



# THE KLIMB<sup>®</sup>

TRAINING QUICK START GUIDE





**WELCOME** to the wonderful world of dog training! Blue-9 proudly provides premium dog training products to aid you on your journey to getting the well-behaved dog of your dreams. Teaching our dogs the ‘place’ or ‘climb’ cue is a foundation step to obedience that will set you on the path to success with your dog. And that is what Blue-9 is all about – **Helping Dogs Succeed.**

The climb cue is incredibly versatile. From developing impulse control, managing common problem behaviors, and setting the foundation for many tricks in the future, we know you’ll see the many benefits as you start this training journey.

Now many people read that word ‘training’ and start to think of it as a chore. Not so! Our training sessions can be as fun and engaging as we choose. Within this document we’ll outline the steps to our proven training program to set you both on the path to success. So let’s jump in!

## WHY TRAIN THE CLIMB CUE?

**OUR GOAL:** Train our dog to go to the KLIMB platform and stay there no matter the duration needed or distractions present.

**There are so many practical uses for the climb cue. Below are just a few examples that will help you see the power of the KLIMB.**

Have your dog wait on the KLIMB while you unload groceries. This helps prevent your pup from dashing out the door and keeps them out from under your feet while your hands are full.

Have your dog wait on the KLIMB while you're cooking dinner. This keeps your pup out of your way and safe from the tempting distraction of dropped food or open oven doors.

Send your dog to the KLIMB while guests are entering the house. This prevents jumping on guests and can give shy dogs a boost of confidence from the elevation.

Have your dog practice their climb cue when it's time to put their harness and leash on for a walk. This helps even the most wiggly pups settle down enough to make harnessing them a breeze.

The climb cue can be used even without a KLIMB. Once trained, we can ask our dogs to climb on a park bench, bolder, or other obstacle. This is a perfect management tool when you're passing other people on a trail or for a nice photo opportunity.

### THERE ARE TWO MAIN COMPONENTS TO THE CLIMB CUE.

1. Stay on the KLIMB
2. Go to the KLIMB

Each of these components will involve adding levels of difficulty such as distance, duration, and distractions.





## WHY USE THE KLIMB?

The KLIMB creates a defined boundary for the dog to work within. Unlike a dog bed or mat, the dog is unable to creep off of the KLIMB. This makes it easier for us to maintain clear criteria, which expedites the training process. The elevation also creates a more obvious choice point. The dog must choose to jump 12 inches down as opposed to the common behavior of walking on and off of a dog bed. During the training process you'll see moments where your dog consciously chooses to stay on the KLIMB even when they are tempted to break position. That is the power of elevation!

Using a KLIMB also gives the dog a visual cue of where to go. This will come in handy when we want to teach our dog to move away from us to go to their place. For example, if we've broken a glass and need to keep our dog away from the area, we can cue our dog to go to their KLIMB while we clean up.





## INTRODUCTION TO REWARD-BASED TRAINING

We'll be using reward-based training to help our dogs learn the concepts required to master the climb cue. We'll teach our dogs that desirable behaviors earn them reinforcement, this is usually in the form of a treat or the opportunity to play with a toy.

Quick Tips for successful sessions:

Keep your training sessions fun and short. Five minutes twice a day should be enough to help you achieve your training goals.

Focus on what you want your dog to do, rather than punishing your dog for mistakes.

### IDENTIFYING YOUR DOG'S MOTIVATORS

Before we start our training, we want to determine what motivates your dog. What is your dog willing to work for? We recommend using small, soft and stinky training treats. This tends to be the most efficient as we are able to get multiple repetitions within a short amount of time. Scheduling training sessions around mealtimes can increase the likelihood your dog will be motivated and engaged to earn those treats.

### MARKER SIGNALS

For our dogs to link the behavior they've done with the reward they've earned we use something called a marker. You can use a verbal marker such as the word "yes" or a clicker. When we mark a behavior it's like taking a picture of the behavior that you intend to reward. Markers let your dog know exactly which behavior has earned them a reward.

As we progress in our training, we may also want to introduce another marker signal that communicates to the dog that they are on the right track, and they should keep doing what they are doing. This marker is also sometimes called a 'keep going signal.' We recommend using the word "good" as your keep going signal.

We'll explain where to use these markers a little later.

**Timing is Key:** The marker should be used the moment the desired behavior occurs. Think of it as "capturing" that perfect behavior in real-time. Now that we've talked through some components of reward based training, we are ready to get to the fun part: the actual training!



## INTRODUCING YOUR DOG TO THE KLIMB

With your dog's favorite training treats ready, set up your KLIMB table in your training space. For puppies, small or shy dogs, start with a shorter platform by not installing the legs.

Start training in a low-distraction area with enough room around the KLIMB, like a living room.

**Tip:** Avoid placing the KLIMB too close to a wall initially. Walls can create spatial pressure, making new learners hesitant to jump. Once your dog is comfortable, you can move the KLIMB to a more convenient location, even against a wall.

The first step to training your dog with the KLIMB is to get him to jump up onto it. There are many methods to do this.

### CAPTURING

If you happen to have a dog that offers the behavior of jumping onto the KLIMB with minimal or no prompting, mark and reward. This technique is called capturing. For behaviors that our dog does naturally, we can capture (mark and reward) and then eventually put the behavior on cue.

1. When your dog has all four feet on the KLIMB, mark and reward.
2. If your dog stays on the KLIMB, give them 2-3 more treats, one after another, for staying on it. This helps teach the dog that good things happen when they are on the KLIMB and helps them become 'magnetized to it.'
3. To reset for another repetition, gesture or move in a way that gets your dog off the KLIMB.
4. Wait for them to jump on the KLIMB again, then mark and reward.

### ADDING THE VERBAL CUE

When you can reliably predict that your dog is going to jump on the KLIMB, give them the verbal cue 'climb' right before they do it. Mark and reward when they complete the behavior. You can gesture or point to the KLIMB to help them if needed.

### LURING

If your dog doesn't offer jumping onto the KLIMB we can use a training technique called luring. Luring involves using a food treat to entice your dog to complete the desired behavior.

1. With a treat in your hand, place it at the dog's nose and slowly lure him up onto the KLIMB. Mark and reward when all four paws are on the KLIMB.
2. If your dog stays on the KLIMB, give them 2-3 more treats, one after another, for staying on it. This helps teach the dog that good things happen when they are on the KLIMB and helps them become 'magnetized to it.'
3. To reset for another repetition, gesture or move in a way that gets your dog off the KLIMB.
4. Repeat the luring process until your dog is reliably jumping onto the KLIMB.
5. Once comfortable, try gesturing towards the KLIMB without food in your hand. Your dog should jump onto the KLIMB. Mark and reward.

### ADDING THE VERBAL CUE

When you can reliably predict that your dog is going to jump on the KLIMB, give them the verbal cue 'climb' right before they do it. Mark and reward when they complete the behavior. You can gesture or point to the KLIMB to help them if needed.

### ADDING A RELEASE CUE

Our next step in KLIMB training is teaching our dog a release cue. When we've asked our dog to 'climb' we want them to stay on the KLIMB until we've given them

permission to get off. To do this, we will add a release cue. Some examples of a release cue are “Release,” “Break,” “Free,” or “All Done.”

1. Cue your dog to jump on the KLIMB. Mark and reward.
2. Say your release cue, **pause** for 1 second, then gesture for your dog to get off the KLIMB.

It's important to pause between saying your release cue and then gesturing. We want our dog to learn that it is the verbal cue 'break' that gives them permission to get off the KLIMB. If we gesture at the same time we say the release cue, the dog may associate the gesture with permission to get off the KLIMB. This will make adding distractions more difficult in future steps of training.

At this time, we have not built in any duration for staying on the KLIMB. If your dog makes a mistake and jumps off the KLIMB before you have given your release cue, simply gesture for your dog to get back on the KLIMB, pause briefly, and then give your release cue. With the next repetition, you can reward your dog.

## ADDING THE THREE D'S

Now that we have trained our dog to get on the KLIMB, we're ready to start layering in levels of difficulty. To start, we'll add the three D's while our dog stays on the KLIMB. The three layers of difficulty include duration, distance, and distractions.

In practical applications, our dogs will have to stay on the KLIMB for various durations, while we are at variable distances from the dog, and with any number of distractions present in the environment. To set our dog up for success, we'll train these concepts in layers.

### MOVE-STICK-DROP

Up until now, the criteria for our dog to earn a reward was to simply get on the KLIMB. As we start to train the levels of difficulty, we are raising our criteria. That is, the dog has to work harder in order to earn the reward. To make sure we aren't making things too difficult too quickly, we'll use the “move-stick-drop” rule.

- **Move Criteria Up:** If your dog is successful in 8 out of 10 repetitions, you're ready to increase the difficulty level.
- **Stick at the Same Criteria:** If your dog's success rate is between 5 and 7 out of 10 trials, maintain the current criteria.
- **Drop Your Criteria:** If your dog successful in fewer than 5 out of 10 trials, we should drop down to the previous criteria that the dog was successful at.

By paying attention to our dog's success rate in training we can decrease the chance our dog will become frustrated within the training session. We also want to prevent our dog from rehearsing mistakes too frequently as they can become a part of the end behavior.

### ADDING DURATION

The first layer of difficulty we will train is duration.

1. Cue your dog to get onto the KLIMB.
2. Pause briefly, then mark and reward.
3. Gradually extend the pause time to 10-30 seconds.
4. Mix in breaks and play sessions after around 10 repetitions.
5. If a mistake occurs, quickly redirect your dog back to the KLIMB. If needed, adjust your criteria.

**Tip:** When adding layers of difficulty, we don't want to make each repetition more difficult. Toggle back and forth between easy reps and more difficult to help prevent frustration.

### ADDING DISTANCE

Once we've built some duration, we're ready to start adding in distance. Because of the reward history we've built for our dog staying on the KLIMB, your dog is likely to wait there in anticipation of their reward. When we raise our criteria in one area (distance) we want to lower our criteria in another area (duration). Even though we've trained our dog to stay on the KLIMB for 30 seconds, when we add distance, we'll only ask for a couple of seconds of duration.

1. Cue your dog to get onto the KLIMB. Mark and reward.
2. Take a single step back from the KLIMB. Mark and return to reward your dog.
3. Gradually increase the distance you can move away from your dog. Try walking from one end of the room to the other. Or moving from the living room to the kitchen. With each repetition, walk back to your dog to reward on the KLIMB.
4. If your dog errs at any point, quickly redirect the dog back to the KLIMB and set up for another repetition. Ideally, we want to notice signs the dog is about to break off of the KLIMB and take action beforehand.

**Tip:** Be sure to add in play breaks as needed.

### ADDING DISTRACTIONS ON THE KLIMB

Think back to some of the practical applications we listed earlier. Having our dog stay on the KLIMB while we prepare dinner, or while we get ready to take our dogs for a walk. These are all distractions that our dog will have to work through. Start with simple distractions, then build up to real world scenarios. Below is a simple outline

using a toy as the distraction.

1. Cue your dog to get onto the KLIMB.
2. Present a toy in one hand. If they stay on the KLIMB, mark and reward.
3. Wiggle the toy slightly. Reward staying on the KLIMB.
4. Squeak the toy. Again, reward for maintaining position.
5. Toss the toy in the air. Mark and reward for staying put.
6. Finally, try dropping the toy on the ground. Mark and reward when your dog is successful.

At this point, I'd take a break and play with that toy with my dog. They conquered the distraction, and now they've earned the opportunity to play with it! Celebrate those successes and have some fun with your dog!

### TRAINING FOR PRACTICAL SCENARIOS

Now you're ready to practice some practical scenarios inside of a training session. You're still in training mode, so you'll want to select activities where you are primarily focused on the dog.

1. Have your dog wait on the KLIMB while you tidy the living room. Reward them for relaxing on their KLIMB while you fold throw blankets, put away dog toys, or take dishes to the kitchen.
2. Have your dog practice their KLIMB cue while you chop vegetables for dinner. I like to use human grade, non-greasy treats for this. Cheese cubes, carrot slices, and boiled chicken are just a couple favorites in my house.







## GO TO THE KLIMB

At this point in our training, we're able to get our dog to stay on the KLIMB with duration, distance, and distractions. One of the benefits of using the KLIMB in our training is that we can send our dog to it. While many of the practical scenarios could work with a simple "sit stay" cue, the KLIMB really shines when we need our dog to move away from us. In the next step of our training, we'll work on sending our dog to the KLIMB from greater distances. We'll also incorporate distractions along their path.

If I drop a casserole dish filled with something yummy, I'll need my pup out of the way while I clean the mess. Convincing my pup to leave that delicious distraction and go to their KLIMB could be a challenge. The exercises outlined below will get you started on the right track.

### ADDING DISTANCE

With enough repetition most dogs become magnetized to the KLIMB. You may notice your dog drawn to the KLIMB anytime they think there is an opportunity to train. This will help us with our next step.

1. Start off 3 feet away from the KLIMB. Send your dog to the KLIMB with their verbal cue. If needed, prompt them by pointing to the KLIMB. Mark and reward as soon as they jump on the KLIMB.
2. Give your release cue and set up for another repetition. This time, start a few feet away. Mark and reward with each success.
3. Gradually increase the distance your dog must travel to get to the KLIMB.
4. As your dog is successful, try sending them to the KLIMB from another room. Losing sight of you can be a challenge for some dogs, so build up to this slowly.
5. If your dog seems hesitant, encourage them by pointing to the KLIMB or taking a couple of steps toward the KLIMB. This will help them be more successful in the early stages of the training.

### ADDING DISTRACTIONS

Getting our dogs to go to the KLIMB even when distractions are present can be a challenge. Maybe we need them to go to the KLIMB when the doorbell rings, signaling that a visitor they may want to greet has arrived. Or maybe we've dropped food in the kitchen and need to manage the dog while we clean it up.

There are two training exercises that can help teach this to our dog.

## LEAVING A FUN GAME

1. Play a fun game with your dog such as tug or fetch.
2. Ask your dog to drop the toy, then send them to the KLIMB. If you're playing tug, hold the toy close to your body and point to the KLIMB with your empty hand. If you're playing fetch, pick up the ball before cueing the dog to 'climb.'
3. Mark and reward each successful repetition.
4. Release your dog to join you for another game!
5. If your dog finds playing tug or fetch rewarding, you can use that as the reward in these training sessions. In essence you're telling the dog that just because you've sent them to the KLIMB, it doesn't mean the game has stopped.

## GOING PAST A FOOD BOWL

1. Set a food bowl about 5 feet away from your dog's natural path to the KLIMB, about halfway between you and the KLIMB. For now, leave it empty.
2. Send your dog to the KLIMB from about 6-10 feet away. Mark and reward on the KLIMB.
3. Leaving your dog on the KLIMB, walk back to your starting point. Recall them to you. If they leave the food bowl alone, praise them lavishly, then run to the food bowl and drop a couple treats in the bowl telling them to 'get it.'
4. Set up for another repetition.

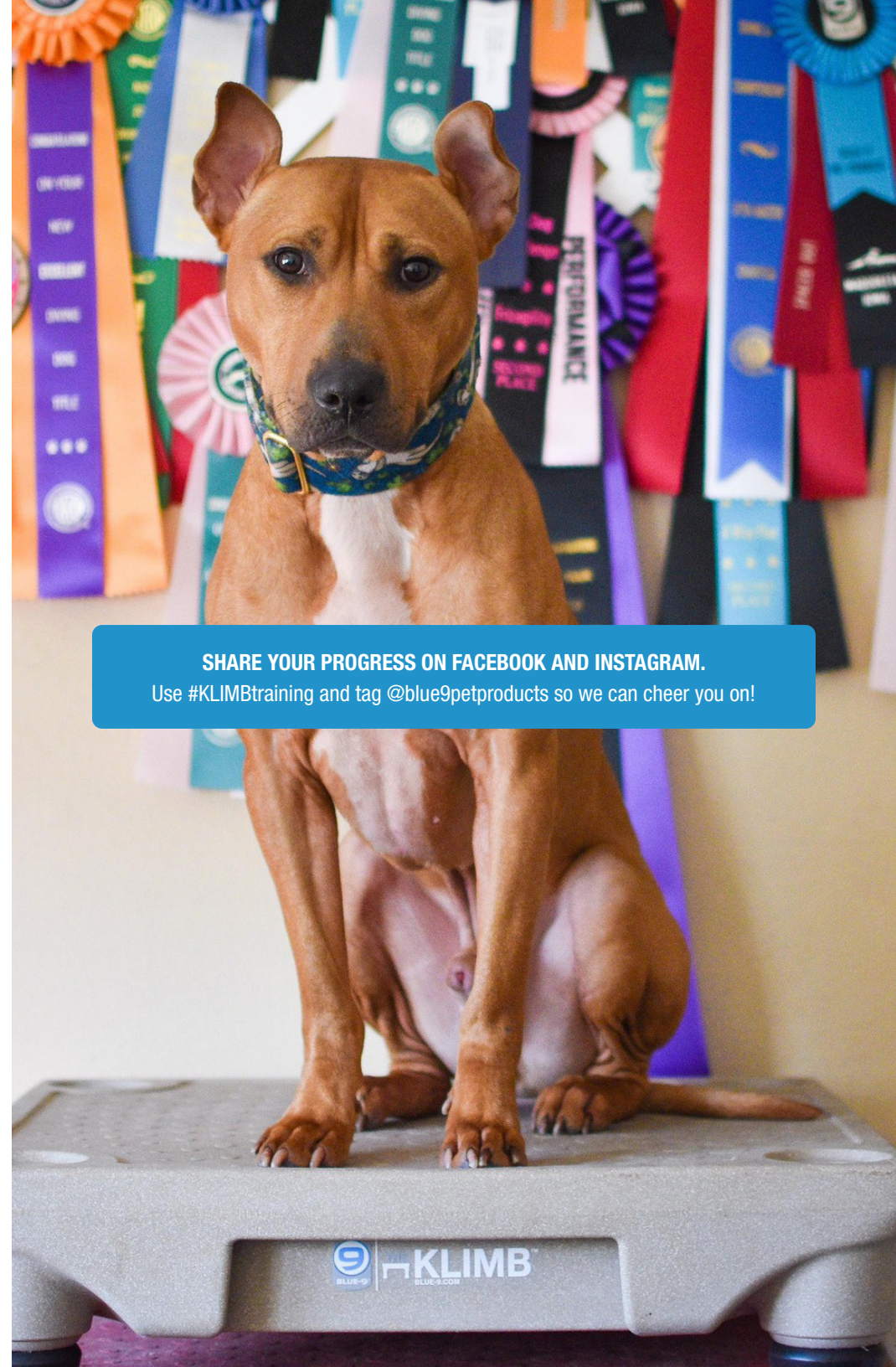
We leave the food bowl empty for the first couple of repetitions, so the dog is not able to self-reward. They should only eat out of the bowl if you've gone over to it and told them to 'get it.' If your dog goes toward the food bowl, give their 'leave it' cue. If needed walk over and pick up the bowl and send the dog to the KLIMB from the shorter distance. Overtime, move the bowl closer to the dog's natural path. You can also put treats in the bowl if you feel confident your dog will leave them alone.

These two training exercises will help your dog learn that going to the KLIMB even with exciting distractions will pay off.

## HAPPY TRAINING

Remember, training takes time, patience, and consistency. If you carve out 5 minutes a day to practice these exercises with your dog, you'll be well on your way to having the well-behaved dog of your dreams!

If you're looking for more training resources, check out our YouTube Channel or our Blog!



SHARE YOUR PROGRESS ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM.  
Use #KLIMBtraining and tag @blue9petproducts so we can cheer you on!





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