

Hammering Out Repetitions in Dog Training



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Shallow nails don't provide support. Depth is the key. Training your dog is the same.

A shallow driven nail, like the one in the picture, isn't a reliable support for a heavy hanging planter.

Several more hammer taps would be required in order for the nail to have the depth required to do the job.

Dog training operates in much the same way.

In order for a new cue/behavior to be performed by your dog in a reliable manner, training repetitions must continue past the initial correct responses and within increasingly more challenging environments, distractions, and durations.

Keep the picture of the nail in mind when you think your dog has learned a new cue simply because he/she has performed it correctly a few times.

Unfortunately, many dog owners mistake initial correct responses for the dog having learned a new behavior. This simply isn't the case.

An Olympic gymnast has not learned to reliably perform a triple pike with a back flip after a few correct repetitions. The movement must be practiced repeatedly before it becomes reliable. It must

be able to stand the test of higher levels of difficulty such as performing the move in a challenging setting such as a competition.

A cue as simple as “sit” might be reliable within the confines of a quiet kitchen. But asking for and getting that same “sit” when out in the backyard with a squirrel in sight/scent, is entirely another matter.

Basic cues such as “sit” “down” “stay” “come” are potential life savers. The only way your dog will respond to them when you need them the most, is if you’ve done several repetitions within increasingly difficult settings and by challenging your dog to perform them with tests requiring higher levels of focus and concentration.

Keep that nail in mind the next time you’re tempted to say “Look what I taught Rover”