

## Single File

### Purpose:

The Single File exercise teaches your dog to either walk behind you or walk ahead of you. It will be used when there is not enough space for you and your dog to move together side by side. This might occur when you pass someone on the sidewalk, when you are going down a narrow aisle in a store, or moving through a doorway.

**Verbal Signal:** Yes  
**Non-verbal Signal:** Yes  
**Need to Know:** Targeting and By Me

---

### Steps for Teaching Single File – Follow Behind:

Step 1 – Start with your dog in the **By Me** position. **Target** your dog to go behind you. **Click/Treat** your dog when she is in the desired position, i.e. directly behind you with her head nearer to you. At this step, you are not moving forward.

### **Training Tip**

Although you will click when your dog is behind you, do not give your dog the food reward behind you. Instead, treat her next to your side. This will allow you to repeat Step 1 right away.

Step 2 – Repeat Step 1 several times. Once your dog is moving into the correct position each time, begin adding the verbal signal such as **Follow**. You will pair the verbal signal **Follow** as you **Target** your dog into position. Repeat several times.

Step 3 – Do not **Target** your dog. Give the verbal signal **Follow**. If your dog moves into the **Follow** position, **Jackpot** her and end the training session.

### **Training Tip**

If your dog does not move into the **Follow** position with just the verbal signal, continue to pair the verbal signal as you **Target** her a few more times. Then try the verbal signal once again.

If your dog begins to move even a few steps to go behind you, **Click/Treat**. Continue to raise your criteria until your dog is in the **Follow** position.

## Single File continued

Step 4 – Once your dog has learned to do the **Follow** with only a verbal signal, you will begin to teach her to remain in this position as you move.

Begin by giving the verbal signal **Follow**. Do not **Click/Treat**. Move forward a very short distance. If your dog remains in the **Follow** position as you are moving, **Click/Treat**. If your dog does not remain in the **Follow** position, shorten the distance that you are moving. Be sure to **Click/Treat** while your dog is walking behind you. Gradually increase the distance that you move while your dog is in the **Follow** position.

---

### **Steps for Teaching Single File – Go First:**

Step 1 – Start with your dog in the **By Me** position. **Target** your dog ahead of you. Your dog's hindquarters should be nearer to you and she should be facing away from you. This orientation will allow her to walk forward while you move after her. **Click/Treat** your dog when she is in the desired position, i.e. directly ahead of you. At this step, you are not moving forward.

#### **Training Tip**

Although you will click when your dog is ahead of you, do not give your dog the food reward ahead of you. Instead, treat her next to your side. This will allow you to repeat Step 1 right away.

Step 2 – Repeat Step 1 several times. Once your dog is moving into the correct position each time, begin adding the verbal signal such as **Go First**. You will pair the verbal signal **Go First** as you **Target** your dog into position. Repeat several times.

Step 3 – Do not **Target** your dog. Give the verbal signal **Go First**. If your dog moves into the **Go First** position, **Jackpot** her and end the training session.

#### **Training Tip**

If your dog does not move into the **Go First** position with just the verbal signal, continue to pair the verbal signal as you **Target** her a few more times. Then try the verbal signal once again.

If your dog begins to move even a few steps to go ahead of you, **Click/Treat**. Continue to raise your criteria until your dog is in the **Go First** position.

## Single File continued

Step 4 – Once your dog has learned to **Go First** with only a verbal signal, you will begin to teach her to remain in this position as you move.

Begin by giving the verbal signal **Go First**. Do not **Click/Treat**. Move forwards a very short distance. If your dog remains in the **Go First** position as you are moving, **Click/Treat**. If your dog does not remain in the **Go First** position, shorten the distance that you are moving. Be sure to **Click/Treat** while your dog is walking ahead of you. Gradually increase the distance that you move while your dog is in the **Go First** position.

---

---

### Training Tip

Practice the **Follow/Go First** in a narrow hallway, between two rows of chairs, going through doorways, or any other narrow opening. Remember to give your dog either a **Release Signal** or a signal to do another behavior when it is no longer necessary for her to remain in the **Follow/Go First** position.

### Savvy Helpful Hint

Make sure your dog understands the non-verbal signal you are using for the **Follow/Go First** exercise. Be consistent and clear when you give the signal. Practice the non-verbal signal and the verbal signal separately to see if your dog understands each one of the signals.