

How to Teach “Drop It”

Step 1

Trade for a treat. Give your dog a toy or a chew but hold on to it. When your dog has it in their mouth, say the word “Drop!,” then immediately pop a treat in their mouth (do not wait for them to open their mouth on their own). In order to eat the treat, the dog has to drop the item. Wait for them to finish eating, then offer the item again. Repeat at least five times.

Step 2

When your dog has a toy, say “Drop!” and wait 2-3 seconds for their mouth to open. If they open it, mark the moment with a clicker or the word “Yes!,” then reward them with a treat. If they don’t open their mouth, trade a treat for the toy, then go back to Step 1. Practice a few more times, then try Step 2 again.



Step 3

Try the cue randomly when your dog isn’t in the middle of a play session. The next time your dog has something in their mouth, ask them to “Drop!” When they do, click/mark the moment and reward them with a treat! For Step 3, the object could be a toy or any other household item that doesn’t hold special value for your pup.

Troubleshooting

Be sure to have plenty of practice with less exciting objects before asking your dog to drop your favourite pair of underwear or something equally important. The more forbidden the object, the higher its value. And the higher its value, the less inclined your dog will be to drop the item.

Don’t chase your dog!

If your pooch has the tendency to guard higher value items, work with a qualified trainer before attempting to teach these behaviours.

If your drop cue isn’t working, grab a treat. Slowly approach your pup and exchange a treat for the object. If you can’t get close enough to trade without your dog guarding the object, try a treat trail.

