

Foundation Skills and Games

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10 Things to Remember!

For more info, read “Click to Calm” by Emma Parsons—good info for all dogs, and aggressive or pushy dogs in particular!

1. Teach your dog to say “Please”. (example: ask for a “sit” before feeding, going out, before engaging in a game of tug, etc..)
2. Catch your dog being good and reinforce (reward) the good behavior!
3. “Being calm” gets fun and goodies, being “out of control and noisy” gets NOTHING—turn your back, walk away, ignore for a few minutes, then try again.
4. Teach your dog “excuse me”, so they think nothing of moving out of the way of humans. See later slide for this game.
5. YOU start the play and YOU end the play.

10 things continued...

6. Exercise your dog's MIND as much as his BODY - give a 30 minute walk each day AND create an "operant dog".
7. Give your dog a quiet space of its own for a safe retreat— dog bed in a corner, crate, quiet room, etc... don't let kids or others invade this space.
8. Teach your dog that "if you give me this, I will give you that"...a great fun game that also goes along with "leave it".
9. Rotate your dogs toys so that he has a new set of a few every day or so.
10. Being fed is not to be taken for granted— no free feeding. When you bowl feed, pick up uneaten food after a few minutes. Hand feed occasionally while putting your dog through his set of tricks. "all good things come from your hand!"

#1 Foundation Behavior to Keep Practicing for LIFE!

- ***The Name Game:*** When you say your dogs name, they should be conditioned to automatically look at your eyes. This takes practice, practice, practice in all kinds of places! Once they learn this, play the name game at the vet, on **each** walk, in PetSmart, at grandma's house, inside, outside.. Get in the habit of reinforcing your dog looking at you with a pat, a “yes” or other reward *even if you haven't called their name.* Reward their initiative! You want your dog to decide nothing is more interesting than you!

The Name Game-

Builds Attentiveness

- 1. Count out 10 pieces of kibble- hide it in your hand, pocket, or on the counter behind you.
- 2. Say your pups name ONE TIME. (in the beginning, play this in a smaller place with minimal distractions!)
- 3. When she looks at you, say “yes” or click.. then give one piece of kibble.
- 4. Stay in the same place and repeat this three times.
- 5. Move to another spot a few feet away, and repeat.
- 6. Move to another spot a few feet away and repeat until the treats are gone.
- 7. When the pup can do this at home, play this everywhere you go with your pup– build success with distractions!

Teaching “Excuse Me”

- Occasionally when your dog is resting, come up and gently touch your toe to his back, tail, etc.. he will typically look at you to see what’s up.
- Toss a delectable treat a few inches/feet away from his head and say “excuse me”. He will get up to get the treat.
- At the moment he gets up, say “yes” to mark the behavior.
- Then toss another treat and say “thank you”.
- Pretty soon, when someone says “excuse me” he will happily jump up out of the way and come looking for his “thank you” treat!

“Sit” is the magic word!

- Use “sit” as your major cue in any stressful situation. A dog with a solid sit who automatically plants his butt when you give the command then looks to you immediately for reinforcement (a pat, a treat, a “yes”), is a dog too busy to start a fight, jump on grandma, run away from a scary thing, etc..
- Practice “sit” and “sit-stay” everywhere, many times a day. Ask your dog to sit first before every good thing that happens! (feeding, going out, get a toy...)
- Work up to your dog obeying this command even when you are across the room!

Teaching the Sit

- Step 1: the “magnetic” sit using a treat as the magnet. Use a delectable treat held above your pups nose to “pull” them up and back into a sit. Click/say “yes” the second their butt hits the floor. Give a treat. No command at this step.
- Step 2: Use the lure as before, but now say “sit” (ONE TIME ONLY) just before their butt hits the floor. Click/say “yes”, and treat as usual.
- Step 3: When they are consistently sitting to the cues above, begin to say sit BEFORE they move into position to sit. Begin to fade the lure (don’t have one in your hand) as well, but still give your click/ “yes” when they sit and then reward.



“Down” is your second magic word.

- Teach it gradually with a lure as you did the sit. Fade the lure.
 - Practice it everywhere, at least several times a day.
 - Mix it up with “sit” for something to do before play, going out, eating... “puppy push-ups”
 - When walking and a strange dog approaches, give the “down” cue and “stay” until they pass.
- **remember—only give the word cue ONCE! Then help your dog to down if needed. If your dog ignores you, you need much more practice inside at home without distractions to make the down automatic and solid—then start adding distractions again.**

Teaching Stand

- From a sit or down, hold your “magnet” lure in front of the pup’s nose and pull the lure out to draw the pup into a stand. Click/“yes” when they stand and reward with the treat. No command yet.
- When they are rising quickly to the lure, add the word “stand” just as they rise. Sometimes it helps to put your hand in front of their rear leg as you say “stand” to keep them standing while you treat them. I like to use a bigger treat and draw it out a bit, like baiting, while they stand. Then release.
- Gradually fade the lure by using a lead out hand motion with the word “stand”. Then reach in your pocket and reinforce with treats/praise.

Wait...vs. Stay

- Use “Wait” when you will eventually release your dog to do something...like run to a target.
- Use “stay” to mean remain in place until I come back and release you.



Teaching Foundations for Stay

- When your pup is solid in their sit (typically takes less than a week!), ask your pup to sit, then freeze and withhold your click/ “yes” for the count of 3. We are asking your pup to wait for their click. Pup should remain in position until you click or say “yes”.
- Gradually add more time. After one week, we typically can count to 10-15 while the pup waits patiently for their click/ “yes” followed by a treat.

Teaching “Send-Away”

- **Practice with feeding time:** hold pup and say “wait”, put dish down a few feet away, wait a few seconds, give “go” command, and release pup
- **Practice the same game with toys and tidbits.** Say “wait” and let pup watch you place the toy or treat on a mat, (hold them!). Give “go” command and release them. Gradually increase the distance they will travel to “go out” to their treat.



“Take-it”

- Step 1: show pup that you put a treat in your **fi**st. Allow pup to sniff and try to get treat but keep your hand closed and steady. As soon as the pup stops fussing and trying to get it, say “yes” (or click) and open your hand giving the treat. Repeat.
- Step 2: When your pup consistently waits nicely for the treat, hold treat on **open** hand but if pup moves to get it, close your hand. When he waits open your hand again. Keep trying until the pup hesitates even though your treat is in your open hand. Say “take it” and give him the treat. Repeat.
- Step 3: When he masters step 2, put treat on floor. If pup moves toward it on his own, cover treat. When pup hesitates, say “take it” and allow him to have the treat. Repeat until he consistently waits for your “take-it”.

Really Reliable Recall: Prerequisites

- The “Name Game”: your dog should already be conditioned to run to you or at least LOOK at you whenever they hear their name. This is their “everyday recall”. Always make it happy!

✓ If they aren’t doing this by now—back up, work on this at least 50 treats a day, 25 treats in 2 sessions per day... minimum!

DO NOT free feed your dog- no leaving food around all the time in its bowl.

Some dogs NEED to learn:

“nothing in life is free”.

It is OK, even desirable to use their kibble for their training treats, and not feed them meals in a bowl.



Really Reliable Recall-

Creating a conditioned response that will work every time.

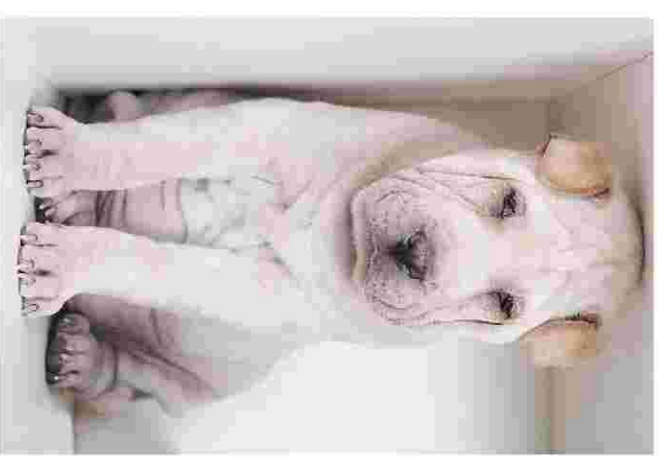
A Call To Use Sparingly for Emergencies!

- Choose your special command: “**pup-pup-pup-pup!**”
- Practice just 3 separate times /day **only** in places you know they will come (inside).
- Call **ONE TIME ONLY**
- Once they look at you &/or start to come, encourage and reinforce all the way in to you (clap, voice, etc).
- When they reach you, give *30 seconds* of praise and fine dining as the final reward!



What do you do if they don't come?

- **NEVER** repeat your command!
- **Grab a great toy**, throw it around & play with it yourself, act silly, pretend to eat the goodies... the goal is to say to your dog, “you weren't paying attention, so you are missing out on a fun game and cookies, I sure wish you had come to share this with me!”
- **When your dog comes over** to see what it is missing... and it will... give it a pat, say “good dog”, but don't make a big fuss, put the toy up, and go back to another activity, ignoring the dog.
- **In 5 minutes** try again with **ONE** command only.
- If the dog comes, **BIG PARTY** with **a full 30 seconds** of fine dining for reward!



Recall Basics

- For Now... **never** call them if you can't enforce it. Make recalls a happy time! **Never** use their name before a scolding!
- Outside is **“unreliable”** right now, so consider using a 25-50 foot drag line in the yard with knots tied in it every 2 feet... or don't call— go to them.



“Recall” Homework Games

- ❖ **Puppy Ping-Pong:** 2 or more family members sit 10 feet apart and take turns calling the dog’s **NAME** and treating for 10 **seconds** each when they come to you. Stop before dog gets full or tired! As pup masters game, you can move farther apart—even in other rooms!

- ❖ **Hide and Seek:** when dog isn’t looking, duck down behind counter or around a corner... **call dog’s name ONCE!** At first, make appealing noises (kissy sounds work well) to help them find you. Be ready with treats, play tug or give a favorite toy, and big praise when they find you.



Puppy Massage

Massage your puppy/dog at least 10 minutes/day!

- Builds rapport and appropriate submission
- Desensitizes paws, ears, muzzle, etc...

Start slowly petting down from head—slow, gentle strokes. Rub tummy, pads of each paw, each ear inside and outside, muzzle, gums, etc.....

Heelwork Games

Heelwork in a circle:

Choose your “run with me” command”

Close, with-me, let's go,...

- Keep toy in your pocket and work at a gentle trot.
- Run the circle twice with pup on left—finish with a tug or toy toss game.
- Run circle twice with pup on the right— finish with a game of tug or toy toss.



Heeling Helps...

- NEVER let your dog pull you...remember, either “be a tree” until he stops pulling and puts slack in the leash, or slowly back up, or turn around and go the other direction when they pull. Reward with brisk walking, voice, and treats when they are walking nicely.

**Remember to use something like “let’s go” to mean “stay in my vicinity” when walking informally or on a flexi, and a formal word like “heel” when you need exact heel position and no sniffing, visiting, etc.

More heeling comments:

- 1. Getting and keeping your dogs attention is the key to good heeling! Play “attention” games at every opportunity.
- 2. Help your dog be successful. Make it easy for them to do well in small stages. At first, they may only be able to heel 2-3 steps with you. Treat often at first. When they can heel 50 seconds with you, at home, with no distractions, then try in a new location! Go back to baby steps in the new location if necessary.
- 3. Half of your training time should be PLAY time! Be unpredictable and mix “lessons” with games of ball, tug, tummy rugs, etc..
- 4. **If your dog is bored, who is boring him? 😊**
- 5. Take time to figure out what is rewarding to your dog. Experiment with food, toys, and activities.

Another Heeling Technique:

Try this approach popularized by Dawn Jecs in her book “Choose to Heel”. In an enclosed, safe area (dog must see you at all times):

- Let your “hungry” dog run free but show him you have a terrific, delectable, desirable food treat in your left hand. Don’t say a word to your dog, but while keeping the goodie in your left hand at waist level or below, start walking briskly about the yard as if you are heeling an invisible dog—make a square, circle, serpentine, etc...
- Eventually, your dog will get interested and come over to investigate. As soon as he is near your left side—TREAT! Then get out another lovely treat, show him, and take off heeling in another direction. **No command, don’t say anything!** When he again comes near heel position, treat, say “yes”, and move off again. He will “choose” to heel, at first for the treats, later because he enjoys the teamwork. Do this for 5-10 minutes at a time 2-3 times a day for a couple of days, and I promise, you won’t be able to get rid of him!

Box Games

Building the “Operant Dog”

- Supplies: A big cardboard box, treats, a clicker (optional)
- Start in a quiet area with no distractions.
- Put the box down, say “ready” (or your preferred verbal cue that you are starting a training session), and immediately treat for any interest shown in the box. Let him explore for about a minute.
- ❖ At first, even just looking at the box or a sniff gets rewarded.
- ❖ Keep up a high rate of reward as he investigates in any way.
- ❖ Take a break (say “all done”) and pick up the box...rest 2 minutes
- ❖ Repeat!

Box Games continued...

- When your dog begins offering lots of behaviors with the box on his own, extend the game by selecting specific things to shape and reward!
 - Paw it, jump on it, pick it up, carry it around, jump in it, push it with nose, etc...
- To add variety, and encourage your dog to “operate” on a variety of things, alternate a novel object like a laundry basket, plastic cone, kiddie pool, child’s toy, etc...!

Just for Fun-Spin

- Spin! Begin with a lure, eventually fade the lure and ask for a spin with a hand motion.
- Teach the spin in both directions using a different word/hand motion for spin to the right (Turn) and spin to the left (Spin).

“Go Around”

- “Go around” an object. Start with a lure and guide them around. Gradually fade lure and increase distance from you to the object so you are sending them out to go around and come back.
- Play with cones, poles, chairs, etc... this is especially a good foundation for agility.

Walking on Surfaces

- Give your pup the opportunity to walk on a new surface every week!
- Concrete, rugs of all textures, wood, tile, blankets, aluminum foil, sheets of newspaper, boards on the ground, sheets of lattice, plastic drop cloths, gravel, sand, etc.

Water Play

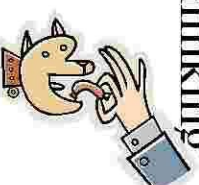
- Buy a low walled kiddie pool and play all your usual games in and around it with your pup.
- ✓ Practice sits, downs, and stands in water
- ✓ Catch/retrieve floating toys (bob for konggs)
- ✓ Play 2 feet in, 2 feet out (good for agility)

Final Tips:



- Keep practicing the “name game”. Looking at you or running to you when they hear their name needs to become a **reflex**— they do it without thinking.

- **No repeating commands** or their name! Call only 1 time!



- You must use *high value treats* so that coming when called becomes the best “game” you ever play. I save real cooked liver for this or really good cooked roast beef, seasoned chicken, very thinly sliced hot dogs.

- Practice the emergency recall command 3 times per day— no more, no less. And, for now, **only** when you **know** they will come (indoors, small space). Reward this activity with high value treats for a full 30 seconds of “fine dining” ... a tiny bit at a time for 30 FULL seconds.

- Reinforce them all the way in as they come to you! Clap, happy voice, “good puppy”, squat down, wave toy, etc...

