



What is Free Shaping?

- 🐾 Free Shaping is a training method that involves the art of giving our dog clues and allowing them to problem solve the answer themselves.
- 🐾 Free Shaping is a method of training that encourages your dog to problem solve.
- 🐾 When Free Shaping we do not give our dogs direction we simply mold the desired behaviour by capturing and rewarding as they make steps toward the desired outcome.
- 🐾 Almost anything can be free shaped, and it is a great way to watch your dog be independent and problem solve.

What are the benefits?

- 🐾 The dog will gain better problem-solving skills.
- 🐾 The dog is less reliant on the handler giving directions.
- 🐾 Great for confidence building and encouraging more emotional awareness!
- 🐾 Helps to wean the dog off treats.
- 🐾 Great for trick training and obedience!
- 🐾 Builds a stronger bond between owner and dog.
- 🐾 Improves the dog's general confidence with a sense of self-achievement.



Things to consider:

- 🐾 Not too difficult to quickly.
- 🐾 Have an end goal in mind if using this for training cues and begin working slowly toward it but be adaptable.
- 🐾 If using free shaping for confidence you do not need to have an end goal but it is worthwhile making sure you have an idea of what you are looking to reinforce (emotions, body language).
- 🐾 When wanting to train a new trick, could it be free-shaped?
- 🐾 Do have the time to spare without getting impatient?
- 🐾 Are you getting frustrated?

The steps of Free Shaping:

- 🐾 Have an end goal in mind.
- 🐾 Start marking and rewarding small steps toward the end goal.
- 🐾 Reinforce the end goal a few times until it seems they have it.
- 🐾 Start using a word that will be the command for them to do that behaviour.





Free shaping obedience skills:

- 🐾 Decide on which skills you would like to teach your dog.
- 🐾 Put in place some things that will help guide or prompt the behaviour and reduce errors.
- 🐾 For example the heel may be a lead and stepping sideways to the dog so it is on your side, drop could be standing on the lead to shorten it.
- 🐾 Wait for the behaviour; if this is taking too long you can move around in ways that will encourage the dog to perform the behaviour or add a few more cues.
- 🐾 Mark and reinforce the behaviour.
- 🐾 After several repetitions if you want a cue for the behaviour add the cue.
- 🐾 Continue this until reliable then start implementing the behaviour into distracting environments and real life situations.

Free shaping to build confidence or teach a trick:

- 🐾 Start with an object you would like to encourage your dog to explore.
- 🐾 Put the object in a space in front of or next to you.
- 🐾 Capture and reinforce all steps towards interacting with that object in a way you would like, include looking for body language that shows an increase in confidence.
- 🐾 If this is a trick that requires no objects then think about other ways you can free shape that behaviour or times the dog offers it and how you can capture and mark the behaviour in the moment it occurs.
- 🐾 Put in place some things that will help guide or prompt the behaviour and reduce errors.
- 🐾 Wait for the behaviour; if this is taking too long you can move around in ways that will encourage the dog to perform the behaviour or add a few more cues.
- 🐾 Mark and reinforce the behaviour.
- 🐾 After several repetitions if you want a cue for the behaviour add the cue.
- 🐾 Continue this until reliable then start implementing the behaviour into distracting environments and real-life situations.

