



Pawsitive Experience
1289 NW Promontory Dr.
Bend, OR 97701
541-318-8459
trainingdogs123@bendbroadband.com
www.PawsitiveExperience.com

The Restrained Recall

I first learned of this recall method when doing agility training. It is a common method used to get speed when calling your dog in agility or flyball competition. It works because the dog thinks it is great fun. If you want to call your dog off other dogs, cats, squirrels, or anything else that is really fun to them, you'll need to be fun yourself.

The golden rule for a successful recall is to ensure that the dog sees you as being the provider of the greatest games, the best food and the most fun.

Before you get started, it is good for your dog to have good attention skills first. There is an article on this site that will help you build these attention skills.

Step One -- Start in a low distraction and safe area like your home or backyard, and you'll need someone to help you start. While your assistant holds the dog by her flat buckle collar, get your dog all razzed up by waving a really yummy treat in front of her nose, or tease her with her favorite toy. Enthusiastically says words such as "are you ready, ready, ready?" or "do you want that yummy, yummy treat?" Whatever floats your boat, as long as it gets your dog excited, while the assistant maintains hold of her collar.

Step Two -- Now as your assistant lets go of your dog, run about 5 feet away and call your dog, but don't stop -- keep running at least another five feet. When the dog gets to you, give her the yummy treat or toy, and tell her in an excited voice how fun that was, and what a good dog she was.

Step Three -- Now it is time to increase the distance. Find a safe fenced area and move 5 to 10 yards away before calling your dog, and keep running another 5-10 yards. Repeat and slowly add distance until you can run at least 50 yards. This is a great way to train your dog and get them exercise at the same time. You can also involve your kids. They love playing the game with their dog, the kids get exercise as well, and it helps create a bond.

Step Four: -- When you get 90% reliability, repeat the same as above, but eliminate the teasing in the beginning. Still give your dog a reward at the end.

Caution: Some dogs will grab the treat and keep running. The running part is so fun they won't want to stop. To prevent this, gently take their collar before giving the treat. Some

dogs may be running so fast they can't stop, or enjoy putting a little body slam in at the end, which is dog play. For these dogs, say sit when they are about two steps from you. If they body slam, or jump up on you, withhold treat until they sit.

Important rules for getting a dog to come every time:

1. Do not call your dog to punishment or something they don't want to do (like a bath). In these situations, just go get them.
2. Always set yourself up for success. Do not call your dog unless you are certain she will come. If she is playing with another dog and you are certain she won't come, go get her instead.
3. Praise every time and with things your dog loves -- food rewards, toys, or a belly rub.
4. Always smile and tell your dog how much you appreciate that they came to you.
5. When off leash, call your dog all the time, reward and let them go play and have fun. Too many recalls get ruined because dogs think when they are called, it means the fun ends -- they get put on a leash or in the car.

Meredith Gage

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