

Teach your dog “Drop it” and “Give”

Dogs naturally explore the world using their mouth. You can teach your dog to give you the item that is in their mouth so you can easily get items away from your dog that you do not approve of them having. You can also use “drop it” and “give” when playing games with your dog such as fetch or tug.

Teaching your dog these cues can also be helpful for dogs that like to steal items and it is much easier to teach your dog to bring something to you rather than trying to chase your dog down and get the item back.

Definition of Drop It

The definition of the cue “Drop It” will mean your dog should open his mouth and let go of the item. It is up to you if you would like your dog to drop the item on the floor, in your lap, or in your hand.

Definition of Give

The definition of the cue “Give” will mean your dog will give you the item that he has in his mouth. This also means that your dog will put the item in your hand or will release the item when you put your hand on the item that is in his mouth.

Sometimes these cues are interchangeable or can mean the same thing. Because these cues are very similar you may choose to use one or the other instead of both.

Teaching your dog to trade

The first step to teaching your dog “Drop it” or “Give” is to teach your dog to trade his item to you for something equal or greater.



Additional Resources

Please contact our Behavior Team to speak with a skilled behavior specialist.

BehaviorTeam@spca.org

214-461-5169

www.spca.org/petuniversity

Check the above website for upcoming Pet University training classes to teach your dog “Drop it”, “Give” and much more.

You will need 2 toys of equal value, 2 ropes, 2 balls, 2 squeaky toys, and treats for this lesson.

- Start by giving your dog a toy item and allow him to play with it. Engaging your dog in a game of fetch or tug works best for teaching this cue.
- After your dog has been able to engage with the toy, offer him another toy and say “drop it”. When he drops the first toy to grab the second toy praise him and then engage him with the second toy. If your dog does not give up the first toy, offer him a smelly treat instead. Wave the treat in front of his nose and as soon as he drops the toy, praise him and give him the treat. Pick up the first toy and engage him in play with it again or use the second toy and engage in play.
- Repeat until your dog willingly drops the item when you say “drop it” in exchange for the other item or treat.
- Once your dog is willing to give you his toy for another toy or treat you can place your hand on the toy or just below the dog's mouth and say “give”. As soon as the dog lets go of the toy, resume play with the other toy or reward with a treat.
 - If your dog tries to play tug with the toy either let go and wait for the dog to come back to you or hold your hand firm and do not tug back or say anything to your dog. Your dog will begin to wonder why you aren't engaging and should give up the item. Remember to not repeat the cue “give” but instead wait for the dog to release the item.
 - You may need to wave a treat in front of your dog's nose to encourage them to release the toy that is in their mouth.
- Repeat until your dog is willingly letting go of the item in his mouth when you say “give”.

Use these cues each time you play fetch or tug with your dog so that he learns them more quickly. After your dog has successfully mastered learning each of these cues during play, and your dog willingly gives up an item on cue or drops an item on cue, you can reward your dog with praise and play rather than using treats. At that point you can also begin using the cue in other real life scenarios such as if your dog gets something that he shouldn't have.