



The purpose of this badge is to help the handler understand how to take better photos of his/her dog and help the dog to become easier subjects for photos. The badge requires the handler to gain a solid understanding of his/her camera and how to use it to get great photos. It also requires the dog to demonstrate skills that help him to be a better subject. The dog needs to have solid impulse control prior to training the required skills.

#### **DOG REQUIREMENTS:**

The Art of Shaping badge is a prerequisite for the Pho-DOG-raphy badge. The handler must have a solid understanding of operant conditioning, clicker training and shaping before attempting to train the required skills.

#### **Teaching the dog to focus on an object –**

Think of the photographic possibilities if your dog knows how to target something with his eyes. Teaching this skill is not difficult, but it's helpful if the dog has learned to target an object with his nose before moving on to focus. Where a dog's nose goes, his eyes will follow.

It's also important that the dog have a **solid 'stay'** with distractions before trying to teach any of the required behaviors. With the dog in a 'stay', **teach the 'look'** using an object that the dog really likes. This is usually food or a favorite toy. Click and treat the dog for following the object with his eyes, but without moving his body, as you hold the object in your hand and move it slowly from one side to the other.

Next, **set the object nearby but out of reach** and click and treat with the dog looks at it. Gradually require more of a head turn while the dog maintains his body position, by moving the object further to the side. Then you'll gradually require longer and longer duration in looking at the object before you click and treat.

It helps early on in this training to have the dog's reward actually be the object he desires and is staring at. This could be a ball, toy or favorite treat that he is rewarded with just for looking at it. You want to build the time the dog looks at the object so that later you have time to set up the shot without him moving.

Once you have a nice long 'look' behavior you should **add the cue** just before you place the object. Be sure to vary the placement of the object to get the dog to look in different directions. The dog needs to be able to look in all directions and varying heights. You can even get the dog to look down by placing him on a bed, table or Klimb platform and placing the object below him.

Once you have good duration using the favorite object you are ready to **transfer the behavior to another object**. This is required for the badge. Start by placing the new target object beside the favorite object and practice a few repetitions as above. Next put the favorite object behind or even inside the new object. Since the favorite object is still in play the dog shouldn't have a set back with the behavior at this stage.



Next, you'll place only the new target object. At this stage the favorite object or treat comes from you and not from the target location. You'll want to be careful that the dog isn't looking at you because you have the reward object. Work through the steps gradually so the dog fully understands the behavior. If at any time the dog falters repeatedly, you've likely moved too fast and need to take a step back.

You might use various objects as you continue to proof the behavior so that the dog understands that the 'look' cue means, "stare at what I place until I tell you to stop." Possible objects include anything that can be placed and is not seen as a toy by the dog. Things like post-it notes, folded paper, a bell, a box, etc.

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### Specific required behaviors –

The behaviors required for the badge are outlined in the chart below.

Dog will 'look' at a target object on cue and will maintain the look for at least 5 seconds with the object placed on the ground 2 feet in front of the dog, then 2 feet to either side	<p>The 'look' cue must be transferred from the favorite object to a new target object. The dog should demonstrate that he understands the 'look' cue and will maintain the look at the object until given another cue or until the handler releases the dog from the behavior.</p> <p>By placing the object near the dog in various positions, the handler demonstrates that he/she is able to set-up photos that allow him/her to choose the direction of the dog's 'look' and that the dog is able to maintain the 'look' behavior long enough to allow the handler to get the camera ready and take the photo.</p>
Dog will 'look' at a target object on cue and will maintain the look for at least 5 seconds with the object placed on a raised surface to each side, as if to get a profile shot	<p>This step shows that the dog will not only perform the behavior with the object on the ground, but in other positions as well. The handler might want the dog to be looking up or have his nose parallel to the floor.</p>
Dog will maintain the 'look' position for several seconds regardless of the target object position	<p>This step clarifies that the 'look' behavior is not just a glance at the object, but instead is a trained behavior with duration. This is best demonstrated if the target object is to the side of the dog, so he is clearly looking away from the handler and the camera. This position allows for an excellent profile shot of the dog.</p>
Dog will perform a 'stay' or 'freeze' for 20 seconds with minimal head or body movement when placed in an 'odd' position or location	<p>This shows that the dog can hold a pose. The pose should be a non-standard position and/or location and tests the dog's understanding of the 'stay' cue. The handler might choose to have the dog hold a play bow, put his paws up on something or hold a stay while on a boulder or log. This 'stay' allows for infinite possibilities for much more interesting photos.</p>



<p>Dog will maintain a stay while the handler uses attention words and makes exciting noises that cause the dog's ears to come forward</p>	<p>The dog will look happy and expressive when his ears are up, but he needs to learn to 'stay' while they are hearing exciting sounds.</p> <p>An alternative way to meet this requirement would be for the handler to teach the dog a cue that means 'bring your ears forward'. Many dogs learn to pop their ears forward when they hear the words, "squirrel", "walk" or "cookie". That is not the intent here. The dog should understand that a cue like 'ears' or 'focus' said in a neutral tone means that he should put his ears forward.</p> <p>Dogs don't consciously think about the position of their ears, but through clicker training and shaping, they can be taught to do so.</p>
<p>Dog will stay while the handler throws a toy or another object in the air to get the dog to look where the handler wants for the photo.</p>	<p>Many professional photographers have learned the value of tossing things into the air to get the attention of a dog. To successfully accomplish this the handler must be able to toss the object he/she is using while looking through the lens of the camera. This means that the handler is probably not going to also catch the tossed item. The dog must demonstrate that he will not bolt from a well-planned posed shot to get the object that is tossed. Objects should not be thrown at or close to the dog.</p>

### HANDLER REQUIREMENTS:

Most people have cell phones that have cameras and that camera is appropriate to use to capture the necessary photos for this badge. An SLR camera or any type of camera preferred by the handler is okay as well. It's important for the handler to learn about the features and settings on whatever type of camera is used and need to learn how photos are affected by the various features and setting. Most cell phones and cameras don't come with manuals anymore but information is readily available online.

A good acronym to remember when learning to get great photographs is **CLICKS**.

### **C is for COMPOSITION**

Before the camera is ever pointed at a subject you must think about what you want to show with the photo as well as what you don't want. Is the end result intended to be a formal portrait, an action shot that tells a story or simply a candid shot? When considering the composition of any photo, you must consider a number of elements.

#### **Background –**

In determining the spot from which the photo will be taken, be aware of what is behind the subject. Background clutter should be minimized or eliminated. Anything that is not part of the story that is being told with the photo should be removed, if possible. Things like weeds or trees in front of a subject or anything that will look like it is coming out of the subject's head detract from the photo.



### Fill the frame –

Zoom in or move in close enough to the subject when composing the photo in order to make sure that the eye is drawn to the subject and not something that is unimportant. Digital photography allows us to easily edit photos. However, when the subject does not fill the majority of the frame, the cropped photo will be smaller and may have a lot of pixilation when enlarged. The camera can be held both horizontally and vertically to see which orientation best fits the frame.

### Details –

Watch the dog's ears and tail when composing the photo and try to get them up as the shutter is clicked. Look for light reflected in the dog's eyes. The 'sparkle' will add life and character to the dog's expression. Make sure light does not reflect off any surface in the shot and take the eye away from the subject. All of the details matter when composing a shot.

### Contrast and Color -

The background of the photo should contrast with the color of the dog so that the dog doesn't blend in, though sometimes in an 'art' shot that may be the desire. The greens of the trees and grass and blues of the sky and water are good contrasting colors for most dogs. Everything should look intentional.

### L is for LIGHTING:

Lighting is a key component of any photo. Light, or the lack of it, is what is recorded by the camera. Light can be used intentionally and can yield excellent photos.

### Time of day and Location –

Consider whether a photo should be taken inside or outside, whether a flash is used, what time of day it is and how close the subject will be to the flash or other light source. All of these things can enhance or detract from a photo.

Artificial lighting can be challenging for indoor photos as some lights cast odd colors in photos or don't provide enough light. Artificial lighting can enhance a photo when properly placed and filtered. Bouncing a bright light off a white ceiling or wall can provide good filtering and minimize dark shadows. Using a flash can cause 'red eye', though many cameras have red eye filters that help to eliminate the problem. Having the dog's eyes look away from the flash or bouncing the light from the flash can help with this problem as well. Flashes can also be used to fill in shadows caused by lighting behind the subject.

Outdoor light is normally great for photography and a bright, yet overcast day is ideal. The clouds on an overcast day provide a natural filter for the sunlight and minimize shadows while still allowing for contrast and proper colors. A bright sun from directly above on a sunny day may cause troublesome shadows on the subject and surrounding objects. Subjects will likely squint or close their eyes on very sunny days. Shade on a sunny day can help but blotchy shadows caused by trees may fall on the subject.



### **I is for IMPRESSION:**

The overall impression that you are trying to elicit from the photo must be considered before you click the shutter. Consider how you want someone looking at the photo to feel when they see it. Should the photo cause laughter, contentment, excitement, sadness or amazement? Should it convey a formal setting or have a candid feel? How will the photo capture the personality of the dog? Is the dog happy, affectionate, relaxed, high strung, goofy, playful or sleepy in the photo? Using camera settings, backdrops, props and different poses all contribute to impression.

### **C is for CHOOSE:**

Making choices in advance of pressing the shutter button will make a huge impact on the end result.

#### **Choose correct body posture –**

Laying on the floor or ground helps to get down on eye level with the dog. Shooting from below the dog's eyes often results in dramatic photos. Stay relaxed rather than tense. Bend your knees if standing. Keep arms tucked into the body and/or lean against a solid object to minimize the shake that can ruin a photo. Tripods can help with posed photos or even with action shots if a remote is used for the camera's shutter.

#### **Choose the right time –**

Active puppies may need to be a bit tired in order to sit still or even just slow down. Couch potatoes need to be photographed when alert and active. Have patience. Sometimes it's best to wait or reattempt the shot. The dog may need to be regroomed after running in mud. Stay calm so that the dog doesn't get stressed or agitated. Anything can happen during a photo shoot. If the time isn't right, don't force it.

#### **Choose the right attention getters –**

Find just the right thing to make the dog's ears go up, head tilt or some other desired reaction. Extremely active dogs should be given something to do. Two active puppies with a stick are almost guaranteed to result in adorable photos.

#### **Choose the right equipment –**

It's important to know how different features of the camera work. Different cameras can produce different results so you may decide to have more than one to choose from. This rule also applies to editing photos. Various tools and filters can help take a not so great photo and turn it into a really great one.



**K is for KNOW THE DOG:**

It's important to have a strong bond with the dog and to know what times, locations and motivators yield the best photos.

**Know the dog's habits –**

Have the camera ready to capture the unique things that the dog does at different times of the day. The dog might do a cute trick right before he is fed each day or make spectacular leaps when chasing a toy that's been thrown. Great shots can be captured in these situations and are very predictable and thus, easier to get.

**Know the dog's limits –**

Does the dog have a short attention span? If so, it's probably best to not plan for a long photo shoot. Does the dog need to run around for a few minutes after sitting still? Make sure he gets what he needs so he can blow off steam and be ready to start again. All dog's will reach their limits if given enough time and you need to be able to recognize the signs that the dog is done.

**Know the dog is prepared –**

Asking the dog to something that he isn't well prepared for will frustrate both you and the dog. Make sure the photo shoot is fun for the dog. Dogs don't have fun when put into place and asked to stay over and over again. Varying what the dog does makes the shoot more fun for him and will likely yield better photos. The more training the dog has the easier it will be to get that perfect photo with minimal stress on the dog.

**S is for SOMETHING TO DO with your photos:**

Great photos should have a purpose! In the digital era many people take photos and never do anything with them. Photos can be shared using one of the many low-cost sharing sites. There are many places that offer options for putting photos on various products like shirts and mugs. And of course, a framed photo makes a great gift. Web sites and blogs can be set up to chronicle the dog's life through photos. Most importantly, send in your best action shots for the DSA calendar. This is by far the best use for the photos you take that we can think of!

**Specific requirements for handlers –**

The handler must present photos for evaluation as outlined below.

Handler understands how to use his/her camera and how light affects photos in both good and bad ways	Handler needs to take some good photos and some bad one showing how various kinds of light can affect the quality of the end result. Photos must be shared with the evaluator or sent in for evaluation. The handler should put notes on each photo explaining what went right, what went wrong and how problems could be corrected.
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**Dog Scouts of America**  
**Pho-DOG-raphy Training**

**Pho-DOG-raphy**

<p>Handler can take both a good and a bad photo of the dog using natural light; handler can explain why the shots are good and bad and what went wrong with the bad shot</p>	<p>Handler needs to take photos that show some of the good effects and bad effects of using natural sunlight and must explain what went right, what went wrong and how the problems could be corrected.</p>
<p>Handler can take both a good and a bad photo of the dog using a flash; handler can explain why the shots are good and bad and what went wrong with the bad shot</p>	<p>Using a flash correctly can be tricky. The handler needs to take photos that show some of the good effects and bad effects of using a flash and must explain what went right, what went wrong and how the problems could be corrected.</p>
<p>Handler can take both a good action photo and a bad action photo; handler can explain why the shots are good and bad and what went wrong with the bad shot</p>	<p>Action photos are those in which the dog is moving and doing something. Shot like this should clearly show what the activity is and/or what story is being told. Handler needs to some examples of photos, both good and bad that were taken of the dog in action. must explain what went right, what went wrong and how the problems could be corrected.</p>
<p>Handler can take a good posed photo of the dog</p>	<p>The handler can get created with this requirement. Most people can take a photo of a dog sitting or lying down. The handler should try a new pose, prop or location.</p>
<p>Handler can take a good timed photo of him/herself with the dog</p>	<p>The timer on a camera is very under-utilized by most people. Handler needs to set up and take a timed photo with the dog. The shot could be posed with the subjects looking at the camera or could be a photo that looks candid but was actually taken with the timer function on the camera. Handler should explain the steps taken to get the photo</p>
<p>Handler will provide all photographic evidence that demonstrate the required concepts and attests that he/she took the photos him/herself</p>	<p>All photos taken to meet the above requirements must be taken by the handler and not someone else. Handler will attest that the photos provided are his/her own work.</p>