

Training Plan: Treat Trails

Time: 5-15 minutes

Supplies: Bite-sized treats, Bait Bag

Goal: To teach animals to feel comfortable moving around in their environment.

Instructions:

Level 1

1. If safe to do so, open the animal's kennel. Inside the kennel, place 5-6 treats about four inches apart in a row, making a short trail.
2. Exit and close the kennel. You may watch from outside of the kennel with your body turned away.
 - a. If the animal does not begin eating the treat trail, leave the area for 2-5 minutes, then return to see if the treats have been eaten.
3. If the animal eats the treat trail while you're out of sight, repeat this 4-5 times. As you continue to leave treat trails, place them in different locations in the kennel.
 - a. If the animal does not eat, even while you're out of sight, leave the treats and move on to the next animal. You may need to follow the instructions for drive-by treat tosses until the animal is more comfortable with eating.

Over time (sometimes several short sessions), decrease the distance you are from the kennel until you are in visual range of the animal while they are eating. Once you are in visual range, decrease the distance by 1-2 feet until you are at the kennel door.

Level 2

1. If the animal is comfortably eating treats while you're standing on the outside of the kennel, open the kennel and place 5-6 treats in a row, about four inches apart, making a short trail.
 - a. Remain near the kennel door or just outside of the kennel door while kneeling with your body positioned sideways.
 - b. If the animal does not approach the treat trail, exit the kennel and go back to Level 1.
2. Kneel closer to the treat trail in small increments. Keeping the animal's body language in mind, repeat treat trails 4-5 times at each increment.
 - a. Example increments 4 ft; 3 ft; 2 ft; 1 ft; 6 inches.
 - b. If the animal displays discomfort at any distance, move back to the distance the animal was comfortable with.

Level 3

1. Once the animal is comfortably eating treats from 6 inches, start to place the treat trails in

different locations around or near yourself by placing treat trails on the right, left, in front of, and behind you.

- a. It's important that the animal is displaying relaxed body language so that we are not using food to lure a fearful animal closer if they continue to be concerned or display discomfort with your presence.

Level 4

1. Only move to this level if the animal is comfortably eating near you.
2. Place treat trails under or around your arms or legs, so the animal walks under or around you while you are sitting or standing calmly.

Level 5

Start getting creative! Place treat trails in different shapes and patterns, over obstacles or on small surface changes, and in different parts of the kennel. Once the animal is comfortable exiting their kennel, treat trails can also be used in new areas. Then, begin using the Hand-Feeding Behavior Plan.

Reminders:

- If the animal is not eating treats or does not appear comfortable, return to the previously successful level
- You can use different types of treats in a single-treat trail