

TEACHING YOUR DOG TO CHILL

Dogs need our help to learn how to cope with the world. One great life skill you can teach your dog is how to “chill”. That is, to relax and settle calmly in different situations.

When they chill, both their body AND mind are relaxed.

The best part? Once your dog learns this skill, you can use it anywhere: at home, in the car, at the vet, or out at cafés and parks (if your dog enjoys those settings).

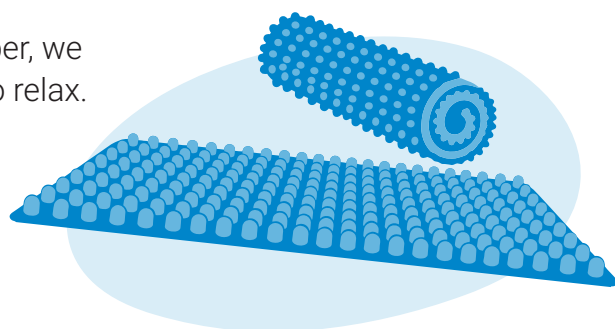


HOW TO TEACH YOUR DOG TO “CHILL”

1 SET UP FOR SUCCESS

Create a special “chill zone” at home for your dog. Remember, we are training calm behaviour and want your dog to be able to relax.

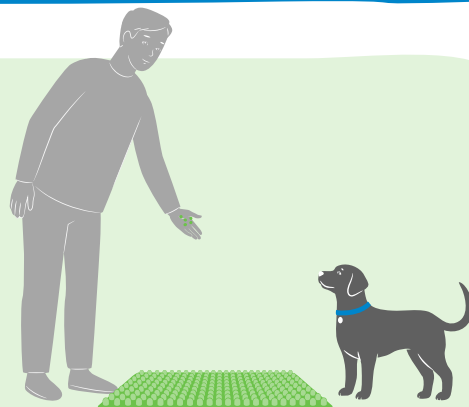
- Use a special mat (not their usual bed).
- Choose something portable, like a bathmat that you can roll up and carry with you when needed.
- Only use this mat for training.



! IMPORTANT: The mat should always be a positive place. Never use it as punishment.

2 TEACH YOUR DOG TO GO TO THE MAT

- Start in a quiet, calm space.
- Place the mat on the floor.
- Let your dog know training is starting (show your treats, ask for a simple cue like “sit” to check if they are ready to learn).
- Walk near the mat and look at it.

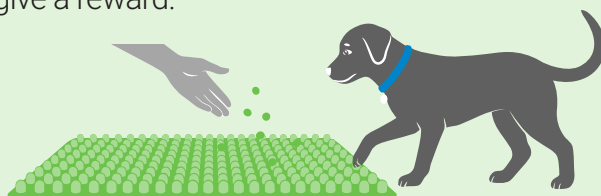


When your dog:

Looks at the mat → bridge (that means, say “Yes”) and give a reward.

Moves toward the mat → bridge and reward.

Steps onto the mat → bridge and reward again.



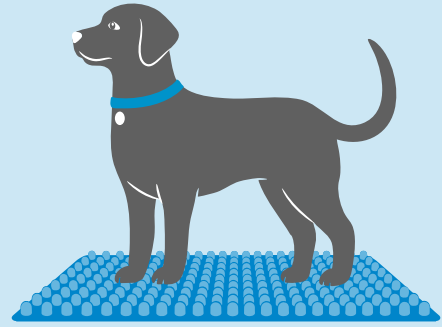
The bridge lets your dog know it has done what you wanted and that a reward is coming.

3 GRADUALLY BUILD THIS UP

Until your dog is confidently stepping onto the mat. When this happens, add a cue like: "Mat" or "On your mat".

Practise a few short sessions each day.

Don't forget to use a release word like "OK" to tell them they can leave the mat.



4 ADD A SIT (AND THEN A DROP)

Once your dog is going to the mat on cue:

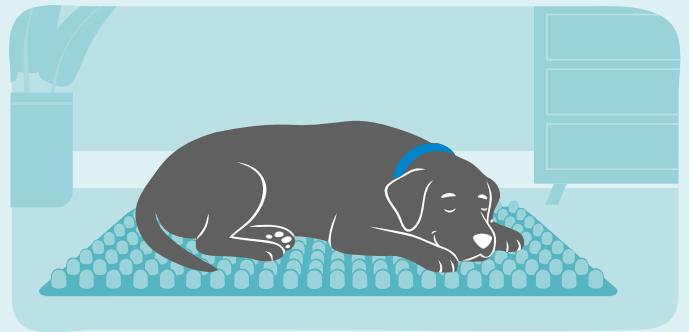
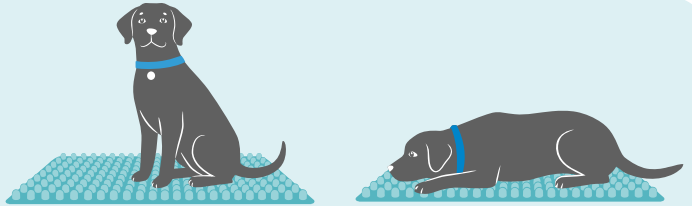
- Ask for a sit while they're on the mat.
- Bridge and reward.

After a few sessions:

- Pause before asking for the sit.
- See if your dog offers the sit on their own.
- If they do – celebrate with a jackpot reward!

When they are confident at sitting on their mat:

- Add a drop/down cue to encourage a more relaxed position.

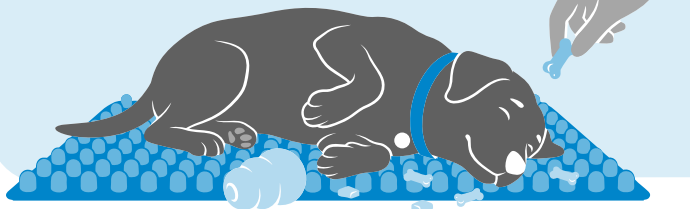


5 BUILD UP TO CALM "CHILL" TIME



Now you're teaching your dog to settle:

- Ask them to sit or lie down on the mat.
- Wait a few seconds before rewarding.
- If they stay relaxed, reward calmly.



Slowly increase the time before you give a reward. Start by waiting for 2 seconds before the reward, then if they are waiting patiently, increase this pause to 5 seconds and so on.

You can also add a long-lasting chew or stuffed Kong to help them relax and enjoy settling on the mat.

KEY TIPS

- Keep sessions short and calm.
- Reward relaxed behaviour, not excitement.
- Go at your dog's pace.
- Practise in different places once they understand the skill.

"Chill" isn't just about being still - it's about helping your dog feel safe, relaxed, and able to cope. That's a skill that will benefit both of you, every day.