



7 Common Commands

Sit

This command is one of the easiest to teach, and is usually the first command introduced to a dog or puppy. Learning this command also helps the dog learn how to respond to training.

Stay

The “stay” command comes in handy when you need your pup to stay put while you go to answer the door. You will want to pair “stay” with sit and down. In the beginning your dog stays will be short, but your dog can learn to stay for up to a half an hour or more with practice.

Down

Another practical command is down (lay down). This is great for all dogs, but especially for dogs.

Come

This command is essential for every dog (and its owner) to master, because it could save his or her life.

Off

Never confuse “down” with “off”. Use the “off” command to teach your dog that jumping on people or climbing on furniture is inappropriate. This command is important for instructing your dog to keep calm on greetings, and to keep all four feet on the ground.

Heel

Your dog is a nuisance if it pulls you down the street. Even the most exuberant dog should learn to pace himself to your speed in walking or jogging.

No

Curious dogs will find enticing objects wherever they go. Teach them to let go of found treasures when you say “leave it” or “no”. This command can also be used in the house, if your dog finds anything that is not meant for canine enjoyment.



Sit

This command is one of the most critical building blocks for your dog's future learning and useful as a behavior-control technique for keeping him in safe and stationary position.

1. Start in an area with minimal distractions, Distractions will only make it harder for your dog to focus on you.
2. For now stand in front of your dog.
3. With your dog standing in front of you hold a treat close in front of his nose.
4. Use the treat to lure your dog into the sit position by moving the treat slowly up and toward the back of his head
5. As your dog's head follows your hand with treat, his head will move up and back and his back end will go down into a sit.
6. As soon as your dog's bottom hits the ground immediately say his mark word ("YES", "WOW", "NICE" or etc.), the treat and plenty of praise as soon as he is in the "Sit" position.
7. Once you have given him the treat release him from the sit position with a release command ("Let Go", "Free Time", "Take a Break" or etc.)
8. Then encourage your dog to move around by gently clapping your hands a few times, petting him, or playing some quick games with him that he likes (no treats).
9. Once he is going into the sit position you can replace his mark word with "Sit" immediately when he is in the sit position and give him the treat and plenty of praise as before. Then follow steps # 7 and 8.
10. Timing in saying "sit" and giving the treat and praise are very important for your dog to understand what he did right to earn the treat and praise.
11. Once you have given him the treat release your dog from the sit position with his release command.
12. Then encourage your dog to move around by gently clapping your hands a few times, petting him, or playing some quick games with your dog that he likes (no treats).
13. Repeat steps 2 through 8
14. Practice this training (2 to 3 min.) as much as possible throughout the day.



Stay

The stay command is extremely useful which will allow you to control your dog to remain in a Sit, down or stand position until he has been given permission to move. The Stay command is also very useful for calming your dog when he gets excited.

1. With you in front of your dog, place him in the sit position.
2. When he is in the sit position raise your hand so your palm is facing your dog (approximately 6 inches from his nose) and say "Stay". Once he is reliably responding to the Stay command you can stand upright with your left palm waist height.
3. Immediately click or give mark words ("YES", "WOW", "NICE" or etc.) for the stay and give him a treat from your right hand with your left palm still out in front of your dog. Then release him from the Stay by giving your dog some release word ("Let's go", "Free Time", "Take a break" or etc.).
4. If he breaks the stay, do not give him any treat and go back to step 1.
5. Repeat steps 1, 2 and 3 for 5 times each training session.
6. Slowly increase the time (2 seconds at a time) your dog has to stay until you give him the treat from your right hand. The goal is that your dog gets the treat before he breaks the stay position, so progress slow.
7. If you dog breaks the stay more than twice in a row you are moving too quickly and should go back to shorter times.
8. Once your dog can reliably hold the stay for 30 seconds with you right in front of him, repeat the above steps but take one step back.
9. Continue taking additional steps back until you can get 6 steps back with your dog staying in position for 30 seconds.
10. You should practice the Stay command every day several times during the day.
11. Keep training sessions short so your dog does not get bored or lose interest and always end the training session when he has been successful, if not with stay command then switch to a command he knows well like sit.



Down

The down position is a venerable position for a dog and requires confidence and trust between your dog and you. The down command is very useful for calming your dog when he gets excited. To help your dog get into position we will start using a treat to lure him into the down position.

1. Start with your dog in the sit position
2. Hold a treat between your index finger, middle finger and thumb of your hand.
3. Now with palm facing down, hold the treat close to his nose. Lower your hand slowly straight down and a little forward, keeping it close to his nose so he will follow the treat down to the ground. As soon as he is in the down position (Abdomen on the ground with back legs tucked under his body) say his mark word ("YES", "WOW", "NICE" or etc.), the treat and plenty of praise.
4. If he does not drop his abdomen to the floor you should slowly move the treat straight in front of your dog along the floor to lure him into the position.
5. Once you have given your dog the treat release him from the down position with a release command ("Let's go", "Free Time", "Take a break" or etc.).
6. Then encourage your dog to move around by gently clapping your hands a few times, petting him, or playing some quick games with your dog that he likes (no treats).
7. You should practice the down command (2 to 3 min.) a day and several times during the day.
8. Once he is going into the down position reliably you can replace his mark word with "Down" immediately when he is in the down position and give our dog the treat and plenty of praise as before. Then follow steps #5 and 6.
9. You may need to break the down task into smaller achievable steps; use the treat to lure his head toward the ground, then work on luring his head and shoulders to the ground and gradually progressing until he is able to get completely into the down position.
10. Gradually we will work toward omitting the treat as a lure and only using the word "Down". Later we will add a hand signal from the down command.
11. Do only 4 or 5 down commands at each practice session. You do not want your dog getting bored or lose interest since dog's have a short attention span.
12. Always end the training session when he has been successful, if not with the down then switch to a command your dog knows well like sit.



Come

1. Begin in a safe and low distraction location in the house.
2. Have your dog on a leash and treat bag with treats.
3. Start in a quiet place in the house with your dog on a 6 foot leash. Let your dog wonder around on the leash and when he is not looking at you say "Dogs name – Come" and then with the treat in hand and your happy voice take a few steps backward and reward him with a treat and praise when he gets to you.
4. If he does not come when called give him a small leash reminder, to get him to come to you (just give him praise – no treat when he gets to you). Never reprimand him for not coming on his own.
5. Once he will come when called without any small leash reminder at least 90% of the time, you can slowly add distractions (have one, then two, then three people in the room, then go to the back yard, then the front yard, then down the street and etc.) Once outside you should use a longer leash (15 to 20 feet).
6. You should always make your dog's experience of coming to you happy and the best thing in the world. Thus if you are going to correct him or perform something that he does not like (clip his nails, clean his ears or give him a bath) never use the "Come" command.
7. Once he is good at coming to you, you can try having him go back and forth between you and another person. With you and the other person standing approximately 10 feet apart place your dog in front of the other person.
8. In your happy excited voice say Your Dog's Name and encourage him to come to you without using the "Come" word at this time. When he gets to you immediately giving a treat and a lot of praise.
9. Then have the other person say Your Dog's Name and encourage him to come without using the "Come" word at this time. When he gets to the other person he should give your dog immediate praise a treat and a lot of praise.
10. Do this at least 5 or 6 times each session.
11. You should practice this everyday and several times during the day.
12. Once your dog is reliably going back and forth, you can add to step 8 the phrase ("Your Dog's Name – Come") to call him
13. If your dog starts to run away from either person, then one of you should grab the leash. He is too distracted, stop and switch to a command he knows well ("Sit") and stop the session.
14. Remember always end any training session when your dog has been successful.



Come

15. When your dog is reliably going back and forth between two people using “Your Dog’s Name – Come”, You can start slowly adding distractions or distance between the two people.
16. Another thing you can do to make the training more complex and fun is to add a third or forth person. Having each one take turns asking your dog to come to them.



Off

The “off” command is used to tell a dog to get its paws off something. It may be the kitchen counter, your bed, the living room couch, or anything else you don’t want your dog on.

Dogs usually jump up to get something they like—a scrap of food or comfy place to sleep—so this can be a difficult command to teach, but it is possible. Just be patient and consistent, and your dog will soon respond to the “off” command.

Before you can start with the OFF training, your dog needs to be good with the sit command. The SIT is what you will tell your dog to do after he gets off whenever he is on, after being given the OFF command. Above all else, be consistent.

Jumping on people

1. A dog usually makes it pretty clear that he is going to jump up. As your dog tries to jump on you turn your back on the dog and give the OFF command as you do so.
2. Once he stops jumping on you immediately ask him to SIT. Give praise and treat when he gets it right.
3. With your dog on the leash have him sit on the floor in front of you, allowing the leash to dangle loosely. You then need to step on the leash where it touches the floor, and then set up the training by getting your dog into a state where he usually jumps up (treat in hand, cute talk, etc.)
4. When he tries to jump, tell him OFF as he self-corrects. More exuberant dogs are likely to try jumping up more than once before they finally get the idea that they are not on the position to actually do so.
5. This is not a one and done deal, though, chances are you are going to have to repeat the training several times throughout the day for a period of a few days.
6. Once you think he has learned not to jump on you, test him by trying to coax him into a jump without using the leash, making sure to reinforce with the OFF and SIT commands if he tries. Give him praise for appropriate behavior but not so much that it looks like an invitation to jump again.
7. You need to also train your dog not to jump on other people. The person handling the dog has to approach the other person who will do the coaxing. The moment that the dog decides to jump, a quick leash pop and OFF should be issued by the handler. The “pop” is achieved by a quick tug and release.



Off

8. Timing is critical here and remember the OFF Command should always be followed by SIT, and the handler should be the only one to praise for appropriate behavior. Each session should consist of 5 or 6 attempts at the technique.
9. **DO NOT** use your hands to push off when he jumps, as he will perceive this as an attempt to praise him.
10. Dogs are smart, but they have no idea what “sometimes” or “maybe” means. If you want him to stop jumping completely, don’t ever allow him to do it.



Heel

Teaching your dog to walk next to you without pulling can be the most challenging behavior that most dog owners will attempt to teach their dog. Typically pulling starts because the dog becomes excited and wants to go investigate and humans pull back, dogs pull harder and so on (opposition reflex). Your dog pulls on the leash because he has learned pulling on the leash causes you to move forward and follow him. She will continue to pull if he gets forward movement in the direction he is pulling, because it gets the desired outcome for him. So what you need to do is change the outcome of his pulling on the leash. Pulling means there is no additional forward motion in the direction he wants to go. Thus, simply refuse to go where he wants when he engages in pulling behavior. As soon as he starts to pull, either stop walking and wait for the leash to be loose (takes a lot of time and patience) or turn 180 degrees or 90 degrees away from her (he pulls you will change directions).

Lose leash training drill (5 to 10 min per session)

1. Start simply in front of your home with minimal distraction around. Distractions will only make it harder for him to focus on you.
2. Avoid picking a destination (this is a training drill, not a walk).
3. In the beginning walking in straight line for a long distance will most likely lead to pulling ahead, thus walk straight for short distances and even if your dog is walking good turn in a direction away from him. This will help teach him that he has to pay close attention to you when walking.
4. Watch her closely and try to anticipate him pulling ahead, when he does, calmly, say "let's go", turn 180 degrees or 90 degrees away from her.
5. If every time he pulls or has tension on the leash you turn and go another direction he will learn that pulling does not get him any additional movement in the direction he is pulling.
6. Remember to praise him calmly when he is walking on a loose leash next you.
7. The better he does the further you can walk straight ahead.
8. Doing this 3 times a day for 5 to 10 mins a day will build healthy behavior patterns and make it more likely that your dog will know what is expected of him on a leash.
9. As he progresses you will need to add distractions like toys, people and other dogs to walk past.
10. The more consistent you are the easier it will be for him to be successful. When to use the "off" cue.



Heel

Use the “OFF” command when asking your dog to get off something:

1. Any time your dog gets on the furniture, or puts his paws on the furniture use a positive interrupter (a noise that distracts your dog without scaring or upsetting him). When your dog gets off furniture immediately give him the sit command and praise and reward for sitting.
2. If your dog won't budge, get his leash, give him a pop on the leash to get off and positive interrupter at the same time to get him off the furniture. Once he is off the furniture immediately give him the sit command and praise and reward for sitting.



No

The “Leave it” command is a very important behavior to teach your dog, so he does not take or touch any inappropriate items that he may destroy or anything that could possibly cause injury. This command can have many uses; leaving visitors alone, not taking food, toys or other items from the table or floor that are not his, and so on. Using the following you can teach your dog to avoid taking or touching inappropriate items. You will need to train your dog in different rooms in the house and outside, so he will understand that he must avoid inappropriate items anywhere.

1. Begin by placing items (shoes, sock, dish towel, tissues, dryer sheets or any other items you do not want her to have) on the floor or table fairly close together (18” to 24” apart).
2. Bring your dog into the room on-leash and walk him around the room near the items on the floor.
3. If he even looks at an item give him a leash correction “Leave it” at the same time (timing is everything). Making the correction as he starts to look at or go for the item on the floor or table. If he gets the item in his mouth the correction is too late. If you make the correction when your dog has the item in his mouth it will only teach him not to carry the item.
4. If your dog does get an item in his mouth do not give a correction either leash or verbal. Use the leash to draw your dog in front of you and without saying anything remove the item from his mouth and do not give him any praise for releasing the item. Place the item back on the floor where he picked it up and do not give your dog any attention for a few mins. You do not want to teach him that picking up items from the floor give him positive or negative attention. Be prepared, in the beginning, for your dog to repeatedly look and attempt to get the items on the floor. Be persistent until he abandons the idea of going for the items.