



Laurie Luck, President
Smart Dog University, LLC
Box 1111
Mount Airy, MD 21771-1111
(240) 848-3468
laurie@smartdoguniversity.com
www.smartdoguniversity.com



Your Smart Dog Real Life Rewards – Use Them Everyday October 2005

As I was thumbing through some local dog-training ads, I saw one that specifically mentioned “No food used during training.” My jaw dropped when I read that! Being a trainer who believes in positive reward methods and uses food liberally in training, I was shocked that a trainer would use that as an attention-getter.

It shouldn't surprise me that the concept of using food in training confuses folks, heck it obviously confuses even some trainers! **Many people mistakenly believe that if you use food as a reward, the dog is working for the food, not for you.** Or that if you use food in training, you'll always have to have food to get the dog to do something for you.

Look at it this way -- your dog gets a meal at least once a day, right? A smart trainer will use that meal, a meal that the dog is going to get anyway, as a reward for doing something good (like sitting before the bowl is placed on the floor). Using your dog's dinner as a reward is called a *real life reward* – it's something that your dog likes that happens to occur during the course of a normal day. There are lots of things that your dog likes that are real-life rewards. **As a smart dog owner, you can use these to your advantage in your daily interactions with your dog.**

Using real-life rewards is really convenient for you – you don't have to carry around anything special, there's no extra work involved for you. **Another advantage of real-life rewards is that your dog is learning that he doesn't have to listen “just when it's time to train.”** We want our dogs to listen all the time,

not just when we're practicing our training exercises.

Real life rewards are easy for you, fun for the dog, and really reinforce the training that you've done with your dog.

Below are some examples of real life rewards that you might be able to use in your daily routine. There are a bunch more, of course, this list is meant to jumpstart your thinking about the things that happen during a normal day that might serve as a real-life reward for your dog.

Playing A Game

Does your dog love to play tug with you? Is he crazy for a tennis ball? Does he delight in a squeaky toy? If your dog loves to play, use those games that he likes to play as a reward for doing something good. For instance, if I call my dog and he comes running, I'll reward him with a five minute game of fetch. He loves fetch, so that's a great reward for coming when called.

Going for a Car Ride

If getting in the car is the highlight of your dog's day, use that to reward your well-behaved dog. You can practice “wait” as you open the car door. If your dog doesn't move, reward him by letting him hop in the car and take him for a spin around the block.



Laurie Luck, President
Smart Dog University, LLC
Box 1111
Mount Airy, MD 21771-1111
(240) 848-3468
laurie@smartdoguniversity.com
www.smartdoguniversity.com



Snuggle Time

My dog loves to get on the sofa with me and take a snooze. (Yes, I allow my dogs on the furniture!) So if she looks like she might want to hop up with me, I'll ask her for a couple of things first: down, speak, sit, etc. If she does them, her reward is hopping up and getting some snuggle time with me. She loves it!

Going Outside

For some dogs, going for a walk outside with you is the highlight of their day. Don't waste the opportunity to use such a valuable reward! Ask for a few tricks from your dog before you leash him up. If he does them, say "Good dog!" and open the door and head out and reward your dog with a nice walk.

These are only a few real life rewards that you can use with your dog – there are a lot more. Others might include the chance to sniff a fire hydrant, chasing the vacuum cleaner, swimming, gnawing on a stuffed Kong, one-on-one time with you, playtime with another dog, off-leash freedom (in a safely enclosed area, of course!), running through the sprinkler, chasing a laser light in the dark, the list goes on and on... Your dog will tell you what he finds rewarding – use it!

Real life rewards are easy for you, fun for the dog, and really reinforce the training that you've done with your dog. Real life rewards also help strengthen the relationship between you and your dog, as well as reinforce your position as leader. It's a win-win situation for both you and your dog. Watch your dog over the next week or so and take note of the things that you do during the course of the day that the dog seems to really enjoy. Start using those as real life rewards and watch your dog's behavior improve!

Laurie Luck
Certified Pet Dog Trainer (CPDT)
Smart Dog University, LLC

© Smart Dog University, LLC
www.smartdoguniversity.com
(240) 848-3468

Box 1111
Mount Airy, MD 21771
(240) 848-3468
laurie@smartdoguniversity.com

<http://www.SmartDogUniversity.com>

Helping good dogs become great dogs.

If you know of others who would like to receive Your Smart Dog for FREE, please forward this copy so they can subscribe at

<http://www.smartdoguniversity.com>

"Your Smart Dog" is sent monthly only to those who have opted-in to this list. If you do not wish to receive Your Smart Dog or have received it in error, simply reply to this email with UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line.

© 2005 Smart Dog University, LLC. All rights reserved.