



Sittin' Pretty

The goal of the "Sit" command is for your dog to sit on cue within 3 seconds and to stay in position quietly for 1 minute until released. Be prepared to take up to 7 weeks to reach your goal. Don't rush. Five exercise repetitions per daily training session is plenty; the steps outlined below are progressively more challenging, so don't move on to the next step until your dog has mastered the current one.

Step 1 = Follow the Treat: Use a treat as a "magnet." Hold it almost on your dog's nose, then get your dog to nod his head up & down and back & forth by moving the treat. After a few moves, say "Yes!" and give the treat to your dog.

Step 2 = Magnetic Lure Sit: Start with the treat once again almost on your dog's nose. Once his eyes are focused on the treat, move the treat back over the head, to between his ears. He will look up to follow the treat with his eyes, and as his head goes back, his gravity will shift and he will automatically sit. Say "Yes!" and give your dog a treat. [Important Note: At this point, the only word you are to use is "Yes!" You are teaching your dog the behavior before you name it.]

Step 3 = Name the Sit: Say your dog's name to get their attention, then say "Sit" immediately before using the magnetic lure technique. Keep your hand still until after you have said "Sit." Eventually you will find that you know longer need to use the lure. As soon as his rear reaches the floor, say "Yes!" and give the treat to your dog.

Step 4 = Sit & Stay Until Released:

- Start delaying the time between the "Sit" cue and saying "Yes!" and giving the treat. Vary the length of time you have your dog hold the sit (3-10 seconds).
- Once your dog has mastered holding the sit, add the cue "Stay." After giving the "Stay" cue, try turning your head slightly, shifting your body weight, or moving away a step or two. The goal is to teach your dog to stay focused on you (and the lure) even if you don't have eye contact or aren't right next to them.
- Then, add a new release cue to replace "Yes!" Recommended release cues include "Okay," "Free," or "Done."

Step 5 = Make Sure Your Dog Has Mastered The Verbal Cue: Stop using the luring hand; just say "Sit." If your dog doesn't understand at first, you can try using just a very slight hand motion or giving them a peek at the treat in your hand without moving it.

Step 6 = Have your Dog Sit 1- 3 Times Before Earning a Treat: By varying the frequency of the reward, you will teach your dog not expect a treat each time they sit.

Step 7 = Add More Variances: Increase the difficulty of the exercise by lengthening the duration of the sit, increasing the distance between you and your dog, or adding distractions. Until your dog has really mastered the task, when you make one element more difficult, make the others easier (for example, if you are adding a distraction, stand closer to your dog and don't expect them to hold the sit as long).

If you encounter difficulty at any point of the training, please ask us about alternative methods for getting your dog to sit.

The Austin Dog Alliance, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, provides the following programs:

- Rescue: Our foster parents provide a nurturing home environment for dogs.
- Youth Outreach: Dog-related educational programs for area schools and youth groups.
- Deaf Community: Uniquely tailored youth and adult dog training taught in sign language.
- Dog Training: We provide a wide variety of fun and educational dog training classes.
- Pet Therapy: We provide seminars, classes, evaluations, placement, and support to therapy teams in local schools, hospitals, and nursing homes.

