



AHNA Puppy Preschool: How to teach "Down"

Images and information provided through the courtesy of Asheville Humane Society and Open Paws Program

How to teach "Down"

Step #1:

- Start with your puppy in a sitting position.
- Hold a yummy treat in front of your puppy's nose (not too high, otherwise he will jump).
- Give the cue "down" (only once).



Step #2:

- Slowly move the treat towards the floor, so his head follows your hand.
- If your puppy raises his hindquarters, start over and make sure you give him the treat while his head is still down, elbows are bent and behind is still on the ground.



Step #3:

- If you use a clicker or another reward marker (like the word "yes"), make sure you click and treat (or say "yes" and treat) as long as elbows are still bent and the behind is still on the ground.
- Start rewarding only the deepest elbow bends.
- Start moving the treat down and then away from the puppy's nose, parallel to the ground.
- If the puppy goes into a full "down", praise lavishly and give him a jackpot (a hand full of treats).



Remember:

- Always end a training session on a positive note! If your puppy didn't go in the full down position, ask him to sit (or to do anything else he knows well). Reward and end your session.
- Keep training sessions short.
- Interrupt with playtime, when you seem to lose your puppy's attention, and continue the session up a little later.