



MOTIVATION

The key to any training is knowing how to motivate your dog. The motivation is in the reward.



Knowing your dogs likes and dislikes will impact your training enormously. Does your dog prefer cheese or chicken or would he much prefer a good game with a toy?

All dogs prefer different things. Generally, Labradors and retrievers adore food. However, the terriers may prefer a good tug game with a ragger; collies and sheepdogs have a preference for chase games like fetch.

One dog may really enjoy being petted while others may not, so our response in training is important. If we animate ourselves, make noises; look excited as well as giving the reward it all adds to the motivation.

However be aware of what your dogs finds rewarding. A lot of dogs don't like being patted on the head, if you have a tendency to do this to your dog, watch his reaction to it. Does he really like it?

The quality of the reward

- ✓ Most dogs won't just work for praise. Unfortunately they don't just do things because they love us – we need to offer them something to make it worth their while.
- ✓ Your dog may work for dry food in the house but if you are in an environment with a lot of distractions, for example outside on a walk or in a class, you may need to up the stakes. Your reward has got to out weight the reward your dog may be getting from the rest of the distractions.
- ✓ If your dog's top choice is food there is more you can do with food than you'd think. You can make the reward much more exciting by doing food circuits where the reward becomes a combination of both food and a chase.
- ✓ If you use toys as a reward make sure that the game lasts a good couple of minutes otherwise your dog won't regard it as much of a reward.

The most important thing in training is to have fun! Your emotions will come through in your tone of voice and body language – if you are having fun, so will your dog!