



Recall - Phase 2 Improvers - Adding “Wait,” Distractions, & More Distance

Introduction

Before you begin the recall exercises for Phase 2 - Improvers, your puppy should be successful most of the time you are training with the exercises in Phase 1 - Beginners.

Remember, that as puppies go through developmental stages, or you make change with variables such as environment, they may regress with their training. When this happens, there is no harm in going back a stage or two, or even a phase or two, until they are back on track!

Adding in “Wait,” Distractions, and More Distance

In this phase your puppy will need to know “Wait.” If you need to refresh this skill, here is a resource to help:

[Video - Wait](#)

- ☐ Stage 5 - Once your puppy has the idea of “Wait” we are now going to use that to set up for our recall rather than placing food on the floor or tossing a treat. Begin with your puppy on a leash or longline indoors. Tell them “Wait” and walk a few feet away from them. Tell them “Come!” and as soon as they start moving towards you, mark with a “Yes!” Reward when they get to you. You may need to take a couple of steps back to keep them moving towards you. Once your puppy is able to do this reliably, four out of five times in each training session, you can use a longline and start to increase the distance you move away from your puppy, and you can practice in different rooms of your house.

Now we are going to make a BIG change and start working on our recalls outdoors. Remember that the outside environment is a lot more exciting and distracting for your puppy, so you will need to be even more animated to get your puppy's attention!

- ☐ Stage 6 – Have your puppy on a longer leash, or a longline in a low-distraction, outdoor environment, such as your driveway or yard. Start by telling them wait and move 2 or 3 steps away from them and then call them to you. As they move towards you, back up a few steps to encourage the movement towards you. If your puppy is successful, you can do 4 or 5 repetitions at this distance and then GRADUALLY start increasing the distance.
- ☐ Stage 7 – Repeat Stage 6 in different outdoor and indoor environments with increasing levels of distractions. Each time you change environment, start with very short distances and gradually increase as your puppy is successful.

Setting Up for Success

- 🐾 The key to building a strong recall with your puppy is to always make coming to you a positive experience. If at any stage they are not successful, remain calm and set your expectations lower!
- 🐾 Always be the most exciting thing in whatever environment you are working in. If you are working outside or in other high distraction environments, this might mean being somewhat squeaky and animated! Try not to worry about what your neighbors might think!
- 🐾 Keep training sessions short and sweet and always end on success.
- 🐾 Always start working on recall in a low distraction environment and begin with short distances.
- 🐾 Make small changes in variables such as distance and distractions to aide proofing of your puppy's recall behavior.
- 🐾 Try to move through the stages slowly as that will help to build a more reliable recall in the long run.
- 🐾 If the behavior is starting to break down at any stage, go back a few stages until it is reliable again.

- 🐾 We do not want to “poison” the “Come” cue so try to avoid nagging. Use the verbal cue just once and try and avoid “Come, come, come, come...” as repeated cues with no reaction from your puppy quickly teaches them that the cue has no meaning.
- 🐾 Keep practicing! Once your puppy has a reliable recall, don’t “tick the box” and move on. Keep practicing which will help proof, generalize, and maintain the behavior!

Other Resources

Looking for more challenges for you and your puppy with recall? Check out these resources:

Article - Recall - Phase 3 - More Challenging - Playing Recall Games
Video - Recall Games