



Guide Dogs for the Blind

Food Reward Basics Part 2

Multiples

Link to video: [Food Reward Basics Part 2 - Multiples](#)

Please first review the document: [Food Reward Basics Part 1](#)

Food Reward Basics Part 2 covers rewarding with multiple pieces of food such as in pezzing/luring, and jackpots.

To Mark or Not to Mark?

See [FAQ on Using a Marker](#)

We don't use a marker when luring. We mark desirable behaviors that the dog offers voluntarily. When we are luring, the handler is making the behavior happen – the puppy is following the food held on its nose. Once the puppy becomes adept at following the lure into a position, the hand that is holding the food takes the shape of a signal. The puppy is progressively weaned off the lure to a pure signal and/or verbal cue and marked when it responds. (See [Ruff Notes - March 2019 Fading the Lure](#))

Secondary Reinforcement (Verbal and Physical Praise)

Enjoyment of verbal praise and petting is highly desirable in a potential guide dog. Some puppies respond to voice and touch naturally and will strive to earn this kind of attention from the handler. Other puppies learn to appreciate this type of reinforcement when it is paired with a primary reinforcer – food. Handlers are encouraged to praise the puppy as food is given during pezzing/luring and, when practical, stroke and pet the puppy when it achieves the desired behavior. Verbal praise should be at an appropriate level for the individual puppy and situation – sometimes praise will be low and soothing and at other times a more excited tone may be required to motivate the puppy. Petting too can either be calming and soothing (long, slow strokes and gentle ear rubs) or stimulating (patting and vigorous rubbing).

Pezzing/Luring

In pezzing and luring, the handler uses food to guide the puppy through the motions of a behavior. We use it to introduce behaviors (such as obedience positions) then we gradually wean the puppy off the food lure. A puppy doesn't 'know' the behavior until it responds to the cue without the food lure in sight.

Pezzing

See the document [Pezzing and Luring](#) and [Human-Only Training Games](#)

Pezzing is a type of luring using multiple pieces of food in the hand. It's a skill that handlers need before introducing a puppy to the foundation obedience positions of stand, sit and down. In the early stages of training these positions, the puppy may need almost continuous rewards for increments of position. The handler's hand, holding multiple pieces of kibble, is kept on the puppy's nose to lure it into position and individual kibbles are pushed forward to the puppy's mouth. Should the puppy lose interest, the handler must put the hand back to the puppy's muzzle, like a magnet, and keep the puppy focused by pushing kibbles forward for the puppy to eat.

The [Emergency Lure](#) is another example of the pezzing technique.

Luring

See the document [Pezzing and Luring](#) and [Human-Only Training Games](#)

Once the puppy understands following the food-containing hand, we can limit the food to one piece of kibble held under the thumb on the fingers. The hand begins to take the shape of the appropriate signal, and the kibble is released to the puppy when it is in the desired position. The key to successful luring is keeping the luring hand right on the puppy's nose at first and gradually, over multiple sessions, moving the hand a little further away from the pup's muzzle as the signal is given. (See [Ruff Notes - March 2019 Fading the Lure](#))

Jackpots

Although we generally reward puppies with a single piece of food at a time, there are situations where we use multiple pieces of food, such as in jackpotting. Jackpots can be very motivating for a puppy, particularly if the puppy is struggling to learn a behavior. They can also be used as a 'super reward' when a puppy overcomes a challenging distraction. Used too often, they can lose their jackpot appeal, and with some puppies, jackpots are so exciting they can cause an undesired increase in energy. Judicious use of jackpots can be especially beneficial for puppies that have lower motivation and those that may need help in building confidence.

Two methods are available for delivering jackpots:

- Offering a whole handful of food at once. How many kibbles depends on the size of the handler's hands; at least four kibbles but not so many that they are easily dropped.
- Delivering four or five kibbles individually in quick succession. With this method, the hand delivering the reward is pulled out of sight quickly in between each delivery so that the puppy is not tempted to wrap in front of the handler to look at the delivery hand.