

Targeting

Purpose:

The Targeting exercise teaches your dog to follow a target, either a pointer or your hand, with her nose. Targeting is used to position your dog in any place you want. Targeting will be used to teach some other exercises your dog will learn.

Verbal Signal: Yes

Hand Signal: No

Steps for Teaching Targeting:

- Step 1 – Rub a little food on your hand or target item to get it smelling good. Offer your hand palm open or target item to your dog. When your dog sniffs it, click/treat.
- Step 2 – Once your dog is touching your hand or target item each time you extend it, add the verbal signal Touch as she puts her nose to the item.
- Step 3 – Put your hand in different places so that your dog must move to touch it. Click/treat each time she touches the target item.
 - a. The first level of movement is to get your dog to turn her head first one way and then the other. Place the target item on one side of your dog's head. Click/treat when she moves her nose towards it. Then place the item on the other side of her head. Click/treat when she moves her nose towards it.
 - b. The second level of movement is to have your dog take one step towards the target item. Place the target item just far enough from your dog that she will have to take one step towards it in order to touch it. You may click/treat any movement towards the item even if your dog does not physically touch it.
 - c. The third level of movement is to have your dog follow a moving target item. Place the item near your dog's nose and then slowly move it away. Click while your dog is following the target item even if her nose is not touching it.

Training Tip

You will have better success if the first level of movement is mastered before going to the second level. Master the second level before going to the third level.

- Step 4 – Now test the verbal signal. Extend the target item and say "Touch". If your dog does not move towards the target item, repeat Step 2 a few more times.

Targeting continued

Step 5 – Once your dog is touching your hand or target item each time you give the signal, be creative. Challenge your dog to touch the item wherever it may be. Put the touch item in your lap, put it behind you, move it in a circle, lay it on a table or chair, or put it against a wall.

Training Tip

If your dog is licking your hand, click just before she reaches your hand.

If your dog is biting the pointer or target item, click just before she reaches the item. If you are using a pointer, click when your dog touches the end of the pointer. Ignore times when your dog touches the middle of the pointer.