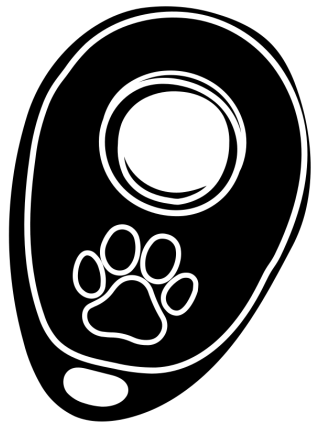




ABOUT MARKER TRAINING



What is a mark?	What gets marked?
“Marks” are signals that point out or “mark” precise behaviors and/or moments in time that you want to call your pet’s attention to (and ultimately have them repeat). A mark is typically auditory (like a click, mouth sound, or word), but can be visual or tactile if needed. Note: marks are not used to tell a pet what to do, nor are they used to grab a pet’s attention.	There are different types of “precise behaviors and/or moments” you may want to call your pet’s attention to. For example a behavior your pet <i>chose</i> to perform (ex: sitting down), a behavior your pet just <i>happened to do</i> (ex: looking at a trigger), or even a behavior they <i>refrained</i> from doing (ex: choosing to not jump up).
What’s the science here?	Can I skip the reward and JUST use the mark?
A mark must have been previously, repeatedly paired with a “consequence” in order to tell the pet what is coming next. As we will use it, the mark will indicate something great (like a treat) is coming. When properly paired, the mark has the same physical and emotional impact on the pet that the consequence alone would have had. For example, a mark that indicates food is coming causes your pet to salivate (think: Pavlov) and release pleasure chemicals, like dopamine (aka pleasure). An example of this is crinkling the treat bag and your pet comes running for treats! The crinkle is the “mark” and eating the treat is the consequence. We are simply recreating this connection in a more controlled manner. Mammalian brains are hard-wired to repeat behaviors that produce dopamine. In marker training - once defined - the mark triggers the release of dopamine. Thus your pet WANTS to repeat the behaviors that got marked. Note: marks can also predict unpleasant consequences (ex: a tone that predicts shock). This is why just the beep on a collar scares your dog. Even without the shock, their body still emotionally and physically anticipates pain and experiences fear.	No. The mark <i>can</i> be given without the reward on rare occasion (be sure to at least substitute with something pleasurable, such as verbal praise). However, if you present the mark and do not follow it with the reward enough times, the connection will break and the mark will no longer have meaning.
	How do you do it?
	1. Once the pet makes the connection between the mark and the consequence... 2. You will present the mark DURING the behavior or precise moment you want to call your pet’s attention to. 3. Your pet will look to you for the expected reward. 4. Give the reward. 5. This will cause your pet to notice what was going on or what they were doing when the mark occurred. 6. Because the mark released “happiness” in your pet, they will want to recreate that and... 7. Your pet will seek to repeat the behaviors you marked. 8. Over time you increase the difficulty of the behavior while decreasing the frequency of reward until they are no longer needed. Note: marker training works on any species.
Why bother? Why not just use treats?	
There are several advantages to marker training, such as: • Calling attention to fleeting behaviors (ex: brief pauses in barking) that are impossible to “catch” with treats alone • Being at a physical distance (you can be in the bathroom and mark your dog that’s in the living room) • Not having a reward immediately available (ex: mark, then praise them as you both meet at the fridge for cheese!) • Training non food-driven pets or those on limited diets (affection or play can be used instead) • Capturing moments organically as they occur in your daily life (when you may not have treats handy) • Allowing you to fumble with the treats a bit, if you’re clumsy	