

STEP by STEP free shaping plan

ALWAYS use your start cue for free shaping at the start of each session/round as well as the “I’m not playing anymore” type cue at the end so that the dog knows WHEN it should randomly offer behaviors and more importantly, when it should NOT offer random behaviors. There will be confusion on the dog’s part about that until he learns the start/end cues. Just be sure NOT to reward randomly offered behaviors outside of a session, no matter HOW cute it is!!

	Start with 3 rounds/sessions of 101 things to do with an object. Each session have a different object that the dog can offer different behaviors with, like a box, a cone, and a hoola hoop and/or large ball. The goal is to get the dog to offer new behaviors so don’t click the same behavior more than 2x in a row (ideally only once). But repeated behaviors can be clicked as long as it’s not what the dog just did.
Now that the dog is offering some behaviors, you can start free shaping with a goal . Each session you set up should work on a foundational concept found on the next couple of pages. Your goal can be: to get the dog to do the foundation behavior, to strengthen the likelihood of that behavior, to put it on cue, or to strengthen the understanding of the cue. In that order. Be sure to mix up the concepts you work on rather than just picking one and working it all the way through to fluency. Otherwise it will be hard to get the dog to offer a different behavior when you want to work on something else. It’s fine to do a few similar sessions in a row, but not too many. Use different props for each session to help the dog understand the concept. The more ways you can think of for them to do the same concept, the better the dog will understand it and the more ways you can use the cue when you eventually name it. Work in different locations to help generalize the behaviors. When it is strong and on cue, then add ‘ignoring distractions’ (and greater distance if applicable).	

I recommend writing the cue you want to use next to each line and make sure the cues for different things don’t sound similar to each other or the dog’s name.

First concepts on the next page:

