



*Training your pet to be part of your pack!*

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## BUILDING MOTIVATION

### **What is it?**

Motivation is what makes your dog tick. It's what drives him to do things, like respond to your cues and find doing so worthwhile – especially the second and third times you ask. Motivation answers the question, "What's in it for the dog?"

Common canine motivators: Going for car rides, getting a ball tossed, going on walks, getting a leash clipped on or off, playing tug, access to other dogs, access to smells, and – the biggie – food.

### **How to use it.**

If you control what motivates your dog, you give him good reason to pay attention to you, i.e. to want to do what you want him to do. It's the equivalent of saying to your dog, "I'll tell you what: If you sit, I'll throw your ball" or "If you stop pulling on leash, I'll let you go smell that fire hydrant." You use what naturally motivates your dog to get the behaviors you want most.

### **Ways to increase motivation.**

First, limit your dog's access to the things he finds most motivating. Have a ball-crazy dog? Instead of leaving balls around the house at all times, carry them with you so you can whip one out as a way to reward your dog when he is getting something right.

Second, you can make an item more exciting by bringing it to life for your dog. Simply handing a dog a toy isn't nearly as fun for either of you as shaking it about, playing peek-a-boo with it and then, at the height of excitement, asking for a behavior and rewarding it with a toss of the toy. And food sitting around in a bowl can't equal the fun of kibble dished out during a fun training session.

**Troubleshooting:** Having trouble getting your dog's attention? Be sure you are using the right motivators for the challenge. Kibble can't compete with a treed squirrel. Always have an ultimate trump card – something your dog just can't resist.

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## BUILDING MOTIVATION (CON'T)

**Troubleshooting:** What if your dog isn't food motivated? Well, he has to be – or he wouldn't be alive. But if he blows off your treats, do these things:

1. Significantly increase the value of the treats you offer. Don't try dry foods, especially in high-distraction outdoor settings. Work to find a food (usually something meaty and greasy) that makes your dog go cross-eyed with glee.
2. Limit your dog's access to his food. If your dog is constantly full, he will be less interested in what you have to offer. Avoid free feeding, and schedule feeding times for after training sessions and walks, instead of before.
3. Try something else altogether. For example, if you have a ball-obsessed dog, you may have an easier time getting his attention with his favorite ball than with the leftover chicken from last night's dinner.

**For more training tips or techniques like these, or to set up an educational training consultation to determine your dog's training needs, please contact Betsy Vallone at 401-374-9506, or visit [www.theclassycanine.net](http://www.theclassycanine.net)**

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