

Teaching Settle

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A dream dog is a dog who lies at your feet instead of bothering guests, who snoozes under the table at the coffee shop while you enjoy your favorite book. A dog who lies on his bed during dinner, instead of begging at the table.

This is what your dog will practice during every demo in class. While you are learning about the next exercise, your dog can be learning to be calm, patient and polite, and how to ignore distractions. It will be challenging at first - getting and keeping his attention, helping him relax and remain attentive to you with all the other dogs around!

You must learn how to multi-task! You will need to remember to reward frequently and keep your dog's attention while your attention is divided, listening and watching something else.

Practice at home!

A special "settle down" mat will help give your dog a place to target. It will eventually become a subliminal cue to relax and settle. And he will - if you practice every day!

Place the mat next to your chair, turn on the TV to your favorite show. Put your foot on your dog's leash so he can't wander off, guide him into a "down" position and reward him for lying there. **The goal is relaxation.**

- "Yes"/treat for assuming the position, & an immediate "Yes"/treat for holding position for a microsecond.
- "Yes"/treat for a slight pause x3. If the dog remained in position, extend the time SLIGHTLY.
- "Yes"/treat for one second x3, then two seconds x3, etc.



Choose a "release cue" and use it to let your dog know when you are done playing the settle and relax game. "All done!" and encourage him to get up and walk around. Move to a new location in the same room or go to another room and do it again. Extend time gradually.

When you reach 5 seconds between rewards without the dog breaking position, you can begin pretending that you are "not paying attention" (looking up at the TV or talking to a family member) but don't lose track of your dog! Continue to "yes"/reward intermittently at varying pauses - don't wait too long! Make sure your dog is being richly rewarded for waiting calmly. Increase the time as he is ready. Reward more frequently whenever there are distractions and each time you move to a new location. He will find it easier to remain in a down in your living room with just you. He will naturally struggle when you move to a really interesting location like a park bench or coffee shop. When he's good at home, take it on the road! Bring your mat to class each week.

When your dog is good at lying quietly at your feet, add a cue like "Settle" as you place him.