

Games With A Purpose

Targeting A Mat, The Stand



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Debbie Zappia &
V Escobar v Adelrik, SchH 3, FH2, KKL

I decided long ago the path I would follow in my pursuit of a happy working dog. This, ultimately led to my own joy when working with my German Shepherd Dogs. The foundation consists of nurturing a relationship of confidence and trust. I concentrate on expanding my dog's drives, so that I have tools to work with to reach my final goals. I shape behaviours, set limits and I am consistent in my expectations. So many of our dogs are born with magnificent spirits; it is our responsibility to

maintain that spirit throughout a lifetime.

Over 20 years ago, I entered the world of Schutzhund and training dogs. By concerning myself with the process, I have stood on the podium in countless major events. I have competed on 5 World Teams, placing 2nd at the 2004 WUSV in The Netherlands, with V Escobar v Adelrik, SchH 3, FH2, KKL 1a. In addition, Escobar obtained a perfect 100 score on the FH2. V Jai vom Olgameister, SchH 3, FH, KKL 1a, was bred by myself and Jody Potter. He was the highest scoring dog in the United States in the 2007/2008 competition year for USA. I conduct tracking and obedience seminars throughout the country for ProFormance k9's, inc.

NEWS FLASH!!!!

I am here to tell you that only 20% of all dog training is teaching the actual exercises required in any particular dog sport. The other 80% is about getting into your dog's mind so that he is ready, willing and able to pay attention and engage you. Once your dog is in the correct frame of mind, you can teach him anything.

I have found that a final behaviour, or finished product, is what drives most competitive training programs. Our single minded focus on the product often causes us to overlook the process. The process impacts our dog's learning in such a global way. It is the process that has to be fun, for both dog and trainer. Games are fun. Games enable us to play with our dogs and our dogs to play with us. Games are the great relationship builder. Through games, we teach basic skills and concepts. These skills are the building blocks that allow our dogs to gain confidence, concentration, and mental stamina. Through games and play, dogs improve ability to learn, they work through distractions, they gain speed and accuracy. Best of all, relationships are forged.

Stand Game (One game of many that all my dogs love) I do this in two separate parts.

1. Free shaping with a target: Tools needed: Clicker and Mat. The Mat is the target. Targets are a visual cue. They may be kept as part of the final behaviour or faded out. The Mat should be 1.5 to 2.5 inches high. The surface should be anti slip and large enough that the dog's front feet comfortably and easily fit. My GSDs' board is 18 by 12. My criteria is the dog is standing with front feet on the Mat. Clicker. The click should already be a conditioned reinforcer. Dog knows that something good (food) follows the click.
2. Use of a lure, hand cue. The hand cue may be kept as part of the final behaviour or faded out.

Free shaping

The dog tries different behaviours -- the handler clicks approximation (baby steps towards the final behaviour) and rewards (reinforces with food) after each click.

Important Concept: I reinforce (feed) placement. A calm or stationary behaviour requires that food be delivered in a calm manner. If I want action, I deliver the reinforcer to compliment action.

Lure

To lure, food is placed in front of the dog's nose and moved in such a way as to have the dog follow the food. In this way we can achieve a behaviour quickly. I can use the hand that holds the food as a Target. This will become a cue itself when the food is faded.

Begin the Game



Have food and clicker in your hand. Place the Mat on the floor. As the dog notes the Mat, click and feed the dog in such a way that his feet are on the Mat. You will feed him at nose height.



Stand approximately an arms length in front of the Mat. Toss the food behind the dog.



Mike Burke &
Multi V & AKC Major Pointed
Atom Von Borrell, SchH 2, BH

When the dog returns, click as the dog arrives on the Mat, feed the dog at nose level. Toss the food behind the dog. Repeat several times.

When the dog returns, click, toss food behind dog. Repeat. The dog should return to the Mat.



Begin waiting longer before you click. You are looking for the dog to stand quietly for longer periods of time. Duration.



Think of a clock. When you toss the food behind the dog, throw towards 12 o'clock, then 2 o'clock, then 10 o'clock, etc. Continue to look for the dog to return to the Mat.



As the duration increases, you move away from the dog. Begin by facing the dog, click, return to dog, feed, throw behind the dog. Repeat, continue to move further away from the dog.

Change the place that you stand. Click as the dog arrives on the Mat. Throw behind dog.

Move to the side of the Mat. Does the dog still go to the Mat? Click. Throw food. Stand so that the dog has to pass you to get to the Mat. Click. You can add a verbal cue when the dog is executing the behaviour you want.

Separate exercise: **Lure to a stand from a sit.**

The head of the dog controls the rear of the dog.

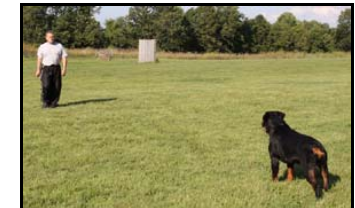
Prerequisite: the dog must be able to sit next to you in heel position.



The lure (piece of food cut in the shape of a nickel). It is held in the right hand. The

hand is flat and the food is held under the thumb. Hand signal

will be a cue when food is faded. Place food on dog's nose raise towards shoulder, pulling the dog's head up. Bring your hand down quickly, passing directly passing your dog's nose. Continue moving hand downward, between dog's front legs, staying close to chest and back towards the hind end of dog. As your dog follows the food with his nose, he will lower his head, following your hand movement through his legs. This will force him to kick his rear legs up and back, into a perfect stand. Bring hand up and back to front, feed dog.



Repeat. Withhold food longer, reinforce calm stand.

Repeat. No food in hand. Hand becomes the cue. Reinforce AFTER the dog stands.

Add verbal cue when dog is executing the behaviour.

Stand while moving:

Heel to Mat, dog places front feet on target, you continue to move away. (You may or may not add verbal cue at this time.)

You may remove Mat. Stand dog in same place as you had the Mat. Next move Mat to new places. Repeat. Remove Mat. Stand dog without Mat using verbal cue or hand cue.

Take your show on the road.

The uses for Mat Target game is endless: Below are just a few

- To obtain drive off of Mat towards a toy, or recall.
- Use to teach CLOSE blind search.
- Send out target.
- A Frame.
- Out of sight Sits or Downs.
- Change of Position



Catrina von Borrell
1 year old

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