

## Homework - Week One

A great portion of the remaining work of this class will be based on the dog's being able to perform this task. Accordingly, for further advancement in class, all dogs **must** be able to touch the target with their nose by Week Two. Any dogs that cannot do this will be unable to properly complete the remaining week's lessons, both in class and on homework assignments.

### ***“Touch Target”***

You will need a plastic lid, such as a margarine tub lid. You and your dog should go to a quiet area where you will not be bothered by interruptions or distractions.

Sit in a chair, with your bait bag readily accessible and your clicker in one hand. If your dog has a tendency to wander, you may want to keep him on leash. (all the leash is for is to keep him in the immediate vicinity – once you get into this you won't need the leash any more.)

Set the target lid on the floor. Say nothing, but touch it with your finger. Most dogs will be curious as to what you put there and will touch it with their nose. The instant your dog touches the lid with his nose, click and give the dog a treat. Some dogs catch on right away, and will immediately touch the lid again. If so, click and treat. If not, wait a minute or two to see if he shows any interest in the lid. If he does not, you may have to touch it again yourself. When he touches it, click and treat. It should only take about five minutes for the dog to learn that touching the lid with his nose earns him a click and treat. NOTE – if your gung-ho retriever tries to pick up the lid, switch to a ceramic saucer or small bowl, upside down, which is difficult or impossible for your dog to pick up.

When he's volunteering to touch the lid as soon as you put it on the floor, you can begin putting a word to the action. When he touches it, say, “Touch” and click and treat. Continue until he will touch the target on the command “touch”. Don't hurry, don't correct, don't get discouraged!

*Note – Click for a **nose touch** – not a foot touch. We want the dog putting his head down to touch the target. Also a foot touch has the tendency to move the target too much.*

When your dog is touching the target on command, you should begin rewarding only when he does it on command. In other words, if he touches the target without your saying anything, do not reward. Continue until he is reliable on this.

Now you can begin moving the target further away. Put it about five feet away and see if he will go to the target on command. If not, bring it closer again. Keep working until you can put the target about 20 feet away and have him go to it and touch it on command.

Do not rush this process. The ultimate goal is for the dog to go to the target at a short distance (20 – 30 feet) and touch it with his nose. It may take two or even three sessions to get to this point.