“Watch me” is an important cue when you want your dog to focus on you instead of distractions. Getting a dog’s attention, especially when they are new to training is to start teaching this cue. Getting your dog’s attention is valuable in everyday life, not just for training sessions. A “Watch Me’ cue is useful to redirect your dog away from distractions. If you want to pass another dog on a walk, asking your dog to look at you instead of the other dog will help to walk by the dog.

How to Teach a “Watch me” Cue

1. Place a treat between your fingers and in front of your dog’s nose.
2. Slowly raise your hand with the treat between your thumb and index finger so the treat is between your eyes over the bridge of your nose. Say the cue “Watch Me”
3. Most dogs will look you in the eye. Make sure the treat is super yummy and small.
4. When your dog focuses on you for a few seconds with eye contact, reward him with the treat.
5. Repeat this exercise several times with the treat in your hand. When your dog is reliably looking at you, do the same gesture but without a treat in your hand. You will still reward your dog with a treat after he looks at you.

When you are practicing this, always start in a quiet area where there are minimal distractions. If your dog fails to look at you, perhaps you have moved the training too quickly exposing him to more distractions. You want to be the source of your dog’s rewards so they will want to look at you to see when the next goody will be coming. When your dog really starts to get it, start introducing more distractions. Mastering the watch me dog command can be a real time-saver for any situation where you need to get him to listen or learn something new.