

## **Teaching Impulse Control, “Wait”, Seeking Permission, Door, Car and Food Manners**

Dogs are not born with impulse control; they generally need to be taught polite behavior and manners. As puppies in the wild, they do what they want, when they want. This is allowed by adult dogs since they are babies and are just learning and playing. However, as the pups grow, the adults teach them proper manners and behavior. However, when pet dog puppies are adopted by people, they are often not taught these skills. This is why jumping on people, counter surfing, and door dashing are such a problem for pets. Teaching a dog to control those impulses is important for their safety and health, and makes them much more polite company to be around as well as less frustrating to deal with. The steps below are tailored to door dashing. However, they can be modified slightly to teach food manners, counter manners, car manners, and more. Once a dog has these manners, they have a tendency to look to people for guidance and permission to perform certain behaviors, which can save the owner a lot of headache and builds a stronger bond between the two. They also teach the dog impulse control, which causes the dog to THINK before behaving. This can save their life. Rather than rushing out to chase the squirrel across the street, the dog will have the training of not charging through the door which will allow you to prevent the dog from rushing out and running away.

### **How to Prevent Door Dashing (crate doors, outside doors, etc.).**

This must be followed EVERY TIME the dog comes out of his crate or goes outside for it to work. It basically teaches the dog that an open door doesn't mean anything to him and he needs permission to cross that threshold. Because they wait for permission, they don't dash out to run away and get lost or dash out when another dog is out and cause a fight. It also teaches them to look to people for guidance and teaches impulse control, both of which are good qualities for dogs to have. Because of this practice with my dogs, I can open their crates and walk away and they will stay in there until I tell them to come out. I can leave my house doors wide open to move stuff in and out and they will stay indoors until given the go ahead to go out and play. It is time consuming at first and can be frustrating with a dog that doesn't have practice, but it is well worth it. It usually takes me 1-2 days of practicing this with a new dog before they learn to wait 10 seconds for the "ok". After that, it is MUCH LESS STRESSFUL to let them out to potty, to answer the door, etc.

1. Have the dog sit if they know the command, or they can remain standing if not. Tell the dog "Wait"
2. Go to grab the door handle, If the dog moves, move your hand away from the door handle and go back to step 1. If the dog stays where it is, say "good boy" proceed to step 3.
3. Slowly turn the door handle. If the dog moves, move your hand away from the door handle and go back to step 1. If the dog stays where it is, say "good boy" proceed to step 4.
4. Slowly open the door a crack. If the dog moves, close the door and go back to step 1. If they sit back down right away (they are learning!), praise the dog for sitting, but repeat step 4. If they don't move, say "good boy" and go to step 5.

5. Slowly keep opening the door, praising the dog for waiting. Once the door is open wide enough for you both to move through (or the dog to come out if it is a crate door), say "Ok!" and let the dog go through the boundary, praising them for being so good and waiting. The "OK" is the permission. If the dog gets up at any point without your "ok", go back to step 1.
6. Gradually increase the time the dog has to wait at the open door before giving the "ok", going back steps as needed to maintain the learning. The goal with this step is to keep the dog succeeding while firming the rule of "you dont get to go out just cause the door is open" and getting rewarded so that he doesnt get frustrated and stop listening. So if the dog is failing every time, it is best to go back a few steps or lower the time for a bit.
7. The goal for our dogs should be to sit with an open door for 10 full seconds, waiting for the "Ok". I go further with my dogs, but I have had them for years.