

1. Distractions

When your dog is responding to a command, you should test your dog by adding distractions. Three types of distractions are people, sounds, and objects. A good example would be a close helper; they could talk to your dog, clap, or whistle in order to distract your dog. Or they could entice your dog with toys and food. As a handler, your job is to correct your dog when they disobey the command. If there is no helper to be found, you may use toys, noise makers, or food as distractions.

2. Sit Stays

Keep working on sit stays. Your dog should be able to stay in a sit position for at least 30 seconds or more, but now we will add distractions. As you add distractions you will need to decrease your distance in front of your dog as well as the time. With distractions you will have to work your way back up to 15-30 seconds before starting to move away from your dog again. Once you have success in 3 or more training sessions then continue to increase your distance and the time you stay in front of your dog. Try to work up to a 60 seconds sit stay.

3. Down Stay

Have your dog down. Give them the “stay” command and signal and make sure you are standing in front of your dog. Work up to 90 seconds. If your dog begins to get up or crawl, use downward pressure on the collar by the leash. Begin adding distractions, but as with the sit you will have to decrease time and distance until you have success. Always remember to give your bridge word and treat then release.

4. Recall

Keep working on recall. By now you should be able to leave your dog, go about 15 to 20 feet; if they need it have someone hold them. Continue to increase your distance from your dog if they come to you consistently. Make sure every time your dog comes to you that you have them sit and that you can grab their collar. Your dog should come to you immediately after being called. You should be very upbeat and enthusiastic when calling your dog.

Play the “get it game”

Now begin adding distractions to your recall: Place your dog on a leash. Allow your dog to investigate somebody or something interesting on the ground. When your dog’s attention is focused on the object or person call their name – run backward if they won’t come. When your dog comes to you praise lavishly. If your dog ignores you, then you can reel them in by the leash or go to them, grab their collar, and run backwards. Remember to praise them when they turn toward you and when they come. A toy or treat might help increase your dog’s attention to you and make the praise better. For some dogs it may be necessary to turn away from them and run in order to get their attention on you.

5. Begin Loose Leash Walking with Distractions

Begin working with loose leash walking while adding distractions. Have someone come around your dog and bounce a ball or toss an object. Or you can walk your dog in a parking lot where there are a lot of people. Start easy and work your way up. If your dog fails then go back to walking without a distraction and make sure to give loads of praise – always try to end on a high note while training. Slowly begin to add distractions again and praise anytime your dog does good loose leash walking. Remember to practice figure 8’s as well.

6. Stand Stay

Continue to practice the Stand. Tell your dog to “Stay” then pivot in front of your dog. Try to get a 30 second stand. Be sure to say “Yes”/treat and then release.

7. Use It or Lose It: Graduation Preparation

By class #7 come up with a real life exercise for each of the following cues:

SIT, DOWN, STAND, ATTENTION, LEAVE IT

Below are some examples:

SIT: Dog sits calmly while you put his leash on

DOWN: Dog does a down while you get food ready

STAND: Dog stands while you give him a bath

ATTENTION: Dog looks at you rather than a dog walking by

LEAVE IT: Dog leaves the food you just dropped on the floor

If you need more ideas please contact me, but each of you will have to perform one real life situation for each case. Think about what you would do in a normal day to day situation and then apply these exercises.

If you have any questions you can e-mail me at DoggyDynasty@gmail.com or call 908-7454.