



Beginning Homework • Week 3

Name Recognition

Start your name recognition practice while out on walks. First, practice when distraction levels are low. Then, start to practice when you see your dog get a bit distracted (she notices a dog in the distance, or is sniffing the grass, or notices a pedestrian, etc.).

Leave It: Step One

Start with a treat in your closed fist held steady at your dog's nose level. Say "leave it" once. As soon as dog takes nose and paws off, say "yes" and treat.

Sit & Down: Increasing Duration

Continue to increase the length of time your dog can do both activities in preparation for stay work next class.

- 1) Cue your dog to sit for one second, say "yes" and reward. Next build a two-second sit and so on. Work to get a ten-second sit at home and a five-second sit outside.
- 2) Cue your dog into a down. If your dog remains in a down position when you stand up, build more duration as described above. If, however, your dog stands up when you do, teach her to hold a down while you stand up. Lure your dog into a down, say "yes" and treat. Now, slightly straighten your knees, say "yes" and treat. Straighten your knees a bit more, say "yes" and treat. Continue this step-by-step process until your dog can remain in a down while you stand up. Now begin to build more duration.
- 3) Add a release word like "break!" after the "yes" and treat with the above exercises to let the dog know he is finished working. This teaches the dog to hold position and not release himself.

Close (walk on a loose leash)

Continue working on this any time you take your dog out on a walk. Remember that if your dog pulls on the leash and you follow behind, you are effectively training your dog to pull! If your dog pulls, stop or change direction. If this is a real struggle for your dog, try exercising her a bit at home before going on the walk. You also might want to consider a no-pull harness or a Gentle Leader to speed things along.

Recalls ("Come!")

On leash: Continue calling your leashed dog while on walks – both with and without distractions. If this is going well, start to incorporate some distance into your recalls by using a Flexi leash/long line. (For safety, Flexi leashes/long lines should be used in locations away from streets.)

At home: When your dog is playing, put a lure right in front of her nose, and say "come". When she arrives in front of you, say "yes" as you touch the collar and let her nibble on the treat.

Now release her to play again. This avoids teaching our dog that every time you call, playtime is over.

In a fenced area: Practice some restrained recalls in a safely fenced area (ie: yard/tennis court). Have a friend hold your dog by the collar/leash. Show your dog a favorite toy/treat. Run about ten feet away, turn around and say, "Come!" Your friend will then release your dog. As soon as your dog arrives in front of you, say "yes" and treat. Increase distance as your dog is successful.

Note: You can also do this exercise without a friend to restrain your dog – you just may not be able to incorporate as much distance.

Add this week: At the end of your recall, grasp your dog's collar while she nibbles on the treat. This insures you can catch your dog if necessary.

Drop/Give (release something from mouth)

First, find a toy your dog likes and will put in her mouth. Offer it to your dog as you say "take it." Make sure you keep hold of the toy. Now offer your dog a yummy treat you know she will love more than the toy and say "drop."

As soon as your dog relinquishes the toy to eat the treat, say "yes" and return the toy to your dog.

Tips:

- Make sure that the majority of the time you give the relinquished object back to your dog. If your dog believes every time you say "drop" she will never get the object back again, she will be more likely to guard the toy and/or run away with it.
- If your dog won't relinquish the item, practice with a less exciting one.
- If your dog enjoys "chase me" games, try to avoid this trap. If she gets something she shouldn't have, do NOT chase her. Instead: teach her to retrieve as a game; ignore her so as not to reward; or try to redirect her attention to an appropriate toy/treat.
- Until your dog is trained, dog-proof your house (pick up socks, remote controls, etc.).