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info@alldawgstraining.com • www.alldawgstraining.com

Use a Spoon: How to Extend Your Reach for Small Dogs

By Erin Healy, Assistant Instructor

There are times when you need to lure your dog into position out of the normal reach of your hands. For example, luring a small dog or puppy into a down using a treat, you are required to crouch down on the ground with them or bend over at the waist, putting lots of pressure on your back. Training should be fun and rewarding... you should not feel like you just finished a long game of Twister.

Training a dog using a long-handled wooden or plastic spoon can help you lure your dog with ease. The following is a guide for training your dog with a spoon.

What You Will Need:

- **Spoon:** You will need a long-handled wooden or plastic spoon. The smaller the dog, the longer the handle should be. The mouth of the spoon should be small so it isn't too intimidating to shy dogs.
- **Treats:** Anything that will stick to the spoon. We recommend anything in a spray can that is safe for dogs. You can use cheese, peanut butter, or the Kong brand Stuff'n that can be purchased at most pet stores and comes in flavors like bacon-cheddar.
- **Utility belt:** It is a good idea to have a treat bag or tool belt that clips to you, to carry the can or treats to easily load the spoon.



How to Use the Spoon:

1. **Load the Spoon:** Press the nozzle of the spray can to the tip of the spoon and put an amount the size of a quarter at the end of the mouth of the spoon. You can double-load by sticking a tiny treat to the cheese.
2. **Place Spoon in Left Hand:** The spoon acts as an extension of your lower arm. The spoon goes in left

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hand to avoid confusing the dog and to be consistent. When it comes time to teach your dog to heel, the dog will also be on the left side. The leash goes in your right hand.

3. **Train Dog How to Use Spoon:** If you act like the spoon is the best invention in the world, your dog will think so too! Encourage your dog to approach the spoon and sample a taste of the treat. When they take some of the treat, praise them with a positive marker like “Yes” or “Good,” and then release them. Repeat this several times letting them have a small taste off the spoon. If you let them eat the whole amount off the spoon, you will be reloading a lot and they will get full too quickly.
4. **Use Spoon to Lure Dog:** When the dog is confident taking treats from the spoon, see if you can have them follow the spoon-this is called luring. Place the spoon right in front of their nose and slowly move it, encouraging the dog to follow by praising then giving the dog a taste of the treat every few seconds or so.
5. **Your Ready to Train:** Now you can train your dog by luring them into positions like sit, down, or rewarding them for coming to you or walking with attention. As the dog progresses, decrease the length of the spoon by walking your hand up the stick portion and you can gradually fade out the spoon altogether.

Examples of Training with a Spoon



Using a spoon, a student keeps her dog's attention while walking.



The spoon may also be used to lure the dog, such as from in front to by the side.