

Once you learn to 'shape' your dog's behavior you will have the skills needed to train your dog to target just about any object.

The Easy Button Challenge

Shaping Involves breaking down a complex behavior into very small parts and marking successes your dog makes along the way.



Materials needed:

- An Easy Button or similar device
- A quiet area with no distractions
- A clicker
- A-grade treats
- And put on your *patience hat*

Directions:

- Clear the space of everything else on the floor
- Be ready with treats. Toss a treat away from you for your dog to "Find It"
- While your dog's back is turned put the button down on the ground
- To facilitate paw movement around the button, use the "training triangle" method of treat delivery demonstrated in class

Observe these behaviors – progressively through the trials click/treat for:

- Dog looks at button
- Dog lowers head to button
- Dog sniffs button
- Dog bumps or pushes button with his/her nose
- Dog raise a paw in the vicinity to the button
- Dog puts paw pressure on button, but not enough for sound
- Dog raises paw, applies pressure to button and you hear "That was easy!"
- Dog consistently targets the button and you apply a cue word right before the hit

Once your dog progresses from one step to the next, do NOT go back. Always click/treat for the next level of activity. Keep sessions short and fun. This could take minutes, hours or days to master. Practices in short spurts and always end on a high note with something he/she already knows. If you give your dog timely feedback you will be surprised how quickly this skill develops.