

# Clicker Training Your Dog



Clicker training uses operant conditioning which is a scientific term that describes the way animals learn from the consequences of certain behaviors. Positive reinforcement is a type of operant conditioning often used in dog training.

Clicker training, a common form of positive reinforcement, is a simple and effective training method. The clicker is generally a metal strip inside a small plastic box that makes a distinct clicking sound when pressed. The click is much faster and more distinct than saying “good dog” and much more effective than using treats alone. To teach a dog the meaning of the click, a treat is given immediately after clicking. Once the dog learns the positive effects of the clicking sound, the clicker itself acts as a conditioned reinforcer.

## **Here are the steps to teach your dog clicker training:**

- Start off with your dog in a room with minimal distractions.
- Have a handful of treats or a treat pouch ready
- Click the clicker and give your dog a treat (Repeat this process while walking through your home or about the room)
- After 20-30 repetitions, test your dog by waiting for him/her to be distracted or looking away and click the clicker to see if he/she turns their head expecting a treat. If the dog turns their head expecting a reward, you are ready to begin teaching behaviors with the clicker. If not, do 20-30 more reps.
- Once your dog is responding to the click, start clicking when your dog gives you a good behavior, for instance, ask your dog to sit and as soon as the butt reaches the floor, “click!” You can also click during a specific behavior such as while your dog is walking nicely by your side without pulling.

Once your dog has learned what you are trying to teach them, you can begin to wean them off of the clicker by just using it less often when you are training. Once your dog is really good at the behavior, you won’t even need the clicker anymore!