

Front Door Manners

One thing I *REALLY* like to have folks teach their dog is proper behavior at the front door. Whether greeting guests, annoying delivery people, or expecting to go with you **EVERY** time you go out, even if it's just to get the mail.

The final product with this training would be a dog in a solid "sit/stay" while the door is open and people are coming in, going out, or you're signing for a package. There are several steps to take to achieve this goal:

- First, a "sit/stay": Work with your dog on leash so you **CAN** control him if he decides to move. Give him the "Stay" command and a hand signal, if you like, and move away from him a step or two. Then return to heel position for all the praise/reward. If you praise/reward while away from the dog he is more apt to break his stay and join you. If he moves give upward leash pressure to re-sit him and remind him to stay. You have to go the speed the dog can handle when starting this exercise. As time goes on add distance, distractions, and duration.

Now adding it to the front door:

- Put your dog on leash **BEFORE** opening the door. Put him in his "sit/stay" and then open the door. You may want to practice just this step. No going out, no guests, nothing happening except the door opening. Then, if you have friends who will help you practice (and aren't worried about standing around on your porch), open the door a crack and close it if the dog moves. When he is holding still, let the people in. Be sure the friends helping you are armed with a treat so the minute they come in they can remind your dog to "sit" and reward him for doing so. Another helpful tool is to have some kind of "line in the sand" at your front door. For example, a place where the flooring changes. This gives your dog a physical reminder of where he should be. Consistency is key with this skill. Practicing with patient people helps a lot.

Good Training!

Karen O.