

Training Tip Tuesday – Doorway Manners revisited

We've had a bunch of questions on doorway manners this week! This is a very important skill; for both safety and sanity! Its also pretty easy to teach BUT its take a lot of patience and consistency

Before you begin, make sure you have a pretty reliable 'sit' cue.

With your dog on leash, walk up to the door and cue the sit. If just being in front of the door is too exciting, back up 5 feet (or 10 feet, or whatever you need!) and practice until your dog will sit at the door. Make sure you leave enough room for the door to open.

Praise your dog for sitting, and reach out and touch the door knob (don't open the door – just touch it!)

If your dog keeps his sit – praise! If he gets up, take your hand off the knob, say 'nope!' and cue the sit again.

You are not holding your dog in place with the leash! He should be holding his position on his own.

If he's still sitting; reach out and touch the knob again, this time turn it and open the door ½". Same as above – if he stays seated, praise! If he gets up, door closes, and he tries again.

Your dog will learn that getting up makes the door close, but sitting makes it open.

The next step is to step through the door. If the dog gets up to follow – step back in. Do NOT let him cross the threshold. When he has held his sit for a second, call him to you and ask for a second sit on the other side of the door. The second sit is a step that many people overlook – but its important! Doorway manners is about impulse control. If you release your dog from his sit inside, and he still gets to go flying through the door off into the yard; hes not showing very much control! But – if he steps through the doorway politely and sits at your feet, waiting for a release; he's showing he understands he has to wait for permission.

The whole key to teaching this is to go slow; work in baby steps, and be consistent. Every door, every time. If it takes you 20 minutes to get through the door properly, so be it. If you are running late and don't have time to train your dog through the door; you can either a) pick him up and carry him through, or b) get the sit, then release him before he makes the choice on his own. Make sure everyone in the household is on board with the plan. Practice through every door and gate. Within a few weeks you will find your dog sits and waits at an open door! (Check out the video from a few weeks ago under doorway manners to see the result of practice)

Tips:

Start with an interior door; like a bathroom door. Your dog doesn't have any expectations around this door, so he will be in a calmer mindset and easier to teach. Once he gets the concept of siting on each side of the door – move to a more interesting threshold.

Practice training (on leash) with doors open. In the past, if every time you've opened the door your dog got to burst out and play; he's learned that doors are magical portals to fun! He's made the association that open door = free for all, and he will start getting excited before you've even turned the knob. (Like Pavlov's dog salivating at the sound of a bell!) If however, you open the door and *nothing* happens... if open doorways no longer mean anything, you will start to decondition the stimulus and make your job easier!

<https://youtu.be/qOJqLdFd5E4>