



WELCOME FETCHIN' VOLUNTEERS AND FOSTERS!

Fetchin' Retrievers Rescue Waggin' Wednesday Zoom Social

**Recall – Come When Called
A How-To**

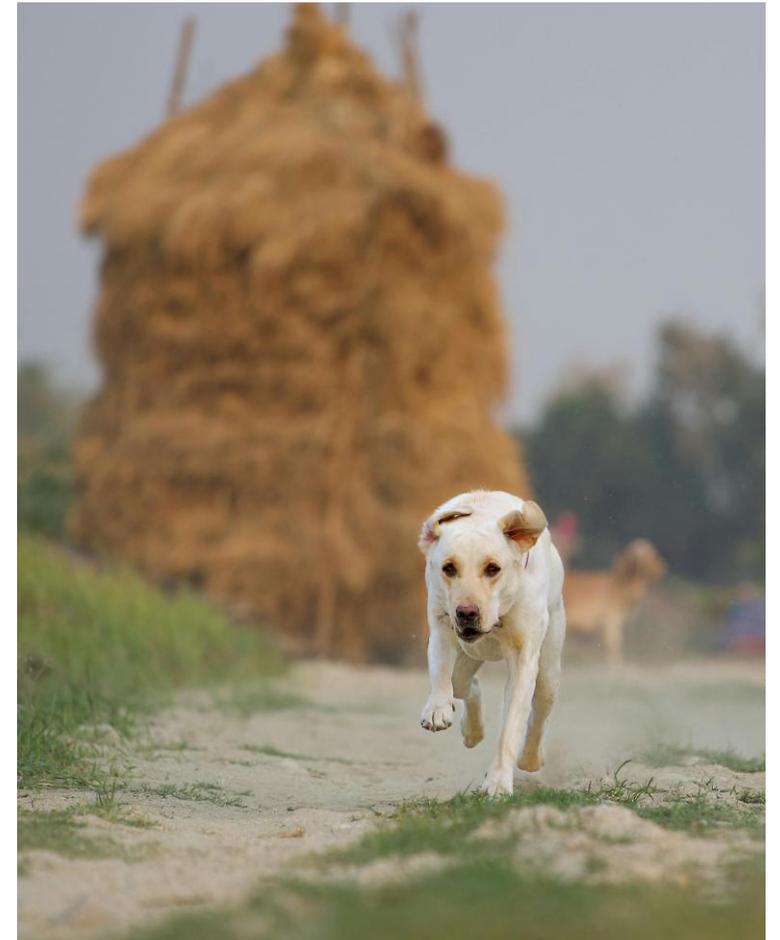
MY DOG COMES TO ME EXCEPT WHEN...

By now, you may have noticed a theme in training that a dog's emotional state and the challenge of the surrounding environment can have a huge effect on your training and your dog's ability to respond to cues.

Recall is hands down the most important skill you can teach your dog. It can save their life.

Getting a solid, reliable recall is not as simple as rewarding your dog when they come to you.

Recall training requires clear criteria, consistency, and training the dog to perform the cue as a conditioned response in as many progressively challenging scenarios as possible.



TEACHING A RECALL. STARTING AT THE END.

For this method of teaching recall, we are going to ensure the dog has clarity on the criteria of this cue by giving them an End Goal behavior (in training this is called a Terminal Behavior). The idea is we are giving the dog a specific task to complete instead of relying on them coming to our general vicinity. It can be any behavior you choose: a sit, a hand touch, etc.

I recommend teaching a **Collar Grab** as the end goal behavior. This has a secondary function of desensitizing your dog to being caught and having someone reach for their collar on a regular basis.

1. Start on leash in a place with low distractions. Have the dog right in front/next to you.
2. Say your cue (Come, Here, etc.) then reach out and take hold of the collar. Once your hand makes contact with the collar, mark with Yes! and feed the dog a treat. If they are antsy and move away from your hand when you reach for them, put a treat in a closed hand in front of their nose to prompt them to hold still. Still use your Yes! marker when you touch their collar, but you can then open your hand and feed them the treat.
3. Progress to taking a couple steps away, use your cue, then lure him to come to you for you to take hold of his collar. He doesn't get a Yes! and reinforcement until the cue is completed with the collar in your hand.
4. Use a long line to increase the distance on this practice while being able to bring him in to complete the cue if end up going further than they can handle. Use the leash and encouragement to bring them in to complete the cue, still marking and rewarding when you complete the collar grab. We do not ever want to set the dog up to learn that this cue is optional. If you think your dog is too overstimulated to respond to a recall, you are better off not using it. Get assistance or use other methods to retrieve your dog.
5. Move to a new location and start at a small distance, or even from the beginning, to ensure your dog is successful

MAKING IT SOLID

- Conditioned body movements
 - Practice the turn-and-movement response to the cue until it become automatic
 - Set your dog up away from you (a small pile of treats, etc.) and call the dog, ensuring they turn and move toward you
- Proofing
 - Duration/distance
 - Train to as large a distance as possible
 - Distractions
 - Start with small distractions in a controlled setting
 - A human at appropriate distance off to the side to not be too tempting but just enough challenge
 - Call from another room or through obstacles
 - Food/toys in a container that the dog cannot retrieve or move as they pass it
 - Work up to calling your dog away from people and other dogs
- Building drive/speed on the return
 - Initiate chase
 - Use your recall cue then run away from your dog, prompting them to chase you
 - Restrained recalls
 - Have someone hold on to your dog's harness. Use your cue word them run away. The restrainer holds the dog briefly to build a small amount of frustration, then releases the dog to charge after you.
 - Special high value rewards
 - Extremely food motivated dogs may benefit from receiving a special treat at the end of a recall that they don't receive at other times
 - This is to condition an excited frame of mind in the dog. However, it is unrealistic that we will always have a special treat in the future when we need to recall. During training, channel the enjoyment of food immediately into a play activity, etc. This will help maintain that level of anticipation when fewer treats are used later

TROUBLESHOOTING

- NO BRIBES - Fade the lure (use your cue word with no treat present) as soon as the dog understands the cue. You DO NOT want to be holding out the reward trying to tempt the dog to come to you. Dogs are generally suspicious of bribes, and if the dog has a chance to weigh if the appeal of a treat can compete with a distraction, they will likely choose the distraction.
- DON'T MAKE IT A PARTY POOPER – try not to use your recall to end fun experiences. When training your recall, have your dog complete the cue a few times during an activity and then release the dog to return to the activity.
- Recall is a trained response, not a competition with the environment. You are unlikely to be more interesting than things like a running prey animal with a mediocre trained recall. This doesn't mean you can't have a 100% solid recall through training even with distractions. This training takes time and intention. You should always strive to condition your dog to want to engage with you and see you as a fun and reliable playmate.