

# Motivation

The key to any training is knowing how to motivate your dog.

Knowing your dogs' likes and dislikes will impact your training enormously. Does your dog prefer cheese or chicken, or would he much prefer a good game with a toy?

All dogs prefer different things. Generally, Labradors and Retrievers adore food and would most likely prefer a smelly bit of frankfurter to anything else. However, the terriers may prefer a good tug game with a ragger, collies and sheepdogs have a preference for chase games like fetch.

One dog may really enjoy being petted while others may not, so our response in training is important. If we animate ourselves, make noises, look excited as well as giving the reward it all adds to the motivation.

However be aware of what your dog finds rewarding. A lot of dogs don't like being patted on the head, if you have a tendency to do this to your dog, watch his reaction to it. Does he really like it?

## The quality of the reward

- Most dogs won't just work for praise. Unfortunately they don't just do things because they love us - we need to offer them something to make it worth their while.
- Your dog may work for dry food in the house but if you are in an environment with a lot of distractions, for example outside on a walk or in a class, you may need to up the stakes. Your reward has got to out weigh the reward your dog may be getting from the rest of the distractions.
- If your dogs' top choice is food there is more you can do with food than you'd think. You can make the reward much more exciting by doing food circuits where the reward becomes a combination of both food and a chase (see Jo Hill's training video, 'The Motivation Movie').
- If you use toys as a reward make sure that the game lasts a good couple of minutes otherwise your dog won't regard it as much of a reward.
- The most important thing in training is to have fun! Your emotions will come through in your tone of voice and body language - if you're having fun, so will your dog!

See [Alpha Shop](#) for "Motivation Movie " by Joanna Hill