

# Adding Verbal Cues

Dogs "talk" to each other through body language. They are also excellent at reading us, and our communication contributes to our love affair.

But if we want dogs to understand words, we need to help by associating them with our hand or body cues.

By using your voice or body, you need to get and keep your dog's attention before using verbal cues. Pleasing, higher pitched voices are most effective. Actions works too, like moving away to prompt a game of chase.

Want your dog to come to you? Before saying "come" or "here," face the way you want your dog to move. Begin moving in that direction. When your dog is consistently playing the chase game and is having fun, say "come" or "here."



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## STEP 1

Get behavior first by using hand signals

## STEP 2

Reinforce each repetition with food, play, toys

## STEP 3

Repeat the hand cue followed by a reward 10 times

## STEP 4

Add the verbal cue just prior to the hand cue

Because dogs don't come programmed with human language skills, it's necessary to get the behavior you want through hand signals or body movement. Often we teach dogs to sit by luring with a treat above their nose. The hand moving upwards becomes the cue for the dog to sit. When your dog is reliably sitting in response to the hand signal, add the verbal cue "sit" just before the sit starts. Most dogs figure out very quickly that "sit" is the gateway to good things like a treat, car ride, walk.



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