BACK
Level 2

Goal: We sometimes need to back up our dog when we find ourselves in a tight space, like rows of seats in a movie theater or a tight doorway. When there is not enough room to walk with our dog side by side, the dog can be facing us, and backing up as we move forward. The dog should be able to backup 4-5 steps in a straight line on cue.

There are three different ways to teach the dog to back up: Shaping, Targeting or Prompting. Depending on the dog and on the situation, you might use one or the other.

Material: clicker, treats, platform, barriers

TRAINING PLAN

1.	**Prompting to back up**	With the dog facing you, move towards them. Click for any movement away from you. Get back in your initial position and reward the dog right in front of you. In other words, the dog will be taking a few steps back, click; then they will be moving forward to come to you and get the treat. This way you set the dog up to repeat the behavior. Repeat this until the dog consistently backs up a step or two as you move towards them, then start adding steps. You might need to use barriers on each side at first to make sure the dog backs up in a straight line. As soon as possible, fade away your movements towards the dog until you can stand still while the dog backs up.
2.	**Adding the cue**	Once the dog consistently backs up, say the word "back" as they start to move back. You'll have to repeat this step 50-100 times for the dog to learn that the word "Back" means: "move backwards in a straight line". You can add a hand signal to this behavior. Present the back of your hand towards the dog, fingers facing down, and wave your hand back and forth. Make sure to use them independently or the dog will not pay much attention to the verbal cue and mostly respond to the hand signal.
3.	**Fading the barriers**	Gradually reduce the barriers until you can make them disappear completely. You can either remove a chair (if you had two chairs on each side), or gradually move them further and further away from the dog. You can also replace them with smaller and smaller objects.
4.	**Building distance**	Gradually build distance by delaying the click until the dog reliably backs up 3-6 steps.
5.	**Building distractions**	Gradually increase the level of distractions when using this cue. Think of anything that could be a distraction to the dog, like certain sounds, certain people, dogs at a distance, etc.
6.	**Generalization**	Repeat the steps above in different locations and in different positions. You might be sitting in a chair or in a wheelchair. You can also ask the dog to "Back" while they are sitting (in which case the dog will stand to back up). When the dog is lying down, they can back up too. This is especially useful when dogs

		tend to crawl from under a table and find themselves in the way of people passing by.
7.	**Fluency**	Gradually build up the level of difficulty until you can successfully get your dog to respond to the cue "Back" in different places and with different levels of distractions. Use it in everyday life situation anytime you need to dog to start using this whenever you need the dog to move backwards.

CONGRATULATIONS! If you've come this far, you have taught the dog a solid response to the cue "Back".