



The Marker Word

Using a marker word allows us to be really precise in telling our dog “Yes that’s the behaviour I wanted”.

Dogs are much faster than humans and by the time we’ve seen them do a behaviour we liked, rumaged around for a treat and then delivered the treat, they’ve probably done four more things. Then what happens is the behaviour we **think** we’ve rewarded is different to the behaviour we’ve actually reinforced.

Your marker word can be absolutely anything you want it to be as long as it’s simple and you can say it in the same way each time. We use ‘good’ but here are some other examples;

- Good!
- Nice!
- Yes!
- Whoop!
- Yep!
- Yip!
- Great!
- Super!

If you prefer, a clicker can be used in exactly the same way, you can even make a click noise with your mouth as long as you keep it consistent.

Charging your marker

1. Grab a handful of super high value food rewards. When your dog is in front of you, say your marker word and **immediately** give them a treat to their mouth.

2. Repeat 10x

They don’t need to do anything at this stage we’re just teaching them that markerword = treat

3. After ten repetitions, add the marker to a behaviour. Simple pattern games like up/down and the orientation game are great for this, or you can practise behaviours your dog already knows like Sit or Down. Ask for the behaviour, as soon as they do that behaviour, say your marker word and **immediately** reward.

How to use:

- When your dog does something you want them to do more often, use your marker!
- The more accurate you are with your marker, the more likely your dog will figure out which behaviour got the reward.
- Once you’ve used your marker, make sure you **always** follow it up with a reward
- Your dog needs to know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, when they hear that marker they’ve 100% won something awesome.