

Treating_-_How_to_do_it_correctly.txt

Treating is a very effective training tool, but it will work best if you do not treat her every time she responds correctly. It is the *anticipation* of maybe getting a treat that makes treating effective. So mix it up so she doesn't know if she'll get a treat or not. Additionally, the treat needs to be better than whatever she has or is doing. Small, soft, meaty treats usually work best. She needs to be able to quickly eat it in one bite with little or no chewing. I know it seems ridiculous given the many all-meat expensive treats I've purchased for this purpose, but my dogs' favorite training treats are Canine Carry Out Minis (10-pack at <http://amzn.to/1NyxCtV>). You can usually buy these at Walmart. Whenever I train puppies with live birds, I make sure I have a couple of hot dogs in my pocket.

If someone tells you it's wrong to use treats when training a hunting dog, politely don't listen. Food is by far the best canine motivator. It's the #1 most important thing in a dog's life and, for most dogs, a piece of meat is irresistible. Not using this to your advantage in training would be ridiculous.

Generally-speaking, training with treats is something you'll do when your dog is young, because she isn't mature enough to use pressure (nice word for negative reinforcement). As she matures and you are able to use pressure, you'll probably rarely use treats. So don't worry, you won't need to carry treats when you're hunting! In fact, I've found my dogs won't take a treat when we're hunting. There have been times when I've tried to give them something for a pick-me-up after hunting for a few hours and they just stick their nose up at it, or drop it on the ground and continue hunting.