

BASIC MANNERS I COURSE

Module 4 Lesson Plan

WATCH WITH FOOD DISTRACTIONS

Chances are, your dog is staring into your eyes affectionately more than ever these days, as he's learned that it is super reinforcing to do so from the previous modules. But what about when there are distractions?

This is when it becomes more challenging. To get your dog ready to maintain eye contact with you, even amid all of the temptations in the real world that are much more exciting, we'll start with a food distraction. Remember the order:



SIT TO GREET AND GO SAY HI

In this module, we're going to make our greetings seem more realistic. We're also going to add in a variation on Sit to Greet that involves the dog approaching the person, instead of the other way around.

If your dog does jump up before you can prompt a sit, swiftly walk in the opposite direction. This is why having a leash is so important in the early stages.

PREMACK RECALLS

Premack principle operates the same way contingencies like “you can watch TV after you've finished your homework” or “you can have ice cream if you eat your broccoli first” do. It is such a brilliant way too teach recalls because we're often competing with things that are much more appealing when we need our dogs to come when called.

When you practice this, remember: 1) we need to make our dogs believers that we control access to reinforcers, even when we don't have them in our possession, and 2) be persistent!

FIND IT

What do you do when your dog is so distracted, no cue seems to work? This is the perfect time for Find It. Simply say the cue, then toss a treat on the ground. Really quickly, your dog learns that it's more reinforcing to attend to you than it is to ignore you.

Find It often works when nothing else seems to because 1) it taps into a dog's innate desire to track moving things, 2) it's really easy for them to be successful and 3) it's fun!

STAY FOR FOOD ON THE FLOOR

We're still not going to move away from our dogs just yet in the stay plan. First we need to ensure that those distractions are really proofed. In the last module, you used a food dangle as a temptation. In this lesson, we'll use the food as the distraction, but we'll put it on the floor.

As you'll remember from the leave it exercise, food on floor is a whole new level of hard for dogs because of the strong reward history they have for picking things up off the ground. So you must be ready to cover it if they go for it.