



Considered the quintessential “good doggie” behavior, “sit” is a must-learn for every pup.

Like all cues, “sit” is a word that we must teach your dog. Remember that your dog is an ESL student and has **no idea** what this new word means! We teach a sit first by using a lure, then a hand signal, and finally a verbal cue. So, what exactly do you want your pup to do when you say “sit”?

The picture of sit: booty and all four feet on the ground, until I tell you otherwise.

Teach your dog that “sit” means “please!” Instead of jumping for attention, or barking to be let outside, teach them that they can “train” you and **sit to get things that they want**. See more about this in the **Hyper Dog: Jumping Up** Behavior Blueprint.

We will also be using a **release cue** (“free!”) to tell our dog’s when it’s ok to get up from the sit. We introduce a release cue **immediately** to help our dogs develop that for every sit, there is also a free. This makes the behavior predictable and is the building block to help your pup develop a stay. See the **Stay** Behavior Blueprint (Basic Obedience) for more on training a stay.

The picture of free: your job is over!

How do we teach this? Follow the steps below to develop a rock-solid sit!

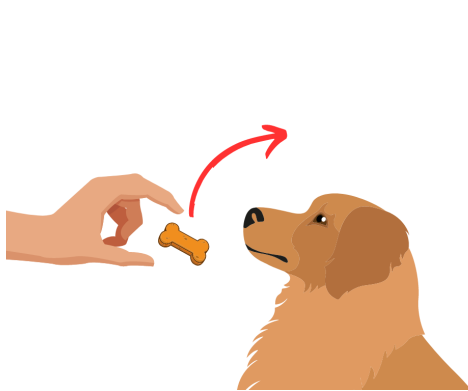
Be sure to read the following Behavior Blueprints before attempting this exercise:

- Marking Mechanics (Must Reads)
- Step-by-Step to a Super Sit (Basic Obedience)
- Teaching Your Puppy How to Sit Using a Lure, Hand Signal, and Verbal Cue (Training Videos)

Teach Your Dog to Sit with a Lure



Step 1: Position your dog in front of you. Hold a treat in your hand. Put the treat to your dog's nose and slowly lure the treat up and back. This should encourage their booty to lower to the floor. **Do not say sit.**



Step 1.5: Put the treat in front of your dog's nose. We recommend putting the treat directly onto their nose!



Step 1.5: Move the treat up and back **slowly**. Their nose should move up to follow the treat, which encourages their booty to go down.



Step 2: Mark "yes!" when your dog's booty hits the floor and give them a treat.

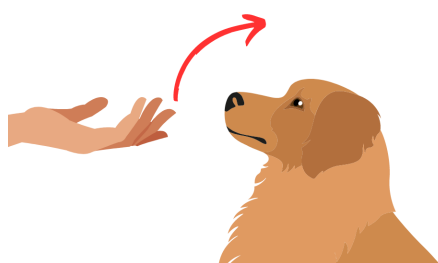


Step 3: Immediately say "free!" before your dog gets up.

Teach Your Dog to Sit with a Hand Signal



Step 1: Position your dog in front of you. **Do not** hold a treat in your hand. Sweep your hand **up and back** over your dog's head. This should mirror the luring motion that we used in the previous steps. **Do not say sit.**



Step 1.5: Hand signals come from lures! Sweep your empty hand in front of your dog's nose **up and back** just like you did with a treat in your hand.



Step 1.5: Their nose should move up to follow the motion of your hand, which will encourage their booty down. Go slow! We are fading out the visual of the treat in this step.



Step 2: Mark "yes!" when your dog's booty hits the floor and give them a treat.

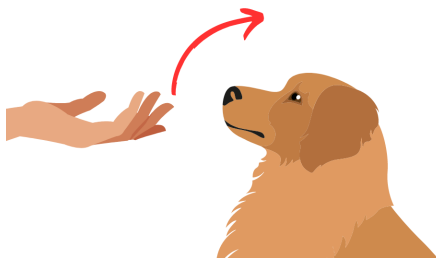


Step 3: Immediately say "free!" before your dog gets up.

Teach Your Dog to Sit with a Verbal Cue



Step 1: Position your dog in front of you. Do not hold a treat in your hand. Say the cue "sit" **one time**. Give them at least 2 seconds to process. Remember, they **will not** understand this word immediately!



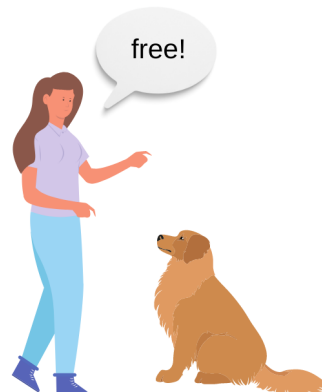
Step 1.5: If your dog has not performed the sit, use a hand signal. **Do not repeat "sit."** Dogs are not fluent in any language, but they are very good at patterns. We can use the hand signal to help teach the verbal cue.



Step 1.5: If every single time we say "sit," we use a hand signal shortly after, they may begin to predict the behavior. **Do not pair the verbal cue with the hand signal. Use a brief pause between the two.**



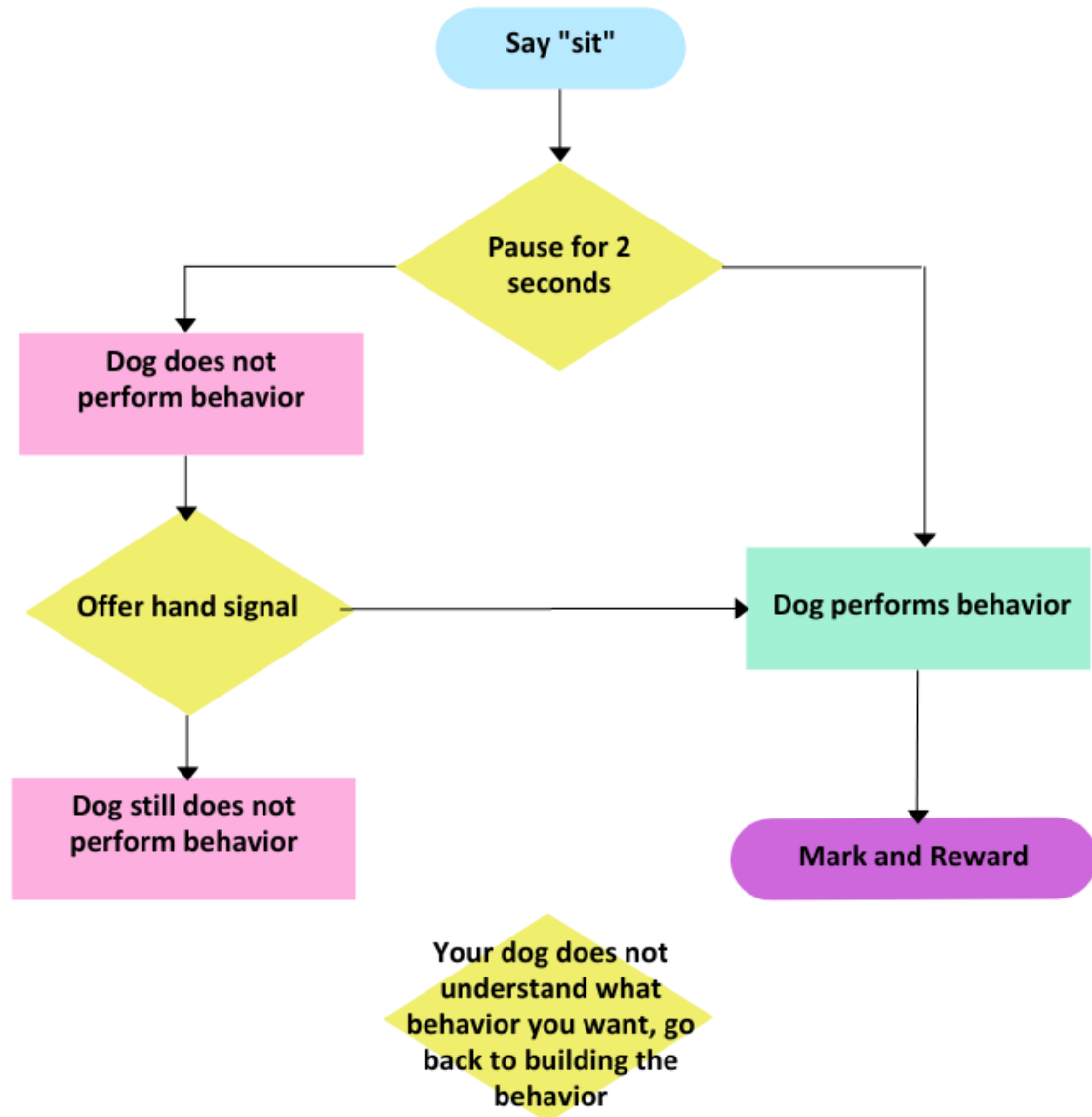
Step 2: Mark "yes!" when your dog's booty hits the floor and give them a treat.



Step 3: Immediately say "free!" before your dog gets up.

More on Verbal Cues

Take extra care not to introduce the word “sit” too soon. Follow these steps to introduce a verbal cue for “sit,” and to help you gauge if your pup is actually understanding the word. Also check out “Step-by-Step to a Super Sit” in the Basic Obedience category!



Sit/Free FAQ's

My dog won't hold the sit for very long:

- Excited dogs and wiggly puppies have ants in their pants and have to be taught how to stay. Be very patient! Make sure that you say "free" for every single sit **before they get up**. Don't expect a 5-minute stays too soon! Initially, your dog may only stay for 1-2 seconds, but will slowly be able to stay longer and longer.
- Read more about this in the Stay (Basic Obedience) Behavior Blueprint on our website.

My dog backs up when I try to lure the sit:

- Slow down your lure! Put the treat directly to their nose like a magnet and **slowly** move the treat up and back. If they continue to back up, use a wall or a piece of furniture to block the back up. Be sure to check out our training video on teaching your pup this behavior.
- Still having trouble? Be sure to sign up for class or a private lesson! One of our trainers would be happy to help troubleshoot.

My dog only sits if I have a treat in my hand:

- What is the picture of sit? **Booty and all four feet on the floor until I tell you otherwise.** When you ask for a sit, is there always a treat in your hand? Try not to have a treat in your hand when asking for any behavior. If you do, keep it behind your back or in your pocket. Dogs are excellent observers of our behavior and are very good at picking up context clues. Don't add "treat in hand" to the picture of a behavior!
- Read more about this in the Generalization (Advanced Skills) Behavior Blueprint on our website.

My dog sits fine at home, but not out in public:

- Set your pup up for success! Even if you have a PhD you still had to start in Kindergarten. Your house is Kindergarten, and Herman Park on a holiday is a PhD. Train your dog for all of the steps in-between. Start by teaching every behavior in your house with no distractions, then try in the backyard, and then the front yard.
- Read more about this in the Generalization (Advanced Skills) Behavior Blueprint.

My dog won't get up when I say "free":

- Dogs and puppies are ESL students and might not understand this new word for some time. Before your dog gets up, tell them "free." Give your pup a moment or two to process, and then swish your hand or clap to encourage them up. Teaching a rock-solid stay starts with teaching "free!"