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Reflex to Name.

(Objective: The dog hears their name and looks/turns around to look at the handler.)

Why is it being taught.

1. **Real life application:** To gain your dog's attention.
2. **Likely Life Rewards:** Can literally be a lifesaver for your dog and will give you a response to use for further training.

Preparation.

3. **Venue:** Initially best done at home with no other dogs being present and at a quiet time that is free of distractions.
4. **Equipment/Supplies:** Gather the equipment and supplies required,
 - a. Have a number and variety of high value rewards to hand. (See [Reward Selection](#)).
 - b. If "rewards" don't work, then praising and fussing should be reward enough at the puppy life stage.
5. **Brief:** Tell any human companions exactly what you want them to do and not to do.
6. **Note:** The treating in this practice is not a reward for a taught behaviour. This is classical conditioning. Delivery of the reward is repeated after the spoken dog's name. This links the sound of the dog's name with a treat from their handler. Be patient and do not show frustration as this could hinder training development.
7. **Starting positions:**
 - a. **Handler:** The handler sits (or stands) with the rewards to hand but out of sight.
 - b. **Dog:** In same space and nearby.

Audible & Visual Cues.

8. **Audible cues:** Your dog's "Name" is their anchor for training. A short name, that is clear when shouted, is easier to communicate amongst distractions and noise.
 - a. "Name"
 - i. **When:** When you want the dog's attention.
 - ii. **How:** Use appropriate volume for the conditions.
 - iii. **Meaning to the dog:** Use of their "name" attracts the dog's attention. i.e. are you talking to me?
9. **Visual cues:** Visual cues must be unique, simple, unambiguous, and consistent. See the (Using Visual Cue pamphlet).

- a. **When:** Same time as you say “Name”.
- b. **How:** Look directly at your dog’s eyes with a friendly encouraging expression.
- c. **Meaning to the dog:** Captures the dog’s interest and prompts it to explore what it means. i.e. There could be something in this for me.

Practice.

10. **Layer 1:** The layer 1 focus is to use the dog’s name to get their attention.

- a. Handler has,
 - i. Upright position/stance.
 - ii. Position by the supply of rewards with their dog nearby.
 - iii. Not to move away from their position.
- b. Handler says (dog’s name) - “Name”.
- c. Regardless of what the dog is doing, within two seconds of saying the name, give the dog the treat.
- d. Repeat layer 1 to reinforce the recall to name response. Repeat until the dog is giving the required behaviour.

11. **Layer 2:** The layer 2 focus is to get the dog’s attention with the handler in a different position.

- a. Handler,
 - i. Changes position whilst keeping close to the supply of rewards, with the dog nearby.
 - ii. Occasionally moves position.
- b. Handler says (dog’s name) - “Name”.
- c. Regardless of what the dog is doing, within two seconds of saying the name, give the dog the treat.
- d. Repeat Layer 2 until, when the dog hears the name, they turn immediately towards the handler.

Homework.

12. Repeat the practice frequently to reinforce the reflex to name.
13. Habituate the dog to the use of their name in various real-life environments. Practice every time you are out with your dog. Keep management and control as appropriate to the environment.

Fluency.

14. Consider the dog achieving fluency when the skill has become generalised for use in different environments. To confirm the skill test for the following,
 - a. **Distance:** Responds from the next room or, from the garden.
 - b. **Duration:** Keeps focus on you long enough for you to give another cue.

- c. **Distraction:** Will still look at you if giving attention to someone else or whilst eating a meal.
- d. **Latency:** They turn immediately to focus on the handler.
- e. **Precision:** No excessive repeating of the audible cue by the handler.
- f. **Speed:** If turning the dog should do so with direct enthusiasm and best speed.

When you are happy that you have completed this exercise, visit <https://cleverk9s.co.uk/reflex-to-name/> and please complete the simple online Quiz Form.

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