

## KAREN PRYOR'S 15 RULES

The following 15 rules are invaluable for any clicker trainer. Although the rules refer to dogs, they are as equally valuable and relevant for horses and any other member of the animal kingdom. Simply insert relevant 'horsey' treats and behaviours. I have copied these rules in total, so as not to lose any of the valuable information they portray:

Don't worry, at first, about getting rid of behaviour you don't like. Instead, start with some good things you want the dog to learn to do. Keep notes. The refrigerator door is a good place. Jot down what the dog was doing when you started. Once a day or so, jot down what you have achieved with each behaviour. You will be surprised at the progress! Reward YOURSELF for the dog's improvements. Here are some simple tips to get you started

1. Push and release the springy end of the clicker, making a two-toned click. Then treat. Keep the treats small. Use a delicious treat at first: little cubes of roast chicken, say--not a lump of kibble.
2. Click DURING the desired behaviour, not after it is completed. The timing of the click is crucial. Don't be dismayed if your pet stops the behaviour when it hears the click. The click ends the behaviour. Give the treat after that; the timing of the treat is not important.
3. Click when the dog does something you like. Choose something easy at first, that the dog is likely to do on its own. (Ideas: sit; come toward you; touch your hand with its nose; raise a paw; go through a door; walk next to you.)
4. Click once (in-out.) If you want to express special enthusiasm, increase the number of treats, not the number of clicks.
5. Keep practice sessions short. Much more is learned in three sessions of five minutes each than in an hour of boring repetition. You can get noticeable results, and teach your dog many new things, by fitting a few clicks a day here and there in your normal routine.
6. Fix bad behaviour by clicking good behaviour. Click the puppy for relieving itself in the proper spot. Click for paws on the ground, not on the visitors. Instead of scolding for barking, click for silence. Cure leash pulling by clicking and treating those moments when the leash happens to go slack.
7. Click for voluntary (or accidental) movements toward your goal. You may coax or lure the dog into a movement or position, but don't push, pull, or

- hold it. Work without a leash. If you need a leash for safety's sake, loop the leash over your arm or through your belt; don't use it as a tool.
8. Don't wait for the "whole picture" or the perfect behaviour. Click and treat for small movements in the right direction. You want the dog to sit, and it starts to crouch in back: click. You want it to come when called, and it takes a few steps your way: click.
  9. Keep raising your goal. As soon as you have a good response—when the dog is voluntarily lying down, coming toward you, or sitting repeatedly—start asking for more. Wait a few beats, until the dog stays down a little longer, comes a little further, and sits a little faster. Then click. This is called "shaping" behaviour.
  10. When the dog has learned to do something for clicks, it will begin showing you the behaviour spontaneously, trying to get you to click. Now is the time to begin offering a cue, such as a word or a hand signal. Start clicking for that behaviour if it happens during or after the cue. Start ignoring that behaviour when the cue wasn't given.
  11. Don't order the dog around; clicker training is not command-based. If your dog does not respond to a cue, it is not disobeying; it just hasn't learned the cue completely. Find more ways to cue it and click it for the desired behaviour, in easier circumstances.
  12. Carry a clicker and "catch" cute behaviours like cocking the head, chasing the tail, or holding up one paw. You can click for many different behaviours, whenever you happen to notice them, without confusing your dog. If you have more than one dog, separate them for training, and let them take turns.
  13. If you get mad, put the clicker away. Don't mix scoldings, leash-jerking, and correction training with clicker training; you will lose the dog's confidence in the clicker and perhaps in you.
  14. If you are not making progress with a particular behaviour, you are probably clicking too late. Accurate timing is important. Get someone else to watch you, and perhaps to click for you, a few times.
  15. Above all, have fun. Clicker training is a wonderful way to enrich your relationship with your dog.

*The printed information contained in this fact sheet was written by Karen Pryor (<http://www.karenpryor.com/>) & downloaded from <http://www.clickertraining.com/>. Karen is the author of "Don't Shoot The Dog" originally published in 1984. Although it is mostly about teaching people, it also became the "bible" on positive reinforcement for dog owners. It is a popular college and high school text, the basic training guide for all zookeepers and marine mammal trainers, and a favourite resource for parents. The Australian Clicker Connection Website can be found at <http://www.equilog.com.au/clicker.htm> & Clickers can be purchased in Australia through Equilog. (ph) 02 499 86095 <http://www.equilog.com.au/>*