



Recall

It is a dog owner's responsibility to keep their dogs under control at all times in public places. Therefore it is important to teach your dog a reliable recall so that you can allow it to exercise off lead.

There are 2 parts to teaching a recall. Firstly your dog has to understand what you are asking him/her to do, and secondly they have to be motivated enough to want to do it, even when there are distractions such as exciting smells, other dogs etc.

Stage 1 - Understanding

- Choose a word that you wish to use for the recall. Single words are much better as these are easy for your dog to remember and are good if you need to call your dog back quickly in an emergency situation. Make sure that everyone is using the same word. If you are using a word already without success, it may be a good idea to use a new word as he may have learnt to ignore the previous one. Once you have chosen a word everyone must stick to it as the dog will become confused if the word changes. For this advice sheet I am going to use the word "come", but any word such as "here" or even a whistle, is fine.
- To begin with teach your dog the word within the home, where there are fewer distractions.
- Put some titbits in your pocket and at random times during the day when your dog is close by and in sight, say "come" in a happy voice, and then when your dog comes to you reward him/her with a titbit from your pocket. Tell your dog "good come" as you give the reward, and then give your dog a release word such as "OK" so that s/he knows that you have finished.
- Repeat this several times a day. Do not move onto the next stage of the training until your dog is recalling quickly every time you say come.
- The next stage is to repeat this training in the house, but when you are out of sight from your dog. Once this is reliable try calling your dog in his own garden, when there are more distractions. Remember to keep this fun and rewarding with lots of praise - "good come".



Stage 2 - Motivation

- You need to keep your dog motivated to want to return to you more than anything else. Now vary your reward - sometimes a titbit, meal, play, praise & cuddles. All dogs have a different jackpot reward i.e. their favourite reward, it may be a play with a favourite toy, or favourite food, but by varying it your dog will keep trying in the hope of hitting his/her jackpot.
- Once the recall is reliable and quick at home and in the garden, you can try it outside. To begin with, try to find an area or time of day when it is quieter, with less distractions. To begin with try it on an extending or training lead, and in sight. However, do not use the lead to pull your dog to you. Your dog must learn to recall, without the use of the lead. When your dog returns reward it, and remember your praise “good come” and the release word “OK”. Repeat this at various times during your walk so that your dog learns that returning to you is always rewarding and that they can then return back to what they were doing. If your dog associates returning back to you, means the end of their walk they may choose to ignore you when they are having too much fun.
- Vary the locations so that your dog learns to respond in a variety of places, e.g. parks, woods, friends gardens etc. Then increase the levels of distractions.
- Once your dog is responding well to this stage of training you can try it off lead. Again choose a quiet place or time with fewer distractions, and of course somewhere safe.
- You can then increase the level of distractions, e.g other dogs etc. However, it is also important that your dog has time to play with other dogs, so let him/her have a little play and then try calling him.
- Remember to be fun to be with! Play with your dog and have fun with him/her, and then they will be less likely to want to run off!
- If your dog doesn't recall immediately still praise and reward him/her on their return. If you are cross or punish your dog they might not want come back at all next time. If your dog is making frequent mistakes, take your training back a stage so that your dog succeeds and learns by habit.