

Teaching the down

Already you should be starting to reap the rewards of this training programme. Your dog now pays attention to you when you talk to him and sits when you ask. I told you it wasn't exactly rocket science!

Now we get to move on to another exercise – the down. So why would you bother teaching a down?

First of all it is another thing in your dog's repertoire and remember – every thing you teach your dog, the more you build the relationship between you. More importantly, having a dog who can lie down and be quiet when asked can be a real godsend when you are eating dinner, have visitors, or just want peace and quiet to drink your wine and watch TV! A down is as far from jumping up, visitor mugging and wine-spilling as it is possible to get.

Your dog can already sit – and that is great because let's face it, you are halfway to a down already (the back half!) You only need to get the front on the ground now!

Remember that when we taught the sit, there was no pushing and pulling? Well downs are exactly the same. If you push and pull, the dog pushes and pulls back and the winner is the one who pushes and pulls the hardest..... this is not scientific dog training – it is a battle of strength and wills. We want a dog who does what we ask him because he wants to – not because you will wrestle him to the ground if he doesn't!



1 From the sit take a treat and place it on the end of your dog's nose to get his interest.



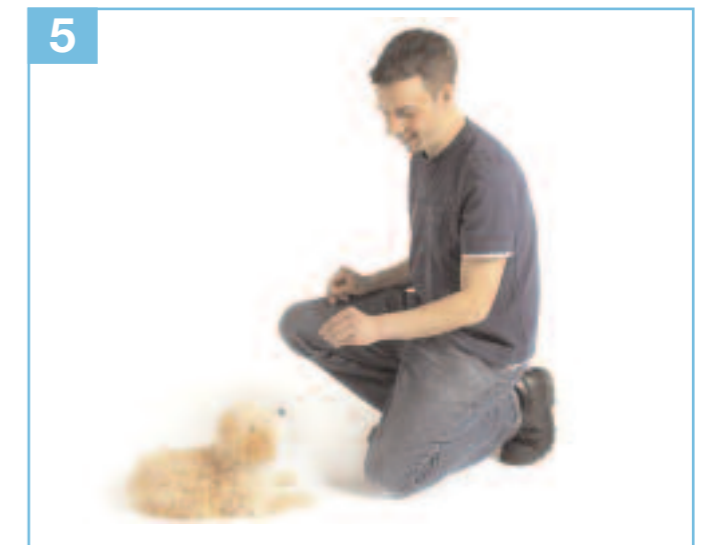
2 Move the treat down to the ground so the dog's nose follows.



3 Always take the treat straight down – not forward away from the dog – if you do that the dog will get up to follow the treat.



4 If you are lucky, your dog will lie down. If he does, say 'down' and let him have the treat. More likely however, he will just sit there with his head on the ground sniffing your hand! If he does this, put the hand with the treat in it flat on the floor – and wait! Eventually it will be easier for him to lie down to try and get the treat – and at that point say 'down' and give the treat.
5 Don't say 'down' until he has done it! You are telling him that 'down' means 'lie on the floor' – not sit with your head on the ground trying to get food! He doesn't understand English!



5 Repeat this until your dog knows that to get the treat, he has to lie down and so he does it straightaway.
6 Once he is doing that, you can start to not take your hand all the way to the floor (and by now most dogs are bright enough to work out that if they are sitting, in order to get the yummy treat, they need to lie down). Practise this a lot.