



# RECALL / RESTRAINED RECALL

What is it?	Why do it?
Dog learns to negotiate obstacles for a toy that is placed or thrown at end of course. Transfers dog's focus away from food in handler's hand, to instead focus on getting to the end of the course quickly.	Useful for improving confidence in dog, increases speed as dog no longer sticking by handler, improves safety and skill in negotiating obstacles as dog learns to look ahead instead of back at handler, improves off leash control, improves distance work (allowing handler to take more shortcuts on agility courses)

**NB: Each of the following steps may take several days or weeks. Do not progress through the steps until your dog is consistently performing the previous step with enthusiasm and speed.**

## Step 1: Introduction to the Recall

We want an enthusiastic fast and reliable recall! Here are some tips to help achieve this:

- 🐾 Always reward (as well as over-the-top praise) for coming back. Lots of practice is needed so that coming quickly becomes a habit with very positive associations. When you first start out training, you will probably use food to reward, later the reward may change to a toy or a game etc.
- 🐾 Never tell the dog off for coming back.
- 🐾 Call the dog only once and if they don't respond, go and get them. (If you can't catch your dog – try running away, hiding, or sitting down). If you go and get them, you can correct them (ie they get negative reinforcement for disobeying). But, if they turn & come to you at the last moment you'll have to praise them!!
- 🐾 A good commanding tone of voice is vital, followed by encouragement for a quick response. Praising at the 'moment of decision' (ie when your dog turns to return to you) can help encourage your dog.
- 🐾 Don't use your 'come' command in situations where you know your dog is unlikely to respond – eg if your dog is in the middle of playing with another dog. Every time you use 'come' and he/she doesn't come to you, you are teaching them that they don't have to obey. You are better not to give the command, but simply go and get your dog. Establish the command using situations where your dog has a good chance of success & a positive outcome. (When the command is reliable, you can use it in more challenging situations.)
- 🐾 Practicing on a leash is useful to reinforce the command especially after a problem off leash.

## Step 2: Consolidation

- 🐾 Work towards having your dog come to you when you are facing away from them & moving. You can use arm positions and food to bring your dog to one or the other side on a recall.
- 🐾 Build up the speed of the recall - use extra praise and treats when you get a lovely fast recall to help reinforce the difference between this and a slower response.
- 🐾 Try running away from your dog if it is slow to return to you.

## Step 3: Introducing the Restrained Recall

Your dog needs to be very keen to go over jumps at speed to return to you. This is easier to teach if someone 'restrains' the dog for you. You will need to reward enthusiastically with a special 'focus reward'.

### Finish Line + Reward

- 🐾 Have a helper hold your dog. Now call them to you over and past an imaginary 'finish line'. Get the helper to restrain your dog so that it is keen and actively pulling to get to you before being released – this means you may need to call your dog more than once and tease them with a reward until they get the idea that they don't have to wait nicely.
- 🐾 When your dog gets to you, give them the reward.



### Jump + Finish Line + Reward

- ✦ Have a helper hold your dog behind the centre of one low jump.
- ✦ Walk away and go **over** the jump yourself (if you walk around the jump your dog may well do the same). Show them the focus reward and call them enthusiastically
- ✦ Your helper should aim the dog toward the first jump and then let go. If your dog doesn't do the jump, don't give them the reward – try again.

### Step 4: Extending the Restrained Recall

Remember that you need to reward enthusiastically with food or toys. Slow dogs can be sped up by running away after the dog has completed the jump.

#### Adding jumps:

- ✦ Add a second low jump about 2 metres from the first one (make sure they are lined up so that the dog's direct path to you will take them over the middle of both jumps).
- ✦ Have a helper hold your dog behind the first low jump.
- ✦ Walk away and go **over** the two jumps yourself. Tease your dog with the focus reward.
- ✦ Call your dog and get them excited.
- ✦ The helper aims the dog toward the first jump and lets go. If the dog fails to jump both jumps, it does **not** get the focus reward.
- ✦ You may want to use your jump command to remind the dog what it is expected to do, but use the command well before the jumps to give the dog time to think.
- ✦ Add further jumps (up to 6) one at a time. Use your jump command before each jump until your dog gets the idea. Reduce the number of jumps if you strike any problems and reinforce the easier step further before trying to progress again.

#### Changing your position:

- ✦ You will at some point be able to stop walking over the jumps yourself and instead walk beside them and position yourself past the centre of last jump. If your dog immediately runs around the jumps instead of over them, go back to just one jump and try walking around that one etc, then build back up to more jumps.
- ✦ Introduce the idea of you facing away from the dog when calling it and using an arm to signal which side the dog should come to. (Make sure that side/arm is the one closest to the centre of the jumps to make it easy for the dog when it is learning the restrained recall).
- ✦ Once the dog is happy with you facing away and calling it, run away from the dog while doing so to increase speed and simulate what happens in real agility competition.
- ✦ Once you have advanced well in this exercise you can start to move away from the direct line of the jumps while you dog is jumping the last jump – this simulates a lead out in agility.

#### Changing the course:

- ✦ When your dog is 100% reliable and fast, you can start to move the jumps slightly out of a straight line (keep the jumps close together to make it easy). Start with flowing curves or lines on an angle. Reduce the number of jumps if necessary to ensure that your dog is not tempted to short-cut away from the jumps straight to you. Use your body position to help – ie line yourself up with whatever jump the dog is currently doing, and move across to help it face the right way for each further jump. – see positions 1,2,3 in the diagram at right.
- ✦ When your dog is an expert, different obstacles, like tunnels, 6 weave poles, A-Frame with hoops, modified long jump, & flyball jumps can be used in the course too.

