

Clicker Training in a Nutshell – Adapted from Karen Pryor

Specific strategies to help shelter animals act better and feel better - and it starts to work from your very first click!

The Clicker's Function

Event marker

Clicker trainers click while the animal is offering the behaviour we are training, in order to tell the animal, “this is exactly what I want”.



You can think of a clicker as a camera: each time you click, you are taking a snapshot of the behaviour at that moment.

Conditioned Reinforcer:

The clicker also functions as a conditioned reinforcer (sometimes called a secondary reinforcer). This is a signal that tells the animal the behaviour he just did has earned him a reward.

The sound of the clicker has no inherent value to an animal. Clicker trainers teach their learners what the clicker means by pairing it with a primary reinforcer (anything the animal wants badly enough to work for), often a food treat or a favorite toy.

Marking Behaviour:

- Most often clicker trainers use the click's distinct sound to mark behaviour.
- A marker means the same thing every time: That's right, and a reward is coming.
- One reason the voice is not a very good marker for teaching new behavior is that our dogs hear it all the time, and it means many different things

**A good marker signal is
distinctive, and different than
other sounds**

The Training Process

Look for what you want. Mark it with a click. Follow up with food (or some other treat).

Watch for the behaviour



Mark the behaviour



Reinforce the behaviour

