

Recall

The most important obedience command to teach the young dog is to come to you when you call it. This is more than just a convenience at the off-leash park; it can be a life-saving command for your pet. The command can be easily taught in five easy phases.

Phase One: At the dog's dinner time, take a handful of dry food and toss a piece about six feet away from you for the pet to chase (if the pet is very picky, small pieces of semi-moist treats may be used.) As soon as the dog eats the food, say its name in a very up-beat tone. When it looks, show it a second piece of food and wave your hand toward you as you say, "Come." When the dog runs up to you, ask it to sit and give it the food. Repeat the toss and recall another 15 to 20 times. Do the exercise indoors daily for two weeks.

Phase Two: Repeat the exercise outdoors for two weeks.

Phase Three: Follow the dog around the yard. Whenever it looks at you (and only when it looks at you), say its name and call it to you to site for a piece of food. Release it to continue sniffing and playing in the yard. Repeat daily for two or more weeks.

Phase Four: Follow the dog around the yard and call it when it is looking away from you. Begin when it is not distracted, and then call it when it is more distracted.

Phase Five: Practice in an off-leash park or a large field.

Attach 30 to 50 feet of light nylon line to the pet's collar.

This will give you some control in case it gets distracted and starts to run off after a rabbit or squirrel. Go back to phase three and four, initially only calling the dog when it is looking at you, then when it is least distracted and finally when it is more distracted. Each time it comes, ask it to sit for a treat and then release it.



Once the dog is dependable in coming when called, gradually phase out the food and give it praise instead. These lessons help teach the pet its name and to pay attention when you say it. And, in addition teaching it to come to you on command, it teaches the dog to run up to you and sit, not jump on you.