

# The Basics Of Clicker Training

## What Is Clicker Training?

Clicker training is a kind of force-free positive reinforcement training method based on a scientifically proven psychological learning principle called operant conditioning. The clicker is a **communication device** and when a behavior occurs, it is immediately marked with a click signaling: “yes, you did it right.” Marking an animal’s behavior by clicking and then rewarding it with a treat, increases the likelihood of the desired action to reoccur.

## How To Use The Clicker I

Before teaching individual behaviors, the clicker needs to be “**charged**” - this means simply click and treat the dog a few times in order to establish a firm association that **click = treat**. Once a solid association has been made, the handler may begin teaching simple behaviors.

The first stage of clicker training includes **a desired behavior, a clicker, and reward**.

### **Behavior -- Click -- Treat**

*Ex.) Sit Behavior is lured -- Click when dog sits -- Treat*

## How To Use The Clicker II

After a few short training sessions your dog will display patterns of behavior and **the cue can be added**. Predictability ensures that a firm and stable association is made between the cue and behavior. The handler begins by speaking or signaling the cue and waits for the dog to respond accurately. The exact second the dog responds with the correct behavior, click and treat. **The cue is only signaled ONCE.**

### **Behavior Is Predictable -- Cue -- Behavior -- Click / Treat**

*Ex. Sit has been practiced (predictable) -- Cue: “Sit” -- Dog Sits -- C/T*

## Using A Verbal Marker

Once your dog has learned a desired behavior, you can move to a verbal marker such as “yes” or “good” in stead of the clicker. This is also a great time to switch to random reinforcement. Try asking for multiple behaviors before rewarding.