

Pawsitive Results Critter Academy

Where people learn to lead...and pets love to follow!

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Tips for Great Recalls

A recall can save your dog's life. It's vital your dog have a solid recall with a strong reinforcement history. Keep the following tips in mind both as you train your recall and as you incorporate it into everyday life:

- *Always* make recalls rewarding. Use the highest value rewards you have.
- If you don't have a reward handy, make a big production of taking your dog to get one. Chat enthusiastically to your dog all the way to the fridge and it actually becomes a part of the reward.
- Practice calling your dog away from something he wants, give him a high-value reward, and then *let him go back to what he was doing*. Practice that A LOT.
- Do lots and lots of short-distance recalls. You'll get more reps and build a habit.
- Don't call your dog when he isn't going to respond. Yelling "Fido, come!" over and over as he runs around ignoring you only weakens your cue.
- When you are getting consistent success in non-distracting environments, then start to practice your recall in distracting situations. Your come cue won't be very helpful in the "real world" if your dog only performs without distractions!
- Call your dog one time. If he doesn't respond, go and get him. Try again a few minutes later. If your dog is consistently ignoring you in a particular situation then you are raising your criteria too quickly. Break it down into smaller steps so your dog can succeed.
- *Don't* take recalls for granted. Remember, your dog's life could depend on this.
- *Never, ever punish a recall*. That means:
 - Don't call your dog to you and then do something he doesn't like.
 - If your dog is doing something you don't like, don't call him and scold him – or even call him and ignore him. If you call him, reinforce him for coming.
 - Don't call your dog away from fun without rewarding him. Balance the times when fun ends with recalls where he is allowed to go back to the fun.