

## The Luring Method

Luring is a method of training that uses a reinforcer as something for the animal to follow. By following the lure (food, treats, or toys) the animal is encouraged to engage in a specific behavior. Once the animal completes the behavior, you click and reinforce. Luring can be a good choice of training method for behaviors that are based on position (sit, down, stand) or require some motion on their part (jumping through a hula hoop).

### CREATING BEHAVIOR WITH LURING

#### STEP 1: Hold the lure in your hand

You will want to have soft food on the wooden spoon or a treat in your hand that your cat enjoys. When your cat smells or sees the food, you will move your hand to encourage the behavior you want. For example, for a “sit”, you will want to move the lure up and over the cat’s head. This will tip the cat’s head up and likely they will start to bend their knees and end up in a sitting position. For jumping through the hula hoop, you would start with the lure on the same side of the hula hoop as the cat. Move the lure through the hula hoop with your hand and the cat should follow your hand and then end up on the other side of the hula hoop with the lure.

If the cat is fearful, you can still lure behavior! You can click and reinforce behaviors such as

- Turning head or body toward front of kennel
- Moving toward front of kennel
- Standing up (from a sit or down)
- Moving location in the kennel

If the cat is very active or vocal, you can still lure behavior! You can click and reinforce behaviors such as

- Sitting or lying down
- Agility courses
- Moving location in a kennel

#### STEP 2: Click then Reinforce

As soon as the cat completes the behavior by following the lure, click then reinforce the behavior.

#### STEP 3: Fading the lure

***This is a very important step!*** Prior to adding the cue for the behavior you will need to fade the lure. This should occur quickly! After you ask for the behavior with a lure 5 times, you should take the lure out of your hand. Then, engage in the same hand motion you used. When the cat completes the behavior without the lure in your hand, click then reinforce!

#### STEP 4: Putting behavior on a cue/new cue

After the cat is performing the behavior consistently, start associating the cue with the behavior. Most often, the cue for behaviors that have been taught by luring will be the hand motion used when holding the lure (this becomes a visual cue for the cat). However, you can add a verbal cue or change your visual cue if you prefer after your cat is reliably completing the behavior.

##### **Adding a new cue to the hand (lure) motion**

Adding a new cue to a lured behavior involves classical conditioning. In order to do so, you will

- Present new cue (verbal or visual), then immediately...

- Present old cue (this is generally the hand motion used when you were using the lure)
- Wait for cat to complete behavior
- Click then Reinforce

Over time, you will begin to put a few seconds between the new cue and old cue. The cat will anticipate that the old cue is coming and begin to complete the behavior. When this happens, slowly fade away the old cue by making it less noticeable to the cat. Once the cat is responding to the new cue by completing the behavior upon presentation of the new cue, you can eliminate the old cue completely. Now, you will have multiple cues (one old, one new) that can tell your cat which behavior will earn their click and reinforcer.

### **Cue before cat begins behavior**

Give the cue before the cat has started to complete the behavior. If you have created a reliable association between your cue and the behavior, your cat will quickly complete the behavior when you use the cue.

**Once you have the behavior truly on cue, the behavior is considered “mastered.” You are then ready to start working on a new behavior utilizing the Luring method.**

## **Using the Luring Method for Some Common Behaviors**

### **Jump Over an Object or Through a Hoop**

“Jump” over an object or through a hoop is a behavior defined by the cat jumping from one side of an object (over or through) to the other side of the same object. Initially it may be easier to place the object directly on the floor, allowing the cat to walk over/through the object. As the cat gains confidence, you can begin slowly to move the object off of the floor requiring the cat to jump over/through the object.

- Hold the lure in your hand. Place your hand in front of the cat, moving it over/through the object.
- When the cat follows the lure by jumping over/through the object, click then reinforce.
- A common verbal cue is “jump” or “hoop.” A common visual cue for this behavior is moving your finger from the “start” to the “finish.”

### **Coming When Called**

“Coming When Called” (aka a “recall”) is a behavior that is defined by the cat orienting toward the human and approaching the human. Most commonly, this behavior is complete once the cat has come within inches of the human who is calling her. It could even end by the cat jumping into a waiting human lap for positive attention!

- While holding the lure, move the lure toward you. If you are in a room where the cat can follow you, you can even back up a few steps to encourage your cat to approach you. Keep the lure as close to you as you want the cat to approach.
- When your cat approaches you within a few inches as a result of visually following the lure, click then reinforce.
- A common verbal cue for this behavior is “come,” or saying the cat’s name and then “come” (such as, “Fluffy, come.”) A common visual cue for this behavior is moving your hand (palm open and facing toward you) by bending your elbow. Go from an outstretched, straight arm to 90° bend in your elbow while moving your palm toward your belly button. Additionally, you may also choose to use a different visual cue such as a “point” from your hand to a location near you.

### **Eye Contact**

“Eye Contact” is a behavior that is defined by the cat looking at the trainer and making direct eye contact. In contrast to a stare, both human and cat should be looking at one another with soft eyes. You may even observe slow blinking from the cat, which is a positive sign.

- While holding the lure, move it up to the location at the top of the bridge of your nose, located between your eyes.
- When your cat makes eye contact as a result of visually following the lure, click then reinforce.
- A common verbal cue is saying “look” or “watch me.” A common visual cue for this behavior is touching your nose or pointing toward your eyes.

### **High-Five, High-Ten/Give Me Ten, or Wave**

“High-Five” is a behavior that is defined by the cat placing a paw against a human hand. “High-Ten” or “Give Me Ten” is a variation of this behavior that requires the cat to place both paws against human hands. “Wave” is yet another version where the cat does not make contact with their paw, but rather repeatedly “waves” their paw up and down.

- Hold the lure in between your thumb and open palm. When your cat uses his paw to reach out to touch your palm, move your hand up so your palm is facing the cat.
  - *For Give Me Ten:* You can move one or both hands toward the cat and slightly upward to encourage the cat to put both paws on your hands. This behavior will require the cat to balance on their back legs/hips.
  - *For Wave:* As the cat reaches a paw toward the lure, move the lure up and down repeatedly just outside of the cat’s reach.
- When the cat follows the lure by moving his paw and then makes contact with your hand, click then reinforce.
  - *For Give Me Ten:* Click then reinforce as soon as both paws make contact with your hand.
  - *For Wave:* Click then reinforce after your cat moves his paw up and down at least once.
- A common verbal cue is saying “high-five.” A common visual cue for this behavior is placing your open palm facing the cat (fingers pointing upward) at about the cat’s shoulder level.
  - *For Give Me Ten:* A common verbal cue is saying “give me ten.” A common visual cue is placing both hands, open palms facing the cat (fingers pointing upward) at about the cat’s shoulder level.
  - *For Wave:* A common verbal cue is saying “wave.” A common visual cue is moving your hand up and down, palm facing down. Alternatively, you can repeatedly bend all fingers where your fingers join your hand.

### **Nose Bump or Head Bump**

“Nose (or Head) Bump” is a behavior that is defined by the cat using his nose or forehead to touch an object.

- Hold the lure in your hand. Move the lure toward the object you want the cat to touch, eventually placing the lure (still in your hand) directly on the object.
- When the cat follows the lure, using his nose or head to touch the object, click then reinforce.
- A common verbal cue for this behavior is saying “touch” or “bump” while pointing at the object. A common visual cue for this behavior is pointing to the object you would like the cat to touch.

### **Sit**

“Sit” is a behavior that is defined by the cat bending her back legs and resting her hips on the floor while her front legs remain extended.

- While holding the lure, move it just above the cat’s head and back toward her ears. The cat should tip her head up to follow the lure. If you are holding the lure at the right distance, she will start to bend her back legs to follow the lure. This will result in a “sit” position.
- As soon as your cat completes the “sit” position, click then reinforce.
- A common verbal cue for this behavior is “sit.” A common visual cue for this behavior is moving your hand (palm open and facing upward) from about the cat’s chest level to above their head.

### **Sit Pretty**

“Sit Pretty” is a behavior that is defined by the cat raising her front feet off the ground while sitting. The cat will be in a

completely vertical position when successfully completing this behavior.

- Hold the lure in your hand. Slowly move the lure up and over the cat's head. When the cat is in a "sit" position, continue to move the lure further behind the cat, encouraging her to place her body weight completely on her back legs/hips. Then, move the lure up directly above the cat (they may even paw at the lure).
- When the cat follows the lure by raising their front paws while sitting completely on her back legs/hips, click, then reinforce.
- A common verbal cue for this behavior is "sit pretty." A common visual cue for this behavior is moving your hand in a "J" motion in front of the cat.

## **Roll Over**

"Roll Over" is a behavior that can be defined in two ways. A partial roll over (180°) is defined by the cat moving from laying one side of his body to the opposite side by "rolling" on his back. The cat starting from a "down" position and rolling to the left or right, ending in the same position from which he started, defines a full roll over (360°).

- Hold the lure in your hand.
  - Partial Roll Over: While your cat is lying on one side, place the lure directly in front of his nose. Move the lure in a "rainbow" motion that encourages him to move his head from one side to the other.
  - Full Roll Over: While your cat is lying down, hold the lure in front of his nose. In a circular motion, move the lure around the cat's head (passing over the shoulder area).
- When the cat follows the lure by:
  - Partial Roll Over: moving his head from one side to the other his body is likely to follow, click, then reinforce.
  - Full Roll Over: shifting his weight onto one side (shoulders and hips will shift separately), then onto his back, next onto the opposite side, and finally back onto his stomach in a "down" position, click, then reinforce.
- A common verbal cue for this behavior is "Roll Over." A common visual cue for this behavior is using your pointer finger to make the "rainbow" motion from one side of the cat to the other.

## **Fetch**

"Fetch" is a behavior defined by the cat bringing an object to you and dropping it in front of you. It is usually easiest if you use softer objects that are easy for the cat to pick up their mouth.

- Place an object in front of the cat.
- When the cat brings you the object, dropping it in front of you, click, then reinforce. You may then pick up the item and toss it away from you encouraging the cat to repeat the behavior.
- A common verbal cue for this behavior is "Fetch." A common visual cue is picking up and tossing the object.