STANDARD CONCEPTS – DEAF DOGS (page 6 includes blind dogs)

My Puppy is Deaf, now what?

My puppy is deaf … what do I do? First off, don't panic. Whether your dog is born deaf or has gone deaf due to illness or hearing impaired due to age you can still communicate just fine.

You need these 5 basics to communicate:

1. A way to connect with your Eyes which will be the basis for all your communication
2. A way to say Yes or No – to communicate if they are giving you the desired or correct
3. response
4. A Position Sit/Down/Stand
5. A Stay and a comeback (recall) response Stay/Come
6. A Directional – sending to a location or asking for a specific direction for them to go

First, if your puppy was born deaf. Believe it or not, this is the easiest scenario for you. Your dog won't miss what they never had, and in this case, they never had their hearing. You want to make sure your puppy will grow up comfortable in their environment and not be startled when touched or approached. Since they cannot hear or may have very limited hearing it is good to get your dog used to being touched in many different places on their body to wake them.

You want to do this in a gentle manner and wake them up softly. When they wake up and see you keep your response calm and make it a relaxing experience for them. You want to be able to approach your dog awake as well from behind. Going up behind your deaf puppy and touching their back or side, or top of the head gently is a good way to start. Let them turn around and react to your presence. We again want a calm response and want to reward calm behavior. Raising a deaf dog that does not startle easily will make both their life and your life much easier!

Connect with your Eyes

Focus - You want to get good eye contact with your dog even more so with a deaf dog. The only way the two of you can communicate is through hand signs and touch. When your puppy looks up and you and you make eye contact, give them a sign you will want to use for “focus/watch me”. Use your pointer finger pointing out at their eyes then swinging up and pointing that same finger up to your eyes. Mark with a thumbs up, then treat.

You are asking for “watch me”. Take each opportunity you have to teach “focus”, every time your puppy looks up at you, smile and give the hand sign “focus”.

Communicating Yes or No

To say “Yes” to your dog, or mark a command use a “**thumbs up**” make sure it is a plain clear thumbs up right in front of their face. Also say the word “yes” out loud, your dog will learn to

read your face. It is important to also talk to your deaf dog, they will learn your facial expressions.

To say “No” to your dog you can wave your pointer finger back and forth, waving a No No. The word “no” when spoken looks much different on your face than a “yes”. So again, it is important to say the word “No”. With positive dog training, we try not to use the word “no”, but with a deaf dog we do need to be able to communicate with a “no” that is not what I wanted a bit differently than with a hearing dog. Marking the “no” at the correct time is very important. You can also use this “no” as the beginning of your “leave it”.

Ten Most Common Hand Signals for Deaf Dogs

Watch me, Sit, Down, Stay, Come, Leave it, Quiet, Place, Off, Heel

Watch me: Use two fingers pointing out at their eyes then swinging up and pointing those same two fingers up to your eyes

Sit: handout with palm up and bend your fingers up, your hand almost looks like a chair, slightly move your whole arm up and down and say Sit. You can use a touch prompt as well which is a finger tap on the base of the tail pushing down. Teach BOTH hand sign and touch prompt if dog is blind and deaf, or if your deaf dog will be going blind soon.

Down: hand straight out with palm flat and facing down, then push down with your hand in front of the dog and say Down. You can use a touch prompt as well which is your flat palm on your dog's shoulder blades and lightly press down or two fingers tapping the toes as you lure into a down.

Stay: handout like a stop sign in front of dog, also verbalize the word stay. Your touch prompt would be a flat palm in front of the nose and tap lightly.

Come: arm straight out in front of you and then bend at the elbow bringing your hand towards your chest. This is a big wave inward which is easy for your dog to see from afar. You can also verbalize Come, dog learn facial expressions. Your touch prompt for deaf blind dog is fingers under the chin swiping the chin in a forward motion to come towards you.

Leave it: You may have to tap your dog for attention for a leave it cue. This is just a fact of life with a deaf dog because you cannot yell leave it without them looking at you to understand you are communicating with them. I quickly always tap if the leave it is very important and always with a deaf blind dog. In the case of deaf blind, all this is, is a distraction to get them to come to you because you can't verbalize or show them why it is a "leave it". But deaf dogs can definitely learn why you want them to leave it so the training is done two ways:

There are two situations for a leave it: (they need to understand "no" before you can teach "leave it")

The first one you come over and can tap the dog then reach in front of their face and point at the object and wave a No finger in front of them.

The second one is if you are very close to your dog and you can just reach down to the object and wave a no finger in front of the object without having to tap them first. It is important to

teach your deaf dog certain things in your home or their immediate environment that are “leave it” items. You can walk up to those items and practice those leave its directly.

The reward for leaving the object is tricky, you don’t want to point at something, then wave a no finger and have them look up at you, which means they left it, but you need to step back and call them to heel or to sit, something else before the reward.

Otherwise, they can think the reward was looking at the object that you pointed at first. Leave it is a little harder with deaf dogs, only because of the communication issue. So go slow and be clear with your communication and reward.

Quiet: put your handout in front near their face when the bark do a movement like you are making your hand “talk” only you start with the hand open and when you say “quiet” you Close your hand.

Place: using a flat hand directing point, send your dog to their “place”. Walk with them when you point to show them their place, then have them sit or down. Reset and do this over again. Eventually, we want our dog to go into a down (settle position). Build duration first and then distance. After they have learned a flat hand directing point, you can build on this and use it as a send or go to for many other things as a directional cue.

Make sure to pick up place when you complete training. This will build value of the placemat and also keep it from being a toy (treats smell very good on the mat). Treats should be delivered on the mat, not from hand to the mouth. The place is where all good things happen. Also, make sure you are releasing your dog often, especially in the beginning of training this concept.

You are working on duration this week. Start slow and build time slowly over the week. Goal is to see if your dog can do 3-5 minutes by the next session. Don’t reward for getting off the mat without being released. The consequence of getting off the mat needs to meet the level of where the dog is at in training for this concept.

So, if you have just started teaching place and your dog is consistently getting off before you release, you are either not giving treats fast enough or waiting too long before releasing

especially in the beginning. If your dog has been consistently good at 3 minutes and you are trying to increase time/duration to 4 minutes and your dog starts getting off place without being released, have your dog go back to place using your hand cue, they should lay down and go into a settle. Since your dog can easily do 3 minutes at this point, you need to wait for that 3 minutes to treat (work at your dog's level) and do that a few times. Then instead of trying to move from 3 to 4 minutes, try maybe 3 minutes 20 seconds to start raising duration.

Off: you can use a motion to swipe down or any motion and is consistent to get them to understand movement away from or off a person or object. Do NOT push them down or touch them. If you can when doing the swiping motion, step into them or invade their space to get them to comply.

This is much harder if a deaf blind dog is learning off for the first time because you do have to touch them, so it becomes a game to them. So in the case of a deaf blind dog, touch them to put them off of you, then push a flat hand in front of their nose which can mean stop or no. Get them to sit or down, then reward. So the reward is at the very end for an alternate behavior.

Heel: You can get a deaf dog to heel by using the "touch" command at your side with your hand in heel, you can lure them at first with a treat, then you can get them to nudge their nose on the hand asking for the treat, then remove the treat and just place your hand down at your side for the touch that they have learned.

Also use your "watch me" to keep their attention and keep them engaged.

A deaf blind dog can learn to walk on a leash nicely too. You just have to practice short walks, short leash 3 ft in the beginning so they aren't ending up in the street side or the yard side with cactus or plants. Deaf blind dogs are not usually fearful, if they were born this way, so don't be surprised if your deaf blind dog pulls on leash and just wants to take off, because they do!! Be very careful because they can't see or hear and get into trouble quickly off leash.

Deaf, or blind or deafblind dogs should **always** be on a leash or longline for their own safety due to lack in ability for you to get an emergency command to them.

Enrichment / Games to Teach

Snuffle Mat https://youtu.be/7yEud7IfjGI

Using a Kong Toy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwZI1isnvPQ

Box games (start with the box completely open to encourage confidence when beginning work with boxes) – with multiple boxes https://youtu.be/_qVIJotQQ9E little more advanced with a single box https://youtu.be/pGvufXEFeHE single foraging box/sniff https://youtu.be/cerVLeIf1Ss

Up/Down Pattern Game

1. Place a treat on the floor by your left foot between the heel of your foot and the arch of your foot area.
2. Wait for your dog to look up at you. Don't say anything or move, just wait.
3. Your dog looks up at you. Mark with THUMBS UP SIGNAL
4. Place another treat on the floor by your left foot between the heel of your foot and the arch of your foot area.
5. Your dog will look Down to eat the treat.
6. Wait for your dog to look up at you. Repeat steps 3-4.

Ping-Pong - With your dog on leash, toss a treat to your left (make sure that you don't throw it past the length of your leash)

1. Your dog looks up at you.
2. Mark with THUMBS UP SIGNAL.
3. Follow the Mark with THUMBS UP SIGNAL with a treat tossed a few inches to the right.
4. Your dog will run to eat the treat.
5. When your dog looks up at you again.
6. Mark with THUMBS UP SIGNAL
7. Follow the Mark with THUMBS UP SIGNAL with a treat tossed a few inches to the left.
8. Your dog looks up at you again…Repeat

STANDARD CONCEPTS – DEAF and BLIND DOGS

My Puppy is Deaf AND Blind, now what?

My puppy is deaf and blind or going blind … what do I do? First off, don't panic. Whether your dog is born deaf/blind or has gone deaf / blind due to illness or due to age you can still communicate just fine. We will use touch and smell, the remaining strong senses to help your dog be successful.

You need these 6 basics to communicate:

1. A way to connect through touch
2. A way to say Yes or No – to communicate if they are giving you the desired or correct
3. response
4. A Position Sit/Down/Stand
5. A Stay and a comeback (recall) response Stay/Come
6. A Directional – sending to a location or asking for a specific direction for them to go

Since they cannot hear or see you will need to get your dog used to being touched in many different places on their body to wake them.

You want to do this in a gentle manner and wake them up softly. When they wake up, keep your response calm and make it a relaxing experience for them. You want to be able to approach your dog awake as well from behind. Going up behind your deaf/blind puppy and touching their back or side, or top of the head gently is a good way to start. Let them turn around and react to your presence. We again want a calm response and want to reward calm behavior. Raising a deaf/blind dog that does not startle easily will make both their life and your life much easier!

Communicating Yes or No

To say "Yes" to your dog or MARK, you will use a touch command touching the chest of your dog with 2 fingers. You may say the word "yes" out loud. It won't help your dog, but it may help you. https://youtu.be/519sV5a76fg

To say "No" to your dog you will tap the top of their nose, to say "No".

Nine Most Common Touch Signals for Deaf/Blind Dogs

Sit, Down, Stay, Come, Leave it, Quiet, Place, Off, Heel

Sit: handout with palm up and bend your fingers up, your hand almost looks like a chair, slightly move your whole arm up and down and say Sit. You can use a touch prompt as well which is a finger tap on the base of the tail. Teach BOTH hand sign and touch prompt if dog is blind and deaf, or if your deaf dog will be going blind soon. https://youtu.be/3SOqqw0G35o

Down: hand straight out with palm flat and facing down, then push down with your hand in front of the dog and say Down if you would like. You can use a touch prompt as well which is your flat palm on your dog's shoulder blades and lightly press down or two fingers tapping the toes as you lure into a down. https://youtu.be/sWHOEL8RgyU

Stay: handout like a stop sign in front of dog, also verbalize the word stay if you would like. Your touch prompt would be a flat palm in front of the nose and tap lightly. https://youtu.be/VLXxmrbrvxs

Come: Your touch prompt for deaf blind dog is fingers under the chin swiping the chin in a forward motion to come towards you, with you moving backwards slightly. https://youtu.be/AKPH_VSHOOs

Leave it: You will tap your dog for attention for a leave it cue. This is just a fact of life with a deaf/blind dog because you cannot ask for a leave it without them looking at you to understand you are communicating with them. Always tap if the leave it is very important with a deaf blind dog. In the case of deaf blind, this is just a distraction to get them to come to you because you can't verbalize or show them why it is a "leave it".

Quiet: put your handout in front near their face when the bark do a movement like you are making your hand "talk" only you start with the hand open and when you say "quiet" you Close your hand lightly around your dog's muzzle.

Place/Go To A Mat: Cue is the presence of the mat in your dog's vicinity. Use a follow me cue / Come cue. https://youtu.be/QEIDcllzL1Q

Off: This is much harder if a deaf blind dog is learning off for the first time because you do have to touch them, so it becomes a game to them. So in the case of a deaf blind dog, touch them to put them off of you, then push a flat hand in front of their nose which can mean stop or no. Get them to sit or down, then reward. So the reward is at the very end for an alternate behavior.

Heel: A deaf blind dog can learn to walk on a leash nicely too. Start with practicing touching your dog's collar. Touch her neck. Immediately treat. You just have to practice short walks, short leash 3 ft in the beginning so they aren't ending up in the street side or the yard side with cactus or plants. Deaf blind dogs are not usually fearful, if they were born this way, so don't be surprised if your deaf blind dog pulls on leash and just wants to take off, because they do!! Be very careful because they can't see or hear and get into trouble quickly off leash. https://youtu.be/7E4BWyo0U60

Deaf, or blind or deafblind dogs should **always** be on a leash or longline for their own safety due to lack in ability for you to get an emergency command to them.

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