



Recall training part 1

Having your dog be able to run freely off lead is very important for their physical and mental well being. It is therefore of great importance that you are able to have control over your dog and recall them back to you when necessary.

To begin recall training you need to teach your dog that YOU are fun, exciting and rewarding.

This training starts the moment you get your dog and just from the way you interact, will start to build the foundation for recall. Remember, if you are always kind, patient, consistent and fun your dog will want to be around you!

Here are some pointers to help with recall training

- The sooner you let your pup off lead the better (They are more likely to stay close to you when they are very young but this changes as they get older!)
- Practice at every opportunity in various locations
- Ensure your location is safe and with minimal distractions to begin with.
- Take a variety of rewards with you
- Practice the following exercises for very short periods during your 'walk'.
- The following exercises are to get your dog used to following you and keeping an eye on you (not the other way round!)

Part 1: Follow me

The food game

- Ensure you take food with you (some of their dinner mixed with some added tasty extras is good)
- Take your pup to a large safe area where they can be let off lead
- To begin with the area should have few distractions (For those who are not fully vaccinated, the garden is fine. For those who are fully vaccinated, find an appropriate venue)
- With puppy on the floor, off lead, immediately move **away**
- DO NOT CALL your pup but out of the corner of your eye watch for your pup to look in your direction and then move a little faster **away** from your pup.
- If your pup chooses to follow you 'click' and praise enthusiastically and reward when they get to you.
- After you have rewarded your pup, change direction and run away, click and treat for them following you
- Do about 4 of 5 repetitions of high energy chasing and then slow down and release your dog to go play, sniff etc using a suitable word such as 'okay', 'off you go' or 'go play'

The toy game

- Ensure that you take toys of high value to your pup (favourite ones that the pup might not have had access to for a few days)
- Go to a place which is safe to let your pup off lead
- To begin with it should have few distractions
- Wait for your pup to give you eye contact and then run **away**
- Produce your toy and then start dragging / waggling your tuggy
- Let the pup grab the toy and commence your game of tug and it's okay to let the dog win

the toy

- Run away to encourage your dog to follow you with the toy or produce a second toy to have another round of tug.
- Before the pup gets bored put the toy away and release as above

Hide and seek

- Either have someone hold your dog and when they are looking at you, run away a short distance and hide behind a tree etc
- Have the helper drop the lead as you are running away
- If you have no helper, just run away when your dog is a short distance away and hide behind the nearest object.
- Praise and reward lavishly with food or a game or both when they 'find' you
- Gradually make it harder and harder for the dog to find you.

If you are worried about letting your pup off lead, place a long training lead on your pup for a little security. This allows you to step on the lead should the need arise. For the initial part of recall training you should NOT be calling your puppy. It is to teach them to follow you whatever.

If your pup is 'busy' or 'distracted' and you need them to follow you, wait for them to finish whatever they are doing whilst moving away from them and then when you get eye contact, run away and have some fun. Or, hide and let them worry for a little while before you either let them find you or reappear and make yourself noticeable again and then have some fun. Or, you put the smelliest, tastiest treat under their nose and lure them away and then begin some fun. The main thing is not to call them as it is highly unlikely that you will get the required response!

Adding the command

Add your command once the dog readily chases you as you begin to run away. Initially say it as they are actually on their way so that they associate running towards you with the command. You can then start calling them before they actually start running but **after** they have given you eye contact. (At this stage still run away from them just after you have called them.) For the above exercises a good command to use would be 'ready'. i.e 'are you ready to have some fun!' We will be introducing another command such as 'come' to teach them to come and sit in front. This is more of a traditional, formal command but one which gives you a little more control

Some rules of recall training

- Be fun exciting and rewarding at all times when your dog chooses to come up to you
- Learn and know when NOT to call your dog - You want your dog to respond first time, every time! When training, do not call when they are 'busy'. Initially, the only time you should call your dog is when they are already on their way or are frantically and actively looking for you.
- Vary the reward they get when they come up to you
- Vary where you walk your dog
- Place the lead on and off your dog randomly throughout your walk
- Keep moving away from your dog (let them learn to keep an eye on you, not the other way round!)
- Never scold, chase or grab your pup when they come up to you
- When calling, your voice should convey that you are pleased to see them.

The idea is that you always start the fun , not end the fun.

i.e Don't call your dog in from the garden and then close the door and do nothing! Instead, call them in, then, give them their dinner, go for a walk or, give them a treat and let them back out.

Proofing your recall

As your training progresses you will find that your puppy gets more confident and that he will start to get more and more distracted.

You want to be able to call your dog away from possible distractions eventually, first time, every time. You therefore need to find a way of ensuring that when you call your dog, they have no choice, but to respond.

The way to train this is with the use of a long trailing training lead. Every time your dog is off lead, this is placed on them and is used to enforce your recall command. As long as the lead is within stepping distance, you can ensure that your dog is unable to continue to go to the 'distraction'. You can curtail their freedom so that they see continuing as futile and will therefore respond to your command. You can then reward by giving them access to what was distracting them if appropriate or if not a great game with you instead.

NB if you are unable to tread on the lead , do NOT call your dog

Recall training part 2

Formal recall

This is a traditional recall exercise which requires the dog to come and sit in front of you.

Having a dog sitting by us gives more control. It enables the owner to take hold of the collar or place a lead on with minimal effort if necessary.

To teach the sit in front:

- Ensure you have your dogs full attention
- With the dog facing you, excitedly move backwards away from the dog a short distance
- As the dog moves towards you, stop and stand up straight with your hands held at chest height.
- This should signal to the dog to place their bottom on the floor. Click & treat.
- Repeat a couple of times
- Finish with a game of tuggy or start to run around and play the 'food game'
- Then use your release command to tell them 'okay, go play'/sniff etc

Adding the command

Once your pup readily moves towards you and places their bottom swiftly on the floor as you stand still facing them, add in your command. Traditionally the cue used is 'come' but you can call it whatever you like!

Say the command initially as the dog moves towards you, then move on to saying it after you have eye contact but before they move i.e just before you turn to run away

So start to combine your running away with your sit in front by turning towards them as they get closer which should help them to come to a stop.

The main thing here is to ensure that this command also equals fun! That is why it should be followed by a fun game and if appropriate your dog should be allowed to return or go and say hello to any 'distractions' if he so wishes.

Remember, you should be the start of fun, not the end!

If and when you introduce your 'come' command, remember that all the rules as stated in part 1, also apply!