Jackpot

Purpose:

A jackpot is a bonus for your dog – a larger than normal food reward. A jackpot lets your dog know that what she just was clicked for was really great. A jackpot makes a behavior more memorable for your dog.

A jackpot can be three or four food rewards given one after the other. Or a jackpot can be a handful of treats given all at once. You can also jackpot your dog with extra rewards plus tossing a ball or giving a belly rub.

You will be using Jackpots throughout your training. You might Jackpot your dog when she does an exercise exceptionally well, when she learns something that has been difficult or challenging, or when a big jump in learning occurs. You can also sometimes surprise your dog with a Jackpot for no particular reason. This surprise may be an incentive that will lead to progress in training.

Training Tip

When you have given a Jackpot, do have your dog repeat that same behavior right away. Practice another behavior or wait until another session to repeat the Jackpotted behavior. Most likely, you will find that your dog will then repeat the same behavior that earned her a Jackpot.

Example of a Jackpot

Pete has been training his dog Fido to do a Sit/Stay while he walks out the front door to get the mail. They have been working on this behavior for several training sessions and Fido has not been successful.

One day Pete tells Fido to Sit/Stay. Pete opens the door, walks out to the mailbox, comes back to the door, and Fido is still doing the Sit/Stay. Pete clicks Fido and gives him a Jackpot consisting of a whole handful of treats.

Pete was pleased that Fido successfully did the behavior they had been working on for so long, and Fido was surprised by the large amount treats.