



BED

Level 1

Goal: The dog will go to his/her bed (mat or towel) anytime you say the word “bed” and stay there until you say the word “Free”. This behavior is very useful to prevent the dog from jumping on visitors, to keep the dog stationed in a specific location in the house, the school or at work. This behavior also helps the dog settle down. This is also a great foundation for the “stay” cue.

Bed involves an implied “stay” as the position should be maintained until we give the cue ‘Free’ or another cue.

Material: Dog bed, mat or towel, clicker and treats

| TRAINING PLAN | | |
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| 1. | Getting started: Capturing/ Shaping | Have your bed (or mat or towel) in one hand, and your clicker in the other. As soon as you place the bed on the floor, the dog is likely to want to investigate, so be ready so you don’t miss the opportunity. Click for any movement directed towards the bed, like a sniff, a look, a step, etc. Even accidental contact is OK. Click and treat any movement directed towards the bed. Repeat this step until the dog starts to volunteer movement towards the bed. Don’t say a word, look at the mat and avoid pointing or prompting the dog. |
| 2. | Increasing criteria | Once the dog shows intentional movement towards the bed, gradually increase your criteria. Start with one paw on the bed for instance then two paws, three paws, etc. Keep the steps small enough for the dog to succeed and keep trying. Your goal is for the dog to stay focused on the mat and start to sit on it. Once the dog is reliably sitting on the mat, start clicking for any movement towards the mat, while sitting, such as looking down, crouching down, dipping of the head, until the dog lies down on the mat. As soon as the dog lies down, click and throw a handful of treats between their front feet (Jackpot!). |
| 3. | Increasing criteria | Repeat steps 1-2 until the dog automatically lies down on the bed. At this point, click and treat the dog 2-3 times for laying down, then click and treat out of position, in other words, click and treat out of the dog’s reach, by bringing your hand out of reach, encouraging the dog to get up to get the food. You can also use the cue “Free” if the dog knows it. |
| 4. | Adding the cue | Once the dog predictably goes back to the bed to lie down, say the word “bed” as they start heading towards the bed. You’ll have to repeat this about 50-100 times for the dog to make the connection between the cue (the word) and the behavior (going to the bed and lying down). Make sure to only say the word once. |
| 5. | Building duration | It’s now time to teach the dog to keep the position for longer and longer periods of time. Once the dog gets in position, wait a few seconds before treating. Don’t click at this point and gradually work up the duration of the behavior to up to 30 seconds or more. It’s important to increase the duration randomly, so you might treat at 4 seconds, then 2 seconds, then 5 seconds, etc. Use the cue “Free” to get the dog off the bed, click and treat for getting out of position. |
| 6. | Relaxation | As your dog is lying on the bed, look for signs of relaxation. Click and treat in position (while lying) as the dog does any of the following: |



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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowering the head • Shifting the hips to the side • Chin resting • Sighing • Slow blinking • Ears relaxing • Rolling to one side |
| 7. | Changing your position | Repeat steps 1-6 while changing your position. Try sitting on a chair, sitting on the floor, lying on the couch, on the floor, place yourself at different angles from the bed, etc. |
| 8. | Building distance | Gradually move further and further away from the bed. Take a couple of steps away and wait for the dog to go lie on their bed. Keep gradually building distance until the dog heads towards bed from a distance of 10ft. or more. Don't go too fast at this step. |
| 9. | Putting it all together | As the dog heads towards the bed, say the word "bed". Once the dog lies down on the bed click and treat in position. Click and treat again for any sign of relaxation and reward the dog for maintaining the position. Use the "Free" cue to get the dog off the bed (if trained as described on "Free" training plan). |
| 10. | Building distractions | Repeat this process while gradually adding distractions. Distractions can be a sound at a distance, a person sitting nearby, all the way to dogs running close by. Gradually build up the levels of distractions so the dog can succeed at every step of the way. |
| 11. | Duration, distance, distractions | let's put it all together. While standing a few feet away from the bed, say the word "bed". At this point, the dog should immediately head towards the bed and lie down. Wait for the dog to relax on the bed and click and treat in position. Move away from the bed, then come back to the dog, click and treat in position. Keep moving away from the bed, a few feet at a time and in different positions, teaching the dog to maintain his position even when you're at a distance. If the dog gets out of position, you may be going too fast. Start over, reduce the distance, then slowly build it back up. The dog should be waiting for the cue "Free" before getting off the bed. You'll also want to gradually decrease the rate of reinforcement at this step, in other words, wait for longer and longer periods of time to click and treat. |
| 12. | Generalization | Repeat the "bed" behavior in different areas with a towel or mat. Make it easy at first and make sure the level of distractions is very low. You may do this in your kitchen, then your living room, your bedroom and eventually under the table at the restaurant (once you're ready for public access). |
| 13. | Fluency | Gradually build up the level of difficulty until you can successfully get your dog to go to their bed in all sorts of places with lots going on, including when you have visitors. Record the sound of your doorbell and play it back to the dog while they're on the bed. Treat for staying in position. It's best to introduce the doorbell sound at a very low level at first to minimize the chances of the dog reacting to it. You'll gradually be able to increase the volume and work it up to the actual doorbell. Once the dog consistently goes to and stays on the bed, you can start introducing visitors. It's best to start with your spouse or child and have a few training sessions with multiple repetitions before you try with other visitors. The first few times, make sure you take the time to manage the situation successfully or the dog will go back to his previous habits. |

CONGRATULATIONS! If you've come this far, you have taught the dog a solid response to the word 'Bed'.