

## First: Puppy Ping-Pong Game

# Teaching Recall



The Doggie Ping-Pong game adds speed and excitement to the recall. The more positive reinforcement and fun that can be attached to the Come cue, the better a dog will respond. This is also an excellent game for children to play with their dogs. This exercise is best done before a dog learns to offer an Auto-Sit with the Come cue.

1. Go to an open area that has no distractions. (A long hallway or large living room works great.) You and another person stand about 10 feet apart; each of you should have an ample amount of hidden high-value treats.
2. The other person lures the dog to him by holding his baited hand out front and at the height of the dog's nose, being sure to hold it low enough that she is not encouraged to jump.
3. Next, you say the dog's name to get her attention and give the Come cue using an encouraging voice to increase the speed of the recall.
4. When the dog approaches you, Mark with a "yes" Next, give her the Release cue, pop a yummy treat in her mouth, and praise her lavishly.
5. The other person now calls the dog and repeats Steps 2 through 4. The two of you continue to alternate giving the Come cue and providing treats and lavish praise.

**Note:** With two people calling the dog back and forth, this quickly turns into a "Who can get a treat in his hand and say 'Come' before the dog gets to you" game. The more positive experiences the dog associates with Come cue, the more she will enjoy responding to it. She will also learn that approaching humans who say "Come" is a very rewarding behavior to engage in.

## Then: Run and Come Game

1. With treats ready in your pouch, put a collar or harness and a 6-foot standard leash on the dog and go to a no-distractions environment. Let her wander 3 to 4 feet away, you may need to toss some treats and let your dog eat them.
2. Say the dog's name, or make noise to gain her attention, once your dog looks at you extend your hand full of treats out to her at nose level. Immediately begin moving backward and pull your baited hand back toward your body, enticing her to approach you.
5. As the dog moves toward you, continue moving backward. When she gets to you, lure her close to your body. When she is very close, stop moving backward and then guide her with a lure into a Sit. As soon as she does, mark then reward then release. **Note:** Even if the dog knows it, do not give the verbal Sit cue because you are adding the sit to another cue. Your standing still is the cue for an Auto-Sit.
6. Practice this exercise 10 or so times in a row. Always lure the dog close to you with your baited hand (and arm) within inches of your body before luring her into Sit. When she gets close, have your hand at her nose level near your legs. When you stop to lure her into a Sit, bring your hand up toward your waist level and she will most likely Sit. Mark with "yes", then reward with "treat", then release.
7. When she is successful with a correct Sit 90 percent of the time. Repeat Steps 3 through 7, but this time add the collar hold when the dog Sits in the front position. Mark, then reward, then release.

**Note:** This is not a speed learning behavior. This is a difficult skill that needs to be precise. A dog's safety might one day rely on this recall. Take your time and make sure you thoroughly complete every step. When the dog completes this sequence (moves toward you while you are backing up, is guided into Sit when you stop, and lets you hold her collar) 90 percent of the time, it is time to move to the next exercise.

# Teaching Recall



## Finally: Hide-and-Seek Game

The Hide-and-Seek game helps a dog learn that she does not have to see you to be rewarded for responding to the Come cue. Most dogs enjoy playing this game; it is also great for children to play with their dogs. It should only be played after a dog has generalized the recall behavior. You can first do this in your house or yard.

### Steps

1. Have an ample amount of hidden high-value treats. Take the dog to a completely fenced-in park or backyard. When she becomes mildly distracted by something, hang back so you can put some distance between you and her.
2. Before she gets too far away (about 10 feet), duck behind a tree or bushes. Be sure that birds or squirrels do not hopelessly distract her.
3. Say the dog's name to get her attention and give the Come cue from your hiding place. Watch her in a way that does not give your location away. If she gets confused, make a bizarre and exciting noise as a hint to your location (do not repeat the cue). Most dogs will begin looking and sniffing frantically to find their owners. It is fun to see how ecstatic and proud the dog will be when she finally locates you.
4. When she does find you and offers an Auto-Sit in front of you, gently touch and then take hold of her collar or harness with one hand, then give the conditioned reinforcer followed by the Release cue and unconditioned reinforcer. Praise lavishly and even play a fast game of fetch to get her excited.

Gradually increase the distance and the difficulty of finding you until the dog is proficient with moderate distractions at about 50 feet.

