

Amazing Bonus Tricks for Your K-9 Companion

You are about to embark on an extremely fun adventure with your dog. By the time you have finished this book you will know how to have your dog go and find any person or object in your home. He will be able to bring you back anything you wish, even if it is hidden. He will be able to bring you a blanket if you are cold. Throw away your bottles of soda or beer for you. He will fetch your keys, your cell phone, anything. What about those nights when you come home late, and your hands are full, wouldn't it be nice to have someone switch on the light switch for you? This is all possible, and not nearly as hard as you think. So let's get started towards training your pet some really fun little tricks.

To teach these tricks we are going to use a clicker. We need to teach your dog extremely specific movements, and to do that we need to use a clicker. You can pick up training clickers from anywhere; your local pet store should have some. You can usually find a training clicker for a couple dollars.

The purpose of the training clicker is to replace the bridge. We talked about the bridge in my other book, and if you have not read it yet, I recommend reading it first. It will give you a better foundation for the knowledge of trick training. To start training your dog with the clicker, we need to teach the dog to earn clicks. You will reward any action that moves your dog closer to the end result you are looking for.

To start out, have your dog sit in front of you. You should have about 40-50 treats in your hand, I like to use small cut up pieces of cheese. I carry the cheese in a small pouch. You will want to take a treat and hold it behind your back while your dog sits in front of you. Sound your clicker and be completely motionless, then drop a piece of cheese on the floor. The reason we are motionless is because we want the dog to realize that the only signal he gets for doing the behavior correctly is the sound of the clicker. Repeat this many times. It should get to the point where when you click the clicker, you can practically see your dog start to salivate, because he knows he has a treat coming. When you are to the point where your dog knows exactly what the sound of that clicker means you are ready for the next step.

Your next step in the clicker training of your dog will set the foundation for many behaviors, so be careful to pay special attention. You should use a stick that is long enough for you to hold while standing up, and still be able to touch the ground. We are going to train your dog to touch this stick. Do this by holding the stick in front of your dog. When your dog happens to sniff the stick, or touch it in any way, instantly click your clicker and reward him. Make sure to act like he just hung the moon. Praise him extensively and let him know he did a great job. You need to put in enough time teaching your dog to associate a treat with the sound of the clicker. When he hears the clicker after touching the stick, it is only a matter of repetitions before he realizes that every time he touches the stick he will get rewarded.

With each repetition put the stick in a different spot near your dog, make him have to reach out to touch it. Then make him have to take a step to touch it, and eventually have him follow you around the house to touch it where ever you are. You should remember to put your dog in the “stay” position at various distances from you. Then tell him to “touch it”, and let him break his stay, run over to you and touch the stick.

When you have your dog trained to touch the stick, we need to move forward in the training and start having your dog touch things that you tell him too touch. You can start with anything simple, like the door, or a bell hanging on a doorknob. Lets say we are going to use the bell. Put the bell on the floor and touch it with your stick; giving the “touch it” command. You might have to position your stick underneath the bell or behind it, so as your dog is reaching for the stick, he accidentally runs, or bumps into the bell. Immediately click and reward your dog when he touches the bell. Ideally you would like to sound your clicker as your dog bumps the bell and before he touches your stick. This won’t happen all the time, but it helps your dog realize that he gets rewarded for touching objects you touch with the stick, and not touching the stick.

When he will touch the bell every time on the ground, move the bell up a few inches. You can do this however you would like. Tying the bell to the doorknob on a long string works the best. This allows you to adjust the height of the bell. With the bell hanging off the doorknob just a few inches off the ground touch it again with your stick giving the “touch your bell” command. The idea here is to give your dog a gradual progression that is so much like the last step, with the bell on the ground, that it isn’t that much harder to touch it while it is in the air. Continue to raise the bell higher and higher so that every time you touch it with the stick, he runs over and touches the bell.

Now lets phase back your cue. Up until this point you have had to touch the bell every time with your stick. So lets mix it up. After you have had a fast paced training for 15-20 reps and he has touched it every time, don’t touch the bell on the next rep. Instead, put your stick very close to the bell, and tell your dog to “touch your bell”. Your dog has been in such a rhythm that he knows what to do. Continue to phase back your stick farther and farther away from the bell, until you can just say the word “touch your bell” and he will obey.

A simple pointer that I would like to point out is that when you reward your dog for touching the bell; reward him with his treat away from the bell. This helps reset the trick, and give your dog better practice by having to approach the bell instead of being right next to it.

You will want to take your dog farther and farther away from the bell until he will respond to “go touch your bell”, even if he is at the other end of the house, and in the basement. It is important to phase the dog far back from the bell, because it will help you when you want him to start to search your house for different things.

Training your dog to ring a bell can be used in a handful of different instances. For example, why don’t we train your dog to ring the bell every time he wants to go outside. We have all had those times when are dog tried to let us know it was time to go outside,

but we didn't quite pay enough attention, and his bladder couldn't hold it. That doesn't have to be the case anymore.

This isn't a trick that you need the clicker on. And it isn't a trick that you need to devote to training sessions. It can be done throughout the day. All of our dogs give us that signal that they need to go outside. Or even if your dog didn't give you the signal, here is how to train him to ring the bell every time he wants out. Position the bell that we used on the doorknob, near the door your dog normally goes out. The only other thing that is required is that you only let your dog go outside if he has touched his bell. We are conditioning him so that in order to go outside, he must touch the bell every time, with no exceptions. With basic repetition your dog will catch on. There isn't much of a hidden secret with this trick, and it doesn't take time out of your schedule to teach.

Turning on a Light Switch

The light switch routine is extremely simple after you have trained your dog to ring a bell. In order to teach this trick you will need to go to your local hardware store and buy a light switch. The light switch that you buy should look just like the ones you have in your home.

After you have your light switch you are ready to begin. You will want to teach this trick in the room where you want your dog to turn on the switch. Sit your dog down in and put the light switch in front of him. Point at the light switch with your stick and tell your dog to touch it. Your dog if he has learned the previous behaviors will probably touch it without much difficulty.

You should be doing this training fairly near a light switch, so that with each repetition you can move the light switch closer and closer to the wall. And then inch the light switch up the wall, until it is as high as the real light switch. Make sure to reward your dog heavily every time he touches the switch. Also make sure that you are teaching your dog to touch the switch in a way that will toggle the switch. You may need to help your dog do this by physically manipulating his paw to toggle the switch correctly. I also recommend teaching this trick at night. The drastic difference that turning the light on and off gives, will go a long way in helping your dog analyze if he did the behavior correctly.

The verbal cue for this trick will be to "touch the light". Make sure that you are telling your pooch this with every repetition. And it should be no time at all before he will have this trick mastered too.

Training Specific Retrieves

In my e-book "How to Train Your Dog to be a Star Performer" I outline how to get your dog to retrieve. I walk you through how to get him to pick up an object and put it in his mouth, and I outline how you should tell him to drop it etc. What I want to cover with

you here are some more specific examples of how you can get your dog to identify different objects, and put those objects wherever you want them.

The retrieve is the command that really is the foundation for the majority of tricks. We will show you how to use this command to pick up your child's dirty laundry, throw away trash in the garbage can, find your keys, wallet, extra blankets, etc.

If you paid real close attention, you would have noticed that we used the command "touch your bell" with training the bell trick. We did this because dogs are very good at mastering auditory commands. They have the ability to distinguish many different words and know what they mean.

Lets start off by teaching your dog to bring you a blanket if your cold. Lets say you are sitting on the couch. You have been dozing in and out all evening but now you are getting a bit chilly. If you keep a pile of blankets somewhere in your house, you have nothing to worry about. We can train your dog to run to that pile of blankets every time you give the "blanket" command.

To start this behavior let your dog see you take the blanket off of the pile, and put the blanket in front of his face, and tell him to pick it up. He should know the "pick it up" command from the teaching in my e-book, if he does not, then you will want to reread that section and focus on teaching your dog to pick up different sorts of objects.

Gradually lower the blanket further from your dogs face and closer to the ground with each repetition so that your dog will pick up the blanket each time you tell him to. When you get your dog to the point where he will pick the blanket off of the ground each time, you need to train him to put it in your hands. For this to work your dog should have mastered the drop it command that is outlined in my e-book.

Every time your dog picks up the blanket you need to give him the drop it command. When you give the command you need to have your hands underneath the blanket so that you can catch it. Repeat this a number of times until he puts it in your hands every time. Then switch it up a little. I want you to kneel facing your dog directly. Put the blanket on the floor to the right of your dog, and give the "pick it up" command. Your dog will be forced to move to his right to pick up the blanket; and when he picks it up will naturally straighten his head. Position your hands so that when he straightens his head and drops the blanket on command, the blanket will fall into your hands. When your dog seems to have mastered that, move the blanket a little closer to the blanket pile so that your dog has to take a step with one of his paws to go retrieve the blanket. Keep your hands positioned underneath where your dog's head was to start the trick, and tell your dog to drop it. If your dog drops the blanket, and it does not land in your hands, do not reward and repeat the steps until he gets it right. If your dog does not seem to be getting it right, then fall back to a point in your training where your dog was getting it right. In time your dog will know that the blanket needs to be dropped into your hands and nowhere else to get a reward.

A dog that will return an object to your hand is already half way there. Now continue to move the blanket closer and closer to the top of the blanket pile, so that eventually your dog is picking the blanket off the top of the pile and bringing it across the room to you. Make sure to always use the command “get your blanket”. When you have reached this point it is just a matter of time before you will be able to phase your dog back into other rooms of your house, and at a simple command he will run and retrieve a blanket for you. You will never be cold again.

You can use the exact same training methods to train your dog to bring you anything, just make sure to call the object by name, and your dog will learn to bring objects to you by their correct name. You can do this with the telephone, your wallet, anything.

Keep in mind that you can have your dog pick objects off of more than just a pile of blankets on the floor. You can have him reach up onto your bathroom counter, your nightstand, or anywhere.

Retrieving Objects to Specific Places

These types of behaviors are taught almost the same way as you would teach a retrieve to your dog. There are only two things you would do differently in teaching these types of retrieves. One is teaching your dog to pick up a variety of objects in a given location. And the other is training the dog to put the objects in a basket, or bin of some kind.

Lets say we are going to teach the dog to pick up clothes from your child’s room, or from your room for that matter. Take your dog into the room you would like him to pick clothes up off of. Have only one piece of clothing on the floor to start out with. Train your dog to only pick up clothes that are lying on the floor. You will do this the exact same way that you taught your dog to pick the blanket off of the pile, except for one exception, you will have your dog return it to a laundry basket instead of your hands.

After he will return one piece of clothing lets add a second. The difference with training your dog to pick up two pieces of clothing is that you must not reward your dog for picking up the clothing until he has put both pieces of clothing in the laundry basket. You train this by simply not rewarding your dog after he returns the first article of clothing and instead point to the second, and tell him to “pick it up”. Continue to up the ante by making your dog pick up more and more clothes to earn his reward, but do so gradually, eventually getting to the point where if your dog sees the laundry basket, he knows every piece of clothing on the floor needs to be picked up to earn a reward. Now that is cool. You never new cleaning up your kid’s rooms could be so fun.

A quick point to make here is that the cue for this trick is the laundry basket. Try to use the same laundry basket each time you train this trick. This will keep your dog from getting confused and speed up his training.

Throw Away Trash

If you would like your dog to help you pick up your back yard after a party, or throw away plastic bottles, cups, plates or any other trash you can use the same methods as above. You will of course want to have a little variation, but the same methods apply. To teach this trick just make sure that there is a garbage can that your dog can easily access. Also make sure to have a 2-liter bottle; it makes nice trash to practice with. Treat the 2-liter bottle just like the blanket and laundry above, with the exception of having your dog return it to the trash can instead of the blanket pile or laundry basket.

When your dog has mastered the 2-liter bottle move onto other objects, paper plates, cans of soda etc. Your dog should get to the point where if you give him anything and say “trash”, he will take that object to the trash.

You will also want to make sure you use the command “trash” while teaching this trick. Making sure that you have distinctly different verbal cues for your dog is very necessary for him to understand to put things where you want him to. You don’t want your dog putting blankets in the garbage do you?