

HOMEWORK – WEEK THREE

Skill	What to Do	Required for Next Week
<p>Name Recognition/ Recall</p>	<p>Practice name recognition using your <i>dog's name followed by your recall cue</i>. Make sure you always use both. A recall cue makes it very clear to your dog what you want, whereas his name can mean a lot of different things. Use a one word cue and be completely consistent. Remember it needs to be audible over a great distance and a lot of background noise. Add distance gradually, building up to 5 metres. Practice in quiet places for the first half of the week, then in places where there is minor distraction – you may need to reduce the distance right down as the distraction level goes up, so be guided by your dog's responses. Play the Funder game in the garden. Aim for an immediate, enthusiastic response every time. Practice in other places if you are confident your dog understands the game and will respond straight away.</p>	<p>Dog should respond immediately to name + recall cue from five metres when mildly distracted.</p>
<p>Loose Lead Walking</p>	<p>Use circle method on all walks – at least three times during the week. Practice with “okay” and “not okay” distractions. Practice with difference lengths of leash. Remember to always move your dog into a circle by pulling him sideways, about level with his shoulder, not backwards or forwards. Be completely consistent – you need to circle EVERY TIME your dog pulls for this training to be successful. Practice your Join the Dots training as well, either separately or as part of your circle training. If your dog is not looking at you fairly quickly now when you stop, try stopping more often (every two or three steps), try shortening your leash, try praising more when you do get attention, and try practicing somewhere less distracting.</p>	<p>Dog should be pulling much less and readily giving in to leash tension. Dog should accept being moved away from medium level distractions with minimal resistance. Dog is starting to be mindful of owner movements and quickly offering attention when stopped.</p>
<p>Sit and Down</p>	<p>Practice luring into sit and down with no food in your hand. If your dog finds this difficult, use food in your luring hand, but only reward from your other hand, for two or three repetitions first. Then lure with no food, still rewarding from the other hand. If your dog is really good at sit and down, start reducing the amount of hand movement you are using – this will eventually become a hand signal rather than a full lure. Keep working on having your dog hold his position until released with the “okay” word, and try to build up to five seconds. However, it is better to do a shorter time successfully, with the dog waiting for “okay”, than to have him break position early because you are trying for longer.</p>	<p>Dog should be sitting/lying down without hesitation when lured with no food, and will hold position for five seconds, until released with “okay” signal.</p>
<p>Plank</p>	<p>If your dog is standing happily on the plank, start teaching him to walk across it. Walking along a plank, even on the ground, requires core strength and balance, and these take time to develop. If your dog is unconfident, or is rushing across, it is probably because he has not yet built up the physical ability to manage this easily, and is feeling unbalanced. So do this <i>slowly</i> – walking, not trotting or running. You can hold his collar to steady him, but don't drag or force him, and go at his pace. You may have to reward one step at a time. If he really wants to step off, let him. Don't allow him to jump on or off the ends of the plank, as this is bad for his joints, and a hard habit to break if you want to do dog sports later on.</p>	<p>Dog should be walking across the plank with reasonable confidence, keeping all four feet on it and not jumping on or off at the ends.</p>

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Tunnel	<p>Most dogs instinctively avoid small enclosed spaces like tunnels, so getting them through initially takes patience and encouragement. <i>Never</i> drag the dog through or force him in any way. This is excellent training for confidence and physical awareness, and most dogs quickly come to love tunnels. A “tunnel” can be made from any item you have to hand (a big box is perfect) as long as the structure is stable and safe, and allows the dog through without ducking. It only needs to be 0.5-1m long at this stage. If you have a helper, one person can hold the dog at the entrance to stop them going around the sides while the other calls the dog through. If you are on your own, you can throw a toy or food into the tunnel to encourage the dog in, or hold the dog at the start with one hand and lean over to wave a treat or toy at the other end, or even crawl through yourself and encourage the dog to follow you (kids are great for this if you have one handy). Don’t use a cue until the dog is immediately going through every time.</p>	<p>Dog will go through short tunnel when called through from the far end.</p>
Send	<p>Your dog should be getting into the box readily by now, but if not, continue to work on this. Otherwise, start adding a cue. This cue will eventually become your send-to cue, so choose something that will have meaning to you in that context (Go, Send, Run, Mat, Bed, Place etc). Practice in-the-box with this cue a few times, then take a step back from the box and ask again. If the dog happily complies, you can gradually increase distance up to about 0.5m. Any time the dog hesitates or gets confused, you need to shorten the distance again to the point the dog succeeds. <i>Don’t move the box to increase distance</i>; increase distance by moving yourself. It is much easier for the dog to cope with more distance if he is always going to exactly the same place. If the dog is getting up speed and is slipping inside the box, or the box is sliding underneath him, add a non-slip mat in or under the box to stop this happening (silicone mats or rubber drawer liners work really well).</p>	<p>Dog should be getting into box on cue, from a distance of 0.5m away.</p>
Stay Read: <i>Successful Stays</i> handout	<p>Practice the stay sequence without the dog a few times so you are reasonably fluent with your side of it. Now add your dog! Ask your dog to get into the box. Don’t ask him to sit or down – keep it really simple for him. Give him the “Stay” cue (what word you use is up to you), wait one second, release him with “okay”, and give him two rewards, one in the box to reinforce this as a good place to be, and the second dropped outside the box for him to go after, to help him learn that “okay” means he can move. Don’t move away from the dog at this stage, don’t wait longer than a second, and don’t repeat your cue, hold your hand up, or talk to him during that second. Gradually build up the length of time your dog can stay in the box with you beside him to five seconds, but don’t push it – the goal is a successful stay rather than a long one.</p>	<p>Dog can do a five second Stay in the box with owner beside him. Correct owner technique is important.</p>
Nose Touch	<p>Practice changing the angle of your hand so that the dog has to work a little harder to touch your palm – coming up underneath, from behind, between your legs etc. Get creative but don’t make it so hard that he fails. Confidence is everything – use food in the touch hand briefly if your dog is getting discouraged.</p>	<p>Dog can nose touch a hand at any angle. Touch should be firm. Food okay but not ideal.</p>
Handling	<p>Gentle, slow stroking over body, head, legs, and tail, examine ears, and feet. If your dog makes a fuss about his feet, just run your hand down his leg until you touch his foot, then “yes” and reward. Build on this slowly until you can lift his foot briefly. Practice with all four feet. Remember that being protective of feet is a strong survival instinct, so be patient and gentle.</p>	<p>Dog should be comfortable and accepting of handling as described, including feet.</p>