

Teaching Your Dog To Love the Car !

A lot of dogs struggle to like the car, sometimes it's from lack of experience, other times a bad experience. Regardless, the first goal is to just get them to associate it with getting really good treats.

If your dog has no interest in jumping in on her own, you can just walk toward the car and give a treat just before they put on the brakes and then turn and move away from it using happy talk to keep them connected to you.

Stay at this step and practice frequently, using moving away from the car as part of the reward. Each day you can push a little to see if your dog will go closer, but don't worry if it takes her a bit to want to approach on her own. Once your dog figures out that they control how to get cookies, they will be very motivated to approach the car and even jump in on their own.

Step By Step

Give your dog plenty of running room so he can get the momentum he needs to launch into the back, or up on the seat.

The first few times toss the treat in as you get close so your dog has incentive to jump in. Be sure to toss it about ½ way toward the back so it's not on the edge and not so far back that they can't see it.

Once your dog is launching easily, toss it further back toward the back.

Label it (you can use UP UP) and encourage her as you approach, keeping the leash loose to give her plenty of room.

As your dog gets good at it, you will want to wait for them to jump in and THEN give the treat so that they will just jump in on cue and you can randomize the rewards so you won't always have to have a treat to get them into the car easily.

Try picking your dog up and putting them in the car and then supporting them as you coax them out. Support them with your hand in the harness or collar so you can help them down and then drop a cookie on the ground for them to find.

Troubleshooting

Try opening the doors and getting a helper so your dog can jump in and come right back out the other side.

Leave the leash dragging so you can grab it easily.

Make it a fun game and later you can add, wait and pay your dog for holding a sit before you release them to jump out again.

Once inside, use an anchor leash that stays inside the car hooked to a grommet in the floor or seat belt so that your dog is safe and contained when you open the back and can't jump out on his own.

I like this leash for securing them in the car: <https://www.chewy.com/slowton-adjustable-dog-car-seat-belt>

Use really high value treats :

Cold cut ends from the deli work great! Ham, turkey, roast beef cut up in tiny pieces are a great incentive. Go at your dog's pace until they are having fun, and then add more steps as your dog is more willing to play this game with you.

Remember that dogs learn by association and frequency, the more you associate the car with fun things, like trips to the woods or a friend house to play and really high value treats the more likely they will be to be cooperative and the more often you practice the quicker it will go.

Happy Trails !