

What is **CLICKER TRAINING**?

Thank you for taking the time to inquire about different methods of training for your dog. There are several different approaches to dog training and I recommend selecting one that not only is effective, but is also humane and falls in line with your own belief system. For me, this is the **clicker training method**.



Perhaps you have heard of this method or have seen the toy like widget which is used as the sound maker. It is growing in popularity and shortly surely will be seen on late night infomercials with cute packaging. Beyond any hype or marketing however, is sound science. It works on proven laws of learning of association (**click means great thing happens**) and operant conditioning, which really just means that **behaviors are repeated or avoided based upon consequences**. For example, when we ask our dog to sit, the behavior is marked/clicked at the direct instant the behavior is given (when butt hits the ground) and the click is followed by something reinforcing, for example food. **The clicker succinctly marks the desired behavior and is a promise of a reward to follow**. The reinforced behavior then becomes more likely to reoccur again and we have a great way to tell our dog that he did the right thing.

Wonderful benefits of clicker training:

- Precise and very effective
- Can provide accelerated learning and retention
- Fun for both the dog and the owner
- A positive way to communicate to a dog that he did the right thing
- Builds trust and strengthens the bond between the dog and owner

The **high rate of positive reinforcement** (which can be treats, toys, walks, your attention, etc.) helps to build a healthy, confident dog. One who is encouraged to learn and is not immobilized by fear of punishing consequences since the focus is on rewarding good behavior and ignoring unwanted behavior -- or training an incompatible behavior (a dog can't jump and sit at the same time). In this safe learning environment, the dog is free to try different playful behaviors which is great for training cute tricks or more advanced skills, but **most importantly he learns to trust you**. It is also easier to be consistent with clicker training, we never have to raise our voice or wonder if we said something in the right tone.

I hope that you will give your dog and yourself the opportunity to learn using clicker training as it lays a great foundation for a wonderful relationship and provides for a healthy and happy learning environment.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can help in any way. Watching the smile on your dog's face and his willingness to participate during the training really let's you know you've made the right decision.

Rachel Agent, CTP