
Facility Animal Care Committee (FACC), veterinarians, veterinary care staff, Principal Investigator, and their research staff, animal care staff.

Operant conditioning is a learning process where behaviors are modified through the association of stimuli with reinforcement or punishment. Behaviors are conditioned to occur or not occur depending on the consequences of the behavior. The operant conditioning learning model includes positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment, and negative punishment.

PRT is a form of operant conditioning that rewards animals with a pleasant or attractive reward when a desired behavior is performed making it likely that the animal will repeat the desired behavior in the future. The principles of PRT apply across animal species.

PRT can be used to achieve voluntary cooperation for targeted activities or procedures of the research protocol, husbandry, veterinary care, and diagnostic sampling. These targeted activities must fall within the natural range of behaviors of the species being trained.

In contrast, Negative Reinforcement Training (NRT) relies on removing an unpleasant action or aversive stimulus immediately after the desired behavior occurs to increase the frequency of the behavior occurring over time. The animal is more likely to repeat the desired behavior in the future

- 5.2.1.2. Criteria: define what you want from the animal, how you want them to do it (e.g., sitting, standing etc.), for how long, etc.
 - 5.2.1.3. Signal: determine the signal that will be used to the animal for the desired behavior, e.g. A hand gesture, a physical object, a cue word, etc.
 - 5.2.1.4. Steps: determine the series of small increments or steps needed to learn the desired behavior.
- 5.3. Determine the rewards the animal likes best and note ones that are highly desirable; these can be used as big rewards. It is best to have a variety of rewards to choose from.
- 5.4. Pair a primary reinforcer, e.g., a favored treat, with a positive connection with your animal and your bridge (or neutral stimulus) such as a clicker, whistle, spoken word, etc. This will become the secondary or conditioned reinforcer.
- 5.5. Training
- 5.5.1. Training sessions should be documented.
 - 5.5.2. Training sessions should occur frequently, ideally daily, and not last longer than 10 to 15 minutes. Consistency in training will yield better results; it may be advisable to limit the number of individuals involved in training each animal.
 - 5.5.3. Only bridge or reinforce on the desired behavior.
 - 5.5.4. Once the animal has established the desired behavior depending on the species, a cue can be added. The cue can be a word or specific gesture depending on the animal and/or your preference.
 - 5.5.5.