



## THE NAME GAME



Your dog's name can be used as a cue for a specific behavior, “look at me!” With your dog’s attention, you can give further instruction and direction. It may seem like your dog should know how to do this, but to be reliable, you need to practice to help your dog to associate their name with good things!

Looking at you can also be a great simple behavior to ask for when you want to redirect your dog from an undesirable behavior, like barking or lunging at something unfamiliar, or jumping up on guests.

Avoid diluting the power of the name cue by using your dog’ name to scold or call over to you for an unpleasant experience like a bath or nail trim, or by repeating it over and over again without result. We want your dog to come running to you with joy when he hears his name! If you need your dog to stop doing something, simply go to your dog instead, or try teaching a [Positive Interrupter](#).

### How to Play the Name Game:

#### Phase One:

- Start training in a low distraction training area
- Say your dog’s name in a light, inviting tone of voice
- Immediately follow with a click/treat.
- At first, your dog does not have to do anything to get the click/treat—it’s contingent only on the sound of his name.
- As your dog starts to look toward you in anticipation of receiving a treat, switch to clicking for the first movement of his head in your direction after he hears his name.
- Deliver the treat under your dog’s nose so they have to look down to eat it or drop it between its front paws.
  - This is a reset so that he can look back up when you say his name again.
- When your dog is looking at you with each repetition, begin to deliver the treat a little to the right or left.
- When your dog really gets the hang of the game, click only when you get eye contact from your dog after you say its name.

## Phase Two:

- Begin to reset the behavior by tossing the treat farther away.
- Move this exercise to increasingly more distracting locations: different rooms in your home, the foyer or porch, the sidewalk, the back yard, etc.
- If the dog does not respond to his name the first time, wait 5-10 seconds before you try again.
- If after a couple of tries, the dog still does not respond, make the training environment less distracting or stressful for your dog. Whenever you move to a new location, temporarily lower your criteria for clicks.
- With 2 or more people, take turns calling the dog's name. When he turns, click the look, then give the treat in front of you. Video:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n\\_nq4SkilZY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_nq4SkilZY&feature=youtu.be)
- This sets the dog up so that the next person can call him away from a distraction. Call the dog as soon as he has finished his last treat.
- Gradually move farther apart and add other distractions.