

## Classical or "Pavlovian" Conditioning

Classical conditioning forms an association between two stimuli.

In an experiment, Pavlov presented dogs with food. Then he began ringing a bell just before presenting the food. At first, the dogs did not begin salivating until the food was presented. After a while, however, the dogs began to salivate when the sound of the bell was presented. They learned to associate the sound of the bell with the presentation of the food. As far as their immediate physiological responses were concerned, the sound of the bell became equivalent to the presentation of the food.

How can this be used? A great way to use classical conditioning is to teach the dog secondary rewards. Let's say you want to use a particular word or even a particular sound (such as a click) as a reward just because it is simpler than whatever your dog's best primary reward is. So train your dog by saying the word or by making the sound and then treating it with the primary reward. It'll start to associate the two quickly and your alternative reward will become a suitable interim reward for your dog.

Credit for portions of this document to Tan Teck Woon of A Good Dog Training School – Affiliate member of AAPDT. Parts of this document have been excerpted from his essay Training Methods & Maxims as part of his Dog Training Instructor Course with Dog Obedience Guidance Systems of Australia (DOGS).

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