

HOMEWORK – WEEK TWO

Skill	What to Do	Required for Next Week
Name Response	Practice where there are very minor distractions, nothing that will really absorb your dog’s attention. If he doesn’t respond straight away, don’t persist. Remove the distraction, or move away from it, or try somewhere quieter. Practice a bright, happy tone of voice. Start to work on name response when your dog is a short distance from you, starting with about half a metre and aiming to build up to two metres. Remember to set yourself up for success each time - it is better to be successful at a shorter distance than to fail at a longer distance.	Dog should respond immediately to name when not looking at handler and when one to two metres away.
Loose Lead Walking (Circle Method)	Use circle method on all walks – at least three times during the week. Introduce minor distractions. When your dog pulls towards it, move him away from it into a circle, and keep circling y further away from it until he no longer pulls towards it. Although you can set this scenario up for practice, make sure you follow this process whenever you come across any distractions while out walking – don’t just drag you dog away from it. Regardless of how big a distraction is, the process of circling the dog away from it is exactly the same.	Dog should be showing real progress and be moving easily and willingly into the circle
Loose Lead Walking (Join the Dots) <i>Read Join the Dots – Loose Lead Walking handout</i>	You can practice this at home or when out for a walk, but start where there is not much distraction so you remain an interesting option. Choose an object or spot at which you will stop, and walk your dog towards it. It doesn’t matter what your dog is doing, even if he is pulling. When you stop, just stand and wait – don’t speak or tug the lead or try to get your dog’s attention. Eventually your dog will glance at you. Immediately offer a treat and praise him. Then walk a few steps to your next stopping point, and repeat. You can combine this method with the Circle Method, or practice it on its own.	Dog is starting to switch his attention onto his owner more quickly when stopping.
Plank	Any stable, level platform can be used for this, as long as it is wide enough and long enough for the dog to stand on comfortably. It must be flat on the ground and no more than about 5-10cm high, as you don’t want the dog jumping off any height. Don’t use a cue yet, just start by using your “yes” marker word when he puts just one foot on it and reward. When he is good at putting one foot up, start encouraging two feet and only mark and reward for that, then three, then four, as he gets confident at each stage. Never force or drag him onto the plank – it must be his choice, and he must be completely comfortable at each stage before moving on to the next. Don’t ask him to walk across it yet. Let him spend time developing his balance first.	Dog should be stepping onto plank with all four feet, but not walking along it.

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Sit and Down	<p>Start to ask the dog to stay in position until you release him with “okay”. Gradually build up the time you ask him to hold position, starting with just a couple of seconds. Make sure you don’t release him <i>after</i> he moves, as this defeats the purpose! Look at the Teaching Down handout from Step 6 for more detail. It is very important to tell the dog when the position starts (cue “sit” or “down”) AND when it finishes (“okay”), otherwise he will have to make that decision for himself. Practice the cue-wait-release/reward sequence without the dog at first, so you are fluent with it – it will make a huge difference to your dog’s understanding.</p>	<p>Dog should be immediately sitting/lying down without hesitation when lured with food, and will hold position for five seconds until released with “Okay” signal.</p>
Box (or container of your choice)	<p>Giving the dog a clear, defined boundary is an easy, fun way to teach skills such as stay and send to. It also builds confidence and physical skills. If your dog is anxious about the box, start by dropping treats around it, even underneath it. Turning the box on its side can help get a scared dog to sniff inside it. Otherwise just drop a few treats into the box and let your dog reach his head in to get them. Then start luring your dog to get him to put one foot inside – mark and reward this. Gradually work up to all four feet in the box. Don’t rush, and never force or physically compel the dog to get in – it must be his choice. Don’t use a cue at this stage, but think about what word you will use later. This will eventually be your cue to send the dog to a target (such as a bed or mat), not a “get in the box” cue, so choose something that will reflect that.</p>	<p>Dog should be getting into box with all four feet – even if not staying there.</p>
Nose Touch	<p>Work towards a harder nose push on your hand. Some dogs are sensitive and won’t want to push hard, so work according to your dog’s preferences. Ask for a few easy nose touches to start. Then don’t mark or reward the next one – just wait with your hand out. Your dog will get a bit frustrated and push a bit harder. Mark and reward that. Keep practicing, only marking and rewarding for firmer pushes rather than light ones. If your dog seems confused or is giving up, you need to practice easy nose touches for a bit longer. Keeping up his confidence is more important than making progress. Be sure to practice with both hands, and with your hands in different positions, but never make it too hard.</p>	<p>Dog can push readily with good pressure on either hand in various positions.</p>
Handling	<p>Daily gentle, slow stroking of body, head, legs, tail, and examine ears. Work particularly on desensitising any problem area, but consider whether pain could be a factor, even in a young dog. Never force the dog to submit, just gradually build tolerance in stages, for just a few seconds and rewarding generously. Stay calm and quiet. If he resists or struggles, reward him anyway– this will calm him and make handling positive rather than scary.</p>	<p>Dog should be comfortable and accepting of gentle handling – body, head, legs, tail, and ear exam.</p>