

HOW TO TEACH YOUR DOG THE WATCH ME COMMAND

Teaching your dog the watch me command is a great way to get your dog's attention. A watch me command means your dog will look up and maintain eye contact with you when asked.

The watch me command can be very useful when out and about, especially if you have a dog that's easily distracted as it allows you to quickly get their attention and ask them to do something you want from them. It can also be useful when training your dog new things as it means you have their attention and they are ready for the next bit of information from you.

HOW TO TEACH A DOG TO WATCH ME

Start teaching your dog to watch me indoors, away from distractions. It's a good idea to use small, tasty treats that motivate your dog.

STEP ONE

Show your dog the treat, then hold it out to the side, at arm's length. Your dog will naturally look over to the treat. The moment they stop looking at it and make eye contact with you say 'yes' and reward them immediately with the treat.

Keep practising this movement until your dog is consistently making eye contact with you when you produce the treat.

STEP TWO

Once your dog is consistently offering you eye contact, you can introduce the verbal command 'watch me'.

This time say 'watch me' and then hold the treat out to the side. As soon as your dog makes eye contact with you, reward them with the treat and say 'yes'.

STEP THREE

Now, you can slowly begin to increase the amount of time that your dog is holding the eye contact.



Start by giving the 'watch me' command and counting to one second in your head. If your dog maintains eye contact, quickly reward them. As your dog begins to do this consistently, gradually increase the watch by a second at a time, until they can hold it for 5 seconds.

You can continue to gradually build up the time that your dog can hold the watch over the following weeks and months.

If your dog is looking away before you've finished counting, you may have progressed too quickly. If this happens, go back to practising for a shorter time and build back up again.

STEP FOUR

With practice, you should start to find that your dog will look at you as you say, 'watch me', and before you hold out your arm. Once they start to do this you can remove the arm signal completely.

As with all training, once you've mastered it in a calm environment you can move somewhere else and begin to build up the level of distraction. Initially you may need to reward your dog more quickly and build up the time again.

When teaching a watch me command, a very nervous dog may be reluctant to hold eye contact with you. Starting from scratch and building up the watch me command slowly will increase your dog's confidence and strengthen the bond you have with them.