

## Motivation: Different Ways To Motivate Your Dog

Having a motivated dog in class will increase learning and performance throughout the course and training sessions. Take a moment to find your dog's own motivational drives. Motivational drives are those that cause excitement and encourage a dog to perform. Every motivational drive will cause a different response according to how much the dog wants the reward. For example, as soon as my dog sees me getting hot dogs ready for training he will basically sell his soul to get them. Food, or food motivation, is the most common reward that will increase your dog's performance.

While some dogs will perform for the slightest piece of food your dog might prefer high value food rewards only such as string cheese or hot dogs. It is important to realize that the frequency of a reward has an effect on the value. For example, those food rewards that dogs get on a daily basis become less valuable. Imagine having to eat your favorite ice cream every day; after a while the excitement of eating the ice cream is going to deteriorate. Owners and trainers should use the high value food rewards on special occasions such as when there is more surrounding competition such as in the dog park. Your dog will need more encouragement in order to perform when there are people, dogs, squirrels and rabbits all around.

There are other ways aside from food that can cause motivation such as toys and your body language. Just like food, toys can also be used as a rewards (that's o say your dog loves toys). Following the same concept as food only use his favorite toys for special occasions so that the value remains high. Body language is also an effective ways to motivate your dog. As body communicators dogs tend to notice body language first than any verbal cue. Using your body can be very helpful especially when practicing recalls or coming when called. By running backwards you are causing your dog to go into chase mode meaning chasing you. Running backwards takes the social pressure off and encourages draws your dog close. On the opposite note by coming forwards or towards your dog your body is pushing them away causing your dog to run away from you. In class, you will learn how to use your body to get the best performance out of your dog.

Take some time to figure out what things motivate your dog and switch them around throughout class. If your dog is not paying attention or is very distracted means what you have to offer is not necessary what he wants. Remember you will be in a new environment and surrounded by other dogs so find the best motivator for your particular dog.