

Release Cue

Any time you are working with your dog, you need to clarify when they are working and when they are free to do as they please. You can let them know they are working by giving them a cue to perform the desired behaviour, but when should they stop?

This is why you need a release cue.

If you are asking your dog to perform a series of behaviours for example sit, down, and stand the cue for the next behaviour will terminate the previous behaviour. But what about the last behaviour?

Generally our marker “yes” or “good” will be the cue that the behaviour has finished. But once a behaviour is more established we will not need to mark and reward every single behaviour. Let's say you asked your dog to sit. They should remain in a sit until you give another cue. In this case, we can help solidify their understanding that they are free to go and do their own thing by giving a release cue.

For example “Ok”, “all done”, “release”, “break”, “go do dog stuff” etc.

This means they no longer need to hold the position or focus on you and are free to do as they choose. Often they may choose to engage with us because they were just working and would love the opportunity for more rewards, but they may also go take a sniff break or check out something interesting. You can help by showing your empty hands and moving away and disengaging from your dog to show they are free to go. You could even do a small treat scatter and set them free to go find the treats.