Novice Obedience

Class 3: Turning Focus into Fun

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Using a Metronome

Working with a metronome will help create a smooth rhythm in your heeling. It also helps you duplicate your trial "appearance" (ie your facial expression and body movements). Using a metronome will help your dog become comfortable with that stressed expression that many people exhibit in the ring. For example, during trials, we might think we're showing our dog this face: ☺, when we are actually exhibiting this face: 😐 . Keep the rate of reward high, so that your dog associates your "stress expression" with good things.

This One is Just Right

In your training sessions, resist heeling in circles to the left or in a straight line! Heeling is more exciting to your dog if they are working on a circle to the right. Heeling on a right circle forces your dog to maintain a faster pace and to keep up with you. If you continually work to the left, you inevitably move into your dog's space – this creates pressure on your dog and then subsequently rewards them for slowing down rather than moving quickly. Heeling in a straight line or on a left circle is NOT fun for your dog! And if you continually practice in that manner, you will have a dog who lags. So, let's keep things moving quickly and in a right circle for your training sessions.

Exercise: **FIGURE 8**

Game 1: **Establishing a Heeling Rhythm (Handler Only)**
Method: Using a metronome, walk the figure 8.

Game 2: **Catch me!**
Method: Heel with your dog, but not in straight lines. Instead try to get away from your dog and make a game out of getting back into position. Use your pocket hand to support your dog's correct position. You can use oppositional reflex to get away from your dog and make it a game for them to catch up! Reward for position only. Remember, food is no longer a game, it's only given for correct position.

Break Fun!

Exercise: **CONE WORK: Focus into Fun**

Game 3: **Fly**
Method: Lure or shape the dog around the cone. When the dog is going around the cone reliably, add the fly cue (or whatever cue you like). Then add some distance from the object - work your way up to greater distances!