



FRIENDLY CREATURES

Your solution to animal behavioural problems

Teaching your dog to give you Eye Contact

Let your dog know you have a treat, but then keep it out of sight. Wait for him or her to look up into your eyes, say "Good!" the moment you get eye contact, and then give the reward. Initially the eye contact may only be a fleeting glance, but be ready for it and mark it. The word "Good!" marks the behaviour you want to increase. NB. When teaching new behaviours, you should always follow the word "Good" with a reward.

When your dog is good at giving you eye contact, try it with a treat in your hand out to the side of you. Say "Good!" and reward when he/she stops staring or pawing at your hand and looks to your face. Always finish the short training session on a good note, after an accurate, brisk eye contact.

The eye-contact exercise can be developed with a distraction. By adding a distraction you are encouraging the dog to "check in" with you, look at you when confronted by something distracting (instead of

just impulsively barking/running). In this exercise it happens to be a treat on the ground, but in the real world, it could be any stressors or perceived prey. By repeating this exercise almost daily over the course of several weeks, the dog becomes less impulsive, and learns to hesitate and look back at you, giving you a chance to ask for an alternative desirable behaviour.

Secure your dog's position with a short lead on. Place a tempting treat on the ground just out of dog's reach, come back to dog and wait for eye contact. When he/she looks back and meets your eyes say "good", then pick up the treat from the ground and give to the dog. Allow your dog a little time to work out what you want, eg. 20-30 seconds for him or her to look back up to your face.