
Recall can be an extremely useful tool in keeping our dog safe out in the world while allowing them freedom to explore. A strong recall can take a long time to build. Practice in fenced areas or on a long line and in a low distraction environment to set your dog up for success.

How to Build a Recall

1. Pick a word to use for recall, we will use “come” for the example, but you can use any word!
2. Start by charging the word. Say “Come!” then immediately give them a yummy high value treat.
3. Next start standing in front of your dog with a treat in your hand.
 - a. Say “Come”
 - b. Put the treat in front of their nose and take several steps backwards luring them to follow. You may deliver small rewards as you go.
 - c. Stop moving and lift your hand, this should cue your sit, reward them with a treat.
4. Toss a treat a few feet away.
 - a. Once your dog has finished eating say “Come”
 - b. Mark them with a “yes” or a click as soon as they start to move towards you.
 - c. Prompt them to sit and reward them when they get to you.
5. If your dog does not come when you call, do not repeat the work. Try to entice them to approach with fun noises, a squeaker, or by crouching down.

Next steps: Start in the easiest location and build through all the steps of the recall. When you transition to a new location you will need to go back and repeat the previous two to three steps to help them generalize the behavior to the new setting. You will always need to practice speedy recalls. Continue to play fun recall games like hide and seek and ping pong.

Order of locations/distractions:

- Inside
- Enclosed backyard
- Quiet outdoor area on long line
- Outdoor area with mild distractions (no loose dogs) on long line
- Outdoor area with slowly increasing distractions

Be safe! It is always okay to work on a long line to keep your dogs safe. Never let your dog approach another dog or person without checking first. Unless you can consistently recall them away from dogs and people, keep them on a long line.

The Rules of Recall

Dog Recall



- Only call your dog if you are sure, you can make it happen. If not, use a different method like a speaker, food lure, or fun noises.
- Do not call your dog for something unpleasant. This may cause them to avoid you when you call.
- Only say “Come” once. If they do not respond, make fun exciting noises to get their attention and then go back a step and strengthen the verbal cue.
- When your dog is playing practice recall, give them a high value reward then let them return to play.
- Give a big payoff when your dog comes to you.