

Auto Sit/Down

Teach the Skill

The dog must first have a solid understanding of what 'sit' or 'down' (ie: lie down) mean. I often recommend using 'sit' because most dogs already know it, but in some cases 'down' is the better option.

Request the Skill

For several days, ask your dog to perform the skill for things it wants, such as access to furniture, going through a door or gate, receiving treats, toys, meals, or anything the dog is excited for. Keep it fun: ask nicely, rather than demanding sternly. Also, they don't have to work for *everything* forever - this temporary exercise is just an easy way to practice frequently throughout the day so they catch on quickly,

Mark/Reward Skill

When the dog gets used to performing the skill, mark it, then give them the thing they're asking for (ex:the bowl, treat, toy, couch, passing through the door, etc.) as their reward.

Test the Skill

The dog should soon be frequently sitting (or lying down) quickly and easily for the things it wants. When you notice this, stop giving the cue (or verbal instruction). Instead, just withhold the thing they want (ex: the ball) and look at them expectantly. Wait several seconds (at least 5). They should automatically perform the skill. When they do, mark and present the reward like you have been. You can praise and pet as well. Repeat frequently

Expect the skill

Your dog should now be automatically sitting (or downing), without being ask. Congrats! you have just trained your dog to *choose* to make good decisions! This is NOT about controlling your dog, this is about communicating with them. Think of the auto sit or down as the pet saying "please, may I." You marking and rewarding is like you saying "Thank you for the nice manners."