



MAT TRAINING

Having a dog that can settle quietly on a mat is probably one of the most useful things an owner can have. Going to the mat becomes a cue to settle and be calm. It will enable you to take a portable 'safe place' for your dog to a variety of new places and situations, which fosters positive associations. The mat is never to be used as a punishment, so please never send your dog to the mat in anger. Rather, calmly send your dog to his mat to calm down and have some quiet time.



Practical Uses

- Your dog cannot be sitting calmly on their mat and jumping all over you and your visitors simultaneously
- Great for teaching self-control
- Teaching a dog to 'be' within a boundary is relatively easy concept for most dogs to learn. The idea with mat training is not that the dog does not move, instead they are free to move about within a boundary.
- Use it every time you need your dog out of your way, i.e. Bringing in shopping, watching TV of an evening.
- Use it when you are out with your dog say at a friend's place or a cafe and need them to remain quiet and calm in one spot for a period of time.

Exercise

- Use a food treat and lure your dog onto the mat.
- When all four feet are on the mat Mark and Pay – practice this step until the dog is consistently following your hand to the mat.
- Once the dog is doing this well, lure the dog on and raise your hand in a sit motion (don't add the word sit) so that the dog learns to automatically default to that position when it goes to the mat – the whole exercise is the dog going to the mat then assuming a sit position.
- To increase the time that your dog settles on the mat, begin to delay your marker signal YES so that they are staying on the mat for longer periods of time.
- Giving the dog a nice, juicy bone will also help you add duration to this exercise.
- Once the pup is doing the above consistently you can then add a cue like "Go to mat," "Mat," or "Go to bed"

Remember small increments of time - try to get your puppy on the mat for 30 seconds, then 1 minute, then 2 minutes and build slowly. Giving your puppy a Kong or a bone to chew on when it is on the mat will help it to stay there. They will learn to associate the mat with the



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Kong or bone and actually enjoy going to their mat. If your puppy is highly excitable and has trouble staying focused when inside, it may be useful to put them on a lead to practice this exercise. This is a great exercise for teaching young pups manners in the house. Once your puppy is trained to settle quietly on the mat, then the mat can be used in a variety of locations when you want them to settle quietly, e.g. Visiting friends, family picnic or at the vets.