

ALERT SOUND

Teaching a Positive Interrupter

General use:

- To attract dog's attention
- To interrupt an unwanted behavior (you can then ask your dog to carry out a more desirable behavior and appropriately mark and reinforce him/her for doing so!)

Uses when 'loose leash' walking:

- To maintain a connection with your dog
- To attract dog's attention before moving forwards
- To attract dog's attention when, while walking, dog hits the 'amber light' (is going towards the end of the leash)

When 'loose leash' walking

Sometimes, we need the dog to be in the 'front' (opposite and facing us) or 'close' position (at our left-hand-side), but please remember that walks should be fun. We do not actually mind whether the dog is to the left, right, in front of or behind, provided the leash is loose.

Dogs have better peripheral vision than humans. We can see about 180 ° but dogs can see more like 270° so even if they are slightly in front they can still be aware of where you are. Here is the important factor: your dog needs to be aware of where you are. It's black and white – he is either aware of you or isn't. As soon as your dog starts to move into the 'grey' area use your alert sound to let them know you are still there! We want to avoid him going into the 'black' area (the red on the traffic light).

If you need your dog to not only focus on you but also to move back into position, attract your dog's attention using the positive interrupter - your alert sound. If he/she does not bounce back into left-side 'close' position or 'front position', use the relevant cue, lure or simply use your 'Let's Go' cue, turn 180° and walk in the opposite direction. As soon as your dog is in the 'close' position, reinforce by telling him good boy and walk on. *Do not reinforce the return to 'close' position with a treat, reinforce with a treat as you are moving forwards and your dog is walking nicely on a loose leash. This will avoid your dog playing 'ping-pong' – Pull forwards, go back to handler and get a treat, pull forwards, go back to handler and get a treat...

If you find yourself using your alert sound often, because the dog is straying into the amber or red area (going towards end of leash/at end of leash), you need to increase the rate of reinforcement for walking nicely – the dog is finding the environment more reinforcing than the handler!

How to teach

- Toss a treat on the floor to the right of you.
- As soon as dog has eaten treat make a your alert noise.
- When dog looks at you toss another treat to the left of you.
- Rinse and Repeat - right-left-right-left etc.

If the dog is on leash, make sure to toss the treat in the 'green' or 'amber' area. The leash should maintain a 'J' shape. Don't send your dog into the 'red' - we do not want a tight leash!