

Retrieve Part 1

Purpose:

Teaches your dog to get an item, bring the item to you, hold the item, and then give the item to you. **Retrieve** is several behaviors done one after the other. This is called a behavior chain. It is important to follow each step in this handout. Each step can be thought of as a link in the behavior chain. Each training step or link must be strong so that the whole chain, the **Retrieve**, can be strong.

Verbal Signal: Yes

Nonverbal Signal: No

Equipment:

- Training Item:** Initially all the **Retrieve** steps will be taught with one item. That item will not be a toy or food. Most people use the retrieve tube provided in class.
- Clicker and Treats:** Have plenty of treats available. For best success, use the treats your dog likes the most, have a variety of treats, and make sure they are in small pieces. It is helpful to use your dog's favorite treat or a special treat to train the **Retrieve**. Do not use that treat to train any other behaviors.
- Retrieve Handout:** Review this handout before each training session. Know each step so you are prepared to proceed when your dog is ready for the next step.
- Your Dog:** Make sure your dog is hungry and eager to train. For best success, train only the **Retrieve** in a training session. Do not train any other behaviors in the same training session.

Steps for Teaching Retrieve:

Do not remain on one step for a long period of time. As soon as your dog is consistent on one step, you will Raise the Criteria and move to the next step.

Step 1 – Present the tube to your dog. **Click/Treat** your dog for any interaction with the tube. This may be a look, sniff, or lick. Click, take the tube away from your dog, then treat. When your dog is done eating, offer the tube again.

Training Tip

If your dog is not interested in the tube, you can make it more interesting by rubbing it with a piece of hotdog or some peanut butter. However, only do this for the first couple of training sessions.

- Step 2 – Raise the Criteria. If you have **Click/Treated** for sniffing a couple of times, it is now time to stop clicking for that behavior and wait for your dog to offer something more. Watch for your dog to touch the tube with her mouth then **Click/Treat**. Then Raise the Criteria and watch for your dog to lick the tube and click/treat.
- Step 3 – Raise the Criteria. Watch for parting of the lips or touching the tube with the teeth and **Click/Treat**.
- Step 4 – Raise the Criteria. **Click/Treat** for any opening of the mouth. **Jackpot** (and end the training session) for any attempt your dog makes to take the tube in her mouth, even if it is just for a second.
- Step 5 – Raise the Criteria. **Click/Treat** if your dog puts her mouth over the tube. Important, at this stage do not put the tube in your dog's mouth. She must learn to take the tube.
- Step 6 – Once your dog is taking the tube in her mouth each time you offer it, you are ready to add a verbal signal. Add the signal as your dog takes the tube. Examples of signals are "Take", "Get", "Fetch", etc.

Savvy Advice

The signal you choose for the **Retrieve** should be different from what you say to your dog when you play with a ball or toss a Frisbee. **Retrieve** is a working exercise and different to your dog from playing.

- Step 7 – Now that your dog is taking the tube and you have added a signal, you will teach her to hold the tube for several seconds. Begin by asking her to take the tube, once it is in her mouth count to one, then **Click/Treat**.

If your dog drops the tube before you have clicked, just offer it to her again. You may have to do this several times, but eventually she will figure out what behavior earns the click.

Gradually increase the amount of time your dog will hold the tube until she will hold it for ten seconds.

Savvy Advice

Your dog should be holding the tube securely. If she is mouthing, chewing, or rolling the tube around in her mouth, do not click. Simply take the tube from her, offer it again, and make sure she is holding it securely then **Click/Treat**.