

# KLIMB TRAINING MANUAL

Helping Dogs Succeed

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## REWARD-BASED TRAINING

Reward-Based Training is all about working with your dog as a partner. The key to reward-based training is helping your dog succeed. We want to set our dogs up for success, and reward good choices. Your training success will depend on you building strong, trusting communication with your dog. With reward-based training we focus on teaching our dogs what we want them to do. It is important to keep training fun for you and your dog. Training is all about building a bond and communication. If you keep your training sessions short and fun, both you and your dog are more likely to enjoy the training sessions!



## WHAT MOTIVATES YOUR DOG?

Before you begin training your dog, you need to understand what motivates your dog. By understanding what motivates your dog, you will know what to use to reward desired behaviors. Some examples of rewards are tiny pieces of food or a game of fetch or tug. Food tends to be the easiest reward to use because you can get multiple repetitions of a behavior in a short amount of time. Make sure you pick a treat your dog finds reinforcing. Choose healthy treats that can be broken into small pieces. Schedule your training sessions during times that your dog will be hungry. For more information, see video “What motivates your dog?”

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## MARKERS

With reward-based training, we want to use a marker signal that lets our dog know exactly what he did right. A marker can be a small mechanical device called a clicker, or you can use a verbal marker such as “yes.” When teaching new skills, this marker signal will always be followed by a reward (e.g., treat or tug). When you mark a behavior, it is like taking a picture of the behavior you want to reward. Good dog training comes down to clear communication and great timing. Markers will help you with your timing. You may also want to use a ‘keep up the good work’ marker such as “good boy/girl.” This is a word or phrase the dog will learn to mean continue the behavior. It will



let him know that he's doing a good job without coming to you for a treat or play reward.

When your dog becomes proficient with KLIMB training, you may want to use a no reward marker. No reward markers mark any behavior the dog exhibits that is incorrect, such as jumping off the KLIMB before being given permission to do so. "Oops" or "No" are good examples of no reward markers. Be sure that you do not say the no reward marker too harshly. This is only to let the dog know that he made a mistake and lost the opportunity to earn a reward, not to scare him.

If you are going to use a no reward marker, it is important that you have impeccable timing. You want to give your no reward marker word as soon as the dog makes the mistake. You would want to say "oops" before your dog's feet even touched the ground. If your dog has jumped off and taken steps forward, it is too late to correct your dog—simply reset your dog and try again. Remember to always set your dog up for success. For more information, see video "How to use a Marker."

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## GIVING CUES

The tone and volume of your voice should be confident, but not overly forceful. The softer you can cue your dog the better. Your dog should be attentive to your voice, but you should not have to raise it.

## TIMING

Remember, timing is key when marking a desired behavior. You want to mark the behavior as it is happening. The instant your dog jumps onto the KLIMB you will want to mark the dog for making the correct choice. Be sure to follow up with a reward within 1 second of marking.

## INTRODUCING YOUR DOG TO THE KLIMB

The first step to training your dog with the KLIMB is to get him to jump up onto it. There are many methods to doing this. If your dog is fearful of the KLIMB, start your training without installing the legs. Note: If you are using the KLIMB without legs attached, be sure to use cap-plugs to prevent injuries. You can order cap-plugs at [www.blue-9.com](http://www.blue-9.com). If you happen to have a dog that offers the behavior of jumping onto the KLIMB with minimal or no



prompting, mark and reward. Repeat the steps below, but without a treat in your hand. Instead of using a lure, use a simple hand gesture.

If your dog doesn't offer jumping onto the KLIMB, use a lure. For more information, see video "How to lure your dog onto the KLIMB."

- ❑ With a treat in your hand, place it at the dog's nose and slowly lure him up onto the KLIMB. Mark and reward.
- ❑ If your dog chooses to stay on the KLIMB continue to mark and reward.
- ❑ Allow your dog to jump off after a few repetitions.
- ❑ Repeat the luring process until your dog is very comfortable jumping onto the KLIMB.
- ❑ Once comfortable, try gesturing towards the KLIMB without food in your hand. Your dog should jump onto the KLIMB. Mark and reward.

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## ADDING A SIT

When we ask our dog to get on the KLIMB, we will want them to perform a stationary behavior while they are on the KLIMB. You can choose to have your dog sit or down.

- ❑ Cue your dog to jump onto the KLIMB.
- ❑ Cue your dog to sit. Mark and reward.
- ❑ Gesture for your dog to get off the KLIMB.

## ADDING THE "KLIMB" CUE

When your dog is comfortable jumping on and off the KLIMB, and you are able to get him to jump onto the KLIMB with a simple gesture instead of a lure, you are ready to add a cue.

- ❑ Say your new cue, "KLIMB," followed by your old cue, gesturing toward the KLIMB. When your dog performs the behavior, mark and reward.



- ☒ Repeat the process, saying the new cue followed by the old cue. Continue to mark and reward.
- ☒ With repetition, your dog will learn to follow the verbal cue and you will not have to use the hand gesture.

## ADDING A RELEASE CUE

Eventually we will want our dog to stay on the KLIMB until we give him permission to get off. To do this, we will add a release cue. Some examples of a release cue are “Release,” “Break,” “Free,” or “All done.”

- ☒ Cue your dog to jump on the KLIMB. Mark and reward.

- ☒ Say your release cue, and then gesture for your dog to get off the KLIMB. You may have to toss a treat/reward on the ground for your dog the first couple of times.

- ☒ With practice, your dog will learn that when he hears the release cue, he has permission to jump off. Once your dog understands this new skill, do not reward your dog after the release cue. We want almost all of our rewards to happen on the KLIMB.



- ☒ At this time, we have not built in any duration for staying on the KLIMB. If your dog makes a mistake and jumps off the KLIMB before you have given your release cue, simply gesture for your dog to get back on the KLIMB, pause briefly, and then give your release cue. With the next repetition, you can reward your dog for jumping onto the KLIMB.

## ADDING THE THREE DS

We want our dogs to be able to stay on the KLIMB for as long as we ask them to no matter how far away the handler walks, and no matter the number of distractions that appear. We will build up the following areas slowly over time: distance, duration, and distractions.

- ☒ Distance – How far the handler can be away from the dog.
- ☒ Duration – How long the dog will stay on the KLIMB.

- ❑ Distractions – How successful the dog is at remaining on the KLIMB in the presence of distractions.

## MOVE-STICK-DROP RULE

As we increase our criteria for what our dogs have to do in order to earn a treat, we need to remember the Move-Stick-Drop rule. If our dog is successful 8/10 trials, we can move up in our criteria. If our dog is successful 5–7 out of 10 trials, we will stick to the same criteria. If our dog is successful less than 5/10 trials we should drop our criteria down to a lower level.

## ADDING DURATION

We want our dogs to maintain their position on the KLIMB for a duration of time. We may want them to rest on their KLIMB while we eat dinner, visit with friends, or train another dog. To be able to do this, we need to build the duration our dogs will stay on their KLIMB.

For more information, see video "Adding Duration."

- ❑ Cue your dog to jump onto the KLIMB. Pause briefly, then mark and reward.
- ❑ Add duration in short increments.
- ❑ After a few successful repetitions, mark and reward your dog for staying on the KLIMB for 3 seconds.
- ❑ After a few successful repetitions, mark and reward your dog for staying on the KLIMB for 5 Seconds.
- ❑ Build duration slowly. Be sure to release and reset your dog occasionally. Take a short play break after approximately 10 repetitions.
- ❑ If at any point your dog makes a mistake, decrease your criteria. Remember the Move-Stick-Drop rule.



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## ADDING DISTANCE

We want to be able to move freely around our dog while they are on their KLIMB. We may want them to rest on their KLIMB 10 feet away from us while we cook dinner, or watch television. To be able to do this, we need to be able to move away from our dog.

For more information, see video "Adding Distance."

- ❏ Cue your dog to jump onto the KLIMB. Mark and reward.
- ❏ Take one step away from the KLIMB. Mark and return to your dog to reward.
- ❏ After a few successful repetitions, take two steps away from the KLIMB. Mark and return to your dog to reward.
- ❏ Add distance one step at a time by building it in slowly. Be sure to release and reset your dog occasionally.
- ❏ If at any point your dog makes a mistake, decrease your criteria. Remember the Move-Stick-Drop rule.

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## ADDING DISTRACTIONS

Eventually we want our dogs to be able to maintain their position on the KLIMB no matter to higher level distractions. Remember to increase your criteria slowly over time. We will discuss an example using a toy. For more information, see video "Adding Distractions."

- ❏ Cue your dog to jump onto the KLIMB. Mark and reward.
- ❏ Show your dog the toy. Mark and reward if your dog stays on the KLIMB.
- ❏ After a few successful repetitions, slowly wiggle the toy around. Mark and reward if your dog stays on the KLIMB.
- ❏ After a few successful repetitions, squeak the toy. Mark and reward.
- ❏ After a few successful repetitions, gently toss the toy up in the air. Mark and reward.
- ❏ After a few successful repetitions, drop the toy on the ground. Mark and reward.



- ☒ Be sure to release and reset your dog occasionally.
- ☒ Use more distracting toys.
- ☒ Practice with food.
- ☒ Use other distractions available in your environment.
- ☒ If at any point your dog makes a mistake, decrease your criteria. Remember the Move-Stick-Drop rule.

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## FINAL REMINDERS

Remember that consistency is key with dog training. If you are not training or maintaining a behavior, you will lose it. Keep your training sessions short and fun! Our dogs are our partners, it is our job to make performing acceptable behaviors reinforcing.

For more training tips and videos check out the "Learn" section at [www.blue-9.com](http://www.blue-9.com).



## NEED MORE TRAINING INFORMATION?

Check out our KLIMB Training DVD. Follow along with Jamie with our step by step training DVD.

[KLIMB Training DVD](#)