



HUMANE SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY

Basic Obedience for Dogs

Handout #4

Stay – Distraction

Continue teaching stay by adding the component of distraction. Distractions will be a big part of everyday life, so training your dog to work through distractions is important. Some distractions are self-rewarding to your dog and will be very hard to compete with. Others are instinctively hard-wired into your dog and you may never be able to compete with. Managing your environment is a better training tool than trying to train thousands of years of genetic engineering out of your pet. Let's face it—chasing squirrels is fun and a natural predatory behavior. Sometimes a dog just needs to be a dog!

- Place your dog in a sit / stay.
- Face your dog and take one step backwards.
- Have a training partner walk past you and your dog and drop a toy.
- If your dog stays for a second, go back to him and deliver a food reward and verbal praise; “Good Dog” and release cue; “OK” or “All Done”.
- If dog gets up repeatedly and is having difficulty completing the cue, decrease distance by standing next to your dog.
- Eliminate training partner for now and use a small distraction yourself, such as; clap your hands, drop something, cough. Gradually work up to a training partner adding distractions once your dog can successfully complete easier cue distractions.
- If your dog is struggling to complete a distraction after several attempts, go back to something easier and practice a few more reps.
- Gradually increase distractions as your dog reliably completes cues.
- Add a squeak to the toy dropping, add a verbal interaction from training partner, add additional movement from training partner (have them walk in a circle around you), add another dog w/training partner (have them walk in a circle around you).
- Do not increase too much distance. Remember, we are working on distractions at this phase.
- Down / Stay: Place your dog in a down position and repeat the instructions above.

Distraction Hints

- ✓ Practice frequently but for short periods of time.
- ✓ Practice when your dog is relaxed or after exercise.
- ✓ Begin training in a controlled environment.
- ✓ This type of training takes time, so be patient with your pet.
- ✓ Don't fight Mother Nature.
- ✓ A good training tool is managing your environment.