

Advanced Beginner

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Our Goal:

Heeling should become more specific.

Improve on Stays.

Introduce the Finish, the Stand and the Front

Increase distance and targeting in the Recall.

Prepare for Novice work.

Timeline:

Goal and progress will be specific to individual teams (dog and handler). In AKC Obedience competition the Sit Stay is 1 minute in Novice and 3 minutes in Open. Down Stay is 3 minutes in Novice and 5 minutes in Open. Open class stays are down with handler out of sight. To be prepared to go into the Novice ring I recommend your dog have at least a 2 minute Sit Stay and 4 minute Down Stay. For most dogs, down stays are easier than sit stays. In Novice the Stand Stay for Exam will depend on the circumstances but it is generally less than a minute. Stand for exam will be trained without a helper at first but once your dog is solid with stand stay for at least 15 seconds, then you can introduce a helper to act as "Judge" to examine your dog. The exam consists of touching the dog's head, shoulder and back.

I will set these goals as the Ultimate for Advanced Beginner. This is not required to be successful in the class but rather is what I consider "Acing the class".

EXERCISE	STAND STAY	SIT STAY	DOWN STAY	Stand Exam
Week 6	30 seconds	2 minutes	4 minutes	When your dog successfully stands for exam time after time you can forget the time
Week 5	25 seconds	90 seconds	3 minutes	
Week 4	20 seconds	1 minute	2 minutes	
Week 3	15 seconds	45 seconds	1.5 minutes	
Week 2	10 seconds	30 seconds	1 minute	
Week 1	5 seconds	15 seconds	45 seconds	

Heeling will be measured by Position and Consistency. The ultimate goal is for your dog to always be in Heel Position except for Stay and Recall and Front. Positions will be defined for you. "Extra Points" for Heeling with Attention.

We will demonstrate Heeling with Attention, Front, and also the 2 basic ways to Finish. I believe that, from a practical standpoint, in and out of the ring, it is important to know how to maneuver your dog. Learning how to teach circles, back and finish aids in maneuvering.

As well progress, we will try various heeling patterns. Day 1 will start with the circle around the building. We'll do normal, slow and fast paces. It's your job to keep your dog's attention so that he stays in position regardless of your speed and direction. We will do L patterns and Figure 8 which is a great test of timing and position.

Heeling with Focus:

Teach your dog to look at your face, your eyes. Teach them to keep focus in heel position. Take one step with your dogs eyes locked on you. If success, then praise and reward. If no success use only a verbal correction like "Ah OH!" to signal it was a mistake. Don't try to physically correct at this point. The correction is simply that the dog is denied praise and reward. Once your dog can successfully heel with focus for one step for a week, then you can go to two steps. **Note** that your dog should always sit when you stop. The same method of praise and reward for success and verbal correction for error remains the same throughout the entire process. Your goal, which a very well seasoned trainer uses is to take six steps with attention and to do so successfully for at least 7 sessions in a row. Be patient, consistent, calm and enjoy doing this with your dog. Make it a game for your dog so she enjoys doing it.

Stays:

For sit stay your dog can move front paws but not the butt. He must remain seated until you get back into Heel Position to be Successful. (Success = Praise and Reward; Mistake = Correction and then Praise when he "fixes it". This applies to every situation.)

For down stay your dog must remain with all elbows on the floor or laying on her side or back.

For stand stay your dog must remain standing on all four. He can shift a paw but he cannot take a step away from his original position.

Corrections: Give both a verbal and physical. For sit the physical is an upward pop with the leash. For down it is a downward pop on the leash. For stand it is using the stay hand signal up to the dog's nose if necessary. If she starts moving towards you, don't wait for her to get to you. Instead move towards her with the loop of the leash in one hand and the other hand sliding down the lead towards her face.

Recall:

Your dog must stay in position and wait for you to call. If he breaks position the exercise is finished. You calmly, swiftly return to him while giving a verbal correction. Put him back where he was. My method is to not give another verbal command but use an emphasized hand signal. Dogs are better with body language than verbal language. If my dog repeatedly keeps breaking position I will give the stay signal a couple times with the last one gently bopping her nose to get her attention.

When you turn to face your dog, looking him in the eye, wait at least 3 seconds before you call. (As you progress make your dog wait 5 seconds, ten seconds and vary the time to keep him alert and not presuming that he's stayed long enough.)

You dog should immediately move towards you, and preferably at an enthusiastic pace. Give your dog a target - this will be demonstrated. Show your dog physically where you want her to sit. Plan ahead to be in time with her pace giving her time to stop. Say "SIT" if your dog doesn't yet know that she's to sit in front of you, Keep in mind that you want your dog to be sitting squarely in front of you. It should be like a capital T with your dog the vertical and you the horizontal crossbar. Your dog should be within range of your arm, preferably as close as possible without touching you.

This behavior of sitting squarely and directly in front of you is known as "**Front**".

Finish is getting your dog from Front to Heel position.