

CLIENT CURRICULUM · MARKER-BASED TRAINING

Six-Week Puppy Course

A Knock Out Dog Training, Gulf Coast Curriculum —
Prepared for Dior

Duration: 6 weeks · 12 sessions (2 per week)

Behaviors: Sit · Down · Come · Heel · Place

Method: Marker-Based Training — Three-Phase Progression

Includes: Weekly homework, behavior reference table, marker vocabulary glossary

Welcome

This is Dior's personalized six-week, twelve-session puppy foundations course. Over the next six weeks, you and Dior will work through engagement, name recognition, sit, down, come, heel, and place — built on a marker-based training approach that's positive, clear, and easy for both of you to follow. We'll move step by step: charging the clicker first, then building engagement, then attaching Dior's name, before any commands are introduced. Two sessions a week, with short homework assignments between sessions to keep things moving.

Our Training Philosophy

- **The marker comes first.** Before Dior can learn anything else, the clicker needs to mean something to her. We “charge” it in Week 1 — clicking and treating with nothing else going on — until the click itself gets her attention, every time.
- **Engagement before everything else.** A dog who isn't tuned in to her handler can't really hear what the marker is telling her. Once the clicker is charged, we spend time building Dior's focus and motivation toward you, because every later skill depends on it.
- **Then comes her name.** Once Dior is engaged and the clicker is meaningful to her, we use both together to condition a strong response to her name — so when you say “Dior,” she turns toward you reliably.
- **Teach the behavior, then name it.** We shape each physical behavior first — through luring — and only attach the verbal word once Dior is already doing it reliably.
- **A second marker comes later, deliberately.** Dior will work with the clicker as her primary marker through Week 3. The verbal “yes” marker isn't introduced until Week 4, once she has full fluency with the clicker — introducing a second marker too soon would dilute both.
- **Everything stays positive.** This program stays in the gentle, purely positive phase of training throughout. A light “that's not it” signal (our non-reinforcement marker) is introduced cautiously in Weeks 5–6, only on behaviors Dior already knows well. No physical corrections are used anywhere in this course — Dior is still building her foundation.
- **Place is a priority, not an afterthought.** We introduce place early (Week 2) and keep reinforcing it every week through Week 6, because a rock-solid place command pays off for the rest of Dior's life — it becomes her calming spot, her impulse-control practice, and your go-to tool out in public.

Program Overview

- **Client:** Dior (puppy)
- **Duration:** 6 weeks, 2 sessions/week (12 sessions total)
- **Homework:** Issued after every session, due before the next
- **Behaviors taught:** Sit, Down, Come, Heel, Place
- **Markers used:** Clicker (Weeks 1–3) → “Yes” (introduced Week 4) → “Good” (introduced Week 2) → a gentle non-reinforcement signal (introduced Week 5)
- **Approach:** Positive, reward-based training throughout, with a light corrective signal added late and only on well-known behaviors

AT A GLANCE: THE SIX WEEKS

WEEK	FOCUS
Week 1	Engagement, name recognition, clicker charging, shaping sit/down (no verbal)
Week 2	Verbal cue transfer (sit/down), come foundation, place introduction
Week 3	“Good” continuation marker, heel foundation, place duration
Week 4	Introducing the verbal “yes” marker; heel formalized
Week 5	Non-reinforcement marker; proofing under mild distraction
Week 6	Generalization and final proofing across all five behaviors

WEEK 1 Marker Charging, Engagement, Name Recognition, Shaping (No Verbal Cues)

GOAL

The clicker is fully meaningful to Dior, she's engaged and tuned in to her handler, and she responds to her name. Sit and down are shaped through luring — no verbal cue is attached yet.

SESSION 1

- Charge the clicker: click, then treat, with nothing else going on — repeated 50–100+ times until Dior shows a clear anticipatory response to the click alone (her head snaps toward you or the treat hand the moment she hears it). This step makes the click meaningful before it's used for anything else.
- Build engagement: control access to food and toys, and reward any voluntary eye contact or orientation toward you with a click and a treat. This builds Dior's habit of checking in with you.
- Condition her name: say “Dior” once, then click and reward any head turn or orientation toward you that follows. Don't repeat her name if she doesn't respond right away — wait for her to check in, then reward it.
- Marker used: Clicker only.

SESSION 2

- Continue building engagement and reinforcing the clicker until Dior's anticipatory response is consistent.
- Shape sit (no verbal): lure her nose up and back with a treat at nose height; the moment her rear end touches the ground, click and reward. No word is said yet. Repeat until she offers the position readily for the lure.
- Shape down (no verbal): lure her nose down and forward/under from a sit; click and reward the instant her chest and elbows touch the ground. No word is said yet.
- Marker used: Clicker only.

HOMEWORK — WEEK 1

- 5 short (2–3 minute) name-recognition and engagement reps per day.
- Keep reinforcing the clicker if the anticipatory response isn't fully consistent yet.
- Practice luring sit and down with no verbal cue, 5 reps each, 1–2x/day. Click and reward the correct position only.

WEEK 2 Verbal Cues Begin (Sit/Down), Come Foundation, Place Introduction, Conditioning “Good”

GOAL

Attach verbal cues to sit and down now that the physical behaviors are reliable on the lure. Start recall (come) as an engagement game. Introduce place as a target-station behavior. Condition “good” by always following it with room service, so Dior learns the word itself means a reward is coming to her.

SESSION 3

- Sit — add the word: say “sit” a half-second before the lure motion (the word always comes first, then the lure), then lure as before. Click and reward. Repeat until Dior starts sitting on the word before the lure is fully presented — that’s the sign the cue has transferred.
- Down — add the word: same sequence as sit — word first, then lure, click and reward on contact.
- Come — foundation: with Dior on a few feet of slack leash or in a small enclosed space, back away while encouraging her to engage with you (no command yet); the instant she moves toward you, click and reward with an animated, high-value moment — not just a flat handout.
- Condition “good”: say “good,” then immediately deliver the reward directly to Dior — bring the treat to her rather than having her come get it (“room service”). Repeat several times until she settles and waits for the reward to arrive rather than breaking toward your hand. This is what makes “good” safe to use for holding position later — she learns it means a reward is coming to her, not that she’s released.
- Marker used: Clicker; “good” conditioning begins.

SESSION 4

- Continue building the verbal cues on sit/down — test by giving the word alone with no physical help; click and reward any correct response, and simply re-lure (without repeating the word) if she doesn’t respond yet.
- Introduce “come”: once she’s reliably chasing the engagement game back to you, attach “come” right before she commits to moving — click and give a jackpot reward (extra treats or play) on arrival.
- Introduce place: use a raised platform or cot. Lure Dior onto it with a straight-line hand target at shoulder height; click and reward the instant all four feet are on the surface. No verbal cue yet — we shape the behavior first, just like sit and down.
- Marker used: Clicker.

HOMEWORK — WEEK 2

- Sit/down on the verbal cue only, 8–10 reps/day, click and reward correct responses; re-lure (without repeating the word) if she misses.
- Come game 3–5x/day in a low-distraction area, jackpot reward on arrival.
- Place: lure onto the platform 5–8x/day, click and reward all-four-feet contact. No verbal cue yet.
- “Good” conditioning: say “good” and immediately bring the reward to Dior — never make her come get it — 5–10x/day. The goal is calm anticipation, not movement toward you.

WEEK 3 Building Duration with “Good,” Heel Foundation, Place Duration**GOAL**

Use the already-conditioned “good” to start building duration on sit/down/place. Begin heel as an engagement-based following behavior. Build place duration to several seconds.

SESSION 5

- Build duration with “good”: once Dior is holding sit/down for even a moment, say “good” and deliver room service — bring her reward directly to her without asking her to move — then continue holding the position. “Good” tells her she’s right and should keep going; the clicker (or “yes,” later) tells her she’s done and free to move. A common mix-up to avoid: using the clicker by mistake during a hold — it will release her out of position.
- Place — add the word: attach “place” the moment before the lure/hand-target motion onto the platform, the same word-then-lure sequence as sit and down. Click and reward on contact.
- Marker used: Clicker + “good.”

SESSION 6

- Heel foundation (engagement-based, not a formal position yet): with Dior on leash at your side, reward any moment she’s tuned in to you while walking a few steps — click and reward for staying close and paying attention, not for precise position. This builds the foundation heel will formalize later. No verbal cue yet.
- Place duration: click and say “good” while Dior stays on the platform, building from a few seconds up to 15–20 seconds before the release word (“free”) and reward.
- Marker used: Clicker + “good.”

HOMEWORK — WEEK 3

- Sit/down with “good” holds before the click and reward — build duration to 10–15 seconds.
- Place: practice the verbal cue “place,” build duration to 20–30 seconds with “good” holds.
- Heel: 5-minute loose-leash walks rewarding closeness and attention — no formal position demands yet.

WEEK 4 Introducing the Verbal “Yes” Marker**GOAL**

Move from the clicker to the verbal word “yes” as Dior's primary marker, now that she has a fully reliable response to the clicker. This is the point where we introduce the verbal marker — once the mechanics are already understood, not before.

SESSION 7

- Pair “yes” with the clicker: say “yes” immediately before every click for several reps (“yes” then click then treat), so “yes” picks up the clicker's established meaning. After 20–30 repetitions, test “yes” alone (no click) on an easy, well-known behavior like sit. If Dior responds the same way, the word has transferred.
- Run sit, down, and place using “yes” in place of the clicker for behaviors she already knows well; keep the clicker on hand for anything new.
- Marker used: “Yes” (primary) + “good” (duration) + clicker (backup for new skills).

SESSION 8

- Continue replacing the clicker with “yes” across sit, down, come, and place.
- Heel — formalize the position: layer the verbal “heel” onto the engagement-following behavior from Week 3 — word first, then a treat lure at your hip to hold position; “yes” and a reward for correct position and closeness.
- Marker used: “Yes,” “good.”

HOMEWORK — WEEK 4

- Run all known behaviors (sit, down, come, place) using “yes” as the reward marker. Keep the clicker handy only if she stalls and needs the original marker to re-engage.
- Heel: short structured-position reps (10–15 steps) at home, “yes” and a reward for position.
- Place: maintain and extend duration with “good,” release with “free.”

WEEK 5 A Gentle “Not Quite” Signal, Light Distraction Practice**GOAL**

Introduce a calm, neutral non-reinforcement signal on behaviors Dior already knows well, and begin light distraction practice.

SESSION 9

- Introduce the non-reinforcement signal (“uh-uh” or “nope” — a sound never used as a household correction word): use it only on behaviors Dior already performs reliably (sit, down). If she breaks position or misses a known cue, give the signal in a flat, neutral tone, withhold the reward, and ask once more. Don't repeat the word a second time after that — just re-cue once.
- We don't use this signal yet on come, heel, or place — those aren't fully solid yet, and using it too early on a skill still being learned creates confusion rather than clarity.
- Marker used: “Yes,” “good,” gentle non-reinforcement signal (sit/down only).

SESSION 10

- Light distraction practice: practice sit, down, and place with one mild distraction added (a person walking by at a distance, a toy on the ground out of reach) — reward generously for success, and dial the distraction back if Dior struggles repeatedly.
- Come: practice recall with a long line in a slightly bigger or new space, jackpot reward on arrival.
- Marker used: “Yes,” “good.”

HOMEWORK — WEEK 5

- Sit/down: use the gentle signal only for genuine known-behavior misses; one re-cue, no repeating the word.
- Place duration: extend to 1+ minute with you standing a short distance away.
- Come and heel: practice in one new location this week (a different room or the yard) to start building reliability everywhere.

WEEK 6 **Bringing It All Together (All Five Behaviors)****GOAL**

Show sit, down, come, heel, and place reliably across at least two environments, using the full set of markers. Wrap up with a maintenance plan to keep going after the program ends.

SESSION 11

- Run all five behaviors (sit, down, come, heel, place) in the usual training space using “yes,” “good,” and the non-reinforcement signal as needed, confirming each one holds up without needing visible food or a toy in sight.
- Note any behavior that still depends on seeing the reward, and flag it for continued homework rather than calling it finished.

SESSION 12 — FINAL WALKTHROUGH

- Run the same five behaviors in a second, new environment (a different room, outdoors, or somewhere with mild background distraction) to confirm Dior performs reliably outside the usual setting.
- Review the full marker vocabulary and command list together, and walk through the maintenance homework plan going forward.
- Marker used: Full set — “yes,” “good,” non-reinforcement signal.

HOMEWORK — WEEK 6 / ONGOING MAINTENANCE

- Practice all five behaviors in a new environment at least 2x/week going forward.
- Mix up how often you reward fully reliable behaviors (not every single rep) — rewarding every time, forever, can create dependency.
- Keep using place as Dior's go-to calming spot during normal day-to-day activity.

How Each Behavior Is Trained

A quick-reference summary of how each behavior is built, and the marker sequence used at each stage of the program.

BEHAVIOR	TRAINING METHOD	MARKER SEQUENCE
Sit	Lure her nose up and back until her rear touches the ground (no verbal) → click and reward → add the word “sit” before the lure once she’s reliable → fade the lure out.	<i>Clicker (Wk1) → “yes” (Wk4) + “good” for holding position</i>
Down	Lure her nose down and forward from a sit until her chest touches the ground (no verbal) → click and reward → add the word “down” before the lure → fade the lure out.	<i>Clicker (Wk1) → “yes” (Wk4) + “good” for holding position</i>
Come	An engagement/chase game: you back away and reward any movement toward you with an animated reward moment; add the word “come” once she’s reliably chasing the game back to you; build distance and light distraction last.	<i>Clicker (Wk2) → “yes” (Wk4), always with a jackpot-style reward on arrival</i>
Heel	Built from engagement (rewarding closeness and attention while walking, no formal position yet) → formalized with a treat lure at the hip and the word “heel” once the following behavior is solid.	<i>Clicker (Wk3) → “yes” (Wk4) for position and closeness</i>
Place	A straight-line hand-target lure onto a raised platform → click and reward all-four-foot contact (no verbal) → add the word “place” once reliable → build duration with “good” holds → release with “free.”	<i>Clicker (Wk2) → “good” for duration (Wk3) → “yes” (Wk4) on placement, “free” to release</i>

Vocabulary

MARKER TERMS

■ Clicker / Marker

A sound that starts out meaningless and becomes meaningful because it reliably comes right before a reward.

■ Terminal Marker ("yes," clicker)

Tells Dior the behavior is complete and she's free to get her reward.

■ Continuation Marker ("good")

Tells Dior "you're right, keep going" without releasing her. Always followed by room service (the reward delivered directly to her in position, never requiring her to move) so she learns the word itself means a reward is coming — conditioned in Week 2, then used to build duration starting Week 3.

■ Non-Reinforcement Signal ("uh-uh," "nope")

Tells Dior that attempt didn't earn a reward; used only on behaviors she already knows well, and always a sound never used as a household correction word.

■ Release Word ("free")

Tells Dior the behavior or position is fully over and she may move.

HOW LEARNING WORKS

■ Classical Conditioning

A neutral sound or word becomes meaningful by reliably coming right before something that already matters to the dog (like food). This is how every marker in this program gets its meaning.

■ Operant Conditioning

Learning through the consequences of a behavior. This program relies almost entirely on rewarding the behaviors we want to see more of, plus occasionally withholding a reward to signal a miss.

■ Reinforcement Schedule

How often a behavior gets rewarded. New behaviors are rewarded every single correct rep to build fast, confident learning; once a behavior is solid, rewards become more occasional to keep performance sharp and prevent Dior from expecting a reward every time.

Vocabulary (continued)

HOW LEARNING WORKS, CONT'D

■Overshadowing

When a word and a physical cue (like a lure) happen at the exact same time, dogs respond to the physical cue and the word never really sinks in. The word should always come a beat before the physical help — this is the most common timing slip in this kind of training.

■Engagement

Dior's sustained focus and motivation toward you, prioritized over everything else in the environment; this is the foundation every other behavior in this program is built on, and it's developed in Week 1 before any command work begins.

■Active vs. Reactive Behavior

A "reactive" behavior only happens when Dior can see the reward; an "active" behavior happens because she understands her own action produces the reward, even when she can't see it yet. The goal of this program is active behaviors by Week 6.

■Shaping

Rewarding small steps in the right direction, rather than waiting for the whole finished behavior to show up on its own.

■Luring

Using a hand or food target to guide Dior's body into position; this is the main tool used to teach sit, down, and place before any word is attached.

■Fading

Gradually removing physical help (the lure, a hand gesture) once Dior is responding reliably to the word alone.

INTERNAL NOTES & BUSINESS TEMPLATE APPENDIX — **NOT CLIENT-FACING** — FOR KNOCK OUT DOG TRAINING, GULF COAST INTERNAL USE ONLY

Internal / Business Template Appendix

The sections below are Knock Out Dog Training, Gulf Coast's internal business documentation for this curriculum. They are not part of the client-facing course material above and are retained here, clearly labeled, consistent with how this document has been delivered previously (client content followed by a labeled internal appendix).

Revenue Model

N/A — this is a client-specific service deliverable within Knock Out Dog Training, Gulf Coast's existing Pet Dog Training Curriculum / Puppy Development and Early Training Course offerings, not a new revenue line. Reusable as a template for future puppy clients.

Buyer or Customer

Dior's owner/client — a private puppy-training client receiving in-person sessions with homework between visits.

Offer Structure

Six weeks, two sessions per week (12 total), with homework issued after each session. Deliverable: a puppy reliably performing sit, down, come, heel, and place on verbal cue across at least two environments, plus a documented marker vocabulary the client can maintain independently.

Sales Strategy

This curriculum doubles as a client-facing demonstration of Knock Out Dog Training, Gulf Coast's documented methodology (our marker-based training system + the Knock Out Phase System sequencing) — useful as a template/credibility asset for future puppy clients who want a structured, professionally documented program rather than ad hoc lessons.

Contracting Strategy

N/A — private client service, not a government contracting deliverable.

Pricing Considerations

N/A — pricing for this engagement is handled outside this document; see Knock Out Dog Training, Gulf Coast's standard pet dog training rate sheet. VERIFY SOURCE for current rates if quoting from this template.

Operational Requirements

- Trainer must complete clicker charging (Week 1) before any shaping begins — do not skip ahead to command work with an uncharged marker.
- Verbal "yes" marker is not introduced before Week 4 per client instruction — confirm clicker fluency (anticipatory response) before transitioning.
- NRM is introduced no earlier than Week 5, and only on behaviors already fluent (sit/down) — never on come, heel, or place until those are equally solid.
- No physical compulsion (Phase 3) is used anywhere in this six-week program.

SOPs Needed

None beyond existing Knock Out Dog Training marker conditioning and engagement protocols, which this curriculum already applies.

INTERNAL NOTES & BUSINESS TEMPLATE APPENDIX — **NOT CLIENT-FACING** — FOR KNOCK OUT DOG TRAINING, GULF COAST INTERNAL USE ONLY

Internal / Business Template Appendix (continued)

Risks and Limits

- This is a foundational (Phase 1, light Phase 2) program only. Reliability under real distraction/compulsion (Phase 3) is out of scope for this six-week course and should be sold as a separate follow-on if the client wants it.
- Timeline assumes a typically developing puppy with no behavioral red flags (fear, aggression, severe avoidance). If such signs appear, pause the standard curriculum and reassess per Knock Out Dog Training Marker-Based Training Methodology socialization/threshold protocols before continuing.
- Place duration targets (20–30 seconds Week 3, 1+ minute Week 5) are general guidelines, not guarantees — adjust pace to the individual puppy; do not advance phases or markers on a fixed calendar if Dior isn't ready.

Quality Control Standards

- Before introducing "yes" in Week 4, confirm Dior shows a genuine anticipatory response to the clicker alone (not just compliance).
- Before introducing the NRM in Week 5, confirm sit and down are fluent without lure dependency (active, not reactive).
- Audit every session for overshadowing errors (verbal and physical cues given simultaneously) — this is the single most common timing mistake in marker-based training.

Day Zero Questions

- Is Dior actually offering behaviors with drive and enthusiasm by Week 6, or just mechanically complying — i.e., is this genuinely Phase 1 fluency or surface-level compliance that will break under any future pressure?
- Has place been reinforced enough relative to the other four behaviors to make it Dior's genuine default station, per the client's emphasis on prioritizing it?

Class and Handout Ideas

1. Marker Vocabulary Quick Reference for Dior's Client — one-page printable version of the Vocabulary section above, for the client to keep between sessions.
2. Weekly Homework Tracker — simple log sheet for the client to record daily reps and successes/misses per behavior, reviewed at the start of each session.

Related Notes

- Knock Out Dog Training Marker-Based Training Methodology
- Knock Out Dog Training Phase System
- Engagement
- Knock Out Dog Training Language
- Puppy Development and Early Training Course
- Pet Dog Training Curriculum

Tags

#knockoutdogtraining #gulfcoast #business
 #puppy-development #curriculum #class-building
 #marker-training #knockoutmethodology
 #knockoutphasesystem #client-program