



DRESS

Level 1

Goal: When off leash, the dog will face the equipment presented in front of him/her (harness, vest, head halter, etc.) and offers his/her nose by leaning into it. When removing the equipment, to the word “Dress” the dog should back out as the handler holds the equipment up.

With this behavior, the dog will be an active participant in putting the gear on/off. This contributes to the dog’s sense of control and can be important in case the person is physically limited and/or would not be able to deal with an uncooperative dog.

Material: clicker & treats, harness, head halter, vest

TRAINING PLAN		
1.	Getting started/luring or shaping	Hold the piece of equipment 3-5 inches from the dog’s face. With a treat in your hand, lure the dog into the equipment. Make sure to hold it at the same height as the dog’s head (not lower or higher). Click and treat the dog as soon as their head is through. You can also just give a treat and not use the clicker at this point. If the dog shows any resistance, stop luring and shape the dog instead. Lower your criteria and start with clicking and treating the dog for looking at the equipment, then for any movement towards the equipment. If the dog licks or bites the equipment presented in front of them, take it away and present it again, or wait until the dog stops, then click and treat.
2.	Forward movement	Gradually increase your criteria by withholding the treat and reward any forward movement of the dog towards the equipment. The goal is for the dog to move into the equipment. Once consistent, clasp the equipment on, click and treat.
3.	Backward movement	Unclasp the equipment and hold it slightly up. Wait for the dog to initiate any movement backward. Click and treat. If the dog doesn’t move backward, look for slight shifts of their body backward. Gradually increase your criteria until the dog automatically backs out of the equipment.
4.	Adding the cue	Once the dog automatically offers their nose or head towards the equipment, say the word “Dress” as the dog engages in the behavior, Clasp the equipment on the dog, click treat. When removing the equipment, say the word “Dress” as you hold the equipment up and the dog backs out of it. Click and treat. Repeat 50-100 times.
5.	Changing positions	Repeat the steps above while you’re in different positions, like sitting in a chair or on the floor, with the dog is on one side or the other, when you’re in a wheelchair and the dog in in a “Lap”, etc.
6.	Building distance	Repeat the steps above while gradually increasing the distance the dog must walk to reach the equipment. Start with the dog just a foot away from the equipment. The goal is to repeat while adding distance so the dog will come put their equipment on from wherever they are. Click and treat. Make it very exciting to complete the behavior at this step.



7.	Building distractions	Gradually increase the level of distractions. Think of anything that could be a distraction to the dog, like people and dogs at a distance, toys on the floor, person doing jumping jacks nearby, etc.
8.	Generalization	Repeat the previous steps in different locations.
9.	Fluency	Gradually increase the level of difficulty until you can ask the dog to “Dress”, in any condition. Start using these cues in everyday life and anytime you need to get them ready to go out or when you take the equipment off.

CONGRATULATIONS! If you’ve come this far, you have taught the dog a solid response to the cue “Dress”.