

Teaching structured interaction training (SIT) for all interactions

Purpose of these exercises

- Gain more control of the pet by consistently rewarding what is desirable
 - Reduce uncertainty and anxiety by being structured, predictable, and consistent so that your pet learns what behaviors get rewards
 - Train behaviors that are calm and relaxed which might then be extended to other situations where problems might arise
1. Teach the dog to sit on cue. Practice until it is sitting nine out of 10 times when asked.
 2. Ask your pet to sit before you give it anything it wants or needs (e.g., petting, play, feeding, going outside, getting on the furniture).
 3. Each time your dog approaches you and requests attention in an impolite way, such as pushing on your hand, pushing a toy at you, or leaning on you, ignore it for 5 seconds or more, then ask it to sit and reward it. Continue this until it automatically sits for attention. Then go to the next step.
 4. When your pet approaches you for attention or a reward, do not acknowledge it until it sits. This can be difficult but you must wait your dog out. If your dog sits, reward it. If any behaviors are exhibited except sit, simply ignore or walk away.
 5. You will have another chance soon because your dog is very likely to seek you out shortly. If it offers a sit when you ignore it, praise it, reward it, or lavish it with attention. Your dog is getting it! Within a couple of days your dog should sit for all attention.
 6. Very gradually request longer sits and more relaxed postures. If your dog chooses to lie down for attention, this is also acceptable.
 7. Continue to reward your dog only if it sits or lies down calmly for attention throughout your dog's life.
 8. Maintain structure and predictability in all your interactions:
 - (a) Anytime you have something that your pet finds rewarding, ensure that your pet learns what response is expected before the reward is given.
 - (b) Practice sit before you attach the pet's leash, before going out the door for a walk, and before crossing the street. You might even consider a sit-stay before your pet is allowed to follow you up or down the steps.
 - (c) During walks, do not allow your dog to walk ahead unless it maintains a small amount of slack on the leash. Have your dog stop or sit if it pulls ahead and only proceed if the leash remains slack.
 - (d) Before giving your dog its food, a feeding toy, or a chew toy, have it sit calmly or consider having it lie on a bed or mat next to its feeding area before giving the reward.