

Lily's Commands & Activity

Dogs don't know English, of course, but this is Lily's "vocabulary."

Vocal commands must be consistent in tone and loud enough that Lily can clearly hear. Project your voice (think drill sergeant) and **do not repeat the command** unless it is clear that Lily didn't hear you. E.g. the command isn't "sit, sit, sit, sit"... it's "**Sit!**", then wait until she complies. Otherwise, Lily will think the command is "sit, sit, sit, sit", or simply won't listen to you (dogs see this as weakness, not authority). Be confident, consistent, and heard. If you don't have her attention (see: "Lily") she won't listen to you.

Hand commands compliment and emphasize some vocal commands. These gestures are noted for each of the commands listed below. These aren't standard with what trainers use, but we were unaware of those gestures when we taught her. They help.

Lily observes body posture and facial expressions. Be consistent and confident (square shoulders, chest out, eyes locked). If Lily isn't listening or is *about to* do something that she shouldn't, you can also use the "**ah ah ah**" command ("the As"). She is very expressive with her body posture and facial expressions. It doesn't take long to understand Lily's feedback.

Lily! Saying Lily's name will get her attention. Be loud and firm. Technically this is a vocal command (the first that she learned), so just say it once. If she hears you, proceed with the next command. Clapping, a squeaker, or a whistle can help at a distance or in a loud environment along with using her name followed by a command. Unless Lily is sleeping, she usually expects some type of direction. Be sure to tell her what to do, otherwise she gets anxious. If in doubt, have her go to her bed or crate.

Eye contact usually tells Lily that you want her attention. Don't be surprised if she faces you or comes to you by simply looking at her. She will often stop playing when you look at her expecting a command. Tell her what you want her to do.

Barking: Whining or barks while playing are a sign of excitement, objection, frustration, anxiety, or exhaustion. Lily very rarely barks, but usually when fussy or if she sees other animals outside. If Lily whines otherwise, or if in doubt, take her outside. If she has relieved herself and is still anxious, it is either a possible medical concern (do a physical inspection) or time for a time-out. Put her in her crate as down time, not punishment. Worst case, let us know or take her to the vet if there is a medical issue.

Tug-of-war is a monitored activity, which helps reinforce safety commands like: "**take it**," "**leave it**," and "**drop it**." Have her "**drop it**" at least every few minutes. This can drain her energy, but walks or puzzle/play are favored activities. End the activity after no more than 15

minutes. Remove toys from the situation and use the “**all done**” command to end play, which should end any activity.

No. The word “no” isn’t a command that Lily knows. It’s not very useful. Use “**ah ah ah**” for corrections, then follow through with what you want Lily to do. When she does well, tell her “**good girl**” and use positive reinforcement techniques for added emphasis.

Physical Positioning

Look at Me

Succeeding with commands requires Lily to focus. The “look at me” command tells Lily to make eye contact with you. This or any command can be reinforced with a positive reward, like a dog treat (don’t give Lily human food).

Hand command: Index and middle fingers pointing at your eyes.

Sit

Be sure to make eye contact with “sit” (and most) commands. If you want Lily’s butt on the ground, this is what you tell her to do. Only say this once, then wait for it to happen.

Hand command: Index and middle finger straight together, pointing up, palm facing you.

Down, Lay Down

This will make Lily lay down. This does not make Lily jump down or get off of higher surfaces (see: “**off**”). This is mostly used when she is in her bed and needs to be calm (see: “**head down**”).

Hand command: Index finger pointing down.

On Your Side

Lily should flop on her side. This can be followed by commands like “**wait**” to increase her patience and “**paw**” to inspect her feet. This is great to have Lily in a position to see if she is injured or to trim her nails. Belly rubs are nice, too!

Hand command: Open palm faced away from Lily.

Head Down, Relax, Shhhhhh

To have Lily relax further, you can tell her “head down” or “relax”, typically when she is in her bed or nearby. If she is too excited and not listening, time alone in her crate is recommended.

Hand command: Index finger pointing down.

In Your Bed, Bed

Lily should usually be in her bed if she isn't playing, eating, walking, or relieving herself. This is her "place". She is most comfortable here and should not be allowed to roam around freely. She will often look at you with an expression of "are you sure?". Repeat the command if needed. When Lily is in her bed, she should be laying down, so use the "**down**" command.

Hand command: Point to her bed.

In Your Crate, Crate

Lily often sleeps in her crate at night. The crate should be latched at night. The crate is not a punishment, but rather, a refuge or sanctuary, which is a natural behavior for dogs. This command is similar to "**get in your bed**".

Hand command: Point to her crate.

Off

If Lily jumps up on a person's legs or other surface, you can tell her "**off**" to get her down. Don't mix up "**down**" and "off". It's best to give her another command after this to let her know what you want her to do instead. If she jumps on you, turn your body to have her fall off.

Hand command: Point away from the surface.

Wait

Sit or down doesn't mean "wait". This is a pause before giving another command, often used in play, while walking, or to create a patient delay.

Hand command: Open palm faced toward Lily.

Stay

Similar to "**wait**", but longer term with the expectation that you will come back to relieve her from the command. This usually follows a "**down**" command. It is a tricky command, so if Lily doesn't listen, consider using her crate.

Hand command: Open palm faced toward Lily.

Back Up, Back

If Lily is too close to you or crowding you (frequently when playing), you can tell her to "back up" followed by "**wait**" if needed. She gets more excited the more she plays, so this command is useful when defining boundaries and demonstrating authority.

Hand command: Point away.

With Me (aka "Heel")

To have Lily walk beside you, say "with me" will tell her to walk with you. This is her "heel" walking command. Lily favors walking on a person's left side.

Hand command: Pat the side of your leg or hold your hand by your side for her to target.

Stop

When Lily is following you or coming to you, you can say "stop" to have her stop where she is. This can be followed up with "wait" if she needs more emphasis to stay in place.

Here

To call Lily to you, first make sure you have her attention (usually by saying her name), then say "here" with your fist as a target. Targeting is common in dog training and helps focus.

Hand command: Point down to the place where Lily should move to.

Inside

If Lily is outside and you want her to come inside, you can say "inside".

Hand command: Pat the side of your leg or clap your hands if Lily is far away.

Touch

This stems from the "**here**" command. The "touch" command helps with focused targeting by having Lily touch her nose to your closed fist. This also helps position Lily. She may get very excited if you give this command too many times in succession.

Hand command: A closed fist held out in front of you for Lily to target.

Up

If you want Lily to put her front paws on your legs or jump up on a surface, pat your bent legs or the surface and say "up". Be careful, though, she may try to jump into your arms.

Hand command: Pat your bent knees or the surface that Lily should jump up on.

Paw, Other Paw

Put your hand in front of Lily to catch her paw, then say "paw." If she give you one paw, you can ask her to "wait" if you want to inspect the paw or have a pause. You can then say "other paw" to hold or look at her alternate paw.

Hand command: Put your hand in front of Lily, palm up to catch her paw.

Shake

Ask this after “**paw**” and Lily should shake your hand until you ask her to “**sit**”. If Lily recoils too early, she is not rewarded, since this command helps practice holding her paws without her pulling them away (e.g. for trimming paw fur or claws).

Safety, Walking, Eating, & Play

Pull

This is an odd one. When Lily is wearing a harness and you have unclipped it, you can say “**pull**” when you want her to pull her head out of the neck section. The “pull” command could extend to other actions where she pulls her head or tugs on something.

Outside, Do You Need to Go Outside?

If Lily looks like she needs to relieve herself, asking her this will get her heading to a door that she knows to go outside. The command is not really needed, but helps communicate your intentions. Using “**outside**” will work as well.

Go

This tells Lily that she should urinate or defecate (on or off leash). If she pauses to look at you, repeat as needed. When Lily is finished relieving herself, be sure to call her into a house/building or back to you in an open area by telling her “**inside**”.

Hand command: Pointing away with an index finger.

Drop It

If Lily has something in her mouth already, whether playing or otherwise, she should release the object from her mouth. If you suspect she has something dangerous/toxic in her mouth, see “**open**”.

Hand command: Point finger down.

Open

If Lily has something in her mouth that is dangerous or toxic, have her sit in front of you, put one hand on the back of her head, say “open” while gently opening her mouth with the other hand, and use a curled index finger to scoop out the object as far back as you can in a sweeping motion. If something is lodged in her mouth/throat or if she ingested something harmful, please take her to the Pet ER.

Leave It

This tells Lily that she should not put something in her mouth, **before** she does (see: “**drop it**”). After Lily complies, give another command to let her know what you want her to do instead. Lily should not take food (see: “**gentle**”) nor other objects with her mouth until and unless you allow her.

Hand command: Open palm face down with fingers spread. Wave over the object she should leave alone.

Take It

If Lily is playing and awaiting permission to take a toy **OR** if Lily is waiting to eat food (she always needs to wait), this tells her that it is okay to take an object or to start eating.

Hand command: Index finger pointing up, then sweeping down to point at the object Lily should take.

Take It Away

If Lily drops a toy near you and you want her to play with it by herself, tell her to “take it away”. She may return with the object again after a few minutes. You can either repeat “take it away”, **play fetch** (a series of “**drop it**”, “**leave it**”, and “**go get it**” commands).

Hand command: Point at the object, then point away in one motion in rhythm with the words.

Get Your Bone in Your Bed/Crate

Lily doesn't know this command too well, so be patient for her to recall it. If Lily is chewing on her bone (or a milk bone, ice cube, or other treat) you can tell her to “get your bone in your bed” and she should take the object to her bed. This encourages her to do that activity in a calm, familiar place.

Hand command: Index finger pointing at the object Lily should take to her bed, then a sweeping motion toward her bed.

Ready?

When playing fetch, when Lily is in position (not crowding you or lording over a toy) and waiting for you to throw the toy, you can say “ready?” to let her know that you are about to throw the toy. If she is too anxious, you can say “**wait**”, which can help. This is similar to the “**back up**” command.

Go Get It, Get Your _____, Where's Your _____?

When Lily has a toy at a distance, but freezes and looks at you, you can use this command to get her to play with the toy by herself. While playing fetch, after throwing a toy, you can use this command to have her seek out the toy.

Hand command: Point toward the object.

Bring It Back

While playing fetch, once Lily has the toy in her mouth, this tells her to bring the toy to you. Always make her drop the toy. If she doesn't do this on her own accord, have her "**drop it**", "**leave it**", and then "**back up**" to continue playing fetch. Do not mix fetch with tug-of-war.

Hand command: Waving toward yourself with a cupped palm.

All Done (aka "Break")

Play, training, or eating have a distinct stop, always. This break command tells Lily that she's done, followed usually by telling her to "**get in your bed**" or "**crate**" for positioning unless you want her to free-roam. This allows Lily to cool off and avoids anxiety, aggression, and frustration.

Quiet

We have had mixed success with this. Other animals or frustration will trigger Lily to bark. She doesn't bark often, but when she does, it's best to tell her what you want her to do instead (e.g. "**inside**" or "**crate**").

Others

Gentle

When handing Lily a treat or food by hand, this tell her to use a soft mouth and avoid biting your hand. This usually comes after telling Lily to "**leave it**" and "**wait**". The "**gentle**" command doesn't have strong recall, but works somewhat when Lily is more calm.

Do You Want Some Food?

Before feeding Lily, we often ask her if she wants food. This prepares her and has her go to a recognized feeding location. **Do not** let her eat while or just after pouring her food into a bowl. Tell her to "**leave it**", "**back up**", and to "**wait**" if she doesn't do that on her own, giving time between each command to register. Once you are ready to have her eat (wait at least 20 seconds), tell her to "**take it**". If Lily eats too quickly out of a normal bowl and starts choking/coughing, tell her to "**leave it**" while using your leg to push her away from the bowl... only use your hands near the bowl if she backs away, otherwise she can be aggressive and territorial. It takes time for Lily to trust a person's authority, but if in doubt, hand feeding can speed that up for the first few feedings. Hand feeding is a cycle of taking bite-sized portions of food in your hand, initially telling her to "**leave it**", making patient eye contact, then telling her "**gentle**" when you are ready for her to take the food.

Good Girl!

This is a verbal reward when Lily does something good. Don't use it if you are unsure, since it is meant to mark good behavior only.

Hand command: A nice head pet or neck scratch re-enforces the command.

Kisses

Get your face close to Lily's, then say "kisses". She should lick your face. You will like it.