

It's A Dog's World™

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PRIVATE LESSON: WEEK 4

The goals for Lesson 4 are to work on all the commands that we have learned on the course with distractions, and to learn how to start working with your dog at a distance.

DISTRACTIONS

Now you are ready to start working with your dog on distractions. Make sure that your dog will work for you perfectly in the backyard without distractions. Then, go to the front yard. You may want to choose a time when very little is going on in the neighborhood, such as 8pm. Once your dog is doing well in the front yard, work with him or her out front at a busy time in your neighborhood, such as Saturday morning. Then start working with your dog at a park, and so on. Try to work with your dog at various locations to prevent your dog from thinking that his or her obedience is specific to one location.

At this point, you will also want to start adding in distractions. Start with low intensity distractions such as clapping, then move to bending down and tapping the ground, throwing keys, balls, etc. Remember to praise your dog immediately upon successful resistance of your distractions. Be creative!

LONG LINE

The purpose of the long line is to prepare you and your dog for off leash obedience or distance work. To start, you should have a 30' cotton web training lead. You may find it difficult to use at first. But, be patient! With practice, the long line gets easier and easier to use.

Heel

Take the long line and put it **behind** your back and up and over your **right** shoulder, not your left! Make sure that you have a 2" belly of slack in your leash. Now, heel with your dog. Try to correct your dog as little as possible. Remember, if your dog were off the leash, you would not be able to correct your dog. Get your dog used to working off your body and voice more than corrections. However, if your dog needs a correction, don't hesitate to give one. The point is to first try to get your dog to respond to you, then use corrections for non-compliance. Change pace and direction often.

Come

Try to get your dog distracted and back away about 10' on the long line. Do not try to use the full 30' until you get used to using the long line. As you get better,

go further and further back on the long line until you are at 30'. Call your dog and do a pulley type motion of reeling in the leash. It might help to imagine that you are reeling your dog in like a fish on the end of a fishing line! You may have to back up as your dog comes into you, to adjust for your dog's speed. Correct the dog as necessary. Work with the "come" command around as many distractions as possible.

Stay

Place your dog into a "sit-stay" or "down-stay". Walk back on the leash. If you move into the dog, you will need to move in with your hands on the long line. If your dog makes a mistake, say, "no" and move in to correct your dog. **Always** follow through with a correction. Once you are proficient in this area, start trying to move out of sight while your dog is in the stay command. You may want to put your dog in the stay command near a corner so that you may "hide" fairly close by. At first, hide for only a few seconds, then come out and reward your dog. Gradually increase the time that you are out of sight from your dog. Again, try to be creative. This work will help develop a dog with a solid stay command who will stay in a part of the house or yard while you are working on other things.

HOMEWORK

Your final goals are to have your dog perform "sit-stay" for 2 minutes and "down-stay" for 5 minutes. It is important that you don't ask your dog to stay any longer than this period of time. If you want your dog to stay put longer than 5 minutes, you will need to use the "place" command, which was covered in last week's lesson. Proof your dog's obedience around as many distractions as possible and don't forget to have fun!

Well Done! You and your dog have now completed basic obedience training. If you would like to keep up the good work, you can now move on to Intermediate Training or Therapy Dog training. Your dog could receive his or her AKC Canine Good Citizen certificate or become a qualified Therapy Dog! Ask your trainer for more details.