



LEAVE IT

Level 2

Goal: When we say “leave it” (in a neutral tone of voice), the dog turns away from whatever it is that he/she was interested in, and looks at us. Our goal is to get this behavior strong enough to be able to walk the dog over food dropped on the floor (i.e. food court) without him/her trying to get to it.

This cue is to be used for objects, people or animals that the dog should not have access to, like pills dropped on the floor, someone passing by or something icky on the ground. We don’t use this cue to interrupt a behavior our dog is likely to do again, such as licking him/herself.

Material: clicker, treats.

TRAINING PLAN		
	Getting started Food in hand	Grab a handful of treats and present your open hand above the dog’s head. If the dog jumps, quickly close your hand and raise it so that the dog cannot get the treats. Your dog should stare at your hand, but since you’ve been working on eye contact previously, they should quickly turn away from your hand and look at you. Don’t move or say a word, simply allow the dog to figure out this game. click and give them a treat when they look in your direction. After 2-3 repetitions, lower your hand just a few inches. If your dog jumps up, quickly close your fist and raise your hand. Once the dog has settled, lower your hand again and wait for them to turn away from your hand and look at you instead. Click and treat when they do. Repeat this process until you can gradually lower your hand all the way to the floor.
1.	Food on the floor	Place a treat on the floor. If the dog tries to get to it, cover it with your hand. As soon as your dog backs away, click and treat with a different treat by hand. For better success make sure that the dog cannot get to the treat or item you present. Click and treat any movement away from the treat. Repeat until the dog no longer tries to get the treat.
2.	Waiting for eye contact	Delay your click and wait for the dog to look away from the treat and look at you. Click and treat. Repeat until the dog automatically makes eye contact after looking at the treat on the floor.
3.	Adding the cue	As soon as the dog looks up to your eyes, say the words “leave it”. Click and treat. After 50-100 repetitions, you can start giving the cue “leave it” as the dog looks at the treat and expect them to turn away from it and look at you. If not, go back to giving the cue as the dog turns to you.
4.	Increasing criteria	Gradually increase the level of difficulty. You can for instance put several treats on the floor. Drop treats on the floor (as if you would pills). Place a toy on the floor or a new object. While doing so, always make sure the dog cannot get to them.



5.	Changing 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 position, be willing to relax your criteria and build the behavior up again. Always be ready to cover up the food. You can use your foot or your hand.
6.	Building distance	At this point the dog should reliably look at you (and away from what's in front of them) anytime you say "Leave it". Gradually increase your distance to the object or food until you can stand 5 feet away from the dog and treat/object. Click and go to the dog to reward.
7.	Building distractions	Very gradually increase the level of distractions when using this cue. Think of anything that could be distraction to the dog, like certain sounds, certain people, dogs at a distance, etc.
8.	Generalization	Repeat the steps in different areas. You may do this in different rooms then move it outside, at the mall, in the stores, etc.
9.	Fluency	Gradually build up the level of difficulty until you can successfully get your dog to respond to the cue "Leave it" in different places and with different levels of distractions. Use it in everyday life situation anytime you need your dog to stay away from something (icky thing on the ground, food at the food court, person walking by, etc.).

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