



Pawsitive Experience
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Stay Command

Step One -- It is first necessary for your dog to learn that being still is rewarding. Have some yummy treats in your pocket or bait bag and work in a quiet area free of distractions. Put our dog into a sit. Tell your dog to stay and raise your hand, palm out as if your hand is a stop sign. Work up to about one minute. After each attempt, release them with your release word. If your dog gets up during the stay, decrease the amount of time you have them stay. Once you get a minute stay it is time to move away from your dog.

Step Two -- Put your dog in a sit and signal them to stay with your verbal cue and hand signal. Slowly step back one step and count slowly to five. Walk back to your dog and reward. Then release them and start again. If your dog breaks a stay before you reach five, just try one second and slowly build from there. When you get 90% accuracy for five second stays, try for ten seconds, and then twenty, until you can build up to between thirty seconds and a minute. If your dog breaks the stay, make it easier by going back to five seconds again, and then build back up.

Step Three -- Now it is time to build distance. Try to get two steps back. When you add more distance you need to decrease duration, so go back to five seconds and build from there. Remember; don't go further back until you get 90% accuracy. See if you can get six-eight feet back for one minute.

Step Four -- Now it is time to add distractions. This is called "proofing the stay." You can create fun ways to add distractions. Here are some examples -- try to vary them as much as you can. When you add distractions you need to go back to kindergarten and ask for no more than a five second stay in the beginning.

Example Distractions. Do the same as above but now ask for down/stays.

1. Move to an area where there are mild to moderate distractions such as out in the backyard or in a local park.
2. Try moving to the side and eventually around your dog while he is in a stay. Up to this point you have probably been moving straight back.
3. Try turning your back to your dog as you move away from him.
4. Briefly hide from your dog, and then return.
5. Squeak a squeaky toy or bounce a ball.
6. Jump up and down and be silly.

Use your imagination to proof the stay.

One important note: Many dogs find it difficult and boring to do stays. Keep your training sessions short, especially in the beginning.

Meredith Gage

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