

RECALL TO SIT

When it comes to building a reliable recall, something that can really help is to teach your dog to sit in front of you when you call them back.

This prevents the common issue of dogs running right by when you recall them, or stopping just out of reach.

Start in a quiet environment and call your dog to you. Mark as they come towards you and reward them just in front of your legs.

Move away and repeat.

After a couple of repetitions when your dog comes to you cue them to sit. Wait for your dog to put their bottom on the floor before marking and rewarding in position.

As you practice this your dog will start to predict that you are going to ask for a sit when they come over. You won't need to cue the sit when they understand this, as it will become part of the recall. When you call your dog to you simply wait and see what your dog does when they arrive. If they offer a sit without you asking, mark and reward them generously!

You can even add in a collar or harness hold when your dog is sat in front which will be great for when you are ready to have your dog off lead and call them to put their lead back on.

Practice in lots of different locations, and remember to use a long line to keep your dog safe when practicing in public.



HAPPY TRAINING!

HAND TARGET RECALL

One way to really supercharge your dog's recall is by encompassing fun games. Once you have taught your dog to target your hand with their nose it can become an excellent alternative to your usual recall.

Start by practicing the hand touch in a quiet location, mark and reward your dog as soon as they contact your hand with their nose.

Gradually start to increase the distance you are from your dog before you cue them to touch. Reward your dog each time they succeed. Be sure to choose a reward that your dog loves. This could be tasty treats, play with their favourite toy or plenty of fuss and praise.

Build up to running away from your dog each time and cueing them to touch. Your dog will need to run to catch up with you and this will build more urgency and excitement into the game.

When your dog is responding really quickly when you call them you can take this game on the road and practice in different locations. Make sure you keep your dog safe by practicing on a long line and harness until your dog's recall is excellent even around distractions,

By making it exciting and building up the difficulty in stages this will become one of your dog's favourite games to play and a really reliable recall prompt.



HAPPY TRAINING!

TEACHING RELEASE CUE

Something that is really useful to teach your dog is a release cue. This is a short word, sound or signal that lets your dog know that the task they are doing is finished and they can do something else.

You can use it to let your dog know they can move out of position, go through a door they've been waiting at, say hello to friends, have their food or go sniff and explore on a walk.

One way to teach it involves asking your dog to do a position they know really well, like sit or down. After they've been in position for a couple of seconds, say your chosen release cue, such as 'ok' or 'free' and immediately cue them to 'get' and toss a treat away for them to chase.

You want to make sure your dog hears the release word before the 'get' cue. As you practice, start to delay the prompt to 'get' by a second or two, to give your dog time to think. In time your dog will start to associate the 2 words and get up when you say their release, before you prompt them to 'get'!

When this happens, celebrate and reward your dog enthusiastically! From here on say only the release cue and wait for your dog to move, before marking and rewarding.

You can proof your dog's release word by adding in distractions and rewarding your dog if they don't move when you haven't said their release cue. Also practice saying words that don't mean anything to your dog and reward them for staying still until you say the release cue.

Practice until your dog is brilliant at holding their positions or waiting in different situations until you release them.



HAPPY TRAINING!

MASTERING CALM WALKING PT 1

Teaching your dog to walk calmly beside you is often one of the most desired behaviours when it comes to dog training.

Having a dog who walks nicely on their lead without pulling or lunging makes walking much more enjoyable and opens up the opportunity to explore many more locations together.

It will take time to perfect but there are a few key things which will help you and your dog to succeed.

The first step to set your dog up for success is to choose locations that won't be overwhelming, and give them time to relax into their surroundings before you begin training.

When you first arrive go on a sniffari together. This will give your dog a chance to investigate the environment, relax and acclimatise. This not only helps to settle dogs who are excitable, but also boosts the confidence of dogs who are more reserved.



HAPPY TRAINING!

MASTERING CALM WALKING PT 2

Teaching your dog to walk calmly beside you is often one of the most desired behaviours when it comes to dog training.

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When you see your dog's body language soften and their movement become calmer you can see if your dog is ready to move onto stage 2 - focusing on you.



HAPPY TRAINING!

CHECK IN ON THE MOVE

One of the easiest ways to improve your dog's walking skill and general focus when out and about is to reward them for checking in. This means that every time your dog looks at you, you are going to mark and reward them with something they love.

When you are out walking and your dog is voluntarily checking in with you regularly, you will become more connected to each other's movements. This really helps when it comes to changing direction on your walk or stopping at the curbside, as your dog will be more aware of your body movements.

The goal is to have your dog periodically look at you and shouldn't be about building constant eye contact which can be unbalancing for your dog.

After you have practiced in multiple locations you can start to fade out the need to reward for every check in and instead verbally praise your dog as you continue to walk together.



HAPPY TRAINING!

TEACHING AN AUTOSTOP

One of the best skills you can teach your dog when walking together is to automatically come to a stop when you do. This will help you to navigate busy areas or wait safely to cross roads.

Start by practicing loose lead walking with your dog. As you are walking slow to a stop and see what your dog does. If your dog stops moving before their lead goes tight, mark and reward them beside you. If they don't stop before the lead goes tight, simply change direction, wait for your dog to move towards you before walking on again together.

Soon your dog will be paying close attention to you and stopping promptly as soon as you do.

If you would like your dog to automatically sit next to you when you stop walking, you can add this in by cueing your dog to sit when you stop. After a few repetitions your dog will get the idea and you won't need to cue them anymore - simply wait for your dog to sit automatically.

Make sure you practice in a variety of locations to perfect your dog's new skill.



HAPPY TRAINING!

STOP START GAME

When your dog is getting good at walking nicely on a lead next to you, you can level up their training even further by playing the stop-start game.

This is a simple exercise that really gets your dog thinking about their behaviour.

Start by walking with your dog on a loose lead. As long as the lead is slack, you can continue moving forward together.

If the lead tightens, stop moving and let your dog decide what to do next. Wait for them to move closer to you which will loosen the lead. At this point start moving forward again.

Getting to start walking again becomes your dog's reward for choosing to loosen up on the lead.

This game is great for when you start to transition to rewarding your dog's behaviour with environmental experiences rather than treats as their skill level increases.



HAPPY TRAINING!

AROUND TO POSITION

When walking with your dog it is helpful to be able to cue them to return to your side by moving around behind you. This can help untangle the lead and reset your dog if they get excited and start to pull.

To start you can lure with treats or use a hand target to guide your dog from standing in front of you, to move behind you and finish off in your normal walking position. As your dog gets good at this, you can reduce the hand signal or attach a verbal cue to signal your dog to move around you. You can even practice this in both directions so that you are ready for all eventualities.

After teaching your dog in a quiet location, be sure to also practice in a variety of situations with increased distractions.

This will help ensure your dog is ready to use their new skill, no matter where you are.



HAPPY TRAINING!

LEARNING TO CATCH

Teaching your dog to catch is such a useful exercise. Not only is it a fun trick but it can also add value to the rewards you use in training, increase your options for reward placement and provide a way to keep your dogs attention on you and away from distractions in the environment.

Some dogs will naturally be good at catching but others will need to be taught.

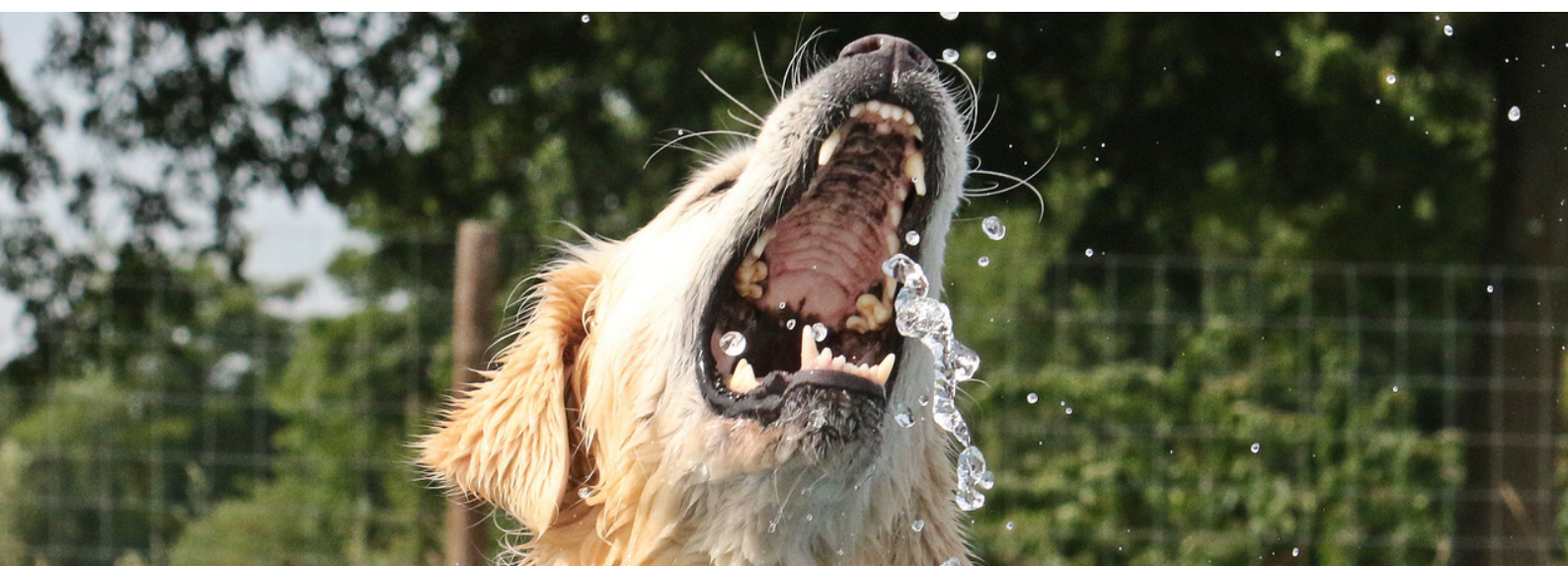
To start with, stand in front of your dog. Bring a treat up and over their nose and when they look up, mark and reward. Next you want to wait for your dog to open their mouth as they tilt their head back. Reward them by bringing the treat to their mouth.

When they are doing well with this you can start to drop the reward into your dog's mouth from a couple of centimeters above their nose. This will be the first catch your dog does!

From here you can start to drop from a higher height, before stepping back and throwing a treat towards your dog for them to catch. At this stage you want to reward them for any attempt to catch. If they manage it, reward with bonus treats and a big celebration.

If your dog doesn't try to catch the food, quickly pick it up before trying again. Don't be afraid to drop back to an easier stage again if you need to and be sure to brush up on your own throwing skills too!

In time your dog will be great at catching and you can start to play this game in a variety of locations.



HAPPY TRAINING!

TUG TO FETCH

Teaching your dog to retrieve is a great skill that can be built upon in many advanced behaviours.

One way to begin training this is through a game of tug.

Start by encouraging your dog to tug one of their toys. Move the toy around and get your dog interested in chasing it. When they pull enthusiastically on the toy, let them win and run around with it.

When they have enjoyed showing off their prize, you can instigate another game of tug.

As you practice you might start to notice your dog coming closer to you with their toy, because they want to start the game again.

Every time they do this, start playing tug and remember to let your dog win. Playing is much more fun when you get to win!

To build on this you can begin to move away when your dog wins the toy and see if they come running over again. If they do, reward with tug.

Over time you will be able to start by throwing the toy out and your dog will bring it back to you so you can play tug together.

Be sure to progress at your dog's pace and keep it fun!



HAPPY TRAINING!

LEARNING TO DROP

Teaching your dog to happily drop items on cue is a really useful exercise to teach in case they pick up anything which you don't want them to have or might be dangerous if ingested.

One way to teach this is through play with your dog. Start by instigating a game of tug with one toy. As your dog gets really into it, stop moving your hand, so the toy goes 'dead'.

As you do this, bring out a second toy and show it to your dog. You can wiggle it about to get their interest if needed. Your dog will likely let go of the first toy, which has become boring, in favour of playing with the other toy. Mark and reward by playing with the new toy.

Hide the first toy behind your back and play for a while before holding still and repeating the switch. Over time your dog will get quicker and quicker at dropping one toy when you present the other.

You can start to mix it up by throwing the toy for them to chase after. When they pick it up and run back to you, show them the other toy, and wait for them to drop. Mark and reward by throwing the toy in your hand for them.

Repeat this game until your dog is quickly letting go of the toy, knowing that it will start a new game.

At this stage you can add the cue 'drop' just before they let go of the toy each time. Mark and reward with more play every time they drop.

In time your dog will be an expert at drop and you can practice in a variety of location and with lots of different objects.



HAPPY TRAINING!