

# Teach Your Dog – Hand Targeting

This exercise is wonderful for dogs that are mouthy or shy with you or others. It can also be used as a low-key come when called and to teach tricks. Dogs are curious and seem to naturally come to you to explore what your hand is offering.

- Hold out your hand out, palm facing your dog.
- Right before your dog's nose touches your hand say "Touch," then say "Good!" and immediately give a treat from the other hand.
- If dog does not engage with you, put your hand behind your back and introduce it again. Eventually, present your hand in different locations, saying "Touch" and give a treat the moment your dog touches your hand.
- **Practice six to nine times a day.**
- Next, have your dog a few feet away, then say "Touch," and see if she will come over on her own and touch the palm of your hand with her nose.
- Be sure to place your hand in different places and positions, saying "Touch," then "Good!" when contact happens. Give a treat quickly.

By now, you have started to engage your dog in what you're doing. If she is a mouthy dog, she will now touch with her nose instead of using her teeth. If she is a shy dog, she will see approaching your hand as something positive.

- Have your dog further away from you—working up to 20 feet—then say "Touch."



## Additional Resources

For more information about training and behavior visit our site.

[www.sPCA.org/petuniversity](http://www.sPCA.org/petuniversity)

[PetU@sPCA.org](mailto:PetU@sPCA.org)

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- Add a few feet at a time as you work on this exercise, being sure to go to at least 20 locations for every few feet you move away.
- Be sure to place your hand in different places and positions, saying “Touch,” then “Good!” when contact happens, then give a treat from the other hand.
- As a trick, you can start to put your hand in the air, palm down, and when you say the cue, your dog will jump up to touch your hand, giving you a high-five!

You can also use hand targeting to teach your dog to walk next to you in a heel position by asking for a hand target every few steps right next to you. Another trick is to teach your dog to jump, dance, or spin using a hand target – your dog's nose becomes a magnet to your hand!