

THRESHOLD TRAINING



Vader and me 2017

What is threshold training?

Threshold training teaches your dog not to rush in or out the door!

Here's *why* threshold training is useful:

The most important reason we teach our dogs this skill is to keep them safe from rushing out the door and getting lost or hit by a car. This is especially important if your dog is aggressive, reactive, territorial or a runner. Additionally, this may save your feet from being run over or prevent you from being bumped out of the way when opening the door. It's a simple skill to develop and helps your dog learn impulse control. It also sets the tone for a nice [Loose Leash Walk](#).

Here's *how* we teach our dogs to wait at a door threshold:

1. When you get to the door, open the door slowly and step into the opening, facing your dog. Use your legs to block them from rushing outside.
2. Look at your dog and wait. As soon as they make eye contact with you, praise instantly (good boy!), open the door wide enough for you to step through, and then wave your dog through with a big arm sweeping motion.
3. After a couple of weeks, increase the criteria of the skill by waiting longer after eye contact. At first, 2 or 3 seconds. Increase it to 10 seconds over the next few days.
4. Continue to increase the time until your dog sits while looking at you. As soon as he does, praise instantly (good boy!), open the door wide enough for you to step through, and then wave your dog through with a big arm sweeping motion.
5. Now, **face the door** with your hand on the knob, **looking back at your dog**. When your dog sits, open the door, step through the opening while you praise and wave them through.
6. Here are a couple of different examples of threshold training with [Cheese](#) and [Bear](#).
 - a. Bear knows that I go through the door first, but he still needs me to step in front of him to remember. He's only a year old! He's almost to the point where I can just open the door and he'll wait for me.
 - b. Cheese is 5 years old now and I just ask him to sit because he's not at my home enough to know the criteria for exiting. In this video I ask him to sit and then step in front of him and wait for eye contact before I praise and wave him through.
7. The KEY to this skill, as with most, is CONSISTENCY. If there are times when your dog is allowed to run out the door as soon as you open it, you will likely have inconsistent behavior forever. Or your dog may behave one way for the family member that is always consistent and another way for those that are not.