

Getting a weight with Positive Reinforcement Training



Engage and Reflect

Watch - *Virtual Vitamin Z* | Zoo Educational Lesson: See How Our Animal Care Staff Uses Ultrasounds | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUAVTa_JdDQ



Skills

- Predicting
- Controlling variables
- Persistence



NGSS Science and Engineering Practices

- Planning and carrying out investigations



Experience

- 10-15 minutes, 4-5 times a day, for several weeks

If you have a companion animal who lives with you, he or she may benefit from positive reinforcement training. Positive reinforcement training is a training methodology that gives your companion animal a reward when they do something we want them to do. Positive reinforcement training has many steps - for this activity, the goal is to have your companion animal learn to happily settle on their side. The ultimate goal is to help our companion animal become more comfortable with vet visits.



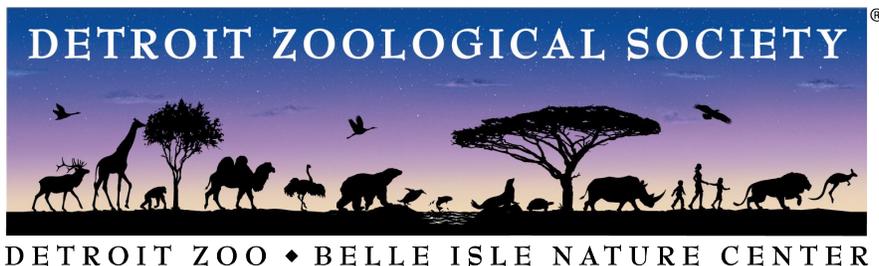
Celebrating and Saving Wildlife

The Detroit Zoological Society works with the animals in our care on positive reinforcement training, which is an important aspect of animal welfare. When animals willingly cooperate with procedures such as blood draws, dental checks, nail trimming and others, more invasive techniques, such as using anesthesia, can be avoided.



Take Action

If you don't have a companion animal of your own, introduce positive reinforcement training to family or friends who do.



Settling with Positive Reinforcement Training

Materials:

Clicker (or a clicking pen)

Treats

Directions

Goal: Companion animal settling on their side, for different lengths of time.

1. Mark when your companion animal lays down. Toss the treat so your companion animal needs to get up to retrieve it.
2. Mark your companion animal when they lay down, you will need to do this multiple times.
3. When your companion animal lays down and looks at you expectantly for a treat, you are ready to add the word “settle”.
4. When you see your companion getting ready to lay down, say “settle”, you will need to do this multiple times.
5. Try to prompt your companion with the word “settle”, if he or she doesn't lay down, go back a step and try again.
6. Next, build time in between your companion animal laying down, and clicking to reward them. Start with a short time, and work your way up on length of time.
 - As you practice, vary the length of time so it is less predictable.
7. Once your companion animal consistently demonstrates this behavior, practice in different places and often

Notes -

- Take lots of breaks, and have fun!
- Remember the click is a promise. Even if you accidentally click, you need to give your companion a treat.

