



HAND TARGET / TOUCH

What is touch?

A command to get your dog to touch his nose to your hand.

Why teach it?

Because it is a useful foundation for many more advanced behaviors and gives you a way to capture your dog's attention and direct his movements. For example, coming toward you to touch your hand is a great start on recall and touching someone's hand is a nice alternative to jumping on them.

How to teach it.

Step 1. Cut up a large number of small treats.

Step 2. Present your hand a couple of inches away from your dog's face. Praise and treat for any interest he shows, whether an actual touch of his nose to your hand or just looking at your hand. After the first few times, reward only for a full nose touch.

Step 3. Repeat this until your dog reliably touches your hand.

Step 4. Now add the verbal command. Before presenting your hand, say, "Touch" and then put your hand down. (Be sure to pause for a second between the command and reaching down.)

Step 5. When your dog responds reliably to the verbal command, begin to increase the distance of your dog's head from your hand by a few inches.

Step 6. Keep increasing the distance little by little. Also move your hand to different positions, higher, lower, toward the side of your dog's head — and try the exercise in different rooms of the house.

Training Tip: If your dog makes several mistakes in a row, go back a step and make the exercise easier. Even if he is doing great, throw in an easy version every now and again for motivation.