

THE HANG OUT *Hack*

Many people have hopes and dreams that their dog can go anywhere and engage in all sorts of public environments with them in which their freedom is not an option (like restaurant patio dining).

WHEN to use it and How it works!

Dogs and human beings, alike, do not come into this world knowing how to navigate these situations. We must teach them the rules of engagement when traversing the modern human world of concrete jungles and all of the related unique distractions and expectations for them to behave in a way that is not problematic to others. Not only do they need to understand how to stay calm in stimulating environments, but they also need to build a pattern of comfortable tolerance for being still and relaxing with so much going on.

The Hang Out Hack is geared specifically for this goal, using the PPP (*Predictable Patterns of Precedent*).

**WHEN
IN THIS SCENARIO,
THIS IS WHAT YOU DO**

Using patterns of behavior for these conditions, creates predictability and sets a precedent for expectations which enables the dog to relax and have a plan (rather than wonder what to do) in many otherwise overstimulating public situations

HOW To use It

You want to begin in a low intensity situation (most likely your home) at first in order to have the optimal opportunity for explaining the criteria for hanging out. As the dog understands the rules you will increase duration and practice in more distracting environments.

- You will have your dog on a leash, as the discriminating stimulus for these scenarios.
- You will be shaping the pattern of “*when your leash is on and I sit down, you lay down*” in a fun game of “musical chairs”.



Equipment

Treats, a 6 foot leash, multiple seating areas.

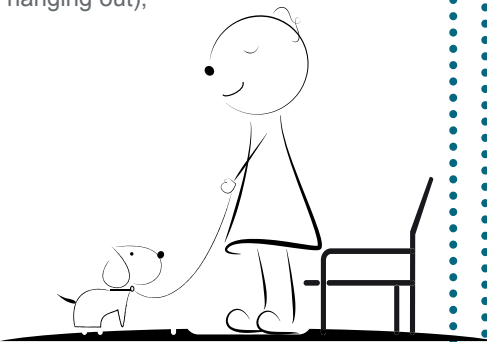


THE HANG OUT

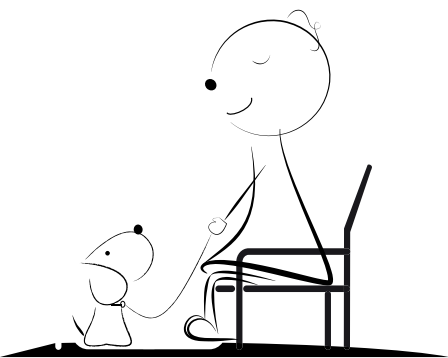
Hack

STEP 1

Before you sit down, make sure that the dog is aware of what you are doing so they notice you sitting when you do (this will become the cue for hanging out),



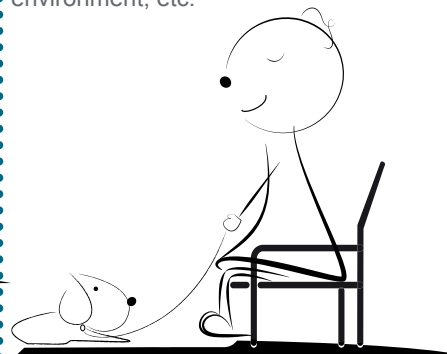
As you sit, simultaneously start luring the dog into the down position, holding the leash with just enough slack for the dog to sit up or reposition in the down as needed.



Offer a gentle favorite treat lure into the down position (no need to cue). For some of the more operantly inclined dogs we want to set this up as relaxation and a pattern, not a training exercise or performance.

On that note, contrary to how many of us have been taught to train a “down”, we are not going for the traditional obedience “active” down in which the

dog's attention is fixed on us. - Rather, we are wanting to **shape a “passive” down** (i.e. “Hanging Out”) in public and a relaxed affect overall. We do NOT want to be making much eye contact with the dog in this pattern. We are modeling the behavior of **simply hanging out** and looking around naturally, enjoying the environment, etc.



We want our criteria of reinforcement to be the dog doing the same.

STEP 2

At first **heavily reinforce** the dog for remaining in the down position (multiple treats, one after the other).

Eventually, begin to **increase the amount of time between the treats** as the dog is successful and mark any increase in calm behavior (looking around but holding position or staying down in the presence of a big distraction like a person or dog walking by).

Slowly increase your expectations of what criteria you are looking for; not looking at you, resting head on the ground, etc.

STEP 3

After a few minutes of this, **calmly stand up** and signal to the dog that it is ok for them to stand up.

You will only be practicing in one seated position for about 2 minutes or so at a time before saying “OK!” or other **release word**, maybe tossing a treat on the ground out of reach to promote the dog standing up when you say it, and then switching seats for round two.

Move to a **different seat** and repeat this process.

Practice this in **several other locations** for just a few minutes at a time. When you are finished take the leash off to signal that they are done.

** If the dog stands up before you have given the release and you just started this process, you may lure them back into a down, rewarding only after waiting about 15-20 seconds.*

**You want to ensure that the leash is short enough that if the dog does stand up or try to walk around they can't get outside of the original spot you had them lay down in. You don't need to pressure or cue a dog back into a down just keep the leash short so they don't have any other interesting options. (*Think keeping a kid blocked into the seat in a booth at a restaurant so they know the only option is to stay seated at the table).*

**If you ever feel that a dog is distressed in one of these public situations, don't force or try to push the establishment of this hack. These situations are not for all dogs.*

