



AHNA Puppy Preschool: “Watch Me”

How to teach your puppy “watch me”

The “watch me” cue is useful anytime you want to get (and keep) your dog’s attention and distract him from other temptations and distractions, such as in the waiting room of the veterinary clinic or when your dog is about to chase a squirrel.

As with every behavior, you start training in a low-distraction environment. Have several small, yummy treats ready:

- Make a smooching sound or any sound that usually gets your dog’s attention.
- When your dog looks at your face, give him a treat immediately.
- If possible, give him several treats in a row before he looks away.
- Stop giving treats when he looks away. Start over with getting his attention.
- If it is difficult to get your dog to look at your face, show him the treat in your hand.

Move the treat quickly up to your eyes. Give the treat the moment he looks at your face. This process is called “luring.” After two or three repetitions, your dog will get the idea and you can stop luring and proceed as described above.

- Once your dog looks at you consistently, add the cue “watch me” right before you make the attention-getting sound.
- Repeat several times, a few times a day.
- To get a longer “watch”, gradually increase the time between him looking at your face and you giving the treat, but make sure you give the treat before he looks away.

The next steps:

- Give treats at irregular intervals.
- Add distractions or start training in a different environment. When doing so, lower your standards initially to giving treats immediately after your dog looks at your face and start to increase the “watch”-time slowly in the distracting environment.
- Start with low distractions. Lower your standards anytime you move on to the next level of distractions.

