



## K9OLOGY

### ABOUT CLICKER TRAINING

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#### PURPOSE

The clicker is a communication tool used alongside positive reinforcement training methods! It helps pin-point good behaviors so your dog can clearly understand what is expected while learning. Using a clicker results in faster responses, and better communication! Clickers have been used to train a variety of species for decades! Including Dolphins, Whales, Seals, Cats, Parrots, Dogs, Horses, Animal Actors, and Zoo Animals.



#### HOW IT WORKS

The first step in clicker training is called “loading the clicker”. This process helps establish that click = treat. Once the dog has learned that association, you are ready to start training!

The clicker in itself is not a reward, but it does let the dog know a reward is coming! Think of it like hitting the button to take the perfect picture! Soon, your pup will be offering behaviors and try to perform just to get that click!

#### Breakdown Example

1. Call dog's name
2. The second they look at you - click!
3. Immediately praise and offer a reward

#### BENEFITS OF CLICKER TRAINING

There are many benefits to using a clicker! This includes:

- Improved handler timing ... we can physically react quicker by hand than verbal praise, thus resulting in better communication!
- Remove emotion from training ... when focusing on using the clicker as a tool we redirect our attention to the skill of handling rather than frustrations.
- Novelty sound ... our dogs get nagged by us all the time, often resulting in them tuning our voice out. The clicker has a distinct novel sound without all the baggage.
- Handler accountability ... owners are more likely to succeed when they have something physical to do (click the clicker). Often times using a verbal "yes" marker only gets forgotten while training.

#### PHASING OUT THE CLICKER

Once our pup can perform skills on command, in a variety of environments, despite different distractions, you can safely assume that your dog's “got it!” At this point you may switch to using a verbal “yes” marker for moments where feedback is reassuring, and continue using praise as part of your rewards!

#### FAQs

- Can I still praise my dog? Absolutely! You can use praise while clicker training! Just make sure the click happens in the moment of the behavior, and praise happens after, as part of the reward process.
- Can anyone use a clicker? People of all ages, skill levels, and training history can successfully use a clicker. There are many styles available to suit your personal preference and handling style.
- Do I always have to have a clicker with me? In the initial stages it's important to keep the clicker handy. The more reliable you become, the better your dog will learn. You can also use a short, sharp, “yes” as a verbal marker if you forget the clicker.
- Will my dog need the clicker for life? No! The clicker is a training tool while teaching your dog behaviors. As your dog becomes more reliable, you may transition to the use of a verbal “yes” marker, or just use good ole praise!