

Food for thought- how many times have you opened the door and tossed cookies back into the house? Dogs will gravitate to the place where they get reinforcement, and in most cases the outside is much more reinforcing than the inside. For an older dog with a long reinforcement history for running out doors and ...playing, peeing, pooping, barking, chasing, etc. it is going to take A LOT of reinforcing inside the house to overcome that history because there have been many deposits in the 'Bank of Outside the House'.

I train all of my dogs (from puppyhood) that exit doors (garage, deck, crate, and front doors) are a cue to automatically sit and wait for a release. (I also agree with always giving verbal permission to go out BEFORE the dog gets to the door when I'm not training it or the dog doesn't know the behavior yet.)

Training this behavior is always done after the dog has been pottied and I know I can mess around. This may be easiest to teach from a crate first.

- With dog in crate - open door slightly (enough to get hand in) and quickly toss several great cookies inside. Keep dog inside crate.
- Repeat 5-10 times- progress the behavior each time until door is wide open- Release dog out of crate with chosen release word (free, OK etc.) If you want dog to always sit at door before going out, then wait till dog is sitting to release it (do not cue it, just wait for it to be offered)
- Proof opening crate door while dog stays by (just a few examples- there are many more ways to proof this):
 - a. moving away- but this behavior should start with just a weight shift backwards (a few inches)
 - b. dropping cookies on floor about a foot away and immediately feed another cookie in the crate (not the one you just dropped)
 - c. jumping up and down
 - d. feeding another dog etc...

In another session- work on this behavior at a house door:

- a. Get close enough to door so you could reach handle, and the first time ask dog for a sit
- b. Reach out and touch door handle -toss cookies back from door or hand feed for sitting still (repeat until dog can sit still as you reach, if you can't reach all the way and touch handle before dog gets up, then just reach out a few inches and progress up to the whole distance). GO to next step when they can sit and wait even if you reach fast or slow.
- c. Next reach and jiggle door handle- start with one jiggle, then 2, etc. Repeat feeding for the sit and wait. Repeat until successful 10 out of 10 jiggles.
- d. Next reach, jiggle and open door 2"- if they stayed sitting- mark it (yes or click) and toss cookies back into house,

e. Progress on the door opening by varying the amount of space the door gets opened. Your hand should stay on door while working this part. Close the door in the dogs face if they attempt to get out. (BUT do not hurt them- Catch it before they get to the door - pay attention to them flinching or getting up out of sit) If this happens more than 1-2 times, roll up a newspaper and hit yourself over the head - you've lumped too many things and not reinforced the sit enough at previous steps.) The real behavior builder here is the opportunity for reinforcement inside the house. You can use a toy instead if you have a non food-motivated dog, it will just take a bit longer because then you must play with the dog after each repetition.

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