



EYE CONTACT NAME

Level 1

Goal: *This behavior is the foundation of all training. We can't ask the dog to perform a behavior when he/she isn't paying attention to us. In addition, when a dog is looking at us, they are not paying attention to other potential distractions in the environment. We'll start by teaching the dog that looking at us is a rewarding behavior. We'll also make sure that we strengthen the connection between the dog's name and the behavior of looking at us.*

Material: *clicker and treats*

| TRAINING PLAN | | |
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| 1. | Luring | <p>Grab a treat between your index finger and your thumb. Present it to the dog, then swiftly bring it up to your eye level. Hold it there until your dog looks at it. Click, then give the dog the treat. Repeat 10 times.</p> <p>Present the treat to the dog then swiftly bring your arm out to the side and out of the dog's reach. The dog will look at your hand. Wait until they look away from the treat and into your eyes. Click, then give the dog the treat. Repeat until the dog looks at your hand holding the treat, then automatically turns to look at your eyes.</p> <p>Repeat this sequence 10 times on both sides (right and left arm).</p> |
| 2. | Capturing/ Shaping | <p>Stand in front of your dog. Click and treat anytime they look at your face or eyes. As soon as the dog turns their head in your direction, click & treat. Repeat until the dog readily offers eye contact.</p> |
| 3. | Adding the cue | <p>Adding their name. Say the dog's name as they turn their head to look into your eyes. Just like any other cue, it will take 50-100 times to pair the dog's name with the behavior (looking at you).</p> |
| 4. | Building duration | <p>Once the dog is looking at you, wait a few seconds before clicking and treating. Gradually work up the duration of the behavior to 5 seconds. Increase the delay randomly by occasionally clicking after 1 second, 3 seconds, 2 seconds, 5 seconds, etc. You'll also want to watch that you're not asking for too much too soon. If the dog cannot maintain the eye contact for the duration you're trying to reach, lower your criteria, click and treat immediately 4-5 times, then build up duration again, very gradually.</p> |
| 5. | Changing your position | <p>Repeat steps 1-3 while changing your position. Try moving around the dog, sitting on a chair, sitting on the floor, standing on one side of the dog, then on the other, etc.</p> <p>Start saying the dog's name as the dog is not looking at you. Click and treat as soon as they turn towards you.</p> |
| 6. | Building distractions | <p>It's time to add 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. Play the name game with</p> |



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| | | increasing levels of distractions. Wait until the dog is looking at someone or something else, say their name. Click & treat as soon as they turn to look at you. If the dog was looking at something that was especially interesting, get excited and make a big fuss over them. Occasionally, and only when you think your dog can succeed, delay the click to reward more sustained attention. intermediate levels of distractions (see distraction sheet for ideas; every dog is different, so levels of distractions need to be adapted to the dog). |
| 7. | 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. |
| 8. | Fluency | Gradually build up the level of difficulty until you can successfully get your dog's attention in all sorts of places, with lots going on, and start using this cue in everyday life. |

CONGRATULATIONS! If you've come this far, you have taught the dog a solid response to their name and increased how much they pay attention to you.