

TEACHING YOUR DOG A BED COMMAND

For young and very active dogs, a 'bed' cue or command is a great way to divert their extra energy and gives them a brief 'time-out' to help them learn to calm themselves down when they get over-excited.

Before teaching your dog to go to bed it's best if they already know a "down." We've got more information about teaching your dog a 'down' in the pet advice section of the Battersea website, and on our YouTube channel. You can also find the video that accompanies this advice on teaching your dog a 'bed' command there.

To get started with this training, you will need some treats and your dog's bed.



STEP 1

First, stand near your dog's bed and use some treats to tempt them over to you.

Put the treats in the bed to encourage them inside. If your dog is reluctant to go all the way onto the bed, reward them for putting one or two paws on the bed. Gradually build this up until you're rewarding your dog is rewarded for having all four paws on the bed.

STEP 2

Once your dog is comfortable standing on the bed, encourage them into a down position using your hand signal. When they're in a down on the bed, reward them with a treat between the front paws. If they stay down, give them a few more treats to encourage them to stay in that position. After a few seconds, say 'OK' and throw them a treat away from the bed to let them know they can get up. Repeat this 5 times until your dog is reliably going to bed and lying down every time you ask.

STEP 3

Next, stand next to the bed again, but don't tempt your dog over. Instead, wait and see if they go into their bed on their own. If they do, give them a

reward between their front paws to encourage them to lie down. Keep practicing this until they go to bed and lie down without being asked. When they do, give them a 'jackpot' tasty treat, or multiple treats, as a reward. If they're not quite there yet, go back a few steps and try tempting them over again. Once your dog is happy going to bed and lying down, you can add a cue word like "bed". Stand near the bed again, and as your dog starts to move towards it, say 'bed' and reward them after they lie down.

STEP 4

Now you can start to build the amount of time your dog stays in the bed. Do this by standing close to the bed again. When your dog goes to bed and stays lying down, reward them with a treat, gradually increasing the time between each reward. You may need to start by rewarding your dog every couple of seconds, but once they're settled, try withholding the treat for a few more seconds before rewarding. Build this up until your dog is able to settle on the bed for 20 seconds or so and increase from there. Remember to give your dog frequent breaks by using your 'OK' cue to give them a time-out. If at any stage your dog is struggling, reduce the time slightly between your rewards and then build it back up again.

STEP 5

Next, it's time to get your dog used to staying in bed when you're not nearby. Once your dog is settled using the 'bed' command, step one foot back, away from your dog. If they stay still, give them a reward.

Repeat this five times, and then try taking two steps back. Keep increasing the distance gradually until you are able to walk away and sit down before going back and rewarding your dog.

If your dog gets up at any point, reduce the distance and build up again. Once they're happy with you being further away you can start to introduce distractions like toys and people and build up in the same way again.

Remember, if your dog becomes frustrated or starts acting out, they may have had enough training for one day. It's important to go at their pace and if necessary, stop the session and come back to it the following day when they're feeling refreshed, focussed, and ready to learn.