

Positive Training & No Free Lunch

Right now, if your dog is like most dogs, there's not a lot expected of him in exchange for the many things you give him for free. But since animals are hardwired to work to survive, and most dogs were originally bred for a particular type of job (like hunting or herding), your dog will benefit from the mental and physical effort of learning to earn his food and other resources in life.

To do this, we recommend a No Free Lunch (NFL) program. NFL gives your dog some work to do to "earn his keep" while helping you improve his training. It's built on the fact that you control all the valuable resources in your dog's life, what we call "life" rewards. They're the simple things your dog wants, such as doors opening, walks, car rides, dinner, water, a chew toy, or play with you. The basic rule is that your dog gets those life rewards *after* doing something you ask him to do.

YOU	YOUR DOG
Put your dog's leash on to go for a walk	Must sit-stay until you've attached the leash
Feed your dog	Must sit-stay until you've placed the bowl on the floor and released him to eat
Play fetch with a ball or toy	Must lie down or sit before each toss of the toy
Open a door (can be a gate, car or house door) for him that he wants through	Must wait as you open it until you release him to go through
Greet your dog	Must sit or stand, but not jump all over you

Key NFL Benefits

- NFL gives your dog a rewarding job that keeps him happy and out of trouble because he has to problem solve to get what he needs and wants in life.
- NFL gives your dog the rules and structure that dogs thrive on and helps him become an enjoyable, trusted family member.
- NFL builds the training skills you want in quick, single interactions throughout your day, rather than in longer training session that can be hard to find time for.

Tips to NFL Success

- Make sure any skill you use in the NFL program is already well learned and 90% reliable.
- Once you've given a cue (like "Sit"), don't give your dog what he wants until he does what you asked. Remember, one name, one cue. Don't nag his name or repeat the cue.
- If he doesn't comply, no need to scold or correct. Just walk away (leaving the leash or bowl on the counter). Come back a minute later and try again. Be patient. Eventually he will have to do what you want in order to get what he wants.