

Stop Begging for Food Fido!

Dogs begging for food is one of the most common discipline issues that dog owners face. An unfortunate side effect of loving our dogs so much is that we would like to give them everything that they want. So when our dogs start begging for food, it's almost too much for us to bear... and we cave!

With a little willpower and discipline on your part, though, begging can be one of the easiest behaviors to correct. Follow these simple tips to turn your hairy panhandler into a productive member of society once more!

- **Do not give food to begging dog.** This tip may seem like common sense, but you'd be surprised how few people consider it when they're looking into the wide, wet eyes of their beloved canine companion. That high-pitched whine is an effective tool against you, and your dog knows it. Why? Because it's worked before! Giving food is a form of affection, and giving affection reinforces the behavior preceding it. Your dog has learned that if he begs, he gets food! Take a stand and start a new trend. Find the willpower to withhold that food, and your dog will learn that he can't expect rewards for begging behavior.
- **Ignore begging dog.** Begging is an attention-seeking behavior. Rather than give in to your dog's demands, ignore the behavior and teach your dog that it does not get results! When you talk to your dog, give him affection, or engage in direct eye contact, you are feeding his mental state. Instead, practice no touch, no talk, and no eye contact.
- **Don't feel sorry for your dog.** Your dog is well-fed. You should know; you feed him! He is not in danger of going hungry if you don't give him that scrap off the table, so don't feel sorry for him when he flashes you those doughy eyes and places a single paw forlornly on your leg. If you become concerned about how much your dog should be fed, talk to your veterinarian. This can help ease your concerns and allow you to remain calm and assertive!
- **Use discipline consistently.** In any kind of training, consistency is the key to success. For your dog to learn that his begging behavior is ineffective, it has to be ineffective 100% of the time. Inconsistent enforcement of the rules leads to an inconsistently obedient dog! Make sure that every pack leader in the household understands and enforces the same rules.
- **Be patient.** Few dogs change overnight. If you have followed these tips to the letter and your dog continues to beg, don't despair! See the last tip: use discipline consistently. Stay consistent and don't give up. Your reward will be a better behaved dog!