

Teach a "Positive Interrupter" (the "Let's Go" cue):

A "positive interrupter" cue stops your dog from doing a specific behavior. Once a behavior is stopped, it's important to reward your dog for doing something else like stopping the previous behavior and looking at you.

The goal is to use this cue to call your dog randomly to you throughout everyday life. You want it to mean "stop what you are doing and come get a reinforcer elsewhere." Have small jars of kibble or treats available and easily accessible throughout the house so you can easily reinforce this behavior at random times throughout the day.

Once your dog consistently responds to an interrupter cue, it's time to use this valuable cue on occasion to re-direct when your dog is displaying undesirable behavior (i.e. your dog shows a growl or lunge reaction to a person walking past and you need to give a neutral response and then re-direct with the "Let's Go" cue).

Remember, an interrupter cue will only interrupt the undesirable behavior, so after rewarding your dog for responding to the interrupter cue, "Instruct and Reinforce" - ask your dog to do something else and reward them for that (i.e. go to your crate, pick up a toy, go lay on a bed, etc).



Example of using a "positive interrupter" to diffuse tension and prevent an aggressive display:

Your dog is resting on the couch, and you notice him stiffen a bit and start to growl after a person stands up and starts to walk past him. You quickly interrupt with a happy "positive interrupter" cue (i.e. dog's name and "Let's Go!") and call him to the treat jar station in the kitchen. In this case you are interrupting a potential "hot zone" and you are re-directing and rewarding him for moving away from the tense situation (and the "resource" of the couch) and coming with you.

Sometimes, the undesirable behavior resumes immediately after hearing an interrupter cue. When this happens, say the interrupter cue again, reward your dog, and then

remove your dog from the situation. For example, crate him with something to chew on, take him outside to sniff and relieve himself, etc. This prevents dogs from immediately reengaging in the undesirable behavior.

***** NOTE:** *Can using a positive interrupter create a behavior chain?*

For example: "If a dog is resource guarding their bed, and you use your positive interrupter cue to stop and re-direct your dog, then won't your dog think that they have to growl/ resource guard to be called away for a treat?"

*You avoid this ever becoming an issue by practicing and rewarding the interrupter cue **frequently** when your dog is not already engaging in undesirable behavior. For every one time you have to call away from engaging in an undesirable behavior, you ideally should have also practiced using the cue and rewarding randomly at least ten other times throughout the day, just for the sake of practice. Also see the above section on using **proactive** measures to counter condition the dog's response to the trigger of people approaching or passing by - proactive is always better than reactive!*

Video example of teaching a "Positive Interrupter" by trainer Emily Larlham from Dogmantics Dog Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBvPaqMZyo8>

Video example of teaching and practicing a "Positive Interrupter" cue *before* it is needed (cue used here is "PupPupPup" instead of "Let's Go" – handler's choice!): <https://youtu.be/Z8jms2e70uI>

Video example of teaching a "Positive Interrupter" with multiple dogs using the cue "Cookies" (cue used here is "Cookies" instead of "Let's Go" – handler's choice!): https://www.dropbox.com/s/lma6uenz84iaywm/20201220_155602.mp4?dl=0