



RSPCA School for Dogs Information Sheet

Leave it!

It is important to teach your dog to ignore an object or food on command. It's not hard to see the benefits of your dog learning to reliably 'leave' your food, mobile phone and, most importantly, cane toads. While we are teaching this exercise using food the 'Leave it' can be used to stop the dog doing many different undesired behaviours like stealing things around the house or displaying other unwanted behaviour. 'Leave it' is much shorter and easier to say than 'That thing that your looking at right now, and would really love to bark at, jump on or put in your mouth I would very much appreciate if you didn't.'



Teach your dog to 'leave it' following these simple steps:

- Take a low value treat (e.g. boring kibble) and place it on the floor
- Place your foot over the treat while your dog is watching and allow your dog to sniff or scratch at your feet
- The split second your dog stops sniffing, looks or moves away, click and reward with a treat from your hand. Repeat this 2 times
- Then, place the treat under your foot and in a calm and quiet voice say 'leave it' once while they sniff, lick and nibble at it
- The split second your dog stops sniffing or looks away hit your clicker and give them a treat from your hand

When your dog starts to get the hang of it, start to move your foot so that the treat is a little more accessible; give treats for staying away from the food. If your dog dives for it, simply cover it with your foot to prevent them from getting it, click and treat your dog as soon as they look away.

When you can step away and the dog leaves the treats alone start substituting other more valuable items and repeat the process.

Make sure you do not over practice this exercise! Remember, dogs have short attention spans, so short training sessions are far more effective.

The leave cue should always be followed by another cue like 'come', 'sit' or 'look at me' etc. to let the dog know what it is that we require them to do instead.



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Training Tips

- Be patient.
- Look for small movement of the eyes away from the food to reward initially.
- Say “leave it” only once, don’t repeat it if your dog is not responding straight away and continues investigating. The object may be too high value to leave!
- Don’t rush the process. Let your dog become reliable with easy to ‘leave’ objects before challenging them with a pot roast!

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