

Exercise: Hand Target - “Touch”

“Touch” is a great, basic introduction to recall for your dog. The goal of this exercise is to have your dog touch their nose to your closed fist and be comfortable coming to you or anyone else who has asked for a “Touch”. Hand targeting is also a foundational tool that will be used for many advanced skills in training like greeting people and walking.

How to teach this:

1. Have a few small treats in one hand, closed in the shape of a fist.
 2. Without saying “Touch” yet, present your fist a few inches away from your dog’s face.
 3. If your dog touches their nose to your fist, mark with “Yes” or a click and give them a treat.
 4. Repeat until you feel this action prompts a reliable response from your dog.
 5. Now it is time to add the verbal cue. As you lower your treat filled fist near your dog, say “Touch” and reward when your dog makes contact with your hand.
 6. As the short distance with a verbal cue becomes a solid behavior for your dog, begin to increase distance and vary the position of your hand, or which hand the treats are in. You can also make this a game with other members of your family and take turns saying your dog’s name and “Touch!”
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Trainer’s Tip:

If your dog starts to make mistakes during this training, mark with “uh oh” or “try again” and lessen the criteria for your dog. If your dog is doing well, throw in an easy target every now and again to keep their motivation high.

Video Link: <https://twopaws-up.com/videos/hand-target/>
