

Food

Its Use in Training



For the sake of training, it is important to not let the dog free feed (leaving food out in the bowl all day for the dog to graze on). The problems with free feeding are several, including:

- Some dogs will free feed themselves into obesity;
- Free fed dogs are rarely food motivated, because food is always available; this makes training with food difficult at best;
- Free fed dogs rarely associate the food with the owner, while scheduled feeding or hand feeding adds to the dog's perception that all good things come from the owner;
- Free fed dogs lose out on two or three periods of excitement in a long day of "hurry up and wait". Why take the enjoyment of feeding time away from them by always having food available?

Therefore, unless your veterinarian specifically prescribes free feeding, please avoid it.

For puppies under six months of age, and for all dogs with behaviour and/or relationship issues, *we recommend hand feeding*, i.e. no or very limited food is served in bowls, and to use the food for training and mental stimulation games, throughout the day, rather than at set meal times. *The only exception to this recommendation is if your veterinarian has told you that your dog needs set mealtimes for medical reasons.*

Measure out your dog's daily food ration in the morning, and then put it in your treat pouch and use it during the day for:

- Training
- Behaviour modification (counter-conditioning to triggers, etc)
- Mental stimulation (food puzzles, hide & seek, etc)

If your dog does not want to eat the kibble during training, or otherwise out of your hand, when you are sure that he should be hungry, you might consider whether he likes the food or not. Perhaps you should consider a different food?

You can try to increase the palatability of kibble by frying up some bacon and putting in a Ziploc bag overnight together with the kibble. In the morning, take the bacon out and you have a bag full of very tasty-smelling kibble!

