

## POSITIVE MOTIVATIONAL TRAINING

### What is positive motivational training?

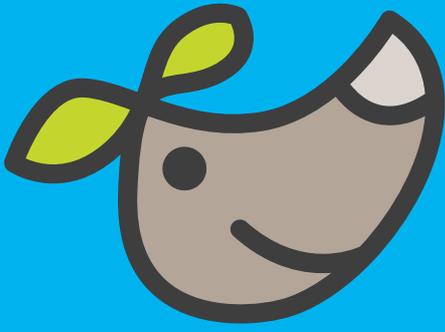
I describe it as – we reward the behaviour we want and ignore the behaviour we don't want. Positive motivational training works well for dogs because we show them what we want them to do, we reward them and this reinforces the behaviour and makes it likely they will do it again.

Finding out what is motivating (rewarding) to our dogs is very important. Some dogs like food, some like toys or others like a pat, every dog is different. Your dog has to love what you use as a reward and variety is the key. If you use food you need at least 3 things that your dog loves.

If you use food, you only need small pieces and make sure that you decrease the amount of the dog's normal meals to allow for the food they get while training, we don't want fat dogs. Things like hot dog (Frankfurt), chicken loaf, dried liver, small amounts of cheese tend to work well but every dog is different.

### What is a marker?

A marker is a sound that we use to tell the dog that they have done what we wanted within half a second of it happening. We use a marker because we can't always reward in time. The marker identifies the behaviour and then we reward it. A marker needs to be short (one syllable), consistent and distinct. You can use a sound like a clicker, a whistle or a word. Remember if you are using a word make sure it doesn't get used a lot in normal conversations.



## Creating a marker

Now you know what your dog loves, we can start to link that with your marker word. To start don't ask your dog to do anything just say the marker word and give the reward. Do this around the house, at different times of the day and even when you are watching TV over a couple of days. The dog will quickly make the link between the word and the reward, you know the dog has made the link when you say the word and he turns to you looking for the reward.

Now we can start training some new behaviour, the marker tells the dog they have done what you wanted at a precise moment in time, you then back that up with the reward.

## Using the marker when training



Your timing of the marker and the reward is important. You need to mark the behaviour within half a second but the reward can come slower. For example if you are teaching a sit you mark when a dog's bottom touches the ground and then you reward them in that position. This reinforces the behaviour for the dog.