



TRAINING TIPS

Leave It

The “Leave It” cue should be delivered in a happy voice, as if it is a wonderful game, so that your dog will become delighted to leave food, an object, another dog, and more for the greater reward you offer. We generally start training this behavior by rewarding with tasty food. As the behavior becomes stronger you can begin to use other things your dog finds rewarding such as play, tug, or a nice game of chase.

1. Set a treat on the floor and hide it under your foot. Click and treat (C/T) when he looks away from your foot and deliver a treat from your hand. Repeat until he no longer tries to get the treat from under your foot.
2. Set a treat on the floor next to your foot. If he moves toward the food cover it with your foot—quickly but quietly—to prevent his rewarding himself by getting the treat. Click and treat (C/T) when he looks away from the food and/or your foot and deliver a treat from your hand. Repeat until he no longer looks at the treat next to your foot.
3. Repeat step #2, but say “leave it” before putting the food on the floor next to your foot.
4. Repeat step #3, using the “leave it” cue, with increasing distance between your foot and the food.
5. Repeat step #4, using the cue, and drop food from a small height above the floor.
6. Repeat, gradually increasing the height.
7. If you are not already standing up, repeat steps 3-5 while standing. Your moving from sitting to standing raises the difficulty level for your dog, which is why we move back a couple of steps.

If you get no farther than this you will have gone a LONG way toward building impulse control! However, a moving “Leave It” off of treats, objects, and other dogs is invaluable.

8. Walk him past the treat on leash, say "leave it" when he sees the treat. Note that you will not yank on the leash to pull him away from the treat, rather you will keep the leash at a fixed length, hand anchored to your hip for the whole exercise, choosing your distance so that he can't get to the treat. C/T when he ignores the decoy treat on the floor. Repeat.
9. Repeat step #8, moving gradually closer to the treat such that he could get it, but rather than yanking back if he moves toward the treat, simply shorten the slack in the leash to prevent his getting the treat.
10. Alternatively, if you are fast, you can do steps 8 and 9 off-leash, as long as you are 95% certain that you can cover the treat with your foot before your dog could get there!
11. Practice with objects such as toys, socks, etc. Begin with something very easy and build up to something more difficult. Eventually use it for walking by dogs, children, etc.