



NAME RECOGNITION

Teaching your dog to look at you the moment they hear their name is an essential skill every dog should learn. Of primary importance is safety, and name recognition (i.e. giving you their attention on request) is the vital foundation for this. Reliably responding to their name is also the first building block for helping your dog learn to respond to other cues/requests and for effectively redirecting their attention away from distractions.

Step One: Getting Eye Contact

- 🦴 Hold a treat close to your pup's nose so that they know you have something yummy.
- 🦴 Bring the treat up towards your collarbone to lift your dog's gaze up to yours.
- 🦴 The moment your dog makes eye contact with you, mark the behavior as correct by saying your marker word (yes or good).
- 🦴 Reward with a tiny treat.
- 🦴 Repeat in multiple 3-5 minute practice sessions throughout the day.

You always want your pup to feel excited to hear their name so avoid saying it in negative contexts. Saying something like "Fido! No!" will serve to confuse your dog about what their name means.

Step Two: Adding the name

- 🦴 Hold a treat close to your pup's nose so that they know you have something yummy.
- 🦴 Say your pup's name one time and then promptly bring the treat up towards your collarbone to lift your dog's gaze up to yours.
- 🦴 Mark the behavior as correct by saying your marker word.
- 🦴 Reward with a tiny treat.
- 🦴 Repeat multiple times in 3-5 minute practice sessions throughout the day.

Step Four: Adding distance

- 🦴 Set a treat on the ground.
- 🦴 When your pup has finished eating the treat, say their name one time.
- 🦴 The moment they your dog makes eye contact with you, mark the behavior as correct.
- 🦴 Reward with a tiny treat.

Step Two: Adding the name

- 🦴 Find natural opportunities to practice name recognition. Wait for your pup to look away from you and then say their name one time.
- 🦴 When your pup makes eye contact, mark the behavior as correct.
- 🦴 Reward with a tiny treat.

If your pup does not respond after you have said their name once, try using another sound like a kissy noise or click sound to get your pup to look at you. Repeating your pup's name over and over again doesn't help them understand what you want and may inadvertently teach them to ignore their name.

Throughout the day pair use a variety of rewards (such as tiny treats, praise, the toss of a toy) to help your dog think, "Ooh! I heard my name! What exciting thing does mom/dad have?"