

POWER POOCHES



WHY TEACH YOUR DOG THE "THIS WAY" CUE?

WHY IT MATTERS

A lot of Dog (Leash) reactivity training is management. Learning ways to avoid too much stress for your dog. And to do this you need a cue that will get your dog to walk away from triggers, before a reaction occurs.

Even though we plan our walks at times that are less busy, or places with minimal triggers, there are going to be moments when a dog appears around a corner, or a jogger comes up behind you, or a car is only metres away.



WHAT DOES "THIS WAY" MEAN?

"This way" means your dog changes direction and doesn't continue walking towards the trigger.

It could be turn left, turn right or make a U turn. Which way your dog goes, will depend on them watching you. So when you say "This way", they will learn to look in your direction and follow you away from the trigger.

Even for non reactive dogs, "This way" is an essential cue to learn on walks.

"This way" can work both on-leash and off, if you have trained it correctly.



HOW TO TEACH IT

1



Start in a place without triggers and distractions (inside your lounge room, in the backyard, or your own street).

2



Ensure your dog is leashed (preferably using a harness).

3



Start your walk. At some point say **"This way"** using an upbeat tone, and change direction, using the leash to guide your dog.

4



Ensure you do this when they are not focused on something else.

5



Mark with a **"Yes"** and reward.

6



Repeat.
Each time change direction and use the leash to guide your dog.
Try going to the left, then right and doing a complete U turn.

7



Ensure your tone is vibrant and **exciting**. You don't want to use a panicked voice as this may alert them to a trigger and a reaction may occur. Keep it happy.

8



As with all training, practice, practice, practice. Start adding distractions and try it on your regular walks.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

"This way" will only work if your dog has not reacted yet. It is not a cue to get them back while reacting.
"This way" will only work if your dog is in a calm state.
Use it when you see a trigger, but your dog is not reacting and you want to avoid the stress for both you and your dog.

ADVOCATE FOR YOUR DOG

"This way" is also perfect to just turn around corners in general without distractions. Every time you perform a directional change using "This way" you strengthen the cue.

You do you!

Some people may feel embarrassed by turning away from a trigger, backing away or putting space between your dog and the scary thing. And to make it worse, the other dog owners can sometimes look at you with a judging face. Who cares? They don't know what you are going through and your dog is all that matters. Because you care about your dog, the last thing you want is to see your dog stressed by being too close to a trigger. So forget about the other humans, teach "This way" and advocate for your dog!