

It's A Dog's World™

K - 9 A C A D E M Y

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GROUP CLASS: Week 6

This week, you will learn how to teach the “*Stand*” command and the “*Finish*” cue. You will also introduce the “*Drop it*” and “*Fetch*” commands to your dog.

STAND

Sometimes it is going to be necessary for your dog to stand patiently while he/she is examined by a vet, getting groomed or bathed, etc. The “*Stand*” command will teach your dog to accept being examined while standing calmly.

With your dog sitting on your left side, place a treat in your right hand. Place the treat on your dog's nose and slowly draw your right hand and the treat away from your dog, at nose level, to your right. As your dog stands up to follow the treat, repeat the command “*Stand*”. When your dog is standing directly in front of and across your body, stop pulling the treat away and hold it in place for a few seconds while allowing your dog to sniff and nibble it. Verbally praise your dog by saying, “Good Stand!” and then release your dog.

FINISH

The “*Finish*” cue will teach your dog to position himself on your left, ready to walk, after completing a recall or “*Come*”.

Phase 1 – Begin with your dog on leash sitting a few feet away in front of and facing you. Taking the leash in your right hand, step forward on your right foot (for balance) and at the same time, use the leash to guide your dog around to your right side and then around behind you toward your left side while saying “*Finish*”. You will have to switch hands on the leash as your dog moves behind you. As you bring your dog around to your left side, be sure your dog completes the normal “Auto-Sit” behavior just as you would if you were preparing to go walking. Praise and reward your dog with a treat. Repeat this phase until your dog starts to move around behind you without you having to pull on the leash.

Phase 2 – As your dog begins to understand the “*Finish*” command, you can start introducing the hand signal. With your dog sitting in front of you, hold the leash temporarily in your left hand. Point your right finger around your right side and slightly behind you (like you are pointing out the path you want your dog to follow) while saying “*Finish*”. If your dog does not follow your finger around your body, take the leash and gently guide your dog around the back of your body to your left side.

DROP IT

Your dog has already been taught the *“Leave it”* command, which allows you to prevent him/her from picking up things you don’t want him to have. Now we’re going to learn the *“Drop it”* command which will teach the dog to drop things that are already in its mouth. These could include forbidden objects like shoes, socks, or children’s toys. It could also include things that your dog is allowed to pick up but that you don’t want him to have at the moment, like one of its dog toys or chew treats. Many dogs are notorious for grabbing something and turning it into a game of chase, with you trying to get the object out of its mouth. The more you chase, the more your dog will tease you by staying just out of your reach and then running away when you get too close. Combining the *“Come”* command with *“Drop it”* will give you the upper hand and enable you to control these types of situations.

To teach the *“Drop It”* command, begin by holding something your dog values, such as a favorite toy. Have a few food treats in your hand. With your dog wearing its leash, start the exercise by either tossing the toy for your dog to retrieve or by encouraging the dog to take the toy from the hand that isn’t holding the treats. Let the dog know that this is something fun. Once your dog has the object in its mouth, give the *“Come”* command to get your dog to return and sit in front of you. Take one of the treats in your hand and place it in front of your dog’s nose and say the command, *“Drop it”*. Your dog should be motivated to release the object in his mouth to get the treat. As soon as your dog drops the object, give plenty of praise. Repeat the process of throwing the object and treating several times. It is important to end your session before your dog becomes bored or tired and stops retrieving the object. As your dog becomes more consistent with dropping the object at your command, try using other objects that your dog values and work without a leash. Be sure to change the location of the “game”. If you started working in the backyard, move into the house or the front yard. Your dog should learn that he must always release the object whenever you tell him, regardless of where he is.

FETCH

Playing fetch is a great way to interact with your dog as well as a perfect way to give your dog the structured exercise he/she needs. Of course, as most dog owners are aware, it’s easier to get the dog to chase the toy but much more difficult to get them to bring it back and release it!

Keep in mind that in order for your dog to give up their prized ball or toy, you have to offer them something as equally rewarding as what they already have. In effect, you are going to “trade” your dog for the toy.

The best method is to get two identical toys. Keep one toy hidden behind your back so your dog doesn’t see it. Have your dog sit and wait until you throw the first toy. As your dog runs after it, use the cue “Fetch”. Encourage your dog to bring it back to you (if your dog has a good recall, now is the time to use the

“Come” cue). Praise your dog as he gets closer. Of course, your dog thinks you are going to take the toy away, so he may stop a few feet away and play “keep away”. If this happens, bring out the toy you’ve been hiding behind your back and show it to your dog. In all likelihood, your dog will drop the toy in his mouth to go after the one you have. At the moment your dog releases the toy, use the “Drop It” or “Give it” cue, praise your dog and then throw the second toy.

While your dog is busy chasing after the toy you just threw, you can pick up the first toy and hide it behind your back. Repeat this process as many times as necessary to encourage your dog to bring the toy to you. You may also use treats to lure your dog closer to you.

HOMEWORK

- Practice using the long line for all commands and keep increasing the distance until you are working at the end of the long-line. Remember that you want your dog to be successful 75% to 80% of the time at a particular distance before you work at a farther distance.
- Practice having your dog “*Stand*” from both a sitting and laying down position. Keep increasing the amount of time your dog stands patiently in position. Have friends or family members pet your dog, especially from their shoulders to their hips, while you keep your dog focused on your reward hand.
- Reinforce your dog’s recall command (“Come”) by practicing in as many places as possible while on the Long Line. As your dog completes the recall command by doing an Auto-Sit in front of you, give the “Finish” command and have your dog move behind you and reposition to your left side, then give your dog the “Let’s Go” command and step off.
- Reinforce your dog’s “Stay” command by alternately placing your dog in a “Sit Stay” or “Down Stay” at the end of the Long Line (or at whatever distance your dog can successfully manage). Have a friend or family member walk around you and your dog and drop items (toys or treats work best) approximately 6 to 10 feet away from your dog. Using combinations of “Watch” and “Leave it”, keep your dog in the “Stay” position. Then give your dog the “Come” signal. Your dog needs to come directly to you without stopping to check out and sniff the toys that have been dropped.
- Practice “Drop it”, with a variety of different “tempters”. Don’t forget to have fun!