



## **What is Clicker Training?**

Clicker training involves using a small handheld device with a button that emits a distinct sound (a click) when pushed. The clicker is used to communicate with your animal during the learning process.

The clicker provides two things for the animal learner:

1. Immediate information/feedback that the current behavior the animal is performing is the one you want, marking the behavior.
2. Time for the reinforcement/reward to be provided to the animal.

## **Clicker Mechanics**

Have some yummy treats available (precut into small pieces) in a treat bag or pocket.

1. Click the button on the clicker.
2. Reach for the treat that is on your training pouch or in a pocket.
3. Give the treat to the animal.

Repeat this process until you notice a look of anticipation on your animal's face when they hear the click. They are learning that the click means good things are on the way! Practice these steps daily (we recommend 3-5 reps per day) while you are standing up, sitting down, moving about, indoors and outdoors. You want to make sure your animal understands that the click means treat in a variety of situations.

Then, in a training session, use the click to mark the moment your animal has done something you like, even if it is a small step towards the goal behavior you have in mind. Reinforce the behavior you have clicked. Make learning enjoyable so that your animal is motivated to continue!

## **Training Tips**

- Some animals are startled by the sound of the clicker. If your animal shows any signs of discomfort (moves away or leaves the room) wrap the clicker in a towel or a sock to muffle the noise. Try again, and when your animal clearly shows that they enjoy the exercise, unwrap the clicker a little at a time.
- Do not use the clicker to get your animal's attention. The click should only be used to communicate when the animal has done something correctly, in the moment that particular behavior occurs.
- Use caution when introducing the clicker in a multi-dog household, especially if there is a history of the dogs guarding food/treats from each other. We recommend that you practice with one dog at a time at the beginning. Eventually, if working with multiple dogs at once, you might consider using different marker sounds for each dog (e.g., a clicker for one, and a word for the other).
- If you do not have a clicker, or if you prefer not to use one, you can use a tongue click or word instead. We recommend using a short, simple word like "good" or "yes." You will use the word the exact same way as the sound of the clicker, always following the word with a treat.

Now it's time to practice and have some fun!