

CGC WEEK #1

Accepting a Friendly Stranger

Your dog needs to be shown how to behave when you meet friends on the street or welcome them into your home. No one enjoys a lunging, jumping dog, and some people are afraid of such an animal. Arrange numerous social encounters by inviting friends to your home or by taking walks in your neighborhood. Keep your leash handy when you are home so you can put it on your dog.

Begin with your dog on-leash, sitting at your side. Ask a person to approach and pet the dog. If your dog is excitable in the beginning, the person can approach, lightly touch the dog and back up. You should praise the dog for staying in the sit position. If the dog starts to jump on the person, you can give a gentle tug on the leash and remind the dog to sit.

If you choose to use food during training, begin the same way with the dog sitting at your side. As the person approaches, reward the dog with a small bit of food for staying in the sit position.

If your dog has difficulty completing this task, you can have a helper approach to pet the dog. If the dog jumps up, the helper can say "Sit" and reward the dog with a small piece of food once the dog sits.

Walking on a Loose Leash

This test demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. During this test, the dog may be on either the handler's left or right hand side, whichever they prefer. (Note: In AKC Obedience events, the dog is required to be on the left-hand side of the handler.) The dog's position should leave no doubt that the dog is attentive to the handler and is responding to the handler's movements and changes of direction. The dog does not need to be perfectly aligned with the handler. The handler may sit the dog at the halt if desired, however, it is not required.

The evaluator may use a pre-plotted course or may direct the handler/dog team by issuing instructions or commands. In either case, there must be a left turn, right turn, and an about turn, with at least one stop during the exercise and another at the end. The handler may talk to the dog along the way to praise or command it in a normal tone of voice.

Training for Loose Leash

In order to see your movements and respond to them, your dog's head needs to be fairly close to your side. Many untrained dogs tend to pull ahead, making a simple walk an unpleasant task. Your dog can learn to move on a loose leash, and you will find that once it does, you will be taking it everywhere because your canine companion is fun to be with.

You can train for this exercise by allowing your dog slack in the leash as you begin to move. If your dog begins to pull, give a quick tug on the leash, and immediately loosen the leash. Remember to praise your dog when it is not pulling.

You can also teach this exercise by showing your dog a treat or toy to encourage it to move with you as you begin to walk. This type of training uses positive reinforcement, and requires fewer corrections. Anticipation of food or a toy motivates your dog to stay in the proper position. With consistency and plenty of praise and attention, your dog will learn to move happily in the desired position, and eventually toys and treats can be eliminated!

Sit or Down on Command

In order to teach your dog to sit or down on command, use a treat to encourage your dog to follow your command. With your dog on-leash, give them the command "Sit." If the dog does not sit, repeat the command, and guide the dog gently into the sitting position with your hand. Once the dog sits, give a treat and plenty of praise. The down command is taught the same way. Give your dog the "Down" command, encouraging them by holding a treat near the ground. Once your dog is down, give them the treat and plenty of praise.