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HUMANE
SOCIETY



HEALDSBURG
CENTER *for Animals*

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TEACHING YOUR CAT TO “Down”

DEFINITION:

Lying down

HOW TO TEACH:

Down: The easiest way to teach this behavior is to catch the cat in the act. He will lie down when he feels comfortable. Watch for him to lie down, then click and treat. Deliver the treat so that he must get up to eat it.

Adding the cue:

When he is getting up and then immediately lying down again, you are ready to start saying the cue word. Say “down” as his belly touches the ground. After one session you can say “down” just before he lies down. Remember the cat should be performing the behavior consistently before you start using verbal cues.

COMMENTS:

- If the cat is too distracted, start working the cat in an area (e.g., bedroom) that the cat uses as a favorite hangout.
- The behavior may happen very quickly so make sure you are paying close attention to the body position of the cat.
- Keep training sessions for cats to no more than two minutes or 10 treats. Take breaks -- grooming the cat or giving attention at appropriate times -- between each training session.