Any Dog Can Learn Tricks!
An introduction to training using science based methods
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Let me introduce myself...
• BS, Animal Science – Rutgers University
  – Pursing MSc in Clinical Animal Behavior – Edinburgh University
• Animal Care/Small Ruminant Practicum Instructor
• Currently teach for Princeton Dog Training Club,
  Private lessons, Seminars & Workshops

A little more about me...
• I play agility, disc & dock diving
• Performance, Print & Acting
Training vs Learning
• Training – the action of teaching a person or animal a skill or behavior
• Learning – the acquisition of knowledge or skill through experience or being taught
• LEARNING IS INFINITE!

How do we learn?
• Foundation of learning is Classical & Operant Conditioning
  – Classical Conditioning – links stimulus with response
  – Classical Conditioning - focuses on involuntary behaviors
  – Example – Clicker
  – Classical Conditioning → Operant Conditioning when an animal intentionally repeats a behavior to earn a reward

Operant Conditioning
• Reinforcement & Punishment
  – Reinforcement → Increases Behavior
  – Punishment → Decreases Behavior
• Each can be Positive or Negative
  – Positive → Adding stimulus
  – Negative → Removing stimulus
• Extinction
  – No consequence at all
Many Different Training Methods!

- Dog training methods can employ classical and operant conditioning, extinction, punishment and/or reinforcement.
- My Training Methods
  - Rely heavily on positive reinforcement
  - Positive reinforcement strengthens the human-animal bond
  - Builds trust and confidence

Mark That Behavior!

- In order for a dog to readily associate a behavior performed with the reward, the reinforcement must occur within ½ second of behavior.
- Reward Markers extend this time
  - Can be verbal word – YES
  - Can be a sound – Clicker
  - Reward Marker must be classically conditioned

Right on Cue!

- Cue - is the signal or stimulus for a dog to perform a behavior.
- A cue can be verbal or non-verbal
  - Dogs often learn non-verbal cues first
- Biggest mistake – pairing verbal cues too early
Luring

- Lures – used to teach a new behavior
  - Lure guides dog into desired position or behavior
  - Often food/treat
- Reward markers can still be used
- Cue/behavior naming can occur nearly simultaneously

Free Shaping

- No lure or prompt is used
- Mark and reward incremental steps towards a desired behavior
  - Requires the dog to understand a reward marker

Capturing

- No lure or prompt is used
- Mark and reward when your dog does desired behavior
  - Requires the dog to understand a reward marker
Why Use Food?

• Primary & Secondary Reinforcers
  – Primary Reinforcers – things we need biologically
    • Food/Water
    • Toys elicit prey drive in some dogs – can be primary reinforcer
  – Secondary Reinforcers – learned reinforcers
    • Praise

• Primary reinforcers
  – Needed for counter conditioning
  – Results in more precise behaviors

Have Fun! Be Creative!
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