



### TRAINING THE ART OF SHAPING:

You could wait until the dog lifts his paw up for some reason on his own (pure shaping), but it would be a far more efficient use of time if you were to be able to "elicit" the paw raising behavior, and then shape it to be a higher and higher "wave." You can do this by teaching the dog to "paw" your hand.

To get started show the dog a yummy treat and then enclose it in your fist. Try to get the dog interested in it. Let him sniff, lick and/or nuzzle your hand. He will become frustrated at his inability to open the hand and he may resort to digging or pawing at it. The minute he does, give the reward mark to tell the dog, "BINGO!" that's the behavior I want. Then give the reward by turning your hand over and opening your palm, exposing the treat for him to eat. Pretty soon, the dog sees that this operates just like a slot machine--you smack the "lever" and the treats appear.

Once the dog offers the hand-smacking behavior reliably, simply elevate your hand so that the dog has to reach for it. Move your hand away as he goes to smack it, during one of those great reaches, and let him smack the thin air and reward that behavior by clicking and treating. From then on, only reward swipes in the air. Do not reward re-directed scratching (some dogs will try to dig at your leg, or anything else within reach, rather than to paw the air). Only a big wave gets the reward.

If you want to get the dog to paint, you will need multiple strokes of the paw on one cue, so don't name the behavior yet. Wait until you get a double or triple wave to name it "wave" or whatever you'd like. Then, get the dog to perform multiple "strokes" while in front of an easel. Reward repeated, long strokes on the easel. Add the proper tools (a [Pantin' Paw](#) and some paint) and you have an artist!

### STEP-BY-STEP TRAINING:

1. Establish a reward marker
  - a) Click and give a treat
  - b) Repeat a few dozen times
  - c) If the dog expects a treat when he hears the click, move on to Step 2
  - d) If the dog does not yet associate the click with a treat repeat until he does
  
2. Elicit a paw behavior – games to get the paw moving
  - a) Slot machine – dog paws at hand hiding a treat and hand opens to deliver the treat
  - b) Target stick slap – don't reward for a nose touch; instead wait for the dog to paw it
  - c) Shell game – treat is covered by a hand on the floor; hand moves when dog paws at it
  - d) Leaning tower – dog targets to one side until weight comes off the opposing foot
  - e) Yucky paw – do something strange to the paw like putting double stick tape on the bottom in order to get him to lift it
  
3. Shape a wave by rewarding successive approximations
  - a) Hold the target or lure up and reward higher paw movements
  - b) Repeat while continually upping the requirement until the dog has a nice high wave with either foot



- c) Watch which paw the dog prefers and concentrate on shaping the behavior with that paw
  - d) Continue until the wave has become a predictable behavior and the dog waves when he sees the food
  - e) Add the cue, such as “wave” for this behavior
4. Require contact with the easel
    - a) Hold up the easel and ask for a wave using the established cue
    - b) Click and reward any waves that come into contact with the upright surface of the easel
    - c) Get selective and reward the strokes that are long and deliberate
  5. Make it more challenging
    - a) Hold up the easel and ask for a wave using the established cue
    - b) Require multiple strokes before rewarding
    - c) Increase the duration of the stroking behavior before rewarding
  6. Add the [Paintin’ Paw](#)
    - a) Reward the dog for having the Paintin’ Paw in contact with his foot
    - b) Slip the Paintin’ Paw on the foot chosen for the painting behavior and reward him for wearing it
    - c) Allow the dog to get used to wearing the Paintin’ Paw while eating treats, then remove it and repeat
    - d) Repeat steps 3 through 5 above, this time with the dog wearing the Paintin’ Paw
  7. Add a cue
    - a) Pick a cue for the finished behavior, such as the word “paint”
    - b) Say the cue just before the dog offers the final desired behavior of stroking the canvas while wearing the Paintin’ Paw
  8. Help the dog create a masterpiece!
    - a) Choose a paint color and apply paint to the sponge
    - b) Use the new “paint” cue
    - c) Turn the easel occasionally so the strokes don’t all go in the same direction
    - d) Repeat steps using additional colors
    - e) Have the dog sign the artwork by applying his pawprint