



# Teaching your dog to return...

## Introduction

Teaching your dog to return when you call, is extremely simple but it does require commitment and consistency from you.

Like all teaching, you must start with some basic small steps and build on those.

The simplest and most effective method is to use praise and reward when they have done you have asked them to do.

## When you first take them out

It is very important that you don't exercise your dog off the lead until they know to come when you call.

When you take your dog out, take them on a long line of 8 to 10 meters. The objective is to make them feel as free as possible, without allowing them to run away.

## Start around the home

Start the main teaching at home by keeping some tasty treats in your pocket at all times.

At regular intervals call them, using simple words or phrases such as 'COME HERE', give them plenty of overboard praise and reward them with a treat as soon as they arrive.

Don't ask or wait for them to sit, the initial objective is just to come to the sound of you calling.

If it suits your situation, you can also associate a whistle or noise with the treat.

Initially it is very important that you do not give treats at any other time, so you reinforce the single meaning of the call resulting in a treat or reward.

Begin by calling at 10 to 15 minute intervals, increase the interval by 10 minutes each day.

As the days go by, vary the place and distance that you call them from, until you can call from

anywhere in the house and they respond straight away.

## Your first field trip

When they have come to you every time for 7 days you can move the teaching outside to a long line, but do not give up the indoor training.

Keep exercising them on a long line, but call them back and reward them with praise and a treat, as you have been doing in the house.

If they show more interest in their surroundings, attract their attention with a gentle tug on the line, but don't pull them towards you, they have to realise that their effort brings the reward.

Again, when they have come to you every time for 21 days you can be fairly confident that they will come whenever you need them to.

At this stage it should then be safe to let them off the lead permanently, but keep up the regular calling until you are confident that are responding every time.

## If at first you don't succeed

If at any stage they fail to return, simply go back and repeat the previous stage.

Just like any teacher you must be aware of the progress of your pupil and slow down the schooling to a pace they can cope with.

Once you are satisfied that your dog knows to come back, you can remove some of the rewards. Never remove all of them, you need to keep refreshing their memory, at least twice a week.

Above all, be nice to your dog. No dog will want to return to an owner that shouts at or scolds them.