



Dog Training & Behavior Services

Courtesy of: Heather Hime
Owner of Lucky Paws LLC
Heather@lucky pawsmn.com
612-388-9656

Focused Fido

Before we can expect that our dogs listen to all of our commands in any given situation, we need to be sure they are able to pay attention to us in those environments. Stress, fear, and excitement can all make paying attention to us a challenge, but if we teach our dogs some really good foundation behaviors, we are much more likely to have success in those challenging situations.

Paying attention to us is a good thing! Except sometimes we forget to tell our dogs that. Do we generally reward our dogs for quietly watching us in class or looking to us as if to say what next or can I have a treat? If you are, great! Keep it up! Usually we are focused on getting behaviors such as sit, down, come etc. Instead, let's take a step back and work on some foundation behaviors. If your dog is unable to respond to something as simple as a command to look back to you, the likelihood of you getting a sit, down or come is quite low.

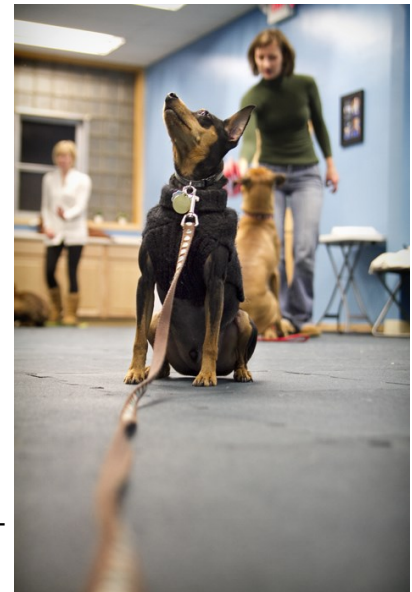


Look/Focus/Watch Me: You may choose to use any command, but these words are meant to gain our dogs eye contact. This command is useful for redirecting your dog off the puppy sitting next to you, to get attention while walking or in other ways distracted. This command means, check in with me, I need your attention.

- Put a treat to your dogs nose and slowly bring it up between your eyes, encouraging their eyes to follow the treat up toward your face. If they follow it and look at you (or the treat at this point), give them the treat. Once they seem to follow the treat well, place the treat in your other hand (behind your back) and use an empty hand doing the same hand motion to try to get eye contact. If it works, reward! This is our first step in weaning off of treats. Repeat over and over and in as many positions as possible until you think you've got it. Then try saying the command when your dog is not paying attention to you or while walking. That's the real test as to whether or not they truly understand the command!

Name Game: This is a simple, yet very useful game to play with your dog. Start off in a low distraction space, working up to more challenging situations.

- Say your dog's name, if s/he turns their attention toward you (even if they don't come all the way to you), reward! Do your best to not say your dogs name over and over again if they aren't listening. Pause at least 3-5 seconds in between saying their name. We don't want them to think saying their name 5 times earns a treat. If your dog is struggling, find a lower distraction area and/or use a higher value treat. Continue to add distractions as they improve until they respond to their name each time you say it, no matter what they are doing!



www.LuckyPawsMN.com