

Training "Drop It"

How to train a dog to release an object on cue

Step One:

Begin by teaching your dog to drop a toy in exchange for something more valuable, such as treats. (Especially while training, it's a good idea to use a reward the dog likes more than the item you are asking them to drop.) Hide the treats in your pocket, in a treat pouch behind your back, or on a table or shelf right next to you. The treats should be easy to grab quickly. Now, get a toy and encourage your dog to tug on it or pick it up.

Step Two:

When your dog is holding the toy, grab a treat and present it right in front of their nose. When your dog opens their mouth to take the treat and drops the toy, say "yes," praise, and give them the treat. Once you know your dog will reliably drop the toy in exchange for the treat, you can begin to say "drop it" (or the cue of your choice) *immediately before reaching to get the treat*. Repeat this process, praising and rewarding your dog with the treat for every successful performance.

Step Three:

With practice your dog will release the toy as soon as they hear "drop it." **From then on, say "drop it" and give your dog 1-3 seconds to perform the behavior on their own, without reaching for a treat.** If your dog does, say "yes," praise and reward. If not, repeat step 2 until your dog associates the cue "drop it" with the behavior. Practice in "real life," such as when you find your dog carrying a toy. If your dog drops it on cue, say "yes" and head to the treats.



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