



DOWN

Level 1

Goal: The dog will lie down as soon as they hear the word 'down'. We'll gradually build up the level of difficulty until the dog can reliably respond with enthusiasm, from whatever position, no matter what angle and distance and under the highest level of distraction.

Down involves an implied "stay" as the position should be maintained until we give the cue 'Free' or another cue.

Material: clicker and treats

TRAINING PLAN		
1.	Luring in position when the dog is sitting down	<p>Bring a treat in front of the dog's nose, then straight to the floor in front of the dog, then drag it on the floor away from your dog (about 5 inches). It's like drawing an L that starts from your dog's nose, goes down to the floor then away from the dog. Keep your hand in position on the floor until the dog lies down. Click and treat.</p> <p>Repeat this sequence until the dog easily gets into position. As soon as the dog lies down, click and treat in position. Treat in position 2-3 times, then click and treat out of position (by delivering the food in your hand out of reach)</p> <p>DO NOT SAY THE WORD 'Down' at this stage. If the dog knows the cue "Free" you can use it to get the dog out of position, then click and treat.</p> <p>If the dog has trouble getting into position you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lure the dog under your leg as you sit on the floor. To get the treat, the dog will need to "crawl" under your leg. Click and treat as soon as their body is flat on the floor. - Shape the dog in position: click and treat for any movement towards the floor, like a look, lowering of the head, etc. - Capture: click and treat anytime the dog lies down on their own.
2.	Luring in position when the dog is standing up	<p>Bring a treat in front of the dog's nose, then straight to the floor in between the dog's front paws. Keep your hand in position on the floor until the dog lies down. Click and treat. Repeat until the dog easily gets in position.</p> <p>We're looking for a "sphinx" down where the dog is nice and square.</p>
3.	Increasing criteria	<p>Once the dog has offered to lie down 5-8 times, in other words, the dog easily followed the treat to the floor, anticipating the movement, stand or sit in front of the dog and wait for the dog to offer a down on their own. Patience is key here and it may take 30-60 seconds before the dog gets in position. As long as the dog stays interested, allow them to think it through. If needed, go back to the previous step.</p> <p>As soon as the dog lies down, Click and reward in position. If the dog gets out of position, withdraw the treat, wait for the dog to lie down, count to 3, then give the dog the treat. Reward 2-3 times in position, then click and treat out of position (by bringing your hand out of reach) or use the cue "Free".</p> <p>Repeat until the dog lies down immediately, on their own, after getting up for a treat.</p>



4.	Adding the cue	Say the word ‘Down’ as the dog initiates the position. As soon as you notice any movement downward, in a calm and natural tone of voice, say “Down”. Make sure to only say it once. Repeat this step 50-100 times.
5.	Building duration	When the dog lies down, don’t click immediately. Instead, wait a few seconds before clicking and treating. Reward in position, while the dog is lying down. If the dog gets out of position to get the treat, pull your hand away and patiently wait for the dog to lie down again. Wait 2-3 seconds, then reward the dog. Use the cue “Free” to get the dog out of position, click and treat. Gradually build the duration by delaying for longer and longer periods of time until the dog maintains the position for up to 6 seconds before you reward. It’s important to increase the duration randomly, so you might click and treat at 4 seconds, then 2 seconds, then 5 seconds, etc.
6.	Changing your position	Repeat the behavior while in different positions (standing in front of the dog, standing parallel to the dog, sitting on a chair, sitting on the floor, lying down, etc.). Anytime you change your criteria, be willing to go back a few steps and build the behavior up again. The goal is to teach the dog to lie down wherever they are. If the dog moves in front of you, you can use a barrier, work against a wall or use a chair for instance. You’ll gradually move the barrier (or you) further and further away until you can eliminate it completely.
7.	Building distance	Take a step away from you dog and ask for the behavior. The purpose here is to be able to give the cue ‘down’ while at a distance of at least 3 feet from the dog. Click then move to the dog to give him/her the treat. Gradually move further and further away from the dog until the dog readily responds when you’re about 3 feet away.
8.	Building distractions	Gradually increase the level of distractions. Ask the dog to lie down while you’re tapping on the table, or the wall, while you’re walking in place or raising your arms up in the air, while there’s a toy or ball or even treats on the floor, etc. Move around the dog while dispensing multiple treats to the dog for staying in position. If the dog gets up at any time, reduce the distractions and slowly build them back up. Ask the dog to lie down while there are other people standing several feet away, then closer. Ask the dog to lie down while there is another dog nearby. Say another word or make another sound. Do not click if the dog goes down. Work very gradually and be creative with this step. Stay at this step until the dog consistently responds within 3 seconds to the cue ‘down’ and maintains the position even in the presence of intermediate levels of distractions.
9.	Generalization	Change your location. Work with your dog in a different room, in the yard, in the back of the car, in a store, at the mall, etc. Ask other handlers to work with the dog. Keep the level of distractions low at first, then gradually build it up until the dog is responsive in most situations when out in public.
10.	Fluency	Gradually build up the level of difficulty until you can successfully get your dog to lie down in all sorts of places with lots going on and start using this cue in everyday life, whenever you need to get the dog to lie down. Use real-life rewards as often as possible. Ask for a ‘down’ before giving access to the food bowl, before throwing a ball, going out the door, putting on the leash, giving access to play with other dogs, etc.

CONGRATULATIONS! If you’ve come this far, you have taught the dog a solid response to the word ‘Down’.