

'Leave it' exercises

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'Leave it' exercises

These steps are designed to enable you to take an item away from your dog without any consequences. They should be repeated several times per session, using a range of items.

Principles

- Start with a low-value item.
- For dogs that show extreme food-guarding or object-guarding behaviour, it is necessary to begin with items of *extremely low value to the dog*. These may include a rolled-up magazine, a piece of cardboard, or a clean wooden spoon.
- Vary the test item and gradually work up to items of greater value.

Steps

1. Hold a low-value item just out of your dog's reach.
2. Your dog looks at the item.
3. Wait patiently and quietly.
4. The dog eventually turns away from the item and toward you.
5. At that moment, say 'leave it' (and click if you use a clicker) and give your dog a treat.

Some dogs may be more resistant and need additional help in learning to turn away from the item. For these dogs the use of a headcollar and lead may facilitate training.

- Repeat steps 1 and 2 and wait.
- If your dog does not turn his/her head, give a gentle tug on the headcollar and, as he/she turns their head toward you, say 'leave it' and reward with a treat.

! If the dog is unable to 'leave' low-value items or shows reluctance and/or any aggressive indicators, stop the training programme immediately and contact your veterinary surgeon.