

ATTENTION

This year I am going to be emphasizing Attention – your dog’s attention on you and your attention on your dog. If your dog’s attention is on you, he/she will be less concerned about the other dogs and will learn much faster and do a much better “job” for you at the Fair. Attention is VERY important!! This method is very effective and will work no matter what type of collar you are using to training your dog. I will check Attention progress each week.

To start actual attention work – you will need a good treat – something your dog does not normally get (hot dogs cut into pieces, chicken, liver bits, cat food OR if he/she is chubby – you can cut back on their meals and feed part of it in training), your dog on any type of collar, a leash or leash tab and a quiet place. Your dog will need to be hungry so don’t practice this right after they eat!!

The first step is to teach your dog to look at you when you give it a command (Watch, look, up here, whatever you’d like to use). The leash is held in your left hand, food is in the right hand. Let the dog smell your right hand so he/she knows there is food in it and take that hand from the dog’s nose to your forehead and give your command. IF your dog looks up at your face, say *GOOD WATCH* (or whatever your command is) and give him a piece of the food. Bring it straight down from your forehead to his/her mouth. If he/she does not look at you – show him/her the treat and try again. Repeat until the dog has EARNED 10 pieces of food! (If he/she does NOT look at you he/she has not earned the treat – DO NOT give it to him/her.) Praise like crazy and give the dog a break for a few minutes – play with him or just relax him. Repeat the sequence again at least twice more a day (total of 3 times per day, minimum). The more you practice the better and faster your dog will learn.

Once the dog is looking at you consistently when he/she hears the command – you may begin taking steps. At first, you will only take steps as the dog is watching you, maybe one or two, maybe more depending on your dog’s attention level. At this point, if the dog looks away from you – stop, sit the dog and start over with attention. You may not just wave the food in front of his/her nose and keep going. You must stop the exercise and start over. Keep working at this until the dog can take more and more steps without you stopping. You may repeat “Good Watch” as long as they are watching you. Do not continue this practice for more than a couple of minutes at a time.

Once they can maintain attention for 20 steps or so, then you can introduce a correction for not watching. That correction is 3 quick “pops” on the leash UP towards you (this will be demonstrated). If the dog looks up – *GOOD WATCH*, break the exercise and treat!! If not, break the exercise and go back in training to the last step that you were working successfully as a team!!

Just as I expect your dog to learn to watch you, I expect you to watch your dog. I will not tolerate dogs which are rude and obnoxious towards other dogs. There will be not running up to other dogs, no growling at other dogs, no pouncing at or on other dogs and no barking at other dogs. You must pay attention to your dog to help them learn that these behaviors are rude!!

Questions or problems??

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