

ELEMENT DOG TRAINING

Leave It

- Definition
 - The act of the dog moving away from an item in response to a cue
- Purpose
 - Leave It is a safety tool to prevent your dog from getting into items that could be harmful
- Process
 - Identify an object that your dog is interested in
 - Show the object to your dog to get their attention
 - Once they expressed interest, block the object so they can't access it
 - Wait until they turn away then **mark and reward** the behavior
 - The more interesting the object, the more patient you'll have to be – it will take longer for the dog to turn away
 - Once the dog is reliably turning away from the object, add in the verbal cue "Leave It" before the behavior
- [YouTube video Leave It](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQdg0qOVik0)
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- Common mistakes when teaching Leave It:
 - Progressing too quickly
 - The initial criteria may need to be as small as the dog's head making a small turn away from the object.
 - Build slowly up to the point where the dog voluntarily turns and walks away from the object. Initially, if you wait for too much of a behavior – it is likely that too much time will have passed for the dog to have associated moving away from the object with the reward.
 - Exposing to much of the object or allowing the dog to get access to it without permission. This will slow down the learning process because each time the dog successfully reaches the item they learn that persistence or that moving toward the object gets rewarded.

