



DOWN



Some dogs feel uncomfortable or vulnerable in a subjective position such as the down. Be sure to make this fun for your dog and avoid asking for it in a situation where your dog will feel uncomfortable, such as with an unfamiliar dog, or group of dogs approaching him. Since dogs do this behavior naturally; they don't need to learn "how" to do it. By clicking your dog whenever you see him or her going down naturally, you take advantage of them performing this in an environment comfortable to them; teaching them that this is a rewardable, fun, non-threatening event. It may help to start this on a rug or towel as opposed to a hard surface.

Capture: anytime you see your dog in the act of lying down, Click, toss the treat so your dog has to get up to get it, resetting him to perform again.

Shape: Click even partial downs! Once the dog is offering partials reliably, do several repetitions, and then withhold the click to see if he will offer you more. Take whatever he gives you, even if it is just a little bit more, click and treat, if you get the whole down - click and Jackpot! (Besides, the "Play Bow" is an adorable behavior all by itself!)



Lure: from sit, hold a treat at the dog's nose then slowly lower it straight down to the floor toward your dog's paws, begin dragging it on the ground away from the dog very slowly. Imagine you are drawing the letter "L" with the treat from the dog's nose to the ground and across. Click then treat as your dog is in the process of lying down rather than after he is already resting. NOTE: Do not tell your dog to "Sit" and then lure him down, doing so will pollute your sit cue. If you need to lure the sit you may, or just wait until he sits then lure the down.

From standing, take the treat from the nose to the floor, and then slowly push it backwards towards the dogs' paws. This will help them "fold" backwards into Down.

- ❖ **Struggling?** Sit on the floor with your legs in front of you, bent at the knee. Put the treat in the hand opposite the side your dog is on. Take the treat between your legs and under your knee; slowly drawing the treat under your leg (or other low object) to make your dog crouch to get to it. Click when your dog's shoulders hunch down. Slowly lower your leg as you do more repetitions so your dog goes lower and lower until you get the down. Then raise your knee and see if he lies down under it. Try it without going under your leg.

When luring, only do a few repetitions with treats in hand, then lure again without the treat. On the next repetition, wait for the dog and see if he offers it to you. If he even so much as moves a paw forward or hunches his shoulders down, click and treat for him trying. Stop taking your hand all the way to the floor as soon as you can so your dog doesn't require that for a hand signal.

Practice in a quiet environment to start. Vary the reward schedule. Increase and change environments, going back to a constant reward in the new environment then vary the reward schedule (slot machine payoffs) as the dog is good in the new places. Remember: Jackpot randomly as well as for great performances.

When your dog is ready, put the down on cue. This is done when the behavior is solid and predictable. Be sure to pick a cue that is simple (one syllable) and is not the same as any other cue (some people say "down" to mean "off") it must be clear to your dog.