



# Susan Garrett's Hand Target Lesson Plan



# Thank You!

Thank you for joining us! I recognize that today, in particular, there are more and more trainers to choose from while on your dog training adventure. Your dog and I both thank you for choosing to invest your time with DogsThat.

I hope you find this Hand Target Lesson Plan eBook to be a great resource to your dog training.

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Here's to setting our dogs and ourselves up for success!



Susan Garrett

[www.DogsThat.com](http://www.DogsThat.com)



# Hand Target

I've been teaching my puppies and dogs to target my hand for many years and have taught the game to many thousands of my students worldwide. It's a game we love to play, and our dogs love it too!

## 3 Big Reasons to Play

- It's a way to refocus your dog back on you.
- It's a great way to change your dog's physiology.
- It's the foundation of so many other behaviors.



# Hand Target

## Hand Target Criteria

We want our dog's nose to press into our hand firmly. A verbal cue is optional, but the word we use is "bump" because it's very descriptive of the way we want our dog to nose target our hand.

If a dog touches the hand lightly, it can easily become a fake touch, so the word "bump" is super clear for us, which helps us make what we want our dogs to do super clear for them.

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# Hand Target

## Training Environment

- Pre-cut treats that your dog loves (we call them 'cookies').
- Print out your training plan and review the steps.
- Set up your video so you can record your training.
- When it's time to play with your dog, have them on leash.
- Journal once you've played: What was great? What needs more work? Select a sticker for your journal notes!
- **BONUS TIP:** Play in a quiet location where you and your dog are comfortable without distractions for either of you.

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# Hand Target

## Training Mechanics Overview

- Pre-cut your training treats so that you can be an efficient trainer.
- Practice these skills without your dog first. It's what professional dog trainers do! It will make your mechanics so smooth that you'll skyrocket your dog's success while dramatically reducing their frustration.
- Deliver the treats from above into your target hand to support the nose target to hand behavior you are teaching your dog.
- Cup your target hand to catch the treats you are dropping from above. Remember to switch hands so you can use both as a target.
- Progress to having your target hand flat and firm, facing your dog. When your dog touches your hand, cup that hand, say "cook", and drop a treat into it from above for your dog to eat. Cook lets your dog know they can eat the treat you've just dropped in your hand.
- In all stages, review your video to make sure your mechanics are fluid and write a note in your journal.



# Hand Target

## How to Play - Fluid Mechanics Without Your Dog

- Have your treats cut up and ready for you. Set up your video camera and record your mechanics. When playing, practice with each hand as your target – left and right.
- Hold one hand in front of you, and cup that hand.
- Drop 5 treats into your cupped hand. Start with your hands close, then try it with your hands further and further apart.
- Next, flatten your catching hand, facing up, and cup it when you drop the treat. Practice until you are comfortable with these mechanics.
- Progress to having your target hand flat and firm, facing your imaginary dog. Say “cook” when your imaginary dog touches your target hand, cup that hand, and drop a treat into it from above.
- Make a note in your journal, include a sticker, and review the video you recorded.



1 Drop treats into cupped hand.



2 Flatten hand.



3 Cup hand when treat dropped.



4 Firm, flat hand facing dog - say “cook”.



5 Turn hand and cup it to catch treat.



6 Drop treat into cupped hand.

# Hand Target

## How to Play With Your Dog ~ Warm Up Cookie Drop

- Have your dog on leash (wearing a comfortable flat collar or harness).
- Drop one treat at a time from above into your hand for your dog, so they learn that focusing on your hand is a good thing and they can eat the cookies you drop into it.
- Drop a couple of cookies into your hand, then move around with your dog, and repeat the treat drop. This energizes your dog so they engage in the fun game.
- Play again, using your other hand as your target hand. Dogs play on both sides of us!
- Your target hand needs to be at your dog's nose level.
- In all stages, your dog should bring their nose to your hand rather than you moving your hand to your dog's nose.



# Hand Target

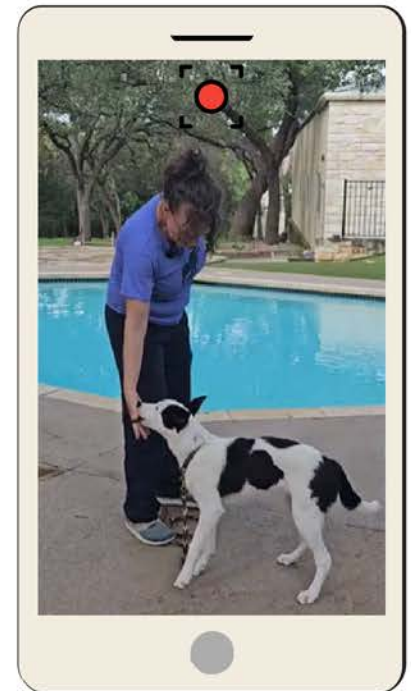
## How to Play With Your Dog ~ Now We're Nose Targeting

### Step 1: There's Value For My Hand

- Put a treat in your hand so your dog sees you, close that hand and hide it behind your back.
- Bring your hand out to your dog, open your hand, say the word "cook" and let them get the treat from your palm.
- Repeat 3 times.

### Step 2: Nose to Target Hand

- The 4th time, don't put a cookie in your hand. Close your hand and put it behind your back.
- Bring your closed hand out for your dog, and open it palm facing them. They will come to your hand because it just had cookies in it from Step 1.
- The moment your dog comes near your open hand, say "cook" and drop a treat into it from above for your dog. Remember to cup your hand when you drop the treat.
- Repeat Step 1 a couple of times, then return to Step 2. Eventually, you'll just be playing Step 2 because you have transferred the value of the treat to your hand.
- Play with both hands as the target hand. Review your video and make a journal note.



Video Your Training

# Hand Target

## Step 3: Hand Target!

- Repeat Step 2. When you present your hand to your dog, hold it firm and flat.
- Your dog will target your hand because of your great training to this point.
- When they press their nose into your palm, say "cook", drop the treat from above into your target hand, cupping that hand to catch the treat so your dog can get it.
- Keep playing, remembering to swap hands so that you practice with each as your target.
- As you progress, you can fade using treats all the time as your dog will LOVE to hand target.



# Hand Target

## Criteria for Adding Your Hand Target Word

- You have played the game in at least 5 different locations around your home.
- Your dog is giving you a firm press of their nose into your target hand.
- Every time your dog sees your target hand they are coming to it and giving you the nose press that you want.

## How to Add the Hand Target Word "Bump"

- Say the word "bump" (or the word you select).
- Then, present your target hand.
- Having a word is optional, because your dog understands to touch your hand when you present it as a target from your great training and value you have built for the behavior.



## Hand Target Summary ~ Nuances of the Game

- Prepare your training environment. Have everything ready to set your dog and yourself up for success.
- Preparation includes having treats your dog loves cut up and easy for you to access.
- Practice your role without your dog! Get your mechanics fluid, and then play with your dog.
- Your dog's focus for 'work' (which is play) and focus for you is built into the game when you follow the steps.
- Video your training so you can see what you'd like to improve and where you are brilliant.
- Make notes in your journal, and use your stickers. Celebrate all of your progress!



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## About Us

DogsThat is brought to you by Susan Garrett and the DogsThat Team.

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades. She has won multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events with her dogs over the past 30 years. Susan was one of the very first dog trainers to share knowledge online when she opened her "Clicker Dogs" website many years ago.

Susan has supported hundreds of thousands of people globally with enjoying a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, interviews, blog posts, podcasts, free dog training and dog agility video series, and online dog training programs.

A natural teacher and an entertaining speaker, Susan is world renowned for her dog training knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Her understanding of how to apply science-based learning principles to both competitive and family pet dog training has been pivotal in changing how dogs are trained.



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