your dog for turning towards you to treating for making direct eye contact.
4. Follow your mark with a reward; feel free to vary the reward so that your dog never knows what goodie he will get next (different treats, tug, fetch, etc.).
5. Strive for 100 error-free responses before adding any distractions.
6. Gradually start adding in distractions and new locations (i.e., other people in the room, out in the back yard, etc.).

If your dog does not respond immediately to his name, either:

- ✓ Attract your dog's attention **without** repeating his name:
 - Make "kissy" noises, click your tongue, whistle, etc.
- ✓ Do the unexpected:
 - Immediately disappear!
 - Eat the treats yourself!
 - Go play with your dog's favorite toy without him!

Once you have gotten your dog's attention, go back and play again in a less distracting environment

If you are not having success with the Name Game, there are three main reasons for it:

1. You simply aren't practicing enough!
2. You are using icky treats (treats your dog doesn't care about).
3. You are repeating your signal (dog's name).

Don't be a stingy trainer! Play often, and reward generously! ☺

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