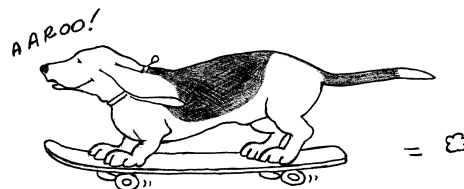# The Happy Hound

Havin' Fun with Tricks & Good Manners!

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Capturing Sit & Down

"Capturing" means to wait for your dog to do the right thing (usually "by accident") and then surprising her with an amazing reward. Capturing is actually one of the fastest ways to teach a dog anything.

Sit

1. Arm yourself with a gob of tasty treats and a clicker (or prepare to say "Yes!"). With the dog on leash, put your foot on the leash so that the dog can stand, but can't wander around. Wait. You may have to wait as much five minutes. Your dog will get bored. As soon as her bottom hits the floor, say "Yes!" and pop the treat in her mouth.

2. Repeat. Be sure to SAY NOTHING…provide no instructions….until your dog sits, then C/T (click & treat) or Yes!

You will notice that what at first may take as long as 5 (I've waited up to 8) minutes, becomes shorter and shorter and shorter.

3. When you can predict that your dog is going to sit, add the word "Sit" –RIGHT BEFORE his hinder hits the floor.

4. Practice asking for sit in different places around the house and when you don't have treats.

5. If you're having a lot of trouble, try giving your dog something comfy to sit on. A lot of short haired dogs are willing to put their li'l butt on the floor if it's soft….

Down

Once you have a reliable sit that you can ask for on cue, without having to give treats ALL the time and can ask for in a couple different places in the home, "down" is your chance to see how frustration can work for you.

1. Arm yourself with a gob of tasty treats and a clicker (or prepare to say "Yes!"). With the dog on leash, put your foot on the leash so that the dog can stand, but can't wander around. Wait. Your dog will probably sit and look at you expectantly. Say nothing. Wait. Your dog will get frustrated. As soon as her bottom hits the floor, say "Yes!" and pop **7 – 15 treats** in her mouth in **succession** (not a handful at once). (this is a Jackpot---see below)

2. Repeat. Be sure to SAY NOTHING…provide no instructions….until your dog lies down, then C/T or Yes! and this time treat once.

3. When you can predict that your dog is going to lie down, add the word "down" –RIGHT BEFORE his hinder hits the floor.

4. Practice asking for down in different places around the house and when you don't have treats.

5. If you're having a lot of trouble, try giving your dog something comfy to lie down on. A lot of short haired dogs are willing to put their li'l bellies on the floor if it's soft….

What's a Jackpot?

A "Jackpot" is one of your best training tools. It's your friend. It taps into your dog's gambling instincts. You want your dog to gamble on his good behavior—sooner or later—bringing an exquisite treat.

The simplest definition of a jackpot is a surprise. If you're clicking and treating on a one click/treat ratio and then your dog does something well worth noticing—click once and TREAT 5 – 15 times. One little treat after another.

You can also give a jackpot by giving one TRULY EXQUISITE treat. The first time Beagie forgot to aggress at Fred as he BEGAN to trounce across HER dog bed on his way to HER water bowl situated next to HER crate—I popped a piece of sausage from my dinner plate into her mouth so fast, she didn't know what was happening. But she's been pretty mild mannered ever since…waiting for another piece of sausage.

According to Steven Johnson, author of "Mind Wide Open," learning is closely associated with the amounts of dopamine released in the brain in response to a given situation. If you get less than expected results, you get a depletion of dopamine. If you get an expected result, dopamine levels remain the same. If you get a jackpot, greater than expected results, you get a dopamine rush. Johnson goes on to say that this is why we love movies, novels and fairytales "because our brains have a biologically grounded interest in surprise." (pp 151-152)

How do you best use a jackpot? You wait for that moment when you get a breakthrough…if you're dog is having a hard time with a trick or exercise, and finally gets an essential piece of it jackpot that moment and end the training session. Take a break. Let the learning happen, come back later. End on a high note.