

A Brief Introduction to Clicker Training

What is Clicker training?

Clicker training is a positive reinforcement training system.

Anything your dog needs to know or do can be taught using this method, and will result in an animal that loves to work. Dolphins are trained in the same way, and like them, dogs will become eager, attentive and they will love to work.

We usually think of training as a method of getting rid of bad behaviour.

Clicker training teaches dogs they are doing the right thing instead of stopping them from doing the wrong thing.

Clickers come in a variety of shapes and sizes. You can buy them from most pet shops, or on-line from Amazon.

Why do we need to use a clicker?

Training in this way requires you to use a clicker, and *not* just your voice, as the conditioner reinforcer. This is because you simply can't say a word with the split-second precision that you can achieve with a click. With the clicker you can reinforce tiny movements the instant they occur and because the clicker has a very distinctive sound so that its meaning is crystal clear.



Getting started

The first thing to do is get a clicker (!) and some small treats that are easy to eat in a single mouthful. You need something like tiny pieces of cheese or chicken that do not need to be crunched.

Teach your dog the meaning of the click by clicking the clicker and throwing a treat on the floor. Do this repeatedly whilst walking around the room. What your dog is doing when the treat arrives is not important; he will remember what he was doing when he heard the click.

When you click the clicker and your dog looks for a treat, you know the signal has become a conditioned reinforcer and you are ready to establish a behaviour. This is known as 'shaping'.

You will find the more things your dog learns to do, the more he will trust and respect you. Training with reinforcement creates a dog that is doing things because he *wants* to do them.

P.S. Cats can be clicker trained too, but that's another story!

