

Teaching Your Dog to 'Let's Go'

Cue: 'Let's Go'

Many times, when interacting with your dog on a leash you will need to quickly and effectively turn your dog the opposite way.

The 'let's go' cue allows you to do that without yanking on the leash.

Potential situations where you may need to use the cue while on a walk:

- You notice an off-leash dog
- You notice large amounts of food trash in the grass just a few feet ahead of you
- You observe a dog behind a fence that is standing very still and staring at your dog

By using the 'let's go' cue you can remove your dog from these potentially hazardous situations and avoid problems, without using force or fearful voice reactions that can contribute to future leash reactivity problems.

Teaching the 'Let's Go' Cue

When you have a dog that will comfortably stand and hover around you in a calm manner on a leash without pulling and tugging, then you are ready to start walking. The 'let's go' cue tells the dog we are going somewhere.

- Move off quickly in any direction and, as your dog moves with you, say 'let's go' then 'yes'/click. Do this several times going in different directions, mixing up the pace.

When you can complete these exercises and get 4 or 5 out of 5, you can progress to adding footsteps into the walk nicely criteria.

Another Method

Another way to teach this cue is to use a hand target. Follow the usual pattern of new cue, old cue, click and treat. This would look like this:

1. Say 'let's go'
2. Say 'nose' (or the word you use for nose to hand target)
3. Lure the dog around with you 180 degrees
4. Click
5. Treat or reinforce with toy

After doing this 3-5 times drop the cue 'nose' and throw a party for the dog turning 180 degrees with you.

Tips

- ✓ Make sure that leash manners are in place and proofed prior to teaching this cue
- ✓ Give the 'let's go' cue in a happy and friendly tone to prevent tension or accidentally triggering your own dog (emotional contagion)
- ✓ Proof 'let's go' prior to using it in an emergency. If the cue is not ideally trained yet and it is an emergency, consider management such as picking up your dog or simply calling your dog to you and running the opposite way.