

You will NEVER EVER have that!

(Leave it)

The goal is to teach your dog to automatically ignore things on the floor/ground. You won't always see the potentially dangerous item before your dog does, so you might not be able to cue "Leave It" in time. Yet, by teaching leave It, a dog will learn that something on the floor, like trash. grand ma's pill or a medical glove will never ever be mine unless I have been given permission to take it. This is part of the larger curriculum of impulse control including "Wait" and "Take It".

You will need to start training in an area with few distractions. You will need some "low value" (think boring) food like rice crackers and some "high value" treats like chicken or beef. And, of course you will want your marker, like my favorite the clicker, or that unique word like "click".

1. Put the boring food in a closed fist in one hand and rest that hand on your knee. Let your dog investigate your closed fist with thoughts of getting the food. Do not give or let your dog eat from that hand.
2. As soon as the dog backs away, mark and reward with a higher value reward from the other hand. Do not toss the higher value treat on the floor. Remember we are trying to get the dog from scarfing down things on the floor.
3. The click is to mark the behavior of backing away from something. After 3-5 consecutive successful trials, add the verbal cue leave it after they back away but before you click.
4. Next put the boring food under one foot. This is why I like rice crackers as the don't easily break. Same drill, they will investigate and when they back away mark and reward with a

high value treat off the ground (ideally at your eye level). Don't let them eat the rice cracker.

5. Next, the same drill, but lift your foot slightly off the cracker. Be prepared to cover the cracker with your foot if the dog goes for it, but try very hard to resist saying NO or yelling LEAVE IT.
6. Keep adding more distractions in the training environment. If it breaks down, quit that lesson and go back to the previous point of success next time you train leave it. Learning is not always linear.
7. Start using toys or other objects on the floor. Try walking past the food or objects. Remember when they back away, mark and reward. At a visit, the reward after a successful leave it can be a scratch behind the ear or saying "What a good dog you are!) Like us, dogs always need to get paid when they perform well, but it doesn't always have to be with food.
8. Ultimately, your dog will see something on the floor and ignore it because it will NEVER EVER be theirs.