

# LEAVE IT

## Why do we teach our dogs Leave It?



Maslow - Leave It

Dogs, especially puppies love to sniff and it's really good for them, but the problem is that the sniff is often followed by eating with little to no discrimination!

Garbage or items may become lodged in their intestinal tract or just make them ill. Usually they will throw up what they shouldn't have eaten, but let's implement some prevention by using Leave It?

## Here's how we teach Leave It:

1. Hold a treat in your hand and extend your arm to your side. The treat should be visible and desirable (high value treat) to your dog.
2. Your dog will more than likely stare at the treat. Watch his eyes.
3. Give a praise marker (yes or good boy) the instant your dog looks into your eyes.
4. Immediately follow the praise with a reward. Repeat this following [Donaldson's framework](#).
5. Each time your dog successfully completes 5 consecutive repetitions you can lower your arm and the treat by 2- 4 inches.
6. As your dog gets better, he will look at the treat for only a second and then immediately look at you without hesitation. At this point you can insert the verbal cue, Leave It. Say it a split second before your dog looks at you. Continue to use the verbal cue from this point forward.
7. As the treat gets closer to your dog's head height, your dog will be more likely to jump for it. If he does that, quickly put your arm behind your back and turn your head away from him to send a clear message, that was a fail buddy! Reset and try again. Eventually your dog will learn moving for the treat doesn't get him the treat, but looking at you does.

8. As you begin repetitions where the treat is approaching the ground your dog will be more likely to fail, but that's okay, stick with the protocol.
9. When the treat reaches the ground, place it on the ground, BUT be ready to quickly cover it with your hand. It will be highly rewarding and counterproductive if your dog gets the treat from the ground.
10. The last step is to place the treat on the ground and now stand up. Be prepared to use your foot to step on the treat if your dog goes for it. However, at this point your dog has had many repetitions and will more than likely succeed!
11. Remember to generalize this new skill outside in the grass where your dog is most likely to find items to eat.

**PRO TIP:** Check yourself or have someone else watch to ensure you are not hovering over your dog during practice, It's human nature to do this, especially if your dog or puppy is very small. You may need to start on your knees or put your dog on a platform, but the former is better because the ground is where they are typically finding objects.

**PRO TIP:** Be sure that your arm height isn't changing sporadically. Follow Donaldson's framework and only change your arm height after 5 successful and consecutive repetitions.