

The Reliable Recall



A **recall** is a word, sound, or hand signal that is used to call your dog back to you from a distance. Teaching your dog a reliable recall is not only a valuable skill to have, it can even save your dog's life should they ever escape from the house, yard, or their leash.

Recall takes a lot of patience, practice and repetition to become reliable. To start:

- Choose a recall word. It can be any word, but keep in mind if you or your family have been practicing with a common word like "Come" without much success, it might be a good idea to choose a new, distinct word for your cue.
- Build value of that word so that your dog loves to hear it! Say your recall word, then treat. It doesn't matter what your dog is doing at this moment. Repeat for a few sessions until you start to see that your dog is perking up when they hear this word.
- Start to capture your dog alerting to the word. Say your recall word when your dog is looking away (but not too distracted), and mark with a 'yes' or click the instant they turn their head in your direction. Repeat for a few sessions.
- Next, start to add a little distance away from your dog (just a few feet to start). Say your recall word, and mark/click the moment they look at you or even take a step toward you. Reward right in front of your body. Take a few steps back, and repeat.
- Slowly start to build distance from your dog as you practice. Make sure you reward EVERY time, and use high value treats to make it even more worthwhile for your dog.
- Begin to generalize your cue in different areas of your home. When you feel your dog has a high rate of success, start to work in higher distraction environments, such as your back yard. If you do not have a fenced-in yard, use a long line in case your dog gets too distracted and wants to take off.

For a video showing the progression of these steps, please watch:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1T1a3_1ouqY

If your dog has been working on a hand target and is comfortable with it, you can also incorporate it into your recall training as explained in this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1T1a3_1ouqY