



## Action & Distraction • Week 1

Lisa Plymale, CPDT-KA

### Working with Distractions

Initially work with your dog a fair distance from distractions. Be sure that the treats you have are better than the distraction (in your dog's opinion!). Gradually work your dog closer to the distraction as he is successful. The higher the distraction level for your dog, the higher the rate of reinforcement should be – be generous with the treats! If your dog is too distracted, get some distance from the distraction and try again. Also be aware that dogs don't generalize training well. Any change can impact their training. Be aware of this and plan ahead!

### Zen Leave It

Say "leave it." Hold a treat in your fist at a distance from your body. Your dog will most likely look at the treat hand. Wait for your dog to look away from the treat to your face, say "yes" and reward. Now vary the position of your hand to generalize the training.

### Wild Dog

Teach your dog to have impulse control and respond to cues under exciting/distracting circumstances.

Get your dog wound up with a favorite toy or game. Remove the toy/stop the game and calmly give your dog a cue to sit or down. If your dog is successful, say "yes" and reward your dog with more of the play time. If however, your dog is unable to respond to your cue, lower the intensity/excitement level of the game. Once your dog is consistently getting it right, increase the difficulty by making the game a little more exciting (ie more running around, more noise, a different toy, etc).

Now try waiting for a default sit. Start playing with your dog and then stop the game. Wait for your dog to offer a sit (or down) on his own and then resume the play.

### Name Recognition

Put your dog on a leash. Place a treat on the ground a few feet from your dog's nose. Say your dog's name. When he turns from the the food toward you, say "yes" and reward (from your hand). As he becomes more proficient, let him get a bit closer to the treat and repeat the exercise.

Now practice while out on a walk. First practice when distractions levels are low. As your dog is doing well, start to practice when you see him get a bit distracted (he notices a dog in the distance, he is sniffing the grass, he notices a pedestrian, etc).

## **“Get Rid of that Leash!” Game**

Teach your dog to engage with you when taken off the leash instead of dashing away and ignoring you. In a safely enclosed, low distraction area, take the leash off your dog, say “yes” and reward. Cue your dog to sit/down/do a trick, say “yes” and reward. If your dog loves toys, after you take off the leash, whip out a toy and play with your dog. When you are finished working/playing with your dog, use your release word (delivered in a boring tone) and allow your dog to explore the environment. Anytime your dog checks back in with you, reward with treats and/or a game and then use your release word.

## **Come**

Practice this while on a walk with your dog. When your dog is paying attention to you, call him as you back up. When he arrives in front of you, say “yes” and reward.

Now wait until your dog is a bit distracted. Say his name first. If he turns toward you, say “come” as you back up, then “yes” and reward when he arrives in front of you. If he does not turn when you say his name, immediately go right up to him, put the treat right in front of his nose, then back up and say “come” as he moves toward you. As soon as he gets in front of you, say “yes” and reward.

## **Goals for the Week**

Your dog will respond to his name, sit, down and come with minimal distractions. at home and outside. In addition, he learns a new form of leave it and when taken off leash begins to pay more attention to you.