

The "Place" command for Therapy Dogs is to command the dog to go to a preordained spot, (often marked by a towel or small rug) and remain there until directed to perform a different command, or released. The purpose of the place command is to instill comfort and confidence in the handler and therapy recipient by being able to trust the dog will know where to be and stay where it was commanded to stay. The purpose of the command for the Therapy Dog is to instill comfort and confidence that there will always be a safe place to go. As the command progresses, the Therapy Dog will often view this action as "work", and will perform the command automatically.

PLACE command will use the foundation commands of come, down or sit, and stay. You WILL NOT be releasing from place, but chaining will take affect as the lesson progresses. The towel or rug (referred to from here as TARGET) should be large enough for dog to place two feet. Blue or yellow targets are recommended. You will be using verbal MARKS, preferably "YES" (If you are using a clicker or other non verbal device to Mark behaviors please let me know before you start training)

#### STEP I

Remove dog from training practice location. Put Target on the floor in a location that is only accessible from one side. (up against a wall for example). Make sure there is clear access to target. Put three or four very tasty treats on the target. Bring dog back into the training practice area and wait until

Dog notices and eats treats. Repeat the command PLACE as the dog is eating them. Repeat this process five times a day for two days. This is the CONDITIONING aspect of training the command. The dog has built a very good impression of the target (Treats just GROW outta this thing!) and the verbal command. (Mom's so HAPPY when I happen to stumble across treats!). By day two dog should go directly to target when they enter the training area.

If this has NOT happened by day three please call me so we can see what is the issue.

#### STEP II

Day three you will move the target out from the wall, so it is accessible from at least three sides. For days three and four, whenever the dog approaches their target, say the word place to them, lead them fully to target, praise and treat, using place command as much as possible. DO NOT use any other commands such as STAY OR DOWN at this point. If your dog is familiar with wait you may use it, but nothing else. Step II is the conclusion of conditioning. You will begin TRAINING at STEP III

#### STEP III

DAY FIVE \_ Move target to centerish of room. Do ONE random placement of treats a few minutes before your training session.

Begin your training session by placing the dog in a STAY at your side, anywhere between 10 and 15 feet away. Happily say Place!" Over and over again, rushing to the target, until dog puts feet on target. MARK the placement, praise and treat. Do not release. Repeat this process from different angles of the room, allowing the dog to find it's best approach for placement. One or two of these approaches per session. You may repeat this as often as you like during the day. End the entire session with a success and then you can release.

#### STEP IV-

Bring your dog to your side at a stay from basically the same positions you had chosen on day four. Command your dog to place, use body movements and gestures until dog arrives at TARGET, and places paws on target. MARK desired behavior and toss a treat to the dog. It's ok if you miss and dog has to move to get it. Repeat until dog moves immediately to target and remains there waiting for the treat to be tossed. Once that happens move into the final STEP V.

#### STEP V.

You will be basically repeating steps III and IV progressively moving further and further away from your training area. Try moving the target all over the room (on the floor), MARKING, toss treat and praise. When dog reliably seeks out target each time in practice (three times in a row should suffice) repeat steps III and IV in different rooms of the house.

Most dogs are ready for real-life use of the place command by lesson three, when we will begin public Access training. Until then, save the place command only for home and sessions with your trainer.