

Foundation Classes

Beginner One

WEEK ONE

IN CLASS:

♦ *General Training Information*

♦ *INTRODUCTION—New*

Release: Release word

Sit: Dit for food as bribe, dog in front of handler

Walking on leash: Dog stands on loose leash, praise for looking at handler

GENERAL TRAINING INFORMATION:

- Good training is done through repetition. 15-20 minute session every day, two sessions if possible.
- Commands:
 - ▣ Dogs can be taught to remember: Give your command **one** time.
 - ▣ Dogs have excellent hearing: Give your command softly.
 - ▣ Use distinct words - one syllable if possible.
- Talk with praise when dog is watching.
- Praise and motivation:
 - ▣ Any positive remarks you make to the dog when he is doing what you want.
 - ▣ Can be accompanied by petting and/or treats.
 - ▣ Give praise at the end of each exercise.
 - ▣ It is important that praise is given for correct behavior so it is clear to the dog what is wanted.
 - ▣ Motivation - should be something that the dog likes, not what you think he should like.
- Corrections - don't give a harsh correction for something the dog doesn't know how to do.
- Help the dog until he understands the exercise.
- When your dog makes a mistake, it is for one of four reasons:
 - Dog is confused - handler helps him.
 - Dog is afraid - handler helps him.
 - Dog is distracted - handler corrects him.
 - Dog thinks he has a choice - handler corrects him

Remember to make this analysis on all errors, don't just automatically make a correction.

- All dogs do not learn at the same rate. Some learn quickly, others take more time and patience. Increase the difficulty of an exercise only when the dog is consistently performing each level correctly.
- Keep a training log or diary.

HOMEWORK: Practice each skill 5-10 times daily

Release word

- One or two words used to tell dog that an exercise is finished or that the dog is finished working.
- Teach the command (Free, OK, Free dog, All done, etc.) and release with exuberant up motion.

Sitting On a Loose Leash

Objective: To teach the dog to quietly sit near you on a loose leash.

Sequence:

The food method

- Stand in front of dog and hold lead close to collar or hold collar.
- Begin with piece of food in front of dog's nose and raise his head by lifting food up.
- This motion should cause the dog to tuck his rear under him and sit. As he does, tell him to "sit" and praise and give food.
- Use the lead to guide if necessary by pulling up and toward you.
- Try not to let dog rock back into a sit (Rock sit—moving the front feet backwards as the rear goes down).

OR The non-food method

- Hold on to the leash with one hand, close to the clasp.
- Use the dog's name before the command to get his focus on you.
- Tell your dog to "sit," pull up on the leash, and with your free hand, gently push on his rear end near the tail. Note! Do not force the hindquarters down as this could cause harm to the dog's hips.
- Praise.

NOTE! By third day dog should start sitting on command.

Learning Good Behavior on a Leash

Objective: To teach your dog to stand, and then walk (beginning next week), on a leash without pulling you.

Sequence (while standing)

- Hold on to the end of the leash, imagining a circle around you with a radius equal to the length of the leash.
- When the dog tries to pull out of the circle, tug the leash toward you.
- Praise the dog when he looks at you.

Correction — Pop—Given primarily for inattention

Make sure you pop upward quickly, and just as quickly let hand come down to release the collar. This gives a squeeze effect on the dog's

neck. You are only trying to startle the dog, not hurt the dog. It is not more humane to only pull and not release as this causes a choke effect (if using a choke collar). Remember the lead must be loose before you make a correction or you will not get a pop. Do not correct dog during the teaching/learning phase of the exercise.

Note on Behavior Problems:

If you are having behavior problems with your dog and need help with such things as jumping up on you or other people, barking, running out the door, and/or destructive behaviors like chewing, see your instructor. We have handouts that can help you with dealing with this.

Remember this is just a beginning, it takes time to create a well-trained dog. DO NOT EXPECT YOUR DOG TO DO MORE THAN YOU HAVE TAUGHT.

Our goal is to give you the knowledge to teach your dog how to be a joy to have around and be a good family member. You must do the work. Try to work the dog **two** times a day for short sessions. Be positive and fun but make it clear to the dog that you are the leader. Work together in learning how to best communicate with each other.

WEEK TWO

IN CLASS:

♦ INTRODUCTION—New

Walking on leash: "Let's Go" command walk on loose leash, praise for looking at handler, stay within circle

Down: Down for food, using food as bribe

Sit: Use food as reward, no longer bribing

Sit Stay: Sit stay with handler standing in front

Recall: Come on 6 foot lead, handler holding lead.

HOMEWORK: Practice each skill 5-10 times daily

Command LET'S GO

Objective: To teach dog to walk near you on leash, not pulling, and having its attention/focus on you.

In most working situations, dog is on the left side of the handler, but you can chose which side you prefer

Sequence:

- Hold on to the end of the leash, say Let's go, and walk with the dog.
- When he runs to the end of the leash stop, then quickly pop the leash toward you. The dog should be startled enough to look at you in surprise. Praise him for giving you his attention, and start walking again.
- When you want to change direction and the dog is not pulling, say, '[Name], let's go' to let him know you're doing so.

- May be on any side of handler but within circle of lead.
- No pulling.

Command DOWN

Objective: To teach dog to lie down on command next to handler

Sequence:

Food method:

- Have dog sitting
- Put a treat right in front of dog's nose.
- Tell dog "down" and slowly lower the food to the ground at an angle so that by walking forward with his front feet, he lies down.
- Place hand on withers to prevent dog from standing up. You are not putting your hand on his back to push him down, only to guide him. Don't solve the problem for the dog.
- When the dog goes all the way down immediately give the treat and lots of praise.

OR the non-food method.

Sequence:

- Get your dog sitting on your left side. Kneel next to him.
- Hold the dog's collar with your left hand, and, if possible, lay your left forearm along the dog's spine.
- Pick up your dog's left front leg with your right hand.
- Tell dog "down" and push down with your left arm.
- When/if dog is not fighting you in the down position, step on the leash with your left foot and stand next to him. If dog tries to get up, push dog back into the down position.
- Release dog.

Command SIT

- Dog should know this command by now.
- Give command to sit. Make correction if necessary.
- If the dog sat properly on the command, give praise and food but do not release.
- Stand next to the dog, making sure there is slack in the leash.
- If the dog gets up, pull up on the leash and push down on its rear end.
- Praise the dog whenever it is sitting quietly without tension on the leash.

Command STAY

Objective: That the dog remain in one place without moving until you release him.

Sequence:

- Make your dog sit next to you.
- Tell your dog to stay, and bring your hand in front of his eyes, palm facing him but not touching him.
- Step directly in front of your dog. If dog moves, do not repeat command. Put him back exactly as you had left him.

- Step back to your dog before you release and praise.
- Do only short periods of time, only one command.

Command COME

Objective: Come directly to me, give me your focus.

Note: It is important to say "dog's name", and Come! in a cheerful but authoritative tone!

- [Dog's name], come!" If necessary, pop the leash toward you and then back up until he catches up with you. Do not reach for him! You may kneel down to encourage him to come all the way to you.
- Walk toward another person, dog, or toy. When he is distracted by something other than you, call him. If he does not turn to you immediately, pop the leash and continue as described above.
- Remember to be happy with the command letting dog know that coming to you is the best thing that can happen.

Homework note: When practicing the recall always be in a fenced/contained area where dog cannot get away if you should happen to drop the lead.

HOMEWORK IDEAS:

In addition to practicing the lessons learned in class, you might also do the following variation:

- Take the dog for a walk (more than once during the week).
- During the walk, frequently stop and make the dog sit or down.
- Also try a short stay, try to work up to 15 seconds.
- When you return to your yard, put your long line on the dog and practice having him come. Always be in a fenced/contained area when practicing the recall so that dog cannot get away if you happen to let go of the lead.

As you are on your walk, use the pop as needed, praise when dog is walking honoring your space and not pulling. Praise also when the dog is watching you. Start guiding the dog to stay at your side. This keeps the dog from running around you and gives him an area to walk in without tripping you.

WEEK THREE

IN CLASS:

♦ INTRODUCTION—New

Recall: Practice come, **introduce** coming on long line, handler hold line

Walking on leash: "Let's go" walking at side of handler

Sit Stay: Practice sit stay on leash, **introduce** handler moving

Sit: Practice sit, **introduce** sit with release

Down: Practice down, **introduce** down with food as reward

HOMEWORK: Practice each skill 5-10 times daily

Recall

Objective: Come to me, give me your "focus."

Sequence:

- The same sequence as in Week Two, except use a long line and let dog get 6-8 feet from you.
- At home take your dog out in the fenced in yard on his long line. Continue to practice having your dog come by calling him back to you whenever he wanders away and becomes distracted. As he stops becoming distracted in the familiar surroundings of your yard, take him for walks or to other locations that might offer new, more exciting distractions. Teaching your dog to come when there are distractions is very important and practical. Remember to praise and treat your dog when it comes.

Walking on Leash:

Sequence:

- It is now reasonable to expect your dog to walk next to you using a "Let's go" command. The dog can walk on your right or left, as long as he does not pull on the leash.
- Really encourage dog to focus on you, use praise and pops and treats appropriately.

Sit Stay:

Sequence :

- At short distances, it is not unreasonable to expect your dog to pay attention to you while he stays!
- Tell your dog to stay and take one giant step away from him. Hold the end of the leash firmly in your right hand, and gently grasp the middle of the leash with your left hand. If he gets distracted, step toward the dog, slide your left hand down the leash toward the clasp and pop up on the leash.
- When you return to the dog, circle him, keeping him on your left side. Stop when he is sitting next to you.
- During the week, increase the distance between you and your dog and the length of time you make him stay. Do not go too quickly. Master one distance and time before moving on to a more difficult one. Try to work up to a 30 second stay.

Sit:

- It is now reasonable to expect your dog to sit on its own when commanded. If the dog does not sit, try to decide if it is confused, afraid, distracted, or thinks it has a choice. If the dog is confused or afraid, help it by pulling up on the leash or pushing down on its rear end. If your dog is distracted or thinks it has a choice, pop up on the leash to get its attention, or use your left hand to pop its rear as opposed to pushing gently.
- Only treat if dog sits on the first command without a pop or without help

Down:

- Dog should know this command by now if you have been practicing every day.
- Give command to down. Make correction if necessary by following non-food down from Week Two and adding a pop down.
- If the dog went down properly on the command, give praise and food but do not release.
- Stand next to dog, making sure there is slack in the leash. If your dog gets up, pull up on the leash and push down on his rear end.
- Praise dog whenever he is laying quietly without tension on the leash.

HOMEWORK IDEAS:

In addition to practicing the lessons learned in class this week, you might also do the following variation:

- Take dog for a walk.
- Practice having the dog walk on both sides of you.
- Along the walk, stop and practice, sit, down, and stay.

WEEK FOUR

IN CLASS:

♦ **PRACTICE**

Walking on leash: “Let’s go” with dog on one side of handler, praise for looking at handler.

Sit Stay: With handler moving from one spot to another while holding lead.

♦ **INTRODUCTION—New**

Sit: Practice sit, **introduce** sit with “focus” and pop.

Recall: Practice come on long line, handler holds line, **introduce** intentional distractions.

Down Stay: Down stay with handler in front.

Wait at door: Dog must stay in place when door is opened until released by handler.

HOMEWORK: Practice each skill 5-10 times daily

Walking on leash:

Practice walking with circle, using what you learned in week 3.

Remember to keep your dog’s focus on you, not what’s going on around you. Remember to encourage not just correct.

- Heeling defined - for those who want to compete with their dogs or those who want a more controlled walking on leash. Heeling is not just walking with your dog. “Heel” refers to a special place on your left side where the dog stays while walking at a normal pace, a fast pace, a slow pace, and when you are stopped. A dog is in “heel” position when a point on its right side, between its nose and its shoulder, is lined up with your left shoulder. A good rule of thumb is

to match up your dog's right ear with the seam on your left pant leg. Another key to "heel" position is that the dog stays close to your left leg, as close as it can get without interfering with your walking. A dog who understands "heel" position can turn right, left, 180 degrees or in circles while maintaining "heel" position.

Sit with Focus:

Objective: By this time, your dog should be understanding that a pop on the leash, both while walking, and when asked to come means, pay attention to me. It is now time to teach him that a pop means pay attention, even while sitting.

Sequence:

- Begin with your dog in a sitting position in front of you.
- Hold the leash, as if you were gripping a baseball bat, with the clasp of the leash under the dog's chin.
- When the dog looks away, pop the leash straight up. If he looks at you, praise him, you can also give him a treat if you like.
- If you pop the leash, and your dog does not look at you, tap the top of his head or lift his head by reaching under his chin.
- Release your dog when he is looking at you.

Recall:

In class:

- Dog will be on long line. The instructor will have someone pet your dog and when he is all involved in this you will
- Command "Come". He should immediately turn and come. If not
- Pop the line toward you until he comes to you.

Homework:

- Take your dog out in the yard on his long line and let him drag it.
- When he is some distance from you, call him to you.
- If he does not respond, go pick up the end of the long line and respond appropriately. (You need to think about whether he is confused, distracted, afraid, or thinks he has a choice.) Hold on to the rope as you back up to the spot where you were standing when you called him.
- When he gets to you, praise him.
- Teaching your dog to come when there are distractions is very important and very practical. Remember to praise and treat dog when he comes.

Sit Stay:

- Tell your dog to sit and stay, on your left side and go to the end of your leash. Try some (or all) of the following:
 - ▣ Kneel down.
 - ▣ Jump up—Pull gently but steadily on the leash, this causes dog to resist the pull which reinforces the stay, be ready to correct if dog moves.
 - ▣ Sit in a chair.

- If he moves, try to determine whether he is confused, afraid, distracted, or thinks he has a choice. Respond appropriately!
- Try to work up to 45 seconds.

Down Stay:

Objective: To lie quietly in place until released.

Sequence:

- It is reasonable to expect your dog to lie down on its own when you ask. If you point to the ground and say down, and he does not, try to determine if he is confused, afraid, distracted, or thinks he has a choice. If he is confused or afraid, pull down on the leash, gently. If he is distracted or thinks he has a choice, pop down on the leash.
- To increase the amount of time that your dog will stay down, place him in a down at your feet and step on the leash. Give him a treat. Wait a few seconds, and give him another treat. Gradually increase the amount of time between the treats. If he tries to get up, push him back down, and reward him for again being down with a treat. Try to keep him down at your feet while you are watching TV or eating a meal.

Wait at Door:

Objective: To have the dog wait at a door until told that it can go through that door.

This is done in class with "fake" doorways. Try the real thing at home, first with an interior doorway, then with an exterior door (preferably one to a fenced in yard)

Sequence:

- Place the dog in a sit or down stay in front of open door to enclosed yard if possible. May want someone to hold him while you leave him.
- Go out the door, turn around, and come back in.
- If dog stayed, praise and release.
- To proof dog, go out, turn and face him, move to the left out-of-sight, return and move to the right out-of-sight, move back to center and return.
- The dog can watch for you but not leave position.
- This can be a difficult exercise for some so be patient and give dog a chance.
- This is really not any different than the basic sit or down stay. The advantage is that the dog is being taught to wait before coming through a doorway. After your dog can do this well on a leash, practice it without a leash each time you and your dog leave or enter a room. If you let your dog out in a fenced in yard, make it wait for a few seconds after the door opens before you release it to go outside. Doing this consistently can prevent dogs from running out the front door and getting injured or lost.

VARIATION:

- With the door closed have someone knock on the door.
- Again may need to restrain dog at first to confirm the stay.
- Open the door to whoever knocks and allow them to come in.
- Be sure dog remains in stay position.

WEEK FIVE

IN CLASS:

♦ **PRACTICE**

Walking on leash: Dog will walk on one side of handler, praise for focus.

Sit : Practice sit with "focus" and pop.

♦ **INTRODUCTION—New**

Recall: Practice come, **introduce** while dragging long line with distractions.

Sit Stay: Practice sit stay, **introduce** external distractions.

Stand Stay: Stand stay command.

Down Stay: Practice with handler in front. **Introduce** pulling lead slightly.

HOMEWORK: Practice each skill 5-10 times daily

Walking on leash:

Practice "let's go." Dog should be under control now, continue to praise for looking at handler.

Recall:

- Should be coming quickly on first command.
- Handler should let go of long line, let dog wander away, and only pick up line if necessary.
- Continue to practice this and add increasingly difficult distractions.

Sit with focus:

Practice and build on sitting with focus, giving a pop when necessary.

Sit Stay with Distractions:

- It is reasonable to expect your dog to look at you while he stays. If he is not looking, step in and pop up on the leash!
- Tell your dog to sit and stay on your left side and go to the end of your leash. Our purpose this week is to introduce external distractions. Try some (all?) of the following:

Knock on the wall

Bounce a ball

Squeak a toy

Let someone else talk to him

Let someone else offer him a treat

- ♦ No matter what you do, your dog should not move, and he should keep his eyes on you! If he moves, try to determine whether he is

confused, afraid, distracted, or thinks he has a choice. Respond appropriately.

- Try to work up to a one minute stay.

Down Stay:

Practice down stay with handler in front.

Stand Stay:

Objective: To have control in a situation such as the Vet's Office for an examination.

This is a relatively easy exercise to teach as dog should already know how to stay.

Sequence:

- From the sit, use a treat or just pull leash forward so that dog moves into standing position while giving command.
- Tell dog to stay using verbal command and hand signal.
- Keep dog from moving forward or sitting.
- If dog tries to sit, place your left hand palm down under belly and gently lift dog to stand. You may need to keep hand there for a bit to discourage him from sitting.
- When dog needs no help, release and praise.

HOMEWORK IDEAS:

For variation and to provide your dog with a number of distractions needed for proofing, do all the exercises while on a walk with your dog. Another place to take your dog is to the parking lot of a mall. Remember to keep him on leash.

WEEK SIX

IN CLASS:

♦ PRACTICE

Recall: Dog comes while dragging leash with distractions.

♦ INTRODUCTION—New

Walking on leash: Practice "let's go," **introduce** while dragging leash. Remember to praise for focus.

Sit Stay: Practice Sit Stay, **introduce** with other people distracting, include friendly stranger approaching handler.

Sit: Handler moves to heel position. Maintain focus.

Down Stay: Practice down stay, **introduce** with external distractions.

Get Back: "Get back" command.

Stand Stay: Practice stand stay, **introduce** pulling lead slightly.

HOMEWORK: Practice each skill 5-10 times daily

Walking on leash

- Dog should know when handler says "lets go" to walk with handler with head watching and not pulling at side full length of mat.
- At times during heeling practice drop the leash and keep dog with you.

Recall:

- Let your dog wander away dragging the six-foot leash.
- When he is distracted, call him to you.
- If he does not come, go pick up the end of the leash, correct or help the dog as you back up to the spot you where you were standing when you called him.
- You have almost completed the steps necessary to teach this dog to come. Hang in there! It is important that he becomes convinced that you will always make him come to you.
- Dog should be able to come quickly while dragging leash and being distracted on the first call of handler to come.

Sit Stay

Dog should be able to stay in sit or down for 1 minute with handler at the end of lead with distractions, should know and respond to sit and down command on first command

- Have other people intentionally distract the dog.

Sit for a friendly stranger:

- Place dog in sit stay by side.
- A friendly stranger approaches you and admires your wonderful dog.
- The stranger shakes your hand and asks if he can pet your dog.
- You reply "please do".
- The dog should sit quietly to be petted, not backing off, jumping up, or licking, etc.
- If the dog should give a warning growl, pull him off and excuse the stranger.

Sit with Focus

Handler moves to heel position, keep focus of dog.

Down Stay

As with the sit stay add distractions.

Get Back Command:

Objective: To make your dog move backwards. Useful for getting dog back into position or away from something you don't want him to investigate.

Sequence:

- With dog standing with you in front.
- Just walk into dog saying "get back."

- If he takes a few steps release and praise
This can also be done with the dog at your side.
- Put dog between you and a wall.
- Give command "get back."
- Take 2-3 steps backward while giving dog a tug to encourage him.
- Be sure dog does not try to turn around.

WEEK SEVEN

IN CLASS:

♦ **PRACTICE**

Walking on leash: "Let's go" and "come" while dragging leash.
Paper leash. Praise for focus.

Recall: "Come" while dragging leash with distractions

Down Stay: "Down stay" with external distraction.

Sit: Do with handler in heel position, maintain focus

♦ **INTRODUCTION—New**

Sit Stay: Do with other people distracting, **introduce** with toys or treats at feet

Stand Stay: Practice "stand stay", **introduce** with external distractions

HOMEWORK: Practice each skill 5-10 times daily

Walking on leash

Practice "let's go" while dropping the leash more and more.

Recall

Leave leash on so that you can correct any mistakes, add distractions.

Sit stay

Have other people distracting.

Down Stay

Have other people distracting.

Sit

Work on focus.

NEXT CLASS TO TAKE: Attention and then Beginner 2

We hope we have given you and your dog an idea of how to develop good behavior and a start on gaining enough obedience to make your dog a good family member. These are very basic skills that must be reviewed often to be maintained. We hope you will wish to continue in classes and gain more control over your dog so that you can enjoy him more. It takes time and a lot of training to have a well trained dog. This gives you time to spend with your dog that hopefully you both enjoy. Dogs need time and attention as well as good care. They get lonely and bored and can become destructive if not kept entertained or given