



# Game #1 for Self Control Ignoring food

*This simple game will help your dog learn to wait for what he wants. It can be the foundation for an excellent "Leave It", "Wait", and similar cued behaviors, but it's equally or more valuable as an uncued default behavior when in the presence of tempting items (e.g. food) and opportunities (e.g. going through a door or gate).*

*You'll need some low to medium-value treats.*

## **Stage 1**

1. Load 10-15 small treats into one hand.
2. Close your hand around the treats so that your dog can't get them.
3. Place your hand at or just below your dog's nose level,
4. Brace your hand so that you won't be tempted to pull it away from your dog.
5. If your dog has noticed the treats in your hand and is trying to get them, that's great! It's where the exercise starts.
6. Hold your hand steady, and keep it closed as long as your dog is trying to get the treats out. When your dog moves away from your hand, open your hand.
7. If your dog moves toward your open hand, close it.
8. If your dog doesn't move toward your open hand, leave it open, remove a treat with your other hand, and feed it to your dog.
9. You're not saying anything to your dog, just opening your hand when your dog moves away, closing it when he moves toward the treats, and giving him treats when he moves away from your open hand.

## **Stage 2**

1. Place 8-10 treats on the floor in front of your dog
2. Place your hand over the treats
3. Leave your hand over the treats as your dog tries to get them.
4. Move your hand away to reveal the treats when your dog backs away.
5. Take a treat from the pile on the floor and feed it to your dog.
6. Add difficulty by taking a single treat from the pile and placing it on the floor a little closer to your dog, then pick it up and feed it to your dog.
7. If at any time your dog moves toward the treats, simply put your hand over them.
8. Don't say "no", "leave it", or anything else. This works like a law of nature: the dog moves toward the treats and your hand covers treats on the floor. Your dog moves away, and your hand uncovers them and gives your dog one of the treats.

*This simple approach is based on "Zen" as taught by Sue Ailsby ([sue-eh.ca](http://sue-eh.ca)), and "It's Yer Choice" as taught by Susan Garrett ([www.clickerdogs.com](http://www.clickerdogs.com)). Any flaws in protocol are my own.*