

ENVIRONMENTAL REWARDS

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Training tip Tues...er... Thursday! Using Environmental Rewards!

Most people have heard of using food or praise to reward their dogs; but did you know you can also use the environment? Those same things that are distracting can also be rewarding!

Environmental rewards help build your relationship. You learn to pay closer attention to your dog, and to read his body language. Your dog learns that he can ask for permission to go check something out instead of dragging you around town! He also learns that you aren't a bully; trying to prevent him from having any fun...he learns that there are standards, and if he abides he still gets to do almost anything he wants!

The idea is pretty simple. As you are out and about working, pay attention to your dog. When he shows interest in something in the environment; immediately get him focused back on you. Don't wait until he's totally enthralled; try to notice little glances or sniffs. Ask for a few simple tasks; like a sit or a touch. Get a step or two of good focus, then go together to check out whatever he was interested in. Getting to go sniff is the reward for paying attention to you! You set the time; 10 – 15 seconds or so, then get him engaged and focused on you again.

Obviously only use things that are SAFE to go explore. Getting a nice sit and 3 seconds of attention doesn't grant permission to chase a cat into traffic or raid the neighborhood dumpster!

If your dog is struggling; start in a less stimulating environment and build your way up. Hold your ground and don't let him drag you. Wait until he puts some slack in the leash before you go together to explore.

Remember: Go Together or not at all!

<https://youtu.be/PpyuDh8iweo>