

Training You To Train Your Dog

Basic Obedience Manual

*"Training Dogs
through
Love and Respect
the Natural Way"*



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with Darr Houssen

This Basic obedience manual is laid out in building block style. This means that you and your dog will be learning a lot of different exercises and commands in each of the 6 sessions, but in small sections so that the training will be fun and fair for the dog and handler. The manual is divided into 6 sessions with a brief outline listed for quick reference, and then detailed explanations will follow. Please take a few moments to review the following topics. By understanding these training fundamentals, the task of training your dog will be much easier.

1- Purpose for basic training: All of us really want to own a behaved dog that listens to us and follows through with what we command it to do. This is accomplished by teaching our dog basic commands and by showing the dog how to perform the commands correctly and quickly.

2- Try to follow the instructions for the various exercises as closely as possible. If the method is not working for your dog's type of personality, alternatives may be listed as alternative methods, in case you need them.

3- Voice tones: There are basically 3 different voice tones that you will need to master in this basic level. The first is of course the praising tone. This will be a happy, appreciative and encouraging tone, with the words **"GOOD DOG"**. The second tone is a commanding type of tone. This is a "matter-of-fact" direct tone that indicates to the dog that you're serious about having the command followed through. This vocal tone has nothing to do with volume. Shouting at your dog will have the opposite effect to what you want to accomplish. The third tone is a corrective tone. This tone needs to have a growl sound incorporated into the **"No"** command. This indicates, in a tone that he clearly understands from his wolf ancestry, that you are very serious about an instant behaviour change. This tone is reserved for specific behaviour modifications or intense situations.

4-Body Language: Your dog would communicate with other dogs by using vocal tones as listed above, but just as important is the use of body language. You will learn to position yourself and use signals right from the beginning. Subtle motions and positioning will help your dog catch onto what you're trying to relate to him.





5-Mental Leash Control: Simply put, this is developing the skill of reading your dog so well that you will know what he's going to do before he actually does an action. You will learn to respond to your dog's actions while he's still in the thought process, before actually carrying out his own wishes. That's when dog ownership starts to become very exciting.

6-Temper Tantrums: Dog's have, in their own way, the ability to throw a temper tantrum. These come in various forms, depending on which personality type your dog is. The prey dog's tantrum usually resembles different vocalizations from whining to a high-pitched screaming sound. The pack dog, sulks to get it's own way. The fight dog will growl and grumble at you when frustrated and the flight dog will crawl into a submissive posture to get it's own way. These are all just methods of control that dog's use as a defense reflex when they are confused, frustrated or just want to do things their own way.

7-The Metal Link Slip Collar: This type of collar is meant to be a backup control system for your dog, when he's put into a very distracting environment. This collar when used properly should give you an instant behavior change when necessary. The real advantage is the sound the metal links make as they move. This is a clear audible signal where you are asking the dog to "pay attention" to what you asking from him. Generally you should only have to occasionally go back to the slip collar for re-enforcement training. Your ultimate goal is to wean yourself and the dog off the slip collar and unto a flat nylon or leather collar. The changeover time will depend on the dog's energy level and how well he adapts to the distractions in your living environment. The slip collar is "**NEVER**" to be used as a tie-out collar or confinement restraint. It's for training only. Placing the collar on the dog properly is very important:

- Stretch the collar** out horizontally by holding a ring in each hand.
- Slide the left ring** down through the right, so that both rings rest on your right hand fingers.
- Slip the collar** over your dog's head, (have him positioned on your left side).
- Position the rings** so that they hang downwards towards the floor.

The ring that hangs down the longest and is next to your left side is the one you attach your leash to. Test the collar by pulling upwards on that longest ring. You should get a nice, smooth slip action, hence the name of the collar "**Slip Collar**". This is the correct look and feel. When it's wrong, the rings will go tight against your left hand (or the dog's throat) and stay snug. When the collar goes on your dog backwards and the snug sensation is present, your training session will be ineffective. The dog will resist and spend his energy fighting against the collar, rather than working in harmony with you. Always double-check your collar's installation before starting a training session.

8- Other equipment requirements: You will need a 6-foot leather or nylon leash for the format of this basic training. As well, a 20 – 30 foot lightweight, cotton or nylon rope will be needed for distance control exercises. This can easily be purchased at any hardware store. Just attach a leash snap (\$2.50) onto one end for easy hook ups and releases then knot it into a handle on the other end (for security).

9-Training Time Durations: The actual time spent in training each day will really depend on your own lifestyle, work schedule and available time. If you work at home, your training can be interacted throughout the daily interactions with your dog. This really helps the dog understand that this is his new lifestyle. If you're away throughout the day, then training must be carried out when you are at home. Whatever effort you can put into the situation will pay back big benefits. The important thing to remember is that you need to practice the exercises so that the dog learns each step before going onto the next session. As the steps are pieced together over the 6-session period, your dog will become more and more under control and educated. Keep in mind however; as it is with people, dogs will progress at their speed. Certain types will catch on quicker than others, just be patient and remember the golden rule of obedience structuring:

“PERSISTANCE REMOVES RESISTANCE”



SESSION ONE – “LAYING THE FOUNDATION”

Training outline:

1. Double check your dog’s slip collar for proper slip action
2. The “Let’s Go” Exercise – energy burn off
3. The “Let’s Go” Exercise – introducing the “Recall”
4. The “Sit” Exercise
5. The “Down” Exercise
6. The “Stand” Exercise
7. “Heeling” - with a “Sit”



SESSION ONE EXPLANATIONS

Praise:

Use your **voice only** (*in the beginning stages*) to let the dog know you're pleased with his behavior for doing an exercise correctly. Your praise should be given in an excited and happy tone. One exception to the rule would be if the dog is extremely high energy or even hyperactive. In this case, use a lower tone for the **"Good Dog"**. *Do not praise by excessive petting during an exercise as this breaks the dog's concentration.* Once you have released the dog from the exercise, petting is permitted and advisable.



"OK" Release Command

You must release your dog after the completion of an exercise with the word **"OK."** Use a higher pitched voice than normal when saying **"OK"**. **"OK"** is really part of the reward for a good performance. The higher and more enthusiastic the **"OK"**, the faster the dog learns. This little word will teach your dog that he is permitted to leave a position and that he is free to move around as he likes. However you must not allow him to become out of control with this freedom.



1. The “Let’s Go” Exercise:

This is a warm-up exercise designed to give your dog a fair chance to burn up some of his stored up energy. Do this exercise before starting a training session so that he is calmer and easier to handle.

Method:

Allow your dog to have the full 6 feet of the leash to explore with. You may walk forward, sideways, in a circle or backwards. It really doesn’t matter as long as at the first feel of tension on the leash, you give a nudge on the leash with the word “EASY”. When the dog turns to look at you, follow up with “Good Dog” and give the command “Let’s Go” again. Four to five minutes at this exercise should be enough to mentally prepare him for the work ahead. A longer warm-up time may be necessary for certain breeds. (Siberian husky, Border collie or some terrier breeds). *If space permits in the location where you are, attach your 20-30 foot long line to give your dog even more space to run around.*

2. “Let’s Go” introducing the “Recall”:

“RECALL” is simply teaching your dog to come to you, wherever you are, under any circumstances, and no matter what the distractions are.

Method:

At a moment when the dog is not looking at you and is a fair distance from you, call out his name with the command “COME”, in a command voice tone. He should respond by turning to look at you. As this happens, start praising him with an excited “GOOD DOG”, again, in a higher pitched tone, bend down to his level and open your arms wide in an inviting manner. This is body language that indicates a playful motion to the dog’s natural instincts. Keep praising him until he reaches you then physically pat and praise your dog. Release him with “OK” and command him “Let’s Go” again. Repetitions could be up to 6 during a warm-up time. Make sure you give your dog enough time to analyze the surroundings.



3. The “Sit” Exercise:

The “**Sit**” exercise is really your control exercise. Use this position anytime that your dog is out of control or misbehaving in any undesirable behavior. Two examples could be when company comes to your door and the dog wants to greet them by jumping up, or barking unnecessarily at people outside your home on the sidewalk. When the dog is placed in a sit, on your left leg in the control position, your dog has no choice but to calm down and do what you ask of him. You will use the “**Sit**” exercise also when you are walking (heeling) him and you come to a halt. You will eventually train your dog to automatically sit as you come to a halt. Again, the reason being, you want your dog under control.



Method:

With your dog in a sit on your left leg, gather your leash up in your right hand and place it over your left hip (almost over the dog’s head). To lay the foundation for the “**Sit**” exercise, you must use two commands. First, give the command “**Heel**” to your dog step out left foot first, take a couple of steps and stop. Give the command “**Sit**” and at the same moment place the thumb and middle finger of your left hand in the dog’s waist indents. These are the two little indents right before your dog’s hipbones. Touching this waist area triggers the dog to sit. Gently rock your dog’s rear into a sitting position, close to your left leg. Immediately praise your dog in a happy higher pitched voice for achieving the sit position. If your dog is struggling to get up, simply rest your left hand on the top of his shoulders. This is “**Steadying**” the dog. After a few repetitions release your dog by saying, “**OK**” in a very enthusiastic higher pitched voice and let him move about freely. Remember, the “**OK**” release is another new term that your dog is just learning so you must show him by the example of movement what the word means. Only after the release word “**OK**” should you physically pet your dog. Repetitions may be as high as five before going onto the next exercise.

NOTE: If your dog is sitting crooked beside you or is swinging out in front of you, first, check to make sure that the leash is placed over the left hip, and furthermore, realign the dog by taking a little step forward with your left foot. When the dog is up on all four feet, place him in a straight sit by touching the waist indents again.

4. The “Down” Exercise:

The “Down” exercise places the dog in a laying position. It also establishes clearly to the dog that he is the sub-missive partner in the “Man’s Best Friend” relationship! The “Down” exercise brings the dog back to its instinctive heritage, meaning that whoever can make the other lie down and stay there is the dominant character of the two. You must win at this exercise.

Signs that tell you that you are not winning the dog’s respect are: dog nipping or biting at your hands or clothing, growling, showing of teeth or continually struggling to get up. Your dog needs a stern and growling low frequency voice tone, “NO” for any of the above behaviors. If your dog is submissive and respectful towards you, the “Down” exercise will be very easy to perform with very little struggle. Count your lucky stars if this is your case!



Method: Place your dog in a sit on your left leg. Stretch the leash out across the ground in front of your feet. Kneel or step on the leash. Place your left hand on the dog's withers (shoulders), and your right hand behind both front legs. Say your dog's name and the command "DOWN." Gently push down on the withers and gently sweep both front legs out from under him. Praise your dog when he reaches the down position. “Steady” the dog by resting a hand on his hips and shoulders. If he starts to struggle, reinforce with an assertive “DOWN” and rest your hands on his hips and shoulders. Once the dog settles, release the dog with "OK", and let him up, moving away from the exercise spot. If your dog is exerting dominant characteristics, stepping on the leash, close to his head may be necessary to establish respect. Follow up with verbal praise if this extra step is needed.

- This “DOWN” Method is successful for most dogs, however for the very dominant canine, you may need to go directly to the one leg lift move. This is taking only the right front leg in your right hand, and just tip his body to the side so that your dog is thrown off balance. This method will definitely work if you follow up with the foot on the leash “steadying” technique. Secure the dominant dog in the down position until he stops struggling against you, then quickly release with “OK” and let him up.

5. The “Stand” Exercise

The “**Stand**” exercise is designed to make the dog’s life and yours a whole lot easier when it comes time to go to the vet’s office for an examination of any type. Other uses are grooming, cleaning ears, cutting nails and bath time. The chores of having a dog will become easy to achieve if your dog learns the

“**Stand for Examination**” exercise.

Method:

Place your dog in a sit position on your left leg. Gather the leash up in your right hand. Place your first two fingers of the right hand in the collar under the dog's chin. Command "**STAND**" and take one-step forward (for motivation), leaving on the left foot. As you step forward with your right hand in the collar, the dog should rise into a standing position. Gently praise the dog with your voice but “**Steady**” him by touching his right flank with the back of your left hand, (under the tummy for females). After a few seconds release with “**OK**” (again a higher pitched voice) and let the dog move. Praise again! Five or six repetitions are enough per homework session.

Notation:

You leave on your left foot when you want the dog with you and you move forward on your right foot when you want your dog to stay in position. Your dog will sub-consciously pick up on this if you are consistent. Just like driving a car or a bicycle. You don’t even have to think about it once repetition sinks in.



6. The “Heeling” Exercise

“**Heeling**” is simply walking your dog. The dog will be calm and under control without any pulling on the leash. You will train him to keep his head even with your left leg and to walk on the leash with a loose lead. That is, no tension on the leash.

This leash technique is an absolute necessity in order to achieve excellent heeling. You will get better at this as time goes on. Your timing and knowledge of your dog’s body language will fine tune as you practice each day, making the training easier.

Method:

Start the “Heeling” exercise with your dog in a sit, on your left leg. Fold your 6’ leash over in your right hand and extend your right arm straight down so that your hand rests on your right thigh. Pick up the slack of the leash with your left hand. Remember; keep the leash loose so that you have some slack to make an adjustment when it’s necessary. Say your dog’s name and the command “**HEEL**”, and then step out, left foot first. Be consistent with using that left foot first so the dog can become confident in your body language. During the heeling, if your dog pulls forward on the leash, gently nudge the slip collar and leash towards yourself. The collar must make a jingle sound to be effective. This is his signal that he’s doing something wrong. Praise him when he turns to look at you and returns to heel position on your left leg. If you have the opposite problem where your dog lags behind, use an excited sweet talk voice to encourage him. Lagging usually happens if the dog gets confused. Come to a halt periodically during your heeling work, placing your dog in a correct straight sit on your left leg. Use the method for the “**Sit**” exercise described in this session. After you’ve gone through a few starts and stops, release him from “**Heel**” position and issue the “**Come**” command. This gives you another opportunity to practice the “**Recall**”.

The “**Sit**” and the “**Heeling**” are two separate exercises in the sessions to follow, however train them for now together.



“Continue to work on session one, until you feel your dog has a good understanding of what the commands mean and can associate the words with the various positions. Be patient, and settle the dog when it’s needed and follow up with lots of verbal praise. Good luck”.

SESSION TWO – “SETTLING THE DOG”

Training Outline:

1. Dog Association
2. Review “Sit”, add stepping to the front using stay technique.
3. Review “Down” and add stepping to the front using “Stay”.
4. Review “Stand” and add stepping to the front using “Stay”.
5. Start “Heeling” work forward, add about turn, fast and slow speeds
6. “Recall” (Coming When Called)
“Let’s Go” Energy burn off



SESSION TWO EXPLANATIONS

1- Dog Association or “LET’S GO” energy burn off:

In the classroom on the videotape, the dogs are in a sit position and everyone forms a large circle facing the center. Dogs and handlers move around the sitting dogs. Use the “**Let’s Go**” command for this until they get back to their starting positions. In your home situation you may need to recruit some helpers for this one. Use the “**Let’s Go**” exercise for your dog allowing him to associate with other dogs, people, children or an unfamiliar article.

This exercise does a whole lot of things. It helps your dog gain confidence in his ability to control himself in a strange setting or around new people. It also allows him to socialize with other dogs and people without the threat of confinement or restriction. This is a very valuable technique for the building of his character. Your dog will learn to walk quietly through all kinds of situations. You’ll love and respect your dog more than ever, after you’ve gotten a few association exercises accomplished with your dog.



Just a reminder, keep working the energy “**LET’S GO**” exercise using the long (20-30ft) line outside every chance you get. This helps reinforce distance control and burns excessive energy at the same time. Practice several recalls during the energy burn off sessions.

2- “Sit” with a step to the front:

Place your dog in a sit in heel position on your left leg. Command “**STAY**” to the dog in an assertive voice along with this hand signal. Left hand, stretched wide in front of the dog's face. Very, very slowly, step out on you’re right foot keeping eye contact at all times with your dog and hold the hand stay signal. If your dog’s eyes start to wonder or is distracted and moves, repeat the “**SIT**” command and replace him in the sit position as quickly as possible, reaching over his back to the waist indents. As the dog settles, in a gentle voice praise with “**GOOD DOG**”.

During the exercise, **DO NOT** praise the dog by petting him. This is all too new for him and hand on praise is too distracting in the early stages. Voice praising will strengthen the

animal / human bond in a powerful way without touching plus the technique teaches the dog to watch you without nagging him to do so. After holding the sit position for about 30 seconds or so, step back into your original position and release the dog with “OK”, giving lots of hand on praise.

• *Note;*

This is known as freeze-staying your dog and is extremely important that you understand the concept. The “**Freeze-Stay**” is the foundation building block for all of the stationary exercises that you will be teaching your dog. The dog learns right from the beginning to obey you, the master without question, thus building trust and bond.

3- “Down” with Step to Front:

Place your dog in the “**SIT**” position on your left leg. Hold the leash in your right hand and rest your left hand on his shoulders. Command “**DOWN**” with an assertive voice and use this hand signal. Motion with your right hand towards the floor. This is usually enough to motivate your dog to lie down, but if he hesitates, just apply a bit of pressure with your left hand on his shoulders. Apply this pressure at a forty-five-degree angle as to not harm the dog’s shoulders, as especially pups, are sensitive to direct shoulder or rear end pressure. Give the verbal “**STAY**” command and the “**STAY**” hand signal, then step out, right foot first, turn and face your dog, positioning yourself about a foot in front of him. If he tries to get up, just reach over his body and “**STEADY**” him back into the “**DOWN**” with one hand on each end of the dog’s body. Hold the position for about 30 seconds and step back into “**HEEL**” position. Release the dog with “**OK**” and give lots of hands on praise.

4- “Stand” with Step to Front:

Start the exercise with the dog in a “**SIT**” position on your left leg. Place the dog in the stand position using the method you learned in session one. Allow the dog to lean on your left leg, for now, as you teach him to be stacked. While balancing the dog with your fingers inside his slip collar, gently lift the dog’s front left leg (by the elbow) and place the leg in a straight line with the shoulder. Run your hand back over the dog’s side to the back leg. Cup the stifle bone (round part of his back leg) and stretch it back a bit, so it lines up just behind the dogs hip area. Move your left hand around to the dog’s right hind leg and gently do the same placement. Lastly, change hands in the collar and place the dog’s right front leg into a straight line with that shoulder. Test the dog’s steadiness and comfort by applying slight pressure along the backbone. If he moves then he wasn’t stacked quite right. Just replace the moved limb and test again.

This exercise should never be rushed in the beginning stages. Harsh handling at this point could make your dog shy or harder to handle. Perhaps your dog has the hand-nipping problem? In this case, keep your fingers out of his collar but steady him with your foot under his tummy. Practice stacking your dog a few times before going onto the “**STAY**”

portion of the exercise. When you feel he is ready to try a “**STAND-STAY**“ use the verbal “**STAY**” command and the hand signal, step out, right foot first to the front of the dog. **REMEMBER:** Keep your fingers inside the collar as a “**STEADYING**” technique. After a few moments step back beside the dog and release with “**OK**” and give lots of praise.

5- “**Heeling**”:

Start off with your dog in the sit position on your left leg. Place your leash in “**CONTROL POSITION**” (arms extended downwards, resting on your thigh or hip area). Say the dog’s name and “**HEEL**”. Start walking forward at your normal walking pace. Your dog’s head should be even with your left leg. Praise at all times when the dog is heeling correctly. If he does forge ahead, tapping your own leg or even snapping your fingers will help him return to “**HEEL**” position. For a large or heavy dog you may need to plant your feet temporarily to give you more body language. These are all signals that your dog will pick up easily. Lagging behind you means the dog is distracted or confused about the procedure. Encourage him with an excited “**HEEL**” command and thigh patting to motivate him to catch up to where you are. Include the occasional “**SIT**” to teach him to sit when you come to a halt.

“**FAST HEELING**”: Heel forward with your dog and just pick up the pace to a brisk walk or a jog. Dogs usually love the excitement of this move and are eager to move into the play pace. However, if your dog is jumping up and out of control, stop the forward movement and place your dog into a “**SIT**”. Remember the “**SIT**” position is the control position.

“**Slow Heeling**”: Just change your normal heeling pace to a slow crawl speed. If the dog doesn’t make the change with you, try leaning over his back while the pace is changing. Your dog will learn to adjust himself to you and your speed.

“**Heeling with About Turn**”: Heel forward with the dog in heeling position (remember lead off with your left foot first) “**ABOUT TURN**” is simply a direction change. You and your dog will do a complete 180-degree turn to the right, turning away from the dog so that you’re going in the opposite direction. If he is not paying attention to you, he will keep going straight ahead even though you’ve made the turn. To correct the problem, tap your left thigh or snap your fingers as you are making the turn. This will communicate to the dog for him to be watching what you are doing and where you are going. Properly done, your dog should learn in 1 or 2 reminders to watch you.

6- “Recall” or “Coming When Called”:

Include this exercise as part of the **“SIT”**, **“DOWN”**, **“STAND”** and **“HEEL”** work. Release your dog from each exercise with the **“OK”** command and allow him to go ahead of you to the end of the leash, step backwards and call his name and the word **“COME”**. Encourage him to turn around and come back to where you are. If the dog refuses to come to you, give a gentle nudge on the leash and bring him within reach. Immediately, follow up with praise. This is the most important exercise that your dog will ever learn and needs to be practiced over and over again. Your dog **“must”** respect your **“recall”** command at all times, no matter what.

SESSION THREE – “EXTENDING THE CONTROL”

Outline:

1. “LET’S GO” energy burn off
2. “SIT / STAY” to the end of the leash
3. DOWN / STAY to the end of the leash
4. STAND / STAY to the end of the leash
5. Heeling review normal, fast and slow paces, about turn add the left about turn
6. “RECALL” or “COME WHEN CALLED”
7. Figure "8" exercise



SESSION THREE EXPLANATIONS

1-“Let’s Go” energy burn-off:

Always give your dog a few minutes to investigate, explore, sniff and snoop on the six-foot leash or twenty foot long line before you start a training session. This is a common courtesy to your dog by allowing him the freedom to be a dog, plus gives him both physical and mental energy burn-offs. If training with or around other dogs, briefly allow the dogs to say “hello” (sniff each other), before starting a work session



2- “Sit-stay”:

Place your dog in the sit position on your left leg. Command him to "**Stay**" and give the hand signal you learned in Session 2. Leave on your right foot and walk to the end of the leash, turn and face the dog. If the dog should happen to move during the exercise, just step towards him pointing over his head at the rear end and steady him with a coaching command "**STAY**". Hold the six-foot distance stay for about 30 seconds to start with before returning to the dog. On the return keep the leash away from the dog's face and circle behind the dog and back into your heeling position. Release the dog with "**OK**" and Praise. Remember, if the dog is distracted, resort to the freeze-stay hand signal technique.

During this session start to concentrate on distraction training. For example, the movement of your own legs around your dog is going to be a distraction. Adding movement around your dog while he’s learning the commands will help establish more self-control and concentration. If your dog is very high energy, slow the movements down to a level that he can handle then gradually pick up the pace.

3-“Down-stay”:

Place your dog in the sit position on your left leg. Place your left hand on the dog’s shoulders and hold the leash in your right hand. Command him “**Down**” and make a dropping motion with your right hand towards the floor. If he doesn’t lie down by himself, apply a bit of pressure to the shoulders or tip his body (*at a 45 degree angle*) over to one side or the other. This will take the weight off the front end and enable you to drop the dog into the down. Command him “**Stay**” slowly rise up beside him, step out, right foot first and walk to the end of the leash.

Should he break the exercise at any time, replace him into the “**Down**” position, step on his leash, close to the snap, to guarantee the “**Down-Stay**”. Slowly work your way out to the six-foot distance in front of him. If the dog is steady, do some movement distractions around him. The more distraction work you do with him the better. Quietly praise with “**Good Dog**” while you’re away from him. On the final return, continue to coach him with gentle praise while circling around behind him returning to heel position. Release with “**OK**”. And give him lots of enthusiastic praise. Have a friend or other family member approach your dog while he is in the down position to add some extra distraction training to the exercise.

4-“Stand - stay”:

Stand and stack your dog as you learned in the former session. Remember to test along the backbone for steadiness by touching lightly. Command him “**Stay**” and step out, right foot first and walk slowly to the end of the leash. Have someone approach your dog if possible to touch him on the head and neck. Coach him to “**Stay**” during the approach and examination of the helper. This helps him to stay calm and reassures him that you are not abandoning him if he’s undecided on the intentions of the distracter.

Return to your dog by circling around behind him to heel position, release with “**OK**” and praise heavily. Should your dog not allow the extra handling, simply return to your dog and steady him, under the chin and tummy while the examination takes place. Praise him while the helper is doing the exam. If grooming is a problem area, enlist a helper to groom while you steady the dog. In no time the dog will be over his fear or phobia of grooming and you’ll be able to handle him yourself.

5- “Heeling”:

Continue working and fine-tuning your normal speed heelwork, the slow speed, fast speed and the about turn to the right. In this session we introduce the “**Left-About Turn**”. To accomplish this move, turn to the left, directly into the pathway of your dog, making a 180-degree turn. You must guide your dog by leaning your right knee towards his face without making actual contact. He will see your knee turning and move out of the way, this is another body language signal. (*Use your ankle if you are handling a small breed*). This little maneuver is designed to teach the dog to move quickly out of your pathway. If the knee guidance is not enough to turn him, leaning over his head and body will clearly indicate where you’re turning towards him.

6- “Recall”:

Occasionally, release your dog from the “**Sit**” position during heelwork, or at the end of sits, downs, or stands. Allow him to move out in front, away from you, command “**Come**” and get the dog to turn back to you as in previous methods but this time have the dog sit directly in front of you. This is achieved by sliding the leash through your left hand as he is returning to you. Wait a few seconds then release with “**OK**” and step backwards, giving lots and lots of praise. Again,

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF THE RECALL (COME) COMMAND. IT’S LIFESAVING!!

7- Figure “8” exercise:

This is a polishing exercise for heelwork. Have 2 people (or any 2 articles) facing each other about 8 feet apart. These are your posts. You and your dog are going to face the invisible line between the 2 posts at a right angle. Start off to the left and go around the post, cross back across the center and go around the other post. Halt when you come to the center again and sit the dog. As your dog becomes familiar with the procedure, try stopping at different points along the figure “8” route. This is another form of distraction training for heelwork. If the dog lags, use words to encourage him. If he crowds you slow the pace down to a crawl so he gets a bit distracted and moves off your leg. This exercise is designed to get your dog paying attention to you even though there are unfamiliar articles or people nearby. After a few repetitions, release with “**OK**” and praise heavily.

SESSION FOUR

“EXPANDING YOUR DOG’S ATTENTION SPAN”

Outline:

1. “LETS GO” Warm up
2. Patterned Heel work –“FIGURE 8”
3. “STAND” For Examination
4. “SIT STAY” with the long line
5. “DOWN-STAY” with the long line
6. “RECALL” from a stationary position
7. “FINISH” Exercise (part 2 of the Recall)



*Long lines or extra leash needed for the next
Few weeks of training (20 to 30 feet)*

SESSION FOUR EXPLANATIONS

1- "LETS GO" warm up

In the classroom, this would be done in the form of dog association but at home, continue as in the previous sessions by letting your dog have a few minutes to sniff and snoop in the working environment. These moments of leashed "freedom" will greatly help your training session.

2- Pattern "HEEL" work:

In this session you will be teaching your dog two more new turns. They are the right and the left turns. Not to be confused with the two about turns you've already learned, these two new ones are ninety degrees to the right or left. Just review your normal heelwork exercises using the slow, normal and fast speed changes but add a few sharp ninety degree turns to the right and left. These additional turns will help your dog pay attention to your body language. You're making the practice unpredictable by changing the pattern every time you take him out. After a few tries at these new turns, add the about turn and left about turn to the routine. The result of this varied pattern is a dog that is watching his master closely to keep in step and work happily for you. Continuing the communication between dog and master will ensure that sort of eye contact and behavior.

Figure "8":

Continue to review and polish the "**FIGURE 8**" Exercise. Try adding some new articles as posts. This could mean using his favorite toys as posts or perhaps a couple of dog biscuits in place of large articles. All this distraction work really helps to build the dog's concentration on you.

3. "Stand for Examination":

Start each "**Stand**" training session with the foundation routine, then build up to the point of being out 6 feet in front of your dog. During your practice times in this session, have someone approach your dog while they are holding some type of food in one hand and petting the dog with the other. If your dog goes for the food without being invited to take it, verbally correct with a growling "**NO**" then follow up with praise when the dog's attention transfers over to you and off the food. This correction will help teach him not to steal food from people's hands.

4. “Sit -Stay” with the long line:

Attach a 20 to 30 foot light nylon or cotton rope to the handle of your obedience leash. Snap the obedience leash to the dogs slip collar. Sit your dog in the usual way on your left leg, command him “**STAY**”, step out, right foot first and walk out to half the length of the long lead. Hold onto the end of the long line, in case your dog makes a run for it. Have a distracter approach your dog. (Or roll a ball, toss a favorite toy, walk briskly past the dog). If the dog leans out for a sniff or visit, correct with a growling “**NO**”, but praising when he looks back to you. In the beginner’s level, you want the dog to be under your absolute control.

If the dog breaks his “**SIT-STAY**”, walk back to where he is and quickly replace him into position. Replace him quickly to the spot where the error was made. When you return to your dog, let the long line flow along the ground with you. Folding or gathering the line will just confirm to your dog that he was under control because of the long line. You now want him to believe that it was you who controlled him from a distance not the line. Release him with “**OK**” and give lots of hands on praise.

5. “Down -Stay “with the long line:

Use the same long line methods for the “**LONG-DOWN**” exercise as you just did for the “**SIT**”. Place your dog in the “**DOWN**” position using the hand signal and then carry out the same procedure as mentioned. Do not remove the long line yet! Remember that the long line is on there for security in case your dog gets confused or distracted to the point of leaving the scene.

6. “Recall” form a stationary position:

Place your dog in a “**SIT**” on your left leg. Command him “**WAIT**”. We use the command “**WAIT**” for the “**RECALL**” exercises because this is a totally different exercise where the dog comes to where you are, different from a stay command. Command him “**WAIT**” and give a milder hand signal than what was used for the stay signal. Step out, right foot first and walk out to the end of the six-foot leash. Turn and face your dog. If he gets up before you’ve called him, step towards him and command “**SIT**”. The repeat with “**WAIT**” and go back to where you were before the dog broke the command. Repeat as many times as necessary.

Your dog will get the idea. After waiting for a few moments with a successful command, call him to you with his name first and the command “**COME**”. As he reaches you, command him to “**SIT**” so that he ends up sitting directly in front of you, in complete control of himself. Wait a few moments and release with “**OK**” and give tons of praise.

Remember: you want the recall command to always be a pleasant experience for your dog so never call him to you when you're upset at him or to give medicine, or anything else that would seem negative to the dog. For example: If your dog happened to stray off the edge of your property, you called him with **"COME"** and the dog turned to return to where you were, you would praise the dog for making the recall, not scold him for straying off the property. However, if the dog kept on going on his merry old way, go get him as quickly as possible, taking a hold of his collar and return him by the collar to where you had called him from in the first place. Make sure your voice is sounding upset as you are returning him to the place that you called him. You do not want him to think that he can get away with not listening. In other words, make him feel guilty. You can tell by looking at his/her facial expressions if you are getting your point across. In other words, if the dog is acting like he is having fun but no guilt is showing then there is a good chance you are not communicating with the dog that you truly are upset. Once the **"SIT"** in front position is achieved and you have made your point, start to praise him gently but not overly, then release with a higher pitched voice, **"OK"**.

This **"RECALL"** training is the most important exercise of the dog's training. Think of it this way: If your dog won't come when he's called, no matter what the distraction, is he really man's best friend!!! Not likely. He's still running his own show, responding to his own desires, not yours.

7- "Finish" exercises:

This is a part 2 of the recall exercise. They are two separate exercises that must be taught separately then combined later when you and your dog have a real familiarity with both aspects. The dog starts off sitting in heel position with the rings of the collar under his chin. Hold your gathered leash in your right hand. Command him **"WAIT"** and give the hand signal. Immediately step to the front of the dog, leaving on your right foot. Still holding the leash in your right hand, pass the bulk of it behind your back to the left hand.

Say your dog's name and command **"HEEL"** Take 1 step backwards or two steps for extra large dogs, with your right foot. This will motivate your dog to start moving towards you. Then pass the leash around completely to the left hand. At this point the dog will be almost behind you so take a couple of steps forward to motivate him to turn and walk into the heel position on your left leg. Place him in a sit and immediately praise him. Release with **"OK"** and praise the dog. You will know you have completed the exercise correctly if your finished position is facing the opposite direction than the beginning. The secret to teaching a happy **"FINISH"** exercise is to try to make it as smooth a transition as possible for the dog and yourself.

***NOTE:** Teach these two exercises separately for a while before trying to put them together as one. Don't take your dog off lead during these training sessions as you have reached a very critical point. If it becomes a game of chase, the dog has automatically won and the respect you have gained from your dog will be lost and perhaps never fully recovered.*

SESSION FIVE

“ACHIEVING VOICE CONTROL OVER YOUR DOG”

Outline:

1. **‘LETS GO’ Warm-up**
2. **“HEELING” Off Lead Preparations**
3. **“STAND FOR EXAMINATION” with a thorough Exam**
4. **“SIT-STAY” with long lines (20 or more feet long)**
5. **“DOWN-STAY” with long lines (20 or more feet long)**
6. **“RECALL” with the “FINISH” using a long line**



SESSION FIVE EXPLANATIONS

1-“Let’s Go” warm-up:

Try using your long line and different locations for your training. The more location variety you include, the more stabilized your dog will be.

2- “Heeling”:

If your dog is very familiar with all the various turns and speeds of the heeling routine, you are now ready to start the off-lead preparations. Sit your dog on your left leg. The first step is to place your leash over your right shoulder, holding just the handle part with your right hand behind your back. Place your left hand over the leash resting on your tummy. Start off with the command **“Heel”**, left foot out first and continue through the heeling routine. Try to command only with your voice, avoiding leash and collar control unless your dog gets out of control. Calm him by using the sit position, then start out again. Continue to work on this semi-off-lead method for a period of time until the dog is going along smoothly with just verbal guidance only.

At that point your dog is ready to try hands free handling. For that stage, place the dog in a sit on your left leg, unsnap the leash, wrap it around yourself, pass the snap through the handle part of the leash and snug it up around your waist, then reattach it to the dogs collar. This is called an umbilical cord. Place your hands at the center of your tummy or in your pockets. Now you are ready to work hands free. Work through the heeling routine, including all the variations. By this time, voice control should be evident with little or no use from the leash at all. Even though you are at this advanced step of heelwork training, always start off the session with the leash in control position, in two hands, so the dog is put under control as soon as possible.

3- “Stand for Examination”:

Stacking is still a very important part of the Stand exercise. Continue to work on this as it stabilizes the dog. It will help reinforce that you mean what you are saying to the dog. Stand your dog as you’ve learned before and go on to the end of the leash. If you are doing your own examination, just drop the lead to the floor or ground at the six-foot distance and return to the dog for the exam. Start at his head, look in his ears, and feel along his neck down over the shoulders to the feet. Run your hand along his back and down over the tail. Touch the hips and run your hands down each back leg. After the examination, go back to the six-foot distance in front of your dog. Leave the leash on the floor but complete the normal return. Release with **“OK”** and praise.

4- “Sit -Stay” with a twenty-foot (or more) long line

Sit your dog on your left leg. Attach a thirty-foot long line to your dog’s collar. Command him **“STAY”**. Proceed to the end of the long line and let it drop to the ground as indiscreetly as you can. You are really working with voice control only. The long line is on the dog for security more than actual control. If your dog should happen to break the sit position, verbally correct with **“SIT”** and the dog should sit right back down. If the dog doesn’t respond with the verbal guidance, quietly but quickly walk back to your dog without touching the long line, if possible. Physically place him back into the sit position using the collar as the control tool, not the long line. Slowly back out to the end of the long line again, steadying with the command **“STAY”** if needed. Try to build up the time duration to 1 or more minutes, without any breaks in the stay. Return to your dog at the end of the segment, but leave the long line on the ground, so your dog never really knows when he’s off the lead.

5- “Down - Stay” with a twenty-foot (or more) long line

Down your dog beside your left leg and proceed with the same method as described above for the **Sit-Stay**. Work towards a time duration of 3 minutes without a break from the position. People distractions are great for this exercise too. You may want to have someone run past your dog or maybe toss a stuffed toy past his head while he is concentrating on the exercise at hand. Any distractions are good for training because the dog bonds stronger and stronger to you as he learns to trust in your judgment.

6- “Recall” and “Finish”:

Start each **“RECALL”** segment of training with a couple separate recalls and finishes on the 6-foot leash. As your dog becomes more polished, you should add the 12-foot long line to the distance. Sit the dog on your left leg. Command **“WAIT”**, proceed to the end of the 12-foot lead. Turn and face the dog. Call him by name and **“COME”**, then start to praise as he’s moving towards you. Let the lead stay at ground level. Do not try to gather it all up as he’s moving in. With your voice, command, **“SIT”** and place him in front of you and let him settle. Without touching the lead, motion by hand signal (*a sweeping motion by the right hand*), for the dog to finish around behind your legs. Use lots of body language and praise as he tries to figure out what you want. Try to avoid touching guidance and make it fun for the dog. It may take your dog a few attempts to get this one figured out, but when the light bulb comes on, he and you both will be ecstatic. Keep coaching with the leg motivations and thigh thumping until he gets it right. You’re really teaching him to understand through body language as what your voice is commanding.

SESSION SIX – “FINE TUNING”

Outline:

1. **“LETS GO”**
2. **Dog association**
3. **Review “HEELING” with right and left turns**
4. **Review “SIT-STAY” in a secure location**
5. **Review “DOWN-STAY” in a secure location**
6. **“STAND FOR EXAMINATION” focus on grooming**
7. **Review “RECALL” - Long lines over 30 feet**



SESSION SIX EXPLANATIONS

1-“Let’s Go”:

Always take a few moments to let your dog be a dog. Remember to work in a few moving recalls while the long line is attached to your dog.

2- “Dog Association”:

Start to expose your dog to other environments where you know there will be dogs around. (*i.e. parks, hiking trails, etc.*) Work him on a sidewalk or in an area where your dog will be in plain sight of another dog. Perhaps you could have a friend bring their dog over for a visit and put your dog through his paces while the other is in the same room or yard. The idea is to use this as another form of distraction training.

3- “Heel work review”:

The patterned heelwork is the best format to fine-tune your dog’s skills for walking on the leash. Walks around the block are fine for ordinary exercise but to really work on the heel work fine tuning, you must take him to a larger size work area, such as a parking lot, shopping mall sidewalk, or a park, so that all the turns and speeds can be really utilized. Continue working your heelwork with the leash up over your right shoulder, then with the umbilical cord. These will keep you progressing towards off lead work and control.

4- “Review Sit-Stay”:

Continue to work the “**SIT**” exercise using the thirty-foot long line. You probably don’t need to be stepping on it at this point but it’s just on there for security when in the outdoor environment. Indoors or in a secure location like a fenced in yard or abandoned tennis court, try removing the long line for a perfect testing area. He can’t escape so you will be able to test total voice control in that situation.

5- “Review Down-Stay”

The format is pretty much the same as the “**SIT**” review above. The main concern with the “**DOWN**” exercise is that the dog will drop instantly when the command “**DOWN**” is given. For the dominant dog, this is the hard part of the exercise. If you are still experiencing difficulties in that area, go back to **SESSION 2** and review just that portion for a few days until the dog is getting a clearer message of what the down command really means. Then advance onto long lead training.

6- Stand For Examination:

This exercise is designed to make everyday dog chores easier on the handler. If you haven't tried cutting his nails while he is placed in a "STAND" position, give it a try. You should start off with just one foot at a time until he gets used to it. Grooming will be much easier when the dog is standing still too. Once your dog is familiar with having his feet handled, you may need to trim the hair under his pads. This makes your dog grip floor surfaces better and helps to eliminate extra snow, mud or grass tracking throughout your home when he comes in from outdoors. Again, start the process off slowly but be assertive if he gives you a hard time. If a professional groomer is required for your breed of dog, be assured that your efforts to teach "STAND" will be greatly appreciated.

7-"Recall":

Increasing the distance is the best therapy for fine-tuning the "RECALL". Use your thirty-foot line from the sit & down exercises to add more distance. Try the exercise without holding the lead in your hands, using voice control and the signal for the "FINISH": Continue to coach your dog as needed and of course always praise. He will never get tired of that! Taking him to a secure location like the tennis court or fenced in yard will enable you to practice him without the long line so you can see just how much control you do have.

This concludes the six-session semester for basic obedience training. Your dog should be controllable by this time. If you have a dog that is still under one year of age, it's probably in the "teenage" stage of development. Polishing the basics is advised until your dog is mature. For some personality types, this may not be achieved until the dog is two to three years old. You're the best judge of your own dog. If the dog is still high energy, more polishing is required. The important thing to realize is that the basic training will carry your dog right through to his or her senior years. It's well worth the time patience and effort you'

Remember: "Persistence Removes Resistance" and "Never Give Up, Never Give In".

These two little sayings, when you believe them, will carry you through any struggles that will come your way.

All the best for a happy, harmonious future for you and your dog.

Thank you for allowing us to:

[Train You To Train Your Dog'](#)

