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Upcoming Events

Remember to come out to our Show and Goes for Agility and Obedience to refine you and your dog's skills.

Agility	Obedience
October 20, 2013 (Fair Hill)	October 27, 2013
November 17, 2013	November 24, 2013
December 15, 2013	December 22, 2013

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Our next session of classes start Oct 28th

If you are looking for more agility show and goes or trials please sign up for our yahoo group (ADTAAgility).

My dog ate my homework!

Confession: this column is not literally about your dog eating your homework, although I do have a story about a 300 dollar check and an Aussie. Instead, it's about the familiar phrase "Fido will come when I call at home". You can substitute recalls for any number of behaviors: downs, stays, heals, not jumping, not barking etc. I think a lot of people have at one point or another said that they could get a behavior at home.

So are we just making an excuse for not doing our homework? Is there something special about home? Or is the problem something else entirely?

Let's break this down. In any behavior we train we have:

1. Criteria – What we are asking the dog to do
2. Reinforcement History – How much/how often has the dog been rewarded for doing the correct or incorrect behavior
3. Accuracy – How often out of each session are you getting your desired response?
4. Environment - Where we are and what's around us

With the above list you can probably capture the reason(s) why any behavior you are training may fail.

Ok so let's take an example, a dog's down:

1. My criterion is: Lie Down means my dog should quickly hit the ground with no space between the ground and his shoulders. He should do this the first time I say his cue, no matter what he or I are doing. He should stay in that position till I give him another cue (ex: stay, sit, rollover or a release word).



If I don't know what down means, how do I expect my dog to know? I should always know what will earn a reward and what won't. Now, a dog's criteria does not start here, your criteria changes incrementally, as you are training the behavior, based on your dog's understanding of his/her job. By knowing your criteria, you can always quickly answer that fun question trainers like to ask "What was that cookie for?"

2. Reinforcement history – This is what gives dogs the motivation to do something. When you are training a new behavior, you always want to set your criteria so the dog is successful and gets a LOT of rewards, but know you will build on that base. You should continue to reward behavior based on your criteria as it develops.

Think of your rewards as a slush fund, you want to build it up before you ask for a withdrawal, and you never want to hit a 0 or – negative balance. Reward the brilliance of your dog, or they may find something else more rewarding.

3. Accuracy: Do you expect a 5 year old to have the same level of accuracy on a calculus test as a College Math Major? This again goes back to Criteria, know the training steps are small, but my general rule is, I can increase my criteria when I hit an 80 percent level of accuracy.

Example: A dog will down quickly, with no space between him and the floor, on the first time I say down, and maintain it 80 percent of the time. Now I will ask him to down while I bounce a ball. I will expect a dip in his accuracy as I introduce the raised criteria, but the reinforcement history should win out and I should quickly be able to get a down with the increased criteria.

4. Finally Environment: I try to get behavior in a sterile, a place with as little distraction as possible. Then I start to test the behavior, by changing the environment. Changes are small at first, if you down in the living room can you down in the kitchen, on the grass, with a toy next to you. I don't expect this behavior to be good in a class unless I've changed my environment before and tried so see if I can cause controlled failures.

What I am trying to do is generalize the behavior, so the dog now understands not only what down means, but that I want it no matter where I am, even if there are other stimuli in the environment. If we hit some difficulty given the environment, I will either lax part of my criteria for a small period of time till I get success, or I build a bit of distance between the distraction and where I am working with my dog till I get success, then reduce the distance or build the criteria.

So next time you wonder why your dog gets a behavior at home look at your training history, think to yourself: Do I have clear criteria? Do I have a good reinforcement history? Have I built on the behavior, only when as accuracy warrants? And finally, have I generalized the behavior by manipulating the environment to maintain success in the real world.

Training Challenge: Lick Your Lips



This month's training challenge is a little different than most. This month we'll look at one way to teach lick your lips. In this method we'll actually capture behavior. Capturing behavior means we click and treat when we see a behavior we want to promote from our dogs.

For this, think of a time your dog licks his or her lips. For me it's when I'm holding a treat in my hand.

So I'll consciously have a clicker in my hand when I'm holding food. I'll click and treat ever time my dog licks his lips.

By reinforcing the behavior you build history and the behavior is more likely to occur more often. As your dog realizes the behavior that you are targeting, they will continue to offer it. Once you know your dog will offer the behavior reliably you can start to put a verbal or physical cue to the

behavior.

You can name it anything you would like.

John and Reggie use "Do you like Sushi?"

I use "Is that Yummy?"

Make the cue be something you think is funny or what you can remember. Have fun with your dog!!!

Academy Brags

The last couple of months (March-June), as always, have been great for students at the Academy of Dog Training and Agility. Our dedicated dogs, handlers, and instructors show that the Academy is a great place to train and they deserve to be recognized:

Obedience / Show Handling / Nose work

- Julie Miller and Shelby earned their second Rally Novice B qualifying score.
- Clara Robbs and Kayleigh earned their Excellence Rally Title.
- Janine Britton and Rio (Whippet) Earned Rio's UKC Grand Champion Title.
- Karen Quinn and Isabella earned their 2nd Novice Rally Qualification and CGC.
- Sue Schneider and Dewey earned an Open Obedience qualification.
- Colleen Raite and Luke earned an Excellence Rally Qualification.
- John Hadfield and Reggie earned their Advanced Trick Title.
- Peggy Udinski and Stoney received their Utility Title in Obedience.

Agility

- Sarah Terping and Buddy earned their Masters Bronze Jumpers Title in AKC
- Clara Robbs and Kayleigh earned their Masters Standard title.
- Clara Robbs and Satchel earned their Excellent Jumpers and Masters Fast titles.
- Cheryl Ulissi and Chew earned their Jumpers Open, and Excellence titles, as well as their Novice Fast Title.
- Carrie Eicher and Anya earned their Masters Jumpers and Masters Standard Titles.

Join me in Congratulating these dogs, owners, and handlers on their great performances, and wishing them continued success in the future.

Also, join me in congratulating the instructors that have helped each along the way.

If you have brags you would like to include in the next issue of the newsletter, please post them on the Academy's chalkboard or contact me at Kristin@acdemyofdogtraining.com. If I have missed any Brags please email me and they will be included in the next edition.

Lums pond and Fair Hill:

Its that time of year again, Lums Pond Fall Agility trial is this weekend OCT 5-6. Come cheer on all of the Academy Students competing, and visit the "Academy Tent City". Next, the Academy will be doing demos at Fair Hill again from Oct 17 – 20 with a show and go on Sunday Oct 21. We'll be looking for volunteers to help us show the public: how much fun we have with our dogs at the academy.

Below are just some of the memories from last year.



Feed back



What did you think about this edition of the Academy Times? What would you like to see going forward? We can only improve, if we know what's on your mind. We will strive to cater our information to you.

Please send all feedback to Kristin@Academyofdogtraining.com or use the feedback tool available on the [Academy site](#).