



## About Food Rewards – Treat Ideas

In the beginning I like to use extra special treats. I also like to be generous with the food rewards I offer. In time I may find many ways to *reward* my dog that is not exclusively dependent upon food. A marker-based training system will facilitate this. I may incorporate other types of reinforcements like *fun games*, *social contact* (petting), and *life rewards* (being permitted to play outside or sit on the sofa) to use in addition to food to reinforce appropriate behavior from my dog. It is important that the dog maintain good weight for both joint and hip health, as well as, to alleviate extra stress on his heart and muscular system, so reduce the amount of food he/she is fed at mealtime accordingly. Be aware that some dogs, just like people, may have allergic reactions to some of the treats listed. Some dogs may become overly aroused in the presence of certain food rewards. You must determine what is most appropriate for your own pooch and your situation.

- ❑ ***Cooked Chicken or Turkey with tryptophan to calm might be a better option for some dogs***
  - ❑ I buy a large package of chicken thighs. Use double boiler to cook. Rinse (to degrease for handling). Cut up cooked chicken into pea-sized pieces. Freeze in small containers to use as needed.
- ❑ ***Stewing Beef***
  - ❑ Empty package of stewing beef into a microwave-able container. Dust the beef cubes with Dry Mustard Powder or Minced Garlic (not Garlic Salt). Microwave on medium heat, stopping to stir for even cooking. Dice into tiny pea-sized pieces. As the chicken above, I put into multiple small containers and freeze some for later use.
- ❑ ***Meal Mixers: Freeze Dried***
  - ❑ For healthier options you might want to try Instinct or Stella and Chewy's Meal Mixers. My dogs LOVE these!
- ❑ ***Basic Dog Food Kibble (dry food)***
  - ❑ Treat the dog with his own dinner kibble around your home. Over time with the exception of new or more challenging tasks, I may use this exclusively. Some higher quality varieties (Wellness, Instinct, Fromm, Honest Kitchen nuggets) seem to be special enough for some dogs to be truly motivational.
  - ❑ You may shake 'n bake with dry kibble and a pinch of minced garlic to enhance the smell and flavor or toss in a container with any of the moist treats, bits of chicken, etc, to marinate the dry kibble.
- ❑ ***String Cheese***
  - ❑ I use cheese frequently when I want a reward of higher value than dry kibble. Easy to use and I know the product has been approved for human consumption. However, you should, as with anything that is not a "complete" diet, use in moderation. Use common sense regarding quantity and watch for constipation or loose stools.
- ❑ ***Baby Food: Turkey, Chicken, Beef, etc. (presenting straight out of the jar!)***
  - ❑ For certain behavior modification needs or basic training where a long-duration form of reinforcement is desired this is a good item to have in your toolkit of motivators. Chicken and Beef varieties are my dogs' favorites. An unopened jar can be kept handy in your training bag.
- ❑ ***Cheese Tortellini or Meatballs from the store freezer section***
  - ❑ Cook these items up and dice into multiple pieces for more treat variety. Use in moderation.
- ❑ ***Training treats on the market (BiJac, Zukes, Wellness wellbites or pure rewards)***
  - ❑ A number of training treats are on the market. Look for those that use whole ingredients, and not *fragments* in the ingredients lists. Avoid products listing poultry or meat by-products, meat meal or poultry meal. Be cautious about anything that has a lot of additives such as artificial colors, sugar, and flavors. For more information about healthy treats and training methods for your dog, consider a subscription to *The Whole Dog Journal*.
- ❑ ***Yogurt***
  - ❑ Yogurt may be used and delivered to your dog in much the same way the baby food is used as a long duration form of reinforcement. Put it into a small container, like a baby food jar, let your dog lick away. Mix yogurt into food puzzle toys that you freeze to prolong meal time food delivery.