

# URBAN AGILITY

As your dog is going through adolescence it's really important to add things into your day to boost your relationship and have fun. One great activity is urban agility. It involves teaching your dog to interact with obstacles in the environment around you on walks. It's a great way to get creative.

You can teach them to put 2 paws up on different surfaces, jump up onto a raised platform, move along a narrow walkway, walk underneath or hop over obstacles, run between objects, weave through them or wrap around before returning to you.

Start by teaching your dog to do these actions at home before taking their new skills on the road with you. The more you practice, the more you'll start to see the world through a new lens.

Having fun experimenting with new sequences will help to keep your walks fresh and interesting for both you and your dog as well as strengthening the connection you share.



**HAPPY TRAINING!**

# ARC BY APPROACHING DISTRACTIONS

When you are walking your dog, there will be times you notice distractions approaching you head on. To set your dog up for success you will need to create enough space that your dog remains relaxed.

One way to do this is to walk in an arc past the person or approaching dog. To begin with you will need to make a wide arc but over time you will be able to lessen this as your dog is better able to focus around other people and dogs.

With enough practice you will be able to simply shift to one side of the pavement as you pass by with ease.

Not only is this helping your dog but it is also polite walking etiquette in populated areas where people and other dogs will be glad of the additional space.

Always remember to watch your dog's body language and use this to gauge when your dog needs more space.



**HAPPY TRAINING!**



# ESCAPE BY CROSSING THE STREET

When you are out with your dog, there will be times you encounter something coming towards you that you know will excite or worry your dog. Having a strategy to give your dog more space is important.

One way to achieve this is to cross the street and continue walking on the other side of the road. As soon as you see the approaching person or dog, slow down, turn and check the road for traffic before crossing.

Proactively creating space will allow your dog the chance to make good choices and remain calm in a variety of situations. Setting your dog up to succeed in this way is essential if you want to enjoy relaxing walks together throughout your dog's life.

Remember things can change quickly, so always pay attention to the world around you and be ready to take action when needed.



**HAPPY TRAINING!**

# ESCAPE TURN TO FRONT

When you are walking with your dog there may be times that you notice something moving towards you that your dog will struggle to walk past calmly. Sometimes you will be able to cross the street or change direction to give your dog more space, but there will be times when this isn't possible.

In these situations one option is to move to the side of the pathway and cue your dog to stand or sit in front, facing you, with their back to the passing distraction.

This will help to keep your dog's focus on you as the other person, dog or distraction moves by without concern.

To start you'll want to practice prompting your dog into position at home or in your garden away from distractions. Walk with your dog on a loose lead before slowing down, turning 90 degrees and getting your dog to turn and face you. Reward your dog several treats one after another as they hold the position.

When they are doing well with this, practice in a quiet area of your neighbourhood. Walk together before slowing down, moving to one side of the path and getting your dog to turn and face you.

Gradually progress to working around distractions and in real life scenarios until your dog can calmly face you while people, dogs and other distractions pass you

Putting time into training this before you need it will really help you to navigate challenging situations with your dog.



**HAPPY TRAINING!**



# ESCAPE USING A TREAT MAGNET

When you are walking your dog there will be times that you become aware of a scenario unfolding that is difficult for your dog. Scanning the environment and looking for things that your dog might get over excited by or worried about helps you to take preventative action before things escalate. You can change your direction, increase distance or get your dog to sit and focus on you, until things pass.

Sometimes situations arise where you are unable to move far enough away for your dog to be able to relax. You may have found yourself in a suddenly busy situation with no feasible escape routes at that moment. This may mean you have to pass something you know your dog is not prepared for.

In these situations you can use a treat magnet to keep your dog's attention as you quickly move past the distraction.

To do this you will need a high value reward that your dog loves.

Hold the treat between your fingers and thumb, at nose height for your dog. Lure them to walk closely beside you, letting them lick and chew pieces off of the treat as you move. Move quickly past the distractions.

When you are safely past, you can return to walking normally together.

Always look to plan routes according to your dog's needs and skill level.



**HAPPY TRAINING!**

# ESCAPE U TURN

One of the escape turns is the U turn. This is where you start off walking in one direction before prompting your dog to turn 180° and walk with you in the opposite direction. It is perfect for when you see distractions up ahead that you think your dog might struggle with or if you start to notice shifts in your dog's body language and movement that communicate they are getting stressed or excited.

Start by walking in one direction before slowing down and guiding your dog to turn beside you. You can use a hand target, food lure or simply turn your body in the direction you would like your dog to follow and wait for them to respond. Mark as your dog turns and reward them beside your leg before continuing to walk together in the opposite direction.

As your dog gets really good at this you can fade out any food in your hand and add a cue, such as 'let's go!' Simply say the cue before turning and reward as before.

Make sure to practice in a variety of quiet locations before taking your training to more distracting environments.

Working on this before you really need it will help to prevent problems in the future.



**HAPPY TRAINING!**

# FADING OUT MANAGEMENT PT1

When it comes to effectively changing behaviour, preventing your dog practicing unwanted habits by implementing management such as barriers or putting them on a lead plays a huge part.

But it isn't always the end goal. Eventually you might want to remove the barriers and know your dog can make good choices even with more freedom.

But how do you know if you're ready to begin phasing out management?

The first step is to teach your dog a reliable alternative behaviour to the activity you're preventing. This should be something that makes doing the unwanted activity impossible at the same time as the trained behaviour.

Let's look at the example of teaching your dog to settle instead of counter surfing.

First practice with management in place so that they can't jump up at any point during training, and continue to use management throughout the rest of the day so they don't practice the unwanted behaviour when you're not around.



**HAPPY TRAINING!**



# FADING OUT MANAGEMENT PT2

When it is going well, do training sessions without management in place to get your dog making excellent choices even when they have more freedom.

At this stage you'll want to leave the management in place any time you are not actively training together.

With practice you will find your dog becomes very reliable at doing the trained behaviour. You can begin to allow supervised access to areas you have been training in for longer during the day outside of set training sessions. Make sure to reward your dog any time they make good choices and offer the trained action throughout the day.

When this is going well you can begin to set up short periods of unsupervised time without management in place. Leave the room for tiny periods before coming back and rewarding your dog for making good choices while you were gone.

In time you can lengthen these periods, perhaps setting up a camera so you can watch your dog while you're out of sight.

Eventually you can remove the management completely, but only when you have been through each of these steps.

If in doubt, play it safe and set your dog up to succeed by keeping management in place for a longer period.



**HAPPY TRAINING!**



# ARRIVING AT AN OFF LEAD PARK

Taking your dog to an area where they get to enjoy off lead freedom can be a great experience but you'll want to go about it in the right way.

Before you even consider letting your dog off lead you will want to make sure they have a brilliant recall around distractions and are relaxed and confident around people and other dogs. You'll also want to make sure you're good at reading your own dog's body language as well as others, so that you can avoid any potential issues arising.

As you approach the off lead area you'll want to make sure that your dog is calm and not becoming overly excited or frustrated.

If your dog is struggling as you approach, things are more likely to go wrong when you arrive. If your dog isn't in the right mindset, don't worry - change your plan and walk elsewhere instead.

As you arrive, look to see what's happening. If you notice any dogs with concerning body language or somebody struggling to recall their dog, it is better to leave rather than risk a negative experience for your dog.

If it's an enclosed dog park, make sure to remove your dog's lead before entering. Ask people to recall their dogs away from the entrance before you head inside and start walking around the perimeter of the park.

Make sure that any playmates are well suited to your dog in terms of play style, size and activity level. You want your dog to learn how to interact appropriately and read social situations well, which means being proactive and not allowing your dog to practice inappropriate interactions.

Always remember to bring a bowl and supply of water to keep your dog hydrated when out and about.



**HAPPY TRAINING!**

# TEACHING RECYCLE

One trick which is great fun to do, is teach your dog to help with the recycling. First you'll want to teach your dog to fetch so they can bring things to your hand. Next set up a bucket in front of you and place some objects around you on the floor. Ask your dog to fetch and as they bring the item over, hold your hand over the bucket.

Mark and reward when they drop the object in your hand. At this stage it doesn't matter if it falls into the bucket or not.

After a few repetitions, see if you hold the bucket at a slight angle, whether your dog will drop the item inside when they come over. If they do, celebrate and reward your dog generously!

From here practice until your dog is happily dropping an item into the bucket every time.

If any of the items miss the bucket, wait and see if your dog will pick them up and try again. When they land in the bucket, mark and reward. When they can do this, introduce a cue, such as 'recycle' by saying it as your dog brings each item, before they drop them in the bucket.

See if you can get your dog to do 2 or 3 objects in a row before you reward them. Don't be afraid to drop back to an easier stage for a few repetitions if needed, before making it more challenging again.



**HAPPY TRAINING!**