waggle

The Ultimate Dog Trainer's Handbook:

20 Commands for Total Obedience

Training your dog isn't just about obedience—it's about safety, communication, and bonding. Whether you have a new pup or an older dog, these 20 essential commands will help shape a well-behaved and confident companion.

Basic Obedience Commands

Name Recognition

- Gets your dog's attention
- Say their name happily → When they look at you, give a treat. Repeat often.

Sit

Helps calm your dog quickly

Hold a treat above the nose → Move it back toward the tail → Dog sits → Say “sit” + reward.

Stay

Keeps your dog in place

Ask dog to “sit” → Say “stay” with a hand signal → Step back → Reward if they hold position.

Come

Calls your dog to you

Use a leash → Say “come” excitedly → Gently guide → Reward when they arrive.

Down

Gets your dog into a relaxed lying position

Ask dog to “sit” → Say “stay” with a hand signal → Step back → Reward if they hold position.

Leave It

Stops your dog from grabbing something

Show treat in one hand → Say “leave it” → Reward with other hand when they back off.

Drop It

Releases objects from their mouth

Offer a toy → Say “drop it” → Offer a treat in exchange → Praise when toy is released.

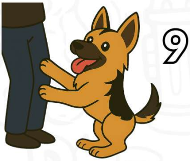
No

Basic boundary word

Use a firm “no” when they do something wrong → Redirect immediately to a good behavior.

Safety & Manners Commands

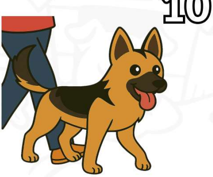
Off



Stops jumping on people or furniture

Say “off” calmly → Turn away or gently guide them down → Reward calm behavior.

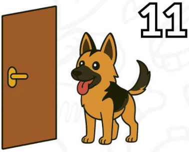
Heel



Walks calmly beside you

Say “heel” while walking → Reward for walking next to you without pulling.

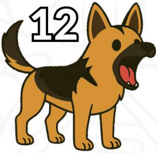
Wait



Pauses before action (doors, stairs)

Say “wait” at thresholds → Open slowly → Reward if they don’t move forward.

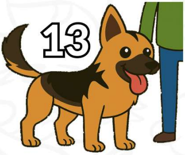
Quiet



Stops barking

Say “quiet” when barking → Wait for silence → Reward calm.

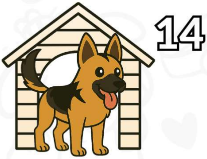
Watch Me



Focuses their attention on you

Hold treat near eyes → Say “watch me” → Reward when eye contact is made.

Kennel (or Crate)



Sends your dog to their crate

Say “kennel” → Toss a treat inside → Reward when they enter.

Take It

Allows dog to grab or eat something

Hold item → Say “take it” → Let them grab it → Praise.

Advanced or Life-Saving Commands

Place

Sends dog to a specific spot (mat, bed)

Say “place” while guiding to mat → Reward when they stay there.

Let’s Go

Signals to start moving together

Use during walks or play → Say “let’s go” → Move together → Reward.

Settle

Encourages calm behavior

Use when dog is lying calmly → Say “settle” → Treat → Repeat during calm times.

Touch

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Dog touches your hand with nose (great for focus!)

Hold out your hand → Say “touch” → Reward when they bump it.

Emergency Recall

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Calls your dog back in serious situations

Use a unique word like “NOW!” only in emergencies → Use high-value treats → Practice in safe areas.

Training Tips

Train daily: 10–15 minutes is enough.

Keep it positive: Praise more than you correct.

Use clear, consistent commands.

Practice in different locations for generalization.

Quick Reference Table

Command	Purpose
Sit	Calm behavior
Stay	Keeps them in one place

Come	Calls them to you
Heel	Walks politely on a leash
Drop It	Releases objects
Leave It	Avoids unwanted items
Quiet	Stops barking
Crate	Enters kennel calmly
Wait	Delays action
Emergency Recall	Life-saving response