



Waiting at Boundaries

What is a boundary and why should my dog wait there?

A boundary is a transitional space your dog crosses through/over/past to get from one place to another. Doorways are a boundary. Crates are a boundary. A dog bed, a gate, or a car can become a boundary.

Teaching boundary manners is beneficial for multiple reasons:

- **Safety** - so your dog doesn't bolt out a door into an unsafe situation whether it be out the front door and into a road or through a door at the vet with an unfriendly dog unknowingly waiting on the other side.
- **Impulse Control** - practicing boundary manners is a great way to put more impulse control practice into your dog's daily routine.
- **Establishing expectations** - entering a space with permission establishes a level of obedience and control for the space
- **Controlling Excitement Around Guests** - teaching boundaries diminishes some of the inherent excitement of people entering and exiting a space.
- **Teaching Stay and Wait** - visual boundaries are incredibly useful for teaching the concepts of wait and stay.

How do I teach my dog boundary manners?

An easy place to start is a doorway that your dog is usually excited to go through. If you have a sliding glass door, that is a great door to practice with, but any door works.

1. Start by placing your hand on the doorknob/handle and asking your dog to sit. Reward the sit. Practice this pattern several times so that the act of putting your hand on the door becomes the cue for your dog to sit. Between each repetition of putting your hand on the door and cueing and rewarding

the sit, reset by walking away and approaching the door again.

2. Once they have begun to automatically sit when you approach the door, you are ready to begin opening the door. As soon as your dog sits, begin to slowly open the door, just a crack. If your dog gets up from the sit and tries to move towards the door, immediately close it.
3. Reset your dog back into a sit and begin again, repeating the process.
4. As soon as you are able to open the door a small amount without your dog immediately rushing it, reward them by opening the door the rest of the way and AT THE SAME TIME verbally releasing them (for example: “okay”, “release”, “break,” “free,” “go ahead,” etc.). Be consistent with your release word. Don’t use different words in different situations.
5. The next time, try to open the door a little further. Again, if your dog tries to go out before receiving permission, close the door.
6. Slowly increase the amount you open the door before releasing your dog.
7. Practice with different doors/boundaries. Remember that changing of the location/situation may require you to take a few steps back (start again with just opening the door a crack at first).
8. Increase the length of time your dog waits before being released.

If your dog gets frustrated during any step, try to make it easier for them to succeed. Training should always be fun and enjoyable and not frustrating for you or your dog.

If your dog bolts through the door and pulls once they have been released, you can increase your criteria to account for calmness on the other side of the door as well. If they burst through when you release them, reset and try the whole thing again.

9. Once your dog has begun to figure out doorway manners, you can begin to establish boundary control for other things like their crate or bed.