

Start and Finish Cue Condition a Bridge

The start and finish cue helps your pet understand when it's time to begin a training session. It's also a cue for you to find out if your dog is ready and willing to participate.

WHY TEACH IT?

Before we begin training it is important to determine whether or not your dog is interested in participating. If your dog is not able to accept treats then you cannot begin your training.

This can be a sign that your dog is not comfortable in the environment; or it may be an indication of a medical problem, especially if your dog usually accepts treats reliably. We also need to let our dog know when the session has ended once we have finished training.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Step one:** Say your dog's name and offer a treat, if your dog accepts the treat you are ready to begin your training session
- Step two:** Once you have finished your session hold your hands up with your palms facing towards your dog to let your dog know the session has ended. You can add a verbal cue "finish".

TIP



Make sure you are using the right kind of treat! Try a whole lot of different treats and find something that really motivates your dog.

Teaching your dog a *bridge* (an audio cue) helps you communicate effectively with your dog. This infosheet outlines the steps to equip your canine friend with this skill.

WHAT IS A BRIDGE?

A bridge is an auditory signal used to mark the precise moment when your dog performs a desired behaviour. It is an effective way to communicate exactly what you want your dog to do. A bridge is the positive feedback that will encourage your dog to repeat an action.

The sound of the bridge will mean nothing to your dog until it is paired with a primary reinforcer, such as food. Once the bridge sound is conditioned, your dog learns that the sound predicts a reward to follow; this process is known as *classical conditioning*. You can use a clicker or the sound of your voice to create a verbal bridge, for example, the word "yes".

It is important to remember to begin conditioning your bridge in an environment with very little distraction, such as in your lounge room. Over time, gradually increase the level of distraction.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Step one:** Sound your bridge (click your clicker/say your bridge word).
- Step two:** Immediately offer your dog a treat.
- Step three:** Repeat this exercise in a range of positions and locations to generalise the response.



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More questions? Need help?

Email our professional behaviour trainers on petsquad@dogshome.com

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