



LEAD OUT

What is it?	Why do it?
Uses a 'wait' command to allow handler to move out from dog, followed by recalling the dog over obstacles. Related to the restrained recall.	Useful for improving confidence in dog, increasing speed, improves off leash control, improves distance work (allowing handler to get a head start 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 Lead Out

- 🐕 In agility your dog will (hopefully) be desperately keen to get onto the course as quickly as possible and it is a very exciting environment.
- 🐕 A 'lead out' (making your dog wait while you walk out ahead on the course) is used at the start of an agility course to give you a head-start on your dog.
- 🐕 If a dog breaks the 'wait' command and starts before you are ready, you can lose precious seconds.
- 🐕 Your dog needs to be able to 'wait', until you release it to proceed onto the course.
- 🐕 The 'wait' command needs to be reliable and it is important to practice it often in situations where you return to your dog so that your dog doesn't learn to anticipate that another command will follow the wait.

What you do:

You need to practice a 'wait' command separately from other exercises and commands.

- 🐕 The wait should be practiced with your dog either in a down or a sit. Down is more stable and arguably a better take-off position for eye/heading dogs. Sit can be a faster take-off position for slower dogs – it is your choice.
- 🐕 Leave your dog in position with a 'wait' command, then move away a few metres before returning and rewarding and releasing the dog while it is still in position. While your dog is still learning the command, practice on a leash away from distractions and start with moving only a step or two away from the dog and remaining away only briefly before returning to the dog and releasing/rewarding.
- 🐕 Increase the distance and time only once your dog is 100% reliable at each stage.
- 🐕 A firm tone of voice on the 'wait' command is important. It is sometimes helpful to also use a hand signal such as a hand palm up towards the dog.



Step 2: Consolidating the 'wait' command

Keep practising the 'wait' command separately from other exercises and commands.

- ✎ Leave your dog in position with a 'wait' command, then move away a few metres before returning and rewarding and releasing your dog while it is still in position.
- ✎ Increase the distance and time you remain away. But, don't make it too hard on your dog – this is a 'wait' not a 'stay' – do not go out of sight and don't remain away from more than a couple of minutes.

Step 3: Turning the 'wait' into a Lead Out

When you have a reliable 'wait' command you can start to turn it into a lead out.

- ✎ Leave your dog in position with a 'wait' command, then move away a few metres before giving the release command calling your dog to you.
- ✎ Work towards having your dog wait and then come to you when you are facing away from them. Then build up to them waiting while you move off and then coming when you call them while you are facing away AND still moving.
- ✎ Start to add obstacles in the path between your dog and you (one low jump at first) and again work on your dog waiting until it is released and then given the command to jump etc.
- ✎ If your dog breaks the wait at any point, go back to practising it only with you returning to the dog each time – that way the dog doesn't get into the habit of anticipating that it's going to be released to do a jump or run to you. You should do this from time to time anyway.
- ✎ Note that many dogs 'self-reward' by being able to have fun doing agility obstacles after breaking the 'wait' command so you need to be firm about not letting them get away with this behaviour – especially in competitions.