

# What is clicker training?

By Wendy Krehbiel

A clicker is a small “toy” that makes a clicking noise. The clicker is a great tool for teaching your dog new behaviors and improving his response on existing ones. Initially, your dog will have no idea what the clicker means. You need to teach him that the click means a treat is coming and also that what he did was correct. Humans tend to talk a lot – the clicker is a distinct sound that can break through the excess noise and communicate clearly to your dog the moment when he did the right thing. It also helps the humans to become better at letting their dog know immediately that he’s done the right thing. It can take several seconds to get the treat out of your pocket or the cupboard and give it to your dog. The clicker is a great way of marking the exact behavior instead of leaving the dog guessing what it was in the past 10-30 seconds that he did to earn the treat.

To start out using the clicker with your dog, you should first teach him that the noise predicts that a treat is coming. Start out with a small pile of small treats. Randomly click the clicker and give your dog a treat. Once he starts to respond positively to the clicking noise (some dogs will perk their ears or turn around quickly) you can then start teaching him that the noise means he has done something right. Most dogs quickly learn that their actions are what make you click. So, if you click your dog every time he sits, you will find that he will start sitting more frequently in an effort to get you to click. You can then use the clicker whenever you are teaching your dog a new behavior or trick to communicate to him when he has done the right thing. You will find that your dog has a better understanding of what it is you want, is more eager to do the behavior, and finds training time fun! For more information about clicker training you can visit: <http://www.clickertraining.com>