

GETTING STARTED - PRINCIPLES OF RECALL

Foundation behaviours:

'Whiplash turn' orientation to name – practice in multiple locations building up levels of distraction until a reflex behaviour

"collar" – teach your pup that the word means you will be touching their collar or harness. Work up to being able to grab it by always pairing with a tasty treat. This prevents your dog being surprised or worried.

Hand targeting – useful but not essential

Remember:

- You will need a 'recall' word – just calling the dog's name doesn't actually tell them what you want them to do
- When training a recall only call your dog when you are sure they will come back i.e. not overly distracted, very far away from you, playing with another dog
- If you are not sure that your dog will come back – keep them on a long line (30ft or more) and a harness **DO NOT USE LONGLINES OR FLEXI LEADS ON COLLARS**
- Always start training in a low distraction environment i.e. the house or garden before moving on to the park.
- Use really high value treats – this is an important exercise that could save your dog's life one day
- Don't over practice – constant drilling is boring for everyone!
- Don't ever punish your dog (verbally or physically) for coming back even if it has taken ages, they will learn that its not worth coming back

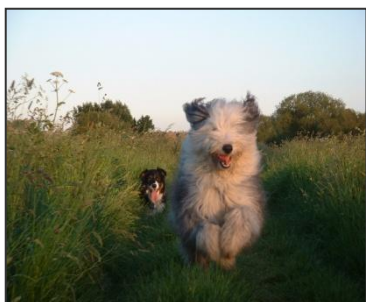
If your dog does NOT respond, think about the following:

- Have you trained in this location?
- Is it very exciting or distracting (if playing with another dog have you trained them to come away from distractions?)
- Is the dog in the middle of greeting another dog?
- Have you used the usual cue word?
- Are your rewards worth coming back for?

Other useful cues:

“this way” means you are changing direction and would like the dog to stay around, but is not a formal recall. Practice on a longline by calling your cue and then changing direction. If your dog changes direction mark/click and throw a reward to them

“steady” I use this to warn the dog when they are getting to the end of their longline to prevent sudden jerking, but once we’re off leash it works well as a cue to slow down and check in visually with me.



A really enthusiastic recall!



Using a long-line (here a length of light climbing rope) attached to a harness

Exercises

- Have one person hold the dog’s collar/harness as you walk away a SHORT distance.
- Call your dog’s name and give the recall cue “Finn come” as helper lets go of the dog
- Mark/click as dog is running toward you, don’t wait till they arrive – the marker tells them that “running toward mum/dad” is the right behaviour, and they have to come to you to get their treat anyway.
- Say ‘collar’ and take hold of collar/harness as you deliver the reward.
- Use your recall word to summon your dog for their meals
- If your dog is running towards you of its own choice – add in the recall word and heavily reward.
- Avoid using the recall cue to put dog back on leash to start with, and if at all possible reward the recall with FOOD + freedom to go and play again
- If they do not respond, walk down the long line to retrieve, pop on lead for 30secs then release again