

Trick 1__My Dog Can Count!

By Coco and Sue Ridgley

Training a Lhasa Apso to do tricks isn't much different than training other dogs, if the other dogs aren't very "biddable". Lhasas tend to be "I'll do it on my own terms" kind of dogs or "We did that already. I'm not doing it again." Motivation is really key to successful training. One motivation might be high value food treats, if you find something he/she really likes. The rule for treating is "Don't be a vending machine, be a slot machine." Unpredictable, but frequent enough to keep it interesting to him is best.

Another motivator might be a toy. In Coco's case, nothing gets him more excited than something that squeaks...the louder the better. Our friends brought him a large "squeaky" bone toy that he chases, puts in the basket, carries around, digs under a blanket for, etc. He loves that thing. (At night, though, it has to sleep in the drawer...no playing with it in the middle of the night!) He also loves squeaky balls, squeaky stuffed toys, pull toys, flying disks, etc.

Here's an easy speak routine you can teach your dog: (My dog can count)

"Coco, speak"...he speaks once and gets a treat.

"Coco, speak twice"...he barks twice and gets a treat.

"Coco, speak three times"...he barks three times and gets a treat.

"Coco, how much is two plus two?" ...he barks four times and gets a lot of treats!

(Of course, there's a trick to this. As the handler, I control the treats. I watch him and treat him at the appropriate times. He doesn't really count, he watches me and barks until I treat. But, it looks good and people like it.)

Sue Ridgley and Coco