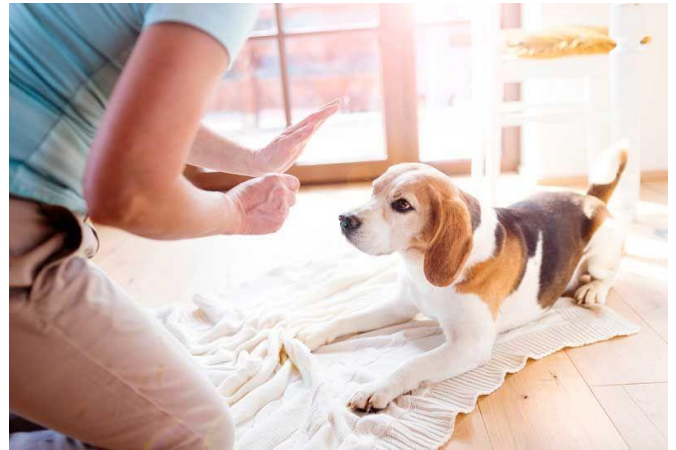


## How to Teach “Leave It”

A reliable “leave it” cue is important for every dog. It helps when your dog may want to pick up items on walks or steal items in the home. A dog that knows a “leave it” cue will be able to walk away from things that may be dangerous. Follow the steps below to teach a leave it.



1. Begin with treats in both hands. Have one hand open and hold it out to your dog; when they try to go for the treats, close your hand. Keeping your hand closed, wait for the moment your dog begins to move away, look away, or stop going for that hand. When they do, click (mark) and reward them with the treats in the opposite hand. Once your dog is reliably leaving the closed hand alone, begin opening that hand. If your dog goes for the treats in the open hand, immediately close it, wait for them to back away, then open the hand again. Repeat this until your dog leaves the open palm alone, and immediately mark and reward! Make sure your dog is offering this reliably every time you offer a closed or open palm before moving on.
2. Place one pile of treats on the ground in front of your dog, with a flat palm covering the treats. Wait for the moment your dog begins to move away, look away, or stop going for the hand covering the treats. When they do, click (mark) and reward from the treats in your other hand. Once your dog is reliably leaving the covered treats alone, begin uncovering the pile. If your dog goes for the treats, immediately cover them, wait for them to back away, then lift the hand off the treats again. Repeat this until the dog leaves the uncovered treats alone, and immediately mark and reward! Ensure this is reliable before moving on. Take your time and make sure your pup gets it.
3. Practice dropping treats from just above the floor to the ground; if your dog leaves them, immediately mark and reward.

If your dog is doing well with all these steps, begin adding a verbal “leave it” cue but only if they are already offering the correct behaviour.

Set yourself up by having low-value treats in one hand and high-value treats in the other. Stand on your dog’s leash.

- Toss a low-value treat on the floor, away from your dog, and out of reach.
- Wait for your dog to stop pulling towards the treat and back away, move away, or look away from it.
- Immediately click and reward a high-value treat from your hand.
- If your dog is ignoring the food or looking at you, begin to toss more treats of higher value.
- As long as your dog is offering the correct behaviour, begin adding a verbal “leave it” cue.

Begin upping the ante by asking for leave it with higher-value items, by dropping them, leaving them on the dog’s paws, head, and so on. Work through the above steps with each new item you wish to generalize (toys, shoes, garbage).

