



The No Wiggling Exercise

By Nancy Gyes

During this handling exercise I expect my dog to stay in a position at my side, without struggling, while being touched and examined. The dog needs to be on leash for the exercise. I kneel on the ground with the leash tucked under my knee. I set a bowl of treats out of his reach off to my side, where I can pick up one cookie at a time. I do not want food in my hand. If having the bowl of treats on the floor beside you is too distracting for your pup, put the bowl on a table, but within reach. You can use a clicker, but I find it challenges my dexterity too much while doing these exercises.

I use the marker word "Yes" or just quietly praise when my dog tolerates my touch. I pet him gently down his back with my left hand for just a couple seconds while my right hand holds the collar. I say Yes the instant he stops wiggling; then I exchange hands with my left hand holding the collar as the right reaches for a treat and hands it to him. I switch hands again and repeat many times.

Next, with my hand under his belly, I gently lift him into a stand and I tickle his belly softly. I also whisper a calm *Good Boy* while he stands. I say Yes, change hands, feed, change back again, and repeat. I lift a leg from the elbow, mark it with Yes, change hands, feed, change back again, and repeat. I lift a leg from the elbow, mark it with Yes, release the leg, change hands, feed, change hands again, and repeat. If holding the leg was okay, then I move farther down the leg the next time (mark, reward), and then move my hand to his foot (mark, reward).

I put my hand on his back, pet all the way down his back, and gently tuck him into a sit by folding him into the position with my hand below his rump. Never push on your puppy's rear to get him into a sit. I do not use any words to cue positions like sit, down, or stand. This exercise does not teach your dog to sit, stand, or down; it teaches your dog to tolerate handling and be rewarded accordingly.

The sessions last about 5 minutes. We do these when my dog has already been out for some exercise and play, not when he is amped and wants to wiggle. Handle in all ways and positions (sit, down, stand). Touch your dog's face, ears, mouth, teeth, and each leg from top to foot; rub the foot gently and separate each toe and rub it gently. I do the outside left legs when the dog is on my left side and the right legs when he is on my right. Be sure to rub gently between the back legs, and touch the privates. Every time the pup tolerates your touching a part of him, he is marked and rewarded while he is tucked into your side.