



## Say Please!

Did your parents ever say this to you? Well, they were probably hoping to teach you manners and how to be polite with adults and peers. This is one of the goals for our dogs, and they can sometimes benefit from learning to say “please” as well. Some trainers call this the “No Such Thing as a Free Lunch” program; others call it the “People Empowerment Program.” However you want to refer to the program, it is one used widely among dog trainers and behaviorists to help set people and their dogs up for success. In any home, dogs are more appreciated and allowed to be more a part of the family when they have good manners.

Dogs are very social creatures, but they live more successfully with us when they understand the rules and expectations. We can teach these things by rewarding them with things they adore: affection, exercise, treats, toys, whatever is exciting to your dog.

### How to Teach Your Dog to Say Please: Part 1

1. Teach your dogs a behavior or two that he can do on cue. A simple sit or down will work. Even teaching your dog to look at you in response to calling their name can work.
2. Once your dog has learned a cue in a variety of conditions, you can begin to ask your dog to do this behavior on cue as a way of “Saying Please” before getting something they want.
3. Once you have given the cue, wait to give the dog what he wants until he performs the behavior. If he doesn’t do the behavior, ignore him and walk away.

### How to Teach Your Dog to Say Please: Part 2

- The best benefit is that your dog gets to learn a polite way to interact with people.
- For that pushy dog who is always asking for attention, it allows you to use the desired attention as a reason for the dog to “Say Please”. You can turn nudging and annoyance barking into opportunities for your dog to “Say Please” for your attention.
- Fearful dogs can build a sense of control of their environment which translates to building confidence and trust in people.

Start making a list of the things your dog likes (eating meals, laying on the couch, walking through doors, opening the cookie jar, playing with a toy, etc...) and from now on ask him to “Say Please” for everything he wants, every time!

**Tony La Russa’s Animal Rescue Foundation**

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