

TRAINING TIP OF THE MONTH

Make “Yes” Mean Something

A marker word is a short word that tells your dog:
That. That moment. That is what I am rewarding.

What is a marker word?

A marker word is a short word, such as “Yes” or “Good”, that tells your dog the exact moment they earned a reward.

Why it matters

Dogs do lots of good things in small moments.

- A glance back at you.
- A pause before barking.
- A step away from a distraction.

The marker helps you say:

That was the bit. Food is coming.

How to teach it

Choose one word, such as “Yes”.

- Say it once.
- Give your dog a treat.
- Repeat 10 times.
- Practise in short, easy sessions.

Marker first. Food second.



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How you know it is working

When your dog hears the marker word and immediately looks towards you for their treat, the word is starting to mean something.

Keep practising in easy situations before using it around distractions.

When to use it

Use your marker word when your dog does something you want to see more often, such as:

- looking back at you
- coming away from a distraction
- pausing instead of reacting
- settling calmly
- choosing to check in with you

One last thought...

Your marker word does not reward the behaviour by itself. It tells your dog exactly which moment earned the reward.

Keep the order clear:

Behaviour. Marker. Reward.

