



Door manners exercise.

Requirements to train this exercise.

Dog on a lead and collar or harness.

Clicker for this training.

Eye contact exercise.

Step one:

Start with your dog on a lead, place your hand on the door handle or latch. Wait for your dog to make eye contact with you.

Click, then take one or two steps away from the door and reward your dog. (Do not reward the dog at the door). Once your dog is giving eye contact consistently, repeat the exercise now turning the latch or open and closing the door very slightly.

Your dog does not need to sit at the door unless you wish them too.

Now start opening the door a short distance. Maybe 50mm (2") If your dog offers eye contact, click and reward them. If the dog can not look at you and keeps looking towards the outside. Close the door and wait for your dog to give eye contact, then reward and repeat. (remember to take a step or two away from the door before rewarding). Slowly start to increase the distance that the door is open building this slowly at the dog's pace.

Step two: Add a cue.

Once your dog is reliably looking at you (eye contact) when the door is fully open. Add a cue, this should be a relaxed word. A soft "let's go" or something similar.

With the door fully open and with your dog giving good eye contact, say "lets go" and pass through the doorway, as you get through the doorway, click and return into the home before rewarding your dog.

Keep practicing this with the door open.

Step three: Adding a verbal cue.

With the dog on a lead, approach the closed door say "wait" then open the door, if your dog gives you eye contact click and reward them.

Once your dog is giving you eye contact, release them forward, as you get to the threshold click and reward the dog, click and reward the dog as you get outside. This will teach your dog to leave the house relaxed and not dash through the doorway.

Step Four: Proof the behaviour.

Now you need to use food, toys and people as distractions. Before you start this exercise, play the eye contact game several times and remind the dog to wait as you get to the door.



Step 4 cont:

Open the door and throw a small treat out the door. You are looking for the dog to not go after the treat. You are looking for your dog to give you eye contact. If they do, click and take two steps back into the home and reward the dog with several treats. Repeat the exercise several times.

If the treat being thrown out side is too hard for your dog, practice standing further back from the door when you throw the treat. This should help your dog.

Next, with the dog on a lead and the door open, practice walking towards the door. Stop at the threshold and if your dog stops, click and reward at the threshold point.

Do this maybe 3-4 times. If the dog stops each time you do. Click and reward, then release your dog through the doorway.

People arriving. (ask them not to talk to speak. Go to your door, say “wait”. Open the door and wait for your dog to give you eye contact, then click and reward. Close the door and repeat the exercise. As your dog gets consistent with this exercise. Ask the people to rattle a bag when you open the door. You are looking for your dog to ignore the person, stay behind the threshold and remain calm. If they do click and reward.

After 3-4 times of the dog ignoring the person. Release the dog throw the door click at the threshold and as you get outside. Do not interact with the person or allow your dog too either.

As long as the outdoor area is safe you can practice taking the lead off the dog at the door and seeing if they still remain and give eye contact. Remember to click and reward if they do.

At any point that your dog can not give you eye contact, you can move further away from the door or ask the person to stand further away.

Proofing with toys:

Ask the person to wave a toy so your dog can see it. Start with low level toys and build to the toys that your dog loves. Again, as before if your dog can not give you eye contact. Take the game back a step.

Calm and relaxed is the way to teach this exercise.

Happy training guys.