

“MINE” & “TAKE IT”

You will teach your dog cues for “Mine” and “Take it”. We are back-chaining this lesson, so first you will teach your dog to take the food when cued to “take it”. Then to leave food alone in response to the “mine” cue.

Why it’s useful

- Dogs learn to not eat anything that falls on the floor (e.g. medication or other harmful items).
- “Mine” *can sometimes* be a good management tool for dogs that may get into conflict with other dogs over resources *if taught to fluency*.
- The skill of leaving food also serves as a foundation for teaching a dog self-control in other situations.
- Your dog will learn that not all food is fair game, and that being attentive to you and responding to cues is very reinforcing.
- You will learn how to introduce cues and present them in a timely fashion.
- You will develop an understanding of how two opposite cues can be taught at the same time and how this can accelerate learning.

Key skills/concepts you’re practicing

- Shaping, cueing, clicker skills, observational skills

Props/Set-Up

- Different types of food reinforcers – based on your knowledge of your dog’s preferences, you’ll need different values. Kibble vs hot dog.
- Chair for handler.

Training Plan & Lesson

There are 5 parts to this behavior:

1. You cue “Take it” just as you offer the dog food.
2. You present your closed hand with food and click the instant the dog moves his nose away from your hand.
 - a. To reinforce you offer food in your other hand and cue “Take it”.
3. When your dog is moving its head away from your hand, add the cue “Mine”.
4. To slightly increase difficulty, hold food between thumb and finger when cueing Mine.
5. When your dog is responding to the “Mine” cue, stand a few feet from your dog and give the “Mine” cue, and slowly lower the food to the ground.



Training Tips

- If your dog is too distracted by the food in your hand, consider moving to a lower-value food while keeping the reinforcer a high value (i.e. the dog gets a better paycheck for waiting).
- If food is too distracting for your dog, consider teaching the “mine” cue with non-food items to start.
- To generalize “mine” and “take it” be sure to practice in different areas of the house; take note of where it might be more difficult for your dog, such as in the kitchen, and adjust props and reinforcers accordingly.
- You might find it easier for your dog to learn “mine” if you practice away from other pets.
- Keep training sessions short and fun – count out 10-15 treats for a session. A few sessions a day is usually enough to teach a new behavior in a relatively short period of time.
- Keep a high rate of reinforcement – lots of clicks and treats - to help your dog stay motivated.
- Don’t move onto the next step until your dog is reliable at the current step.
- Have a variety of reinforcers available – use high-value treats as you’re raising criteria. Switch things up so your dog doesn’t get bored.
- Slowly raise your criteria – if after 3 tries your dog isn’t succeeding, make it easier or change something in the environment.
- Keep in mind what things in the environment may be distracting for your dog, and slowly work up to practicing in the presence of those distractions.