

TRAINING FOR NAME RECOGNITION

What's in a name?

Few things are more irritating than shouting your dog's name over and over to no effect. Don't assume your dog is ignoring you on purpose, though—especially if you have a puppy or recently adopted dog. Unlike people, dogs don't automatically learn their names after hearing it just once or twice.

Four steps for name recognition in no time.

Here's how to get your dog to turn to look at you whenever you call her name (getting her to come when you call is a different exercise):

- Get some treats ready.
- Say your dog's name.
- Hand or toss her a treat.
- Repeat.

Do's and don'ts.

Do the name exercise periodically throughout the day. Take particular care to say her name anytime you were going to give her something anyway.

Don't limit yourself to edible treats. Use life rewards, too. Say your dog's name and then toss a ball or favorite toy her way. Say your dog's name and then give her a good belly rub or rear end scratch—whatever is her personal preference.

Training Tip: Remember that your dog's name is not a cue. It's just an attention-getter. So if you want her to actually do something other than look over at you, tell her what that something is. For example, "Bailey, come!" or "Bailey, sit!" Don't just say "Bailey" and expect your dog to guess what you want. Dogs are smart, but they don't read minds any better than we do.