

Reliable Recalls

Start by getting the behavior (do this before you name the behavior). Do this by kneeling down, make a funny noise and when your puppy comes running towards you say “yes!” You can also try running away from the puppy and when they chase you, turn around, say “yes” and reward for coming to you. Keep the distance from your puppy very short (initially). Each time you give a treat for coming, grab the collar at the same time so they get use to this. Once your puppy is coming towards your reliability, then name the behavior.

Ideally you teach this in a low distraction environment (usually the home) and gradually build up in the both distraction and distance. Only build one at a time (ie. Don’t increase distraction and distance at the same time).

Ideally, work on this each day. Play doggie “ping pong” with another person in the house. Take turns recalling your puppy. Start off close to each other and then build distance. When you move outside, shorten the distance.

Building a strong reward history is key for a good recall

Do not call your dog when you want to do something to him/her that they won’t like (ie. Don’t call them for their ears to be cleaned, just go and get them)

Do not call your dog when “fun time” is over, just go and get them. Otherwise they associate the recall with the end of fun.

If your puppy gets very enthusiastic when their recall and starts to jump, add a sit into the recall. But don’t punish the jump.

Recall Games

- When your dog is several feet away, say her name and give your recall cue. Then begin running backwards away from the dog. Click when she starts toward you and reward her when she catches up. This exercise engages the dog's natural desire to chase.
- While you're training, remember to give a super-good reinforcement *every* time you call your dog.
- Ask one or more friends or family members to help. Stand eight or ten feet apart, facing each other (or make a circle, if you have more than two people). Have one person call the dog. Click as soon as she starts toward the person, and have the person give a treat. Then have the next person call her. Repeat, gradually increasing the distance between people.

- Practice recalls in your house. Call your dog from across the room, from another room, from upstairs, from downstairs. Have a friend hold your dog (or ask your dog to stay) for a moment, then play hide-and-seek.

Tips for a good recall

- *Always* make recalls rewarding.
- Use the highest value rewards you have.
- If you don't have a reward handy, make a big production of taking your dog to get one. She earned it, and the whole party is a **jackpot**.
- Practice calling your dog away from something she wants, give her a high-value reward, and then *let her go back to what she was doing*. Practice that a lot.
- Do lots and lots of short-distance recalls. You'll get more reps and build a habit faster. Grab your dog's collar before you give the reward every time. A recall is no good if you can't catch your dog.