

**You will need:**

- 2 or more people
- A space to move around
- Your “animal’s” favorite snack

**Optional:**

- Clicker or whistle



**Zookeepers use training techniques with their animals daily in order to keep them safe and healthy. These techniques work just as well with your pets (or siblings!) at home. Try this fun activity to help you practice and become a better trainer by seeing training from both a trainer and the animal’s point of views!**

**Directions:**

1. Split into groups of at least 2 or more people per group.
2. Each group decides who will be the “animal” and who will be the trainer.
3. The “animal” moves out of hearing and the trainer and the rest of the group decide what behavior they want their animal to do. Keep the behavior as simple as possible, something that they can physically do (no asking for back flips!) and is respectful to your “animal.” For example, turn in a circle, wave, jump up and down, open a door, clap, pick up an object, etc. Just make sure it does not require multiple steps like opening a door and walking through it.
4. Bring the animal back into hearing range and the trainer will use a clicker, whistle, clap or say “good” as a conditioned reinforcer and then give the “animal” its favorite treat. Do this several times and your animal will quickly learn that when it hears that noise that something good is coming!
5. Once your “animal” has connected the noise with the treat, let them wander around and try to figure out what your behavior is without any talking or hints from the trainer or anyone else in the group.
6. Anytime the “animal” makes a move towards the behavior the trainer makes the noise and rewards the “animal.” For instance, if the behavior is open the door, anytime the animal steps in the direction of the door, make the noise and reward them. Keep reinforcing them (making the noise and rewarding) until they make the completed behavior! Once they do the behavior give them several treats, trainers call this the “jackpot,” to let them know that was the desired behavior.

**Hint:** If your “animal” gets stuck, try moving to another part of the room, changing the behavior or being more generous with your reinforcers.

7. Now the “animal” becomes the trainer and the trainer becomes the “animal” and repeat steps 3-5. Keep repeating until everyone in the group gets a chance to be the trainer and the “animal.”