



TRAINING CHALLENGE OF THE MONTH

EYE CONTACT

This exercise is to teach your dog to look to you when they see something they want. We teach it as “Eye Contact” or “Look at Me,” but it is also a “Leave It” exercise.

Goal: Your dog looks at you whenever he/she wants something.

Basic Exercise:

Hold a treat or toy (distraction) in your hand and extend your arm out to the side. *Do not talk to the dog or give any commands. This is a “default” exercise.*

- If your dog looks you in the eye instead of at the distraction, say “Yes!” and quickly give them the treat or toy. (I prefer treats because it’s easier to do multiple repetitions of the exercise). You can also use a toy but reward with a treat.
- If your dog stares at the distraction, wait until he/she gets frustrated and looks at you like, “What the heck?” say “Yes!” and quickly give them the reward.
- If your dog jumps at the treat/toy, simply pull it up out of reach. Then hold it out again.
- After he/she gets the idea and starts looking at you to get the reward, require slightly longer eye contact.

Advanced Exercise:

- Work up to 30 seconds of solid eye contact, without eye flickers away from you.
- Use other objects that are of interest to your dog.
- Make the objects more interesting by wiggling them.

Ultimate Goal: Your dog immediately makes eye contact when you start this exercise and holds it for 30 seconds or more.