



HUMANE SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY

Basic Obedience for Dogs

Handout #2

The Recall

This may be one of the most important cues you teach your dog and could one day save his life. A reliable recall will be useful in many ways and should be practiced frequently. An important element of a recall cue is trust. Never punish or yell at your dog when he comes to you. Any re-direction for undesired behavior should be delivered at the location of the behavior. Get up and go to your dog.

- Let your dog wander to the end of the leash (start this exercise with the standard 6 ft. training lead).
- Call dog's name first: "Buster!"
- Quickly move a few steps backwards while reeling the dog in toward you.
- Encourage your dog as he starts to move toward you with verbal praise: "Good Dog".
- Hold a treat in front of you as a reward.
- When he reaches you deliver treat and verbal praise.
- Repeat this process until your dog is reliably coming to you. NOTE: Quickly phase out any physical prompting (pulling on the leash).
- Once your dog is reliably completing the behavior add the verbal cue; "Buster, Come" = dog comes towards you, offer verbal encouragement = dog reaches you deliver food treat and verbal praise "Good dog".
- At this point add touching your dog's collar once he comes to you. Work your way up to holding the collar. This will help to eliminate coming to you then dashing away (which is a really fun game for your dog).
- Switch to a long line (20 – 30 ft leash) and repeat.
- Use this technique to practice at home without a leash, in the yard or in any safe enclosed, controlled area.

Recall Hints

- ✓ Always praise your dog for coming to you.
- ✓ Never, ever yell at or punish your dog after he comes to you.
- ✓ Something wonderful must happen every time your dog comes to you.
- ✓ Alternate food rewards with a special toy or play session.
- ✓ The key is being the most exciting thing in his environment.
- ✓ Go slowly when adding the collar touch / hold, this move can be scary for your dog and may seem threatening. Be gentle!

Wait

The wait cue teaches your dog to wait until you give the signal to proceed. This cue can be very useful at the front door, car door, gates, at a curb, etc.

- Start by having your dog sit at a threshold or door way as you approach. This should be a doorway your dog would normally want to go through.
- Stand close to your dog to encourage his attention being on you.

- If he stays put for a few seconds, deliver a treat and verbal praise; “Good dog”.
- Next, reach for the door knob. As you reach out, stop halfway. If your dog stays put, deliver a treat and verbal praise. If he gets up, and he probably will, start over from sit.
- Once your dog is offering the behavior reliably (waiting), add the verbal and physical (hand signal) cue: “Buster, Wait” while placing your hand in front of his nose (palm in, fingers down) for a couple of seconds.
- Graduate this process by reaching for the door knob and jiggling it or turn it slightly. Treat if he stays put, or start over if he gets up.
- By the time you get to open the door or go through a doorway, you should have a reliable wait.
- Start slow, and then add more time to the wait as your dog gets better at it.
- Do not advance to the next stage until you have the wait on cue.

Wait Hints

- ✓ Wait is the first cousin of the stay cue and is a great way to introduce impulse control training for your dog.
- ✓ Always use a release cue like “OK” or “All done”—whatever you want it to be. This tells your dog the behavior cue is over and he is free to move around.
- ✓ Be careful not to use too much verbal praise after a release cue and instead use treats and verbal praise for the completing the desired behavior. Then release and keep the verbal praise low key and brief.
- ✓ Start teaching this cue when your dog is relaxed or tired and environmental distractions are at a minimum.

Place

This is another useful tool for your dog to learn how to calm down and use self control. Place is also a form of the stay cue and will be great practice because stay will be our next big challenge and will be introduced in week four.

- Select a comfortable spot such as a small rug, mat or blanket for your dog’s “Place”.
- Choose a position you want him to be in on his place or let him choose a position he is comfortable with; sitting, lying down or standing. Usually lying down is a good choice as long as your dog can reliably offer this behavior.
- Teach “Down” on the mat.
- Practice several times a day taking him to the mat and once your dog is reliably offering the desired behavior add the verbal cue; “Buster, Place”. When your dog lies down, deliver a food treat and verbal praise “Good Dog”.
- Once this behavior is reliable, try tossing a treat onto the mat while your dog is in the room and saying “Buster, Place” (make sure he sees you toss the treat). When he goes to the mat deliver verbal praise. If he is not going to the mat back up and practice the downs on the mat a little more.