



**Pawsitive Experience**  
1289 NW Promontory Dr.  
Bend, OR 97701  
541-318-8459  
[trainingdogs123@bendbroadband.com](mailto:trainingdogs123@bendbroadband.com)  
[www.PawsitiveExperience.com](http://www.PawsitiveExperience.com)

## **Come to Your Side -- Finding the Heel Position**

Why do we teach this skill? If your dog pulls ahead on leash or gets distracted, we want to be able to get them back at our side with a cue. It is very helpful in maintaining control when you are walking your dog, and to get control if your dog is distracted or reactive.

Before you start, decide on a verbal cue. Common words used are “heel”, “side,” and “by me.” If you want to train your dog to be more specific and come to your right side or left side, use a separate cue for each. My cue for left side is “side” and right side is “by me.” Once you have decided what marker you will (consistently!) use, you are ready to begin training your dog the skill.

**Step One:** Toss a treat so it lands about 2-3 feet away. Allow your dog to go and get it. Now you have your dog in front of you. Take a few backward steps. Your dog will want to follow. Lure him back to your side by holding a treat right at his nose. Continue to lure him until your dog is an arm’s length behind you. Use your reward marker such as “yes” or “good” and reward.

**Step Two:** Now it is time to turn your dog so he is now facing outward. Repeat Step One but now when he is an arm’s length past you, lure him with the treat to turn his body 180 degrees, so he is now facing forward. Now take one step forward, still with the treat right at your dog’s nose, and when he takes that step with you, and is right at your leg, mark and reward.

**Step Three:** Repeat Step Two, but add a sit, so you have a dog sitting right at your side, with his body facing out. There will be times when you want your dog to sit for control.

**Step Four:** Fade having to take the backward steps. If you are taking three steps, fade to two, then one and so on. Your goal is to say your “side cue” and have them fall right into place.

This is not easy to do, and it takes some practice, but it is so valuable to learn if you want your dog to be under control on walks, or if you ever plan run agility courses with your dog.

Meredith Gage  
Pawsitive Experience  
[Trainingdogs123@bendbroadband.com](mailto:Trainingdogs123@bendbroadband.com)  
<http://www.PawsitiveExperience.com>