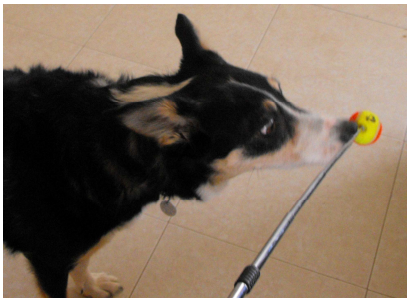
Angelic Dogs

Through your dog's eyes....

Why Target Train Your Dog?

Target training is where you teach your dog to touch or orient towards an object, human or area. Your dog can be taught to target using most parts of their body e.g. nose, paw, hips, shoulder and eyes.

The options open to you to teach your dog to target too are vast:



A target stick

Your hand

A mat

A plastic lid

Plus many other items, your imagination is all that limits the possibilities for you and your dog.

What are the benefits of target training?

Target training can be used to train many behaviour's without the need to use food to lure your dog. Food can become a big problem during training when it becomes a bribe. Target training helps to avoid falling into this trap by having the food appear as a consequence of their behaviour, rather than being used to cause the behaviour to happen.

Target training can give your dog something to do when they are feeling aroused, anxious, distracted and confused, helping them to know where they should direct their focus and calm down.

Target training can help build confidence in nervous, timid dogs by providing them with a feeling of success in an otherwise worrying and potential failing situation for them.

The two dogs above would originally have been very nervous of being close to another dog and be barking and jumping around, by teaching them when a dog appeared they were to target their owners they were able to walk past and be close to another dog.

It helps you as an owner become pro-active with your dogs behaviour rather than reactive.

When presented with choices in a situation targeting helps to teach your dog where they should be, without the stress of having to be handled or guided on the end of a lead etc.

If taught correctly they love it and you will have much better attention from your dog when you are out and about together.

It is a great way to have fun and games with your dog and provide them with the mental stimulation they require.

Targeting is after all a natural behaviour for your dog, how many of you have dogs that look at you then look at what they want you to pay attention to, nudge you with their nose then look at something, tap you with their paw to get your attention e.g. "Throw my toy please!"

What can you teach your dog using targeting?

Teach your dog the appropriate way to interact with human hands, no biting, mouthing etc. They can learn they touch hands gently with their noses.

Give your dog something else to do when greeting people instead of jumping up, ask them to touch the persons hand or leg, or teach them to place their chin in the persons hand.

Teach your dog to move around by following a target without the need of using their collar or handling them, much more comfortable for you and your dog.

To have a speedy come when called by giving your dog a clear target to run to.

To walk to heel.

To lie down quickly at a distance.

To go to bed.

To go into their crate.

To get into the car.

To get on the weighing scales in the vets.

To stand still whilst being examined/groomed.

Retrieve an object for you by name.

To watch you when they are feeling insecure.

To stay with you when they see another dog or person until you say it is okay to go and say hello.

To go over jumps or other obstacles when out and about together.

Teach your dog contact points in agility, those of you doing agility can teach your dog to target the contact points directly or by using a small flat marker e.g. clear plastic lid.

Many tricks e.g. close the door

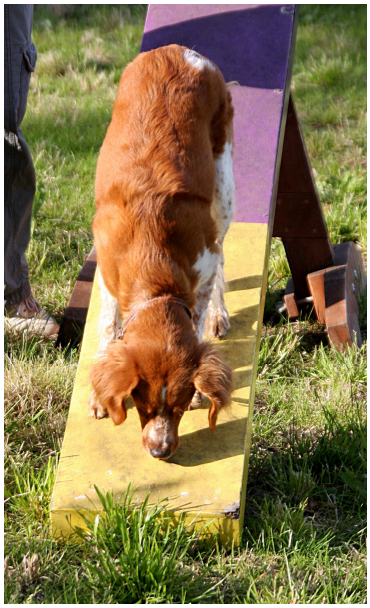
Ring the bell to go out for a wee

Turn a light on

Bow

Twirl

Paw



These are just a few ideas there are many more behaviour's you can teach your dog through targeting.

Can you think of any more to do with your dog?