

INTRO TO DOWN

Learn how to teach your puppy to lie down on cue. The final position will be your puppy in a down and resting onto one hip. This will be incredibly useful when you want to go to lunch together and have them settling under the table or when you visit friends and would like them to relax calmly with you. We are going to show you how to lure this position but you can also capture any moment that your puppy naturally offers it by marking and rewarding throughout the day.

To begin, take a treat and hold between your thumb and first 2 fingers. Offer towards your puppy and when their nose gets close slowly move the food towards their front paws and hold still. Your puppy will lean to follow the food with their nose and as they do their elbows and bottom will drop to the floor. The moment this happens mark and reward your puppy between their front paws.

When your puppy remains in position you can reward them multiple small treats in the same fashion before releasing your puppy by saying 'free' and rolling a treat away for them to go and get. This will reset your puppy and allow you to practice the down again.



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When this becomes fluent for your puppy we want to start to encourage them to rest onto one hip. After a couple of goes see if your puppy will naturally relax onto one hip themselves. From here on you will always look for hip contact with the floor before marking and rewarding. The next stage is to repeat your hand movement for down, but this time without food in your hand. When your puppy's belly touches the floor and they rock onto one hip, mark and reward as before.

Now we get to gradually transform the visual signal so that you don't need to bend and touch the floor to ask your dog to lie down forever. To do this you will move your hand as before but stop above the ground by a few centimeters. When your pup is successful, progress to ankle height, then calf height, then knee height. Until eventually you can cue your pup to lie down using only a hand signal at hip height whilst standing up!

At this point when your pup fully understands the small visual signal, you can go ahead and add a cue word. Say 'down' just before giving your hand signal, wait for your pup to respond and when they are lying down on one hip, mark and reward.

After several repetitions, your puppy will start to offer a down as soon as you say the cue before you move your hand.

Remember to practice in lots of locations to generalize your puppy's new skill.

