



Resource Guarding Protocol -Part 1



Before starting these exercises the dog should have a good understanding of the meaning of markers, either a clicker or the word “Yes”. The dog also needs to understand and respond to the recall command {**Come** or **Here**) and **Place** command.

Create a new, positive CER (Conditioned Emotional Response) surrounding people approaching a valued resource using CC (Classical Conditioning). You may need to use a back tie for safety.

A) Marker Conditioning-Classical Conditioning or CC

For this exercise we don't use any resources, just an area without anything really interesting.

To begin, simply click or say “Yes” and drop a treat on the ground. Try to drop it so the dog has to move a few feet to get it, but not too far. You can use simple kibble from the dog's daily ration for this.

VERY IMPORTANT: Be careful to not reach for a treat or the treat bag until **AFTER the marker**, so the dog is responding to the **marker itself** (“Yes” or a click), NOT seeing you reach for the food. Once the dog is displaying a connection between the marker and a treat coming, proceed to the next step.

B) Conditioned Emotional Response (CC)

Now we begin to change the dog's perception towards someone approaching while they are eating. Continue the same process only this time simply approach the dog while eating from his bowl and drop a HVT (High Value Treat) away from the bowl. No need for a marker in this step.

For safety, the dog may need to be back tied. Determine at what distance the dog feels uncomfortable and stay a foot or two back from there.

2

Teaching the “Out”

As in the first exercise in Step 1-A, we do this in an area where there isn't anything interesting to the dog. For this next step we are still using CC, but will soon move into OC (Operant Conditioning). This is almost exactly like Step 1-A, but now we are using the word “Out” instead of “Yes” or a clicker. The goal is to begin conditioning the dog to voluntarily move away from a desirable resource to get something else. This is the beginning of diffusing their emotional feelings of possession.

3

Now we move into Operant Conditioning and begin creating a positive Conditioned Emotional Response (CER) to **moving away from** a resource by conditioning a call away from an object. The idea is to **reduce conflict** when the dog is asked to come away from a valued object and begin to feel good about coming to you, moving away from the resource. We will use an empty food bowl and kibble for this exercise.

- Put a long leash on the dog, then place an empty bowl on the floor a several feet away. Then place a few pieces of regular kibble in it. As the dog begins to eat, back away from the bowl a few feet, up to about 10 feet.
- As soon as the dog finishes the kibble, call the dog to you using whatever word they know, such as Come or Here. **Mark them coming to you with “Yes” or a clicker, praise and feed the dog a HVT.**



4 I call this next one the Bait and Switch. This exercise requires a helper. The helper will have a LVT (Low Value Treat), such as daily kibble, while the handler has a HVT.

- With the dog on a long leash, have the helper lure the dog away from the handler with the kibble in hand. The helper can allow the dog to sniff or even nibble at the food.
- Once the dog is interested in the helper, the handler will call the dog back to them. The moment the handler says the recall word, the helper closes their hand and turns away from the dog (Bar is Closed). Once the recall cue is said, the helper should become very uninteresting to the dog. It may take a few tries for the dog to figure out that the handler has the “good stuff” and make the commitment to recalling to the handler.
- Rinse and repeat. Do a lot of reps for this particular exercise if you have a helper. **Don’t forget to mark, praise and reward the dog lavishly for a good response in coming back to you.** The faster and snappier they recall the better!
- As the dog gets better at this, increase the value of the food used by the helper to make it more challenging. Reward good responses!!

5 This exercise will be done while the dog is eating. Do exactly the same thing as Step 1-A, only this time use the word “Out” BEFORE you drop the food. Remember the back tie for safety.

- Again, drop the HVT a few feet away from the bowl and from you. The dog doesn’t have to do anything, you just approach, say “Out” and drop the HVT away from the bowl and yourself. IMPORTANT: remember to say “Out” BEFORE reaching for the food or making any motion towards dropping the food. If you’re using a treat bag, don’t reach into the bag until AFTER you have said “Out”.
- After several repetitions you should see the dog begin to anticipate the HVT by looking up or moving away from the bowl as you say “Out”, or even before you say out. This is what we are looking for, the dog making a conscious decision the move away from the food, if even it’s just a raise of the head. Be sure to mark with a clicker or yes (after you say “Out) and reward with HVT and praise.
- Repeat the above exercise using a toy. As with food, we don’t want to use a super high value toy to begin with. The dog doesn’t have to drop the toy, we’re just creating the understanding that “Out” predicts good things for them. As with food, if the dog does drop the toy, be sure to mark with “Yes” or a clicker and reward. Just be sure to say “out” first, then mark and reward.

Do LOTS of repetitions and don’t move on until you feel the dog is “getting it”



Resource Guarding Protocol -Part 2

Intermediate Skills

We will be using the e-collar as a motivator for these exercises. Before moving on to this next phase, we need to have the dog very reliable in the Come and send to Place commands. It is imperative that the dog is in the avoidance phase of e-collar training. Do not attempt these exercises until your trainer tells you you're ready! Moving forward with these exercises before the dog is ready will set back the training significantly.



- 1** Now we will repeat some of the exercises we did in Part 1, step 3 and 4, but now we will add brief taps on the e-collar **only if needed. Do not try this on your own until you have worked with your trainer.** If your dog has been properly prepared for this step, the e-collar should be needed minimally, if at all.
- 2 Remember to back tie for safety.** Don't be tempted to do this without a leash and tie back. We will fade these things out eventually, but you want to be sure that you have a low/no conflict fallback in the event the dog tries to blow you off. You DO NOT want to rely on an e-collar correction. Use the e-collar only as a motivator.
 - Repeat the "Out" exercise the same as in Part 1 Step 5, except we will add in the e-collar. Give the dog something of moderate to high value to the dog, either food in a bowl, a toy, bone, etc. and step away for a few seconds.
 - After giving them some time with the resource, approach as before and say "Out". Wait for the dog to lift their head or otherwise shift their attention to you. Then toss a HVT away from the resource and yourself.
 - If the dog remains as they are, say "Nope" and tap the e-collar briefly. If the dog then disengages, mark it with "Yes" and toss a HVT away from the resource and yourself. If not, take hold of the leash by the back tie and gently repeat starting with "OUT". If the dog reacts badly or refuses to move away, go back to part 1.
 - **Remember to release to dog to go back to the resource with "Break" after they have retrieved to HVT from the floor. We don't want them to just rush back to it and "claim" it.**
 - After several repetitions you should see the dog begin to anticipate the HVT by looking up or moving away from the bowl as you say "Out", or even before you say out. Be sure to reward generously for especially good responses!
 - Give the dog a decent pause between repetitions. Don't over do it, 5 or so reps per sessions is plenty, then put the resource away and do something fun with the dog that doesn't involve anything the dog is possessive about.
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IMPORTANT: remember to say "Out" BEFORE reaching for the food or making any motion towards dropping the food. If you're using a treat bag, don't reach into the bag until AFTER you have said "Out"