



## Coming When Called

This is one of the most important behaviors that you will teach your dog! It takes time and lots of practice, but it can be a lifesaver, so every moment working on this is worth it.

There are a few *Golden Rules* for recall:

- Always call your dog in a happy and positive tone.

If you call your dog in an angry voice, they will be much less likely to come to you in that moment and in the future. They will start to associate you calling them with getting in trouble. They should *ALWAYS* associate you calling them with really great things, so we will use high value treats and lots of praise, every time!

- Don't expect too much too soon

To teach a really solid recall, you want to add in extra challenges very gradually, and make it easy for the dog to get it right. If he gets it wrong, he's practicing a bad habit, so it will be important to avoid these situations. If you need to get your dog but know he probably won't respond to your recall, just walk up to him and snap on the leash.

- Practice in a fenced in area or on leash

Safety first! Teaching a reliable recall takes time so until your dog has it down, you need to stay safe by only letting them off leash in a fenced in yard and practicing on leash in open areas. You can purchase a 15 or 20 foot long line from any pet store. This will allow your dog to explore open areas safely. Also, don't chase your dog- this will teach him to do the opposite of what you want and most likely, he will run away or think it's a game.

### How To Teach Recall

The best way to teach this is to break the behavior down into a few different steps.

1. The first step will be teaching your dog to respond to their name and the verbal cue quickly. To do this, get some yummy treats handy. Call your dog's name and as soon as they turn to look at you, say "Come!" and start to back up. When your dog begins to make a motion towards you, mark this with a click or "yess" and give them a treat. Repeat this exercise until your dog is quickly turning around and coming to you at this short distance.
2. Next, you will start to increase the distance he has to come before getting the treat. Call him to you like you did in the previous exercise, but this time continue backing up for about 10

feet. Do this quickly so that he will speed up to get to you. When he makes it all the way to you, click or say “yess” and reward him with the treat.

3. Lastly, you will ask a helper to hold your dog at an even greater distance that you were working at before. Get 3-4 treats ready and call your dog to you. Call him in an excited voice and continue to make noise until he gets all the way to you. Clap your hands, crouch down, and make smoochy noises - whatever noises will keep your dog's attention.

As soon as he gets to you, give him 3-4 treats back to back and make a big deal out of it. We call this a jackpot and it is helpful to use this intermittently to keep him guessing. You can also start to have him sit when he gets to you and then give him the treat.

## Tips

- Hide & Seek Game

This is a fun way to practice your dog's recall and the entire family can join in! Start by hiding just around the corner from your dog, but to where he can still see you. Call him to you in a happy tone and when he gets to you, give him a yummy treat. Progress to being more hidden and have him try to find you. When you make recall a game, your dog will learn faster and have fun doing it! Make sure not to let the kids chase the dog, the point is to have the dog come to you, not run away.

- Remember to practice this behavior as much as you can. It can take time to get solid. You can implement it into your daily routine, by calling your dog in for meals and calling him to you for some play time. You should also work on this with distractions and more distance as your dog is progressing.