

Stay—Duration

When we talk about stay we need to remember that we are actually teaching TWO behaviors: 1. Do NOT move 2. Get up and move. We cannot teach one without the other. This means you need to teach a Release Cue which means they are allowed to get up and move. Common release words are: free, release, go play, all done, that’ll do, go, move, etc. You can use “okay” but I don’t love it because we use it so much.

The other thing about all behaviors, but particularly stay, is that we have to build the behavior using the “3 D’s”—Duration, Distance, Distraction. We cannot work all three at once, you build up one D then you can build up another D but you have to keep things balanced—if you are adding in a new ‘d’ you have to reduce the difficulty of the others. So, if your dog has a maximum duration of 15 seconds and you want to add some distractions, you can’t do 15 seconds of distractions because you will max out and your dog will fail. Instead, reduce the duration to 5 seconds and then add distractions, continually working up to more distractions for more duration.

We start stay with JUST duration—so you will NOT be taking a single step away from your dog during this practice (this is for your benefit longterm).

1. Cue your dog to sit/down
2. Give a big open “5” hand signal and say “stay” (or whatever cue)
3. Count 1one-thousand
4. Mark the stay with a “good” and REWARD in position (sit/down)
5. Say your release word and toss a treat so the dog has to get up.
6. REPEAT 1-5, five times. IF 4/5 are successful, go to 7 if not, repeat 6.
7. REPEAT 1-5 five times but this time count off 2 seconds
8. If 4/5 are successful at 2 seconds go to 9, if not, repeat steps 6 and 7.
9. REPEAT steps 1-5 counting 3 seconds… etc.

Continue this pattern until you reach 10 seconds. Then you can add 2 or 3 seconds at a time. If your pup ever fails more than 1/5 trials, go back to where he/she was last successful and start there