

Impulse control training helps dogs learn to resist the temptation to perform unwanted behaviors, like jumping, bolting through doors, or grabbing food. By practicing self-control, dogs earn rewards such as treats, walks, toys, or affection. Below are key exercises to develop impulse control. Practicing these exercises consistently will help your dog develop better self-control, leading to a well-mannered and happier companion.

## Wait (Useful for food, doors, and greetings)

*Helps dogs learn patience before moving forward or taking an object. Over time, the dog learns that patience leads to rewards.*

1. Ask your dog to sit and say "Wait."
2. Hold their food bowl at shoulder level. If they remain seated, mark with "Yes!" or a clicker and give a treat.
3. Slowly lower the bowl. If they stay seated, mark and reward.
4. If they move, reset and try again with a smaller movement.
5. Gradually lower the bowl to the floor, clicking and treating for staying put.
6. Once they reliably wait, release them with "Okay!" to eat.

## Leave It (Prevents grabbing unwanted items)

*Teaches dogs to ignore tempting but off-limits items. The goal is for your dog to wait for your cue rather than taking the item.*

1. Show your dog a high-value treat in your hand, then close your fist around it.
2. Say "Leave it." Let them sniff or paw, but don't let them get it.
3. The moment they look away or stop trying, mark and reward with a different treat.
4. Repeat, uncovering the treat slightly but covering it if they try to grab it.
5. Over time, leave the treat uncovered and reward when they ignore it.

## Polite Greetings (Reduces jumping on people)

*Prevents jumping by reinforcing sitting as the default greeting behavior. Practice with different people, ensuring they also step away if the dog jumps.*

1. Approach your dog calmly. If they jump, step back.
2. When they sit, mark and reward.
3. Gradually increase excitement levels in greetings.
4. Have others practice the same approach.
5. Eventually, they will sit politely for greetings instead of jumping.

## Mat Training (Encourages settling and calm behavior)

*Encourages calm behavior by teaching a dog to settle on a designated mat. Add distractions over time to build stronger impulse control.*

1. Place a mat on the floor and reward any interest in it.
2. Mark and reward for standing on it, then lying down.
3. Use "Mat" or "Place" as a cue when they consistently lie down.
4. Gradually increase the duration they stay on the mat.
5. Introduce distractions, rewarding calm behavior.

## Final Tips:

- Keep sessions short and positive.
- Use high-value rewards to reinforce patience.
- Be consistent—your dog will learn that self-control leads to good things!

**For additional resources and training videos, visit:**

- [Clara Relaxes](#)
- [Clara's Advanced Tricks \(Do More With Your Dog\)](#)
- [Teaching Dogs to Chill \(video\)](#)