

Homework – Week 2

Skill	What to Do	Goal for Next Week
Recall	Practice calling your dog away from BIG distractions by luring him away with really high value rewards – delicious treats (use different treats to keep the novelty factor high) or with a toy he loves (make a lot of noise with that squeaky toy or throw his favourite ball). You may have to work quite hard to get him to shift his attention on to you, but it will get easier the more you work at it. Try not to use your recall cue unless you are very certain he will respond – instead, use your cue <i>after</i> you have his attention, so he doesn't learn to ignore you.	Dog can be called or lured away from big distractions.
Loose Lead Walking	Change directions and encourage your dog to follow you, rather than you having to pull him. You can even start adding in cues such as “left” and “right” if you want to. Reward him as soon as he adjusts his direction with you. Add sits and downs into your walk, but make sure you are on a comfortable, dry surface so as not to discourage him. Walk in small circles with him on the inside so he learns to move out of your way and not be tripped over.	Dog is starting to take notice of changes of direction and is responding to other cues, such as “sit” and “down”.
Perch	If your dog is readily getting up on his perch, add a cue. This can be a cue that means something like “target” or something like “step up”. Once your dog is steady on his perch, start teaching him to step around it with his back feet while keep his front feet in place. Lure him so he leans forward and slightly downwards, to shift his weight onto his front legs and make it easier for him to move his back feet. Now, keeping it low, lure his head around to the side. The goal is to get him off balance slightly so he moves his back end to steady himself. When you see him shift his weight even a little at the back end, even just a hip shift, mark the movement with “yes” and reward him. Watch his back feet and give him a jackpot if he moves one, even a little. It can take a long time to get the first step going, because he will be trying to keep himself balanced using his core rather than his legs, and because he isn't thinking about his back feet. If you find he keeps stepping off the perch when you lure him around to the side, try a wider or higher perch – about 75% of his leg length – as it will make it more difficult for him to step off, but only short term to avoid back strain.	Dog is readily stepping up onto perch when it is presented or when asked, and ideally is showing a weight shift in the back end when lured sideways.
Sits and Downs	Incorporate into your daily life. Be mindful of getting a quick response and setting your dog up to succeed. Don't ask your dog to sit or down on cold, wet, uncomfortable surfaces, but do practice in lots of difference places and around distractions. Keep up the rewards.	Working towards fluent behaviour in a variety of situations
Zen Bowl Read the <i>Training Zen Bowl</i> handout	Zen Bowl training is great for focus, distractions, and impulse control, and an essential foundation skill for all dog sports. Your timing is <i>very</i> important, so it is excellent training for you as well! Choose a bowl that is a highly visible colour (white, bright blue, or yellow) and just big enough for your dog to easily get treats out of - about 10-15cm in diameter. Place the bowl about a metre away, letting your dog have a good look and seeing you putting two or three treats in it. Then, with your dog on lead – ideally loose, but short enough to stop him cheating – wait quietly without trying to attract his attention, no matter what he does. The instant he so much as glances in your direction, immediately mark that glance with “yes” and send him to the bowl. You can use a cue such as “get it” or “bowl” or “zen”, as long as they aren't used for anything else, but you may need to encourage him over to the bowl the first couple of times – he may think he isn't allowed it! Repeat this several times. If you think your dog can do it, require actual eye contact (some dogs find this worrying) for a second or two – no more.	Dog is quickly glancing at owner in order to be released to the bowl, or offering a second or two of eye contact. PTO ⇨

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Tunnel	Work with a longer tunnel if possible and aim for a fast, independent entry with you alongside. Change sides so he gets used to you being in a different place. Throw a toy as your dog exits, or use treats if your dog prefers them. Add a tunnel cue if your dog is going through confidently every time.	Dog is running through tunnel confidently with owner beside him, on either side.
Plank	Continue to practice. Make sure your dog is stepping smoothly on and off the ends without jumping. If your dog is confident and well-balanced, work on getting a faster trot over the plank, or even a canter. Send your dog over the plank to a toy or treat to motivate him if you can't move fast enough. Slow down if he is coming off the plank at all. Use a wider plank if you have one to build confidence at speed.	Dog is confident and speeding up over the plank, but not stepping off or losing his balance.
Send	Continue to build up the distance your dog can go to the mat, and the length of time he can stay on it before being released, working towards a 4 metre send and a 15 second stay. Send him from a variety of directions. Remember to keep the mat in the same place while you change distance and direction, to make it easier for him. Always reward him on the mat, never call him back to you or allow him to step off before you release him with "okay".	Dog is going further and waiting in the box longer, working towards 4m and 15 seconds.
Stay	Keep building up the length of time your dog can manage a sit stay, working towards 15 seconds with you 3 – 4 metres away. If your dog starts getting up or lying down, shorten both the time and distance and build up more slowly. Some dogs find sitting in position for a time quite hard work, so don't push it too fast. If your sit stay is going well, start working on a down stay. Stay close to your dog to start with, and make sure you reward the dog while he is still right down in position. If you feed him after he has popped up into a sit or stand, he will start getting up as you return to him and before you have released him with "okay". Rewarding in position reinforces that that position is the best place to be.	Dog will stay in a sit position for up to 15 seconds with owner 3 – 4 metres away, in different directions.
Nose Touch/Lead Hand Training	It is very important your dog stays really confident with nose touch. Your dog's personality or prior experiences may be of a type that makes him a bit hesitant about poking at you in this way, so just work at a pace that is comfortable for him. If your dog is happily stepping forward to line up with your leg and touch your hand, you can introduce the idea of moving with you, following your hand. Warm up with a couple of step-into-heel-and-touch reps, then, as your dog lines up with your leg, take a step forward, so that your hand moves with you, and encourage your dog to move with you to reach your hand. If you need to put food back in that hand to keep your dog confident and motivated, do so, but always reward from the other hand. Work both sides. Do NOT be tempted to take lots of steps just yet – two at the very most for now. It is too easy to over-do it and spoil your dog's confidence.	Shoulder level with leg, dog can take one or two steps forward with his owner, following the hand to touch it, both sides.