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## Conditioning Recall Cues.

*(Objective: The dog hears the recall cue and expects good things to happen where you are.)*

### Why is it being taught.

1. **Real life application:** To bring your dog to you for better control.
2. **Likely Life Rewards:** Can literally be a lifesaver for your dog and will give you a response to use for further training.

### Preparation.

3. **Venue:** Initially best done at home with no other dogs being present and at a quiet time that is free of distractions.
4. **Equipment/Supplies:** Gather the equipment and supplies required,
  - a. Have a number and variety of high value rewards to hand. (See [Reward Selection](#)).
  - b. If “rewards” don’t work, then praising and fussing should be reward enough at the puppy life stage.
5. **Brief:** Tell any human companions exactly what you want them to do and not to do.
6. **Note:** The treating in this practice is not a reward for a taught behaviour. This is classical conditioning. Delivery of the reward is repeated after the recall cue to link it with a reward from their handler. Be patient and do not show frustration as this could hinder training development.
7. **Starting positions:**
  - a. **Handler:** The handler sits (or stands) with the rewards to hand but out of sight.
  - b. **Dog:** In same space and nearby.

### Audible & Visual Cues.

8. **Audible cues:** The word “Come” is clear when shouted and carries well amongst a normal level of distractions and noise.
  - a. “Come”
    - i. **When:** When you want the dog to return to you.
    - ii. **How:** Use appropriate volume for the conditions.
    - iii. **Meaning to the dog:** Use of the “Come” indicates that rewards and good things are about to happen where you are.
9. **Visual cues:** Visual cues must be unique, simple, unambiguous, and consistent. See the (Using Visual Cue pamphlet).

- a. **When:** Same time as you say “Come”.
- b. **How:** Look directly at your dog’s eyes with a friendly encouraging expression.
- c. **Meaning to the dog:** Captures the dog’s interest and prompts it to explore what it means. i.e. There could be something in this for me.

### Practice.

10. **Layer 1:** The layer 1 focus is to use the dog’s name to get their attention.

- a. Handler has,
  - i. Upright position/stance.
  - ii. Position by the supply of rewards with their dog nearby.
  - iii. Not to move away from their position.
- b. Handler says - “Come”.
- c. Regardless of what the dog is doing, within two seconds of saying the “Come”, give the dog the reward.
- d. Repeat layer 1 to reinforce the “Come” response. Repeat until the dog is giving the required behaviour.

11. **Layer 2:** The layer 2 focus is to get the dog’s attention with the handler in a different position.

- a. Handler,
  - i. Changes position whilst keeping close to the supply of rewards, with the dog nearby.
  - ii. Occasionally moves position.
- b. Handler says - “Come”.
- c. Regardless of what the dog is doing, within two seconds of saying the “Come”, give the dog the treat.
- d. Repeat Layer 2 until, when the dog hears “Come”, they turn immediately towards the handler.

### Homework.

- 12. Repeat the practice frequently to reinforce the reflex to “Come”.
- 13. Habituate the dog to the use of “Come” in various real-life environments. Practice every time you are out with your dog. Keep management and control as appropriate to the environment.

### Fluency.

- 14. Consider the dog achieving fluency when the skill has become generalised for use in different environments. To confirm the skill test for the following,
  - a. **Distance:** Responds from the next room or, from the garden.
  - b. **Duration:** Having returned to your side the dog keeps focus on you long enough for you to give another cue.

- c. **Distraction:** Will still return to you if giving attention to someone else or whilst eating a meal.
- d. **Latency:** They turn immediately and return to the handler.
- e. **Precision:** No excessive repeating of the audible cue by the handler.
- f. **Speed:** If returning the dog should do so with direct enthusiasm and best speed.

When you are happy that you have completed this exercise, visit <https://cleverk9s.co.uk/conditioning-recall-cues/> and please complete the simple online Quiz Form.