



## Understanding Recall

A SHORT GUIDE FOR DOG OWNERS

A dog that won't come back hasn't learned that coming back is worth more than whatever they're currently doing. They have also likely learned that they don't have to listen to you because of all the other times they blew you off. Recall isn't a single command you teach once (although we do teach one!); it's a relationship you build every single day, on and off the lead.

### WHY IT HAPPENS

*The world is full of things more immediately rewarding than a return to you, even if you have a kilo of cheese, the scent or sight of another dog, squirrel, hedgehog, cat, fox, deer... is worth more, why? Because it's new, or moving, or flying, or staring directly at you or coming towards you or sprinting away from you, or towards another group, a moving car. If coming back has ever meant the fun stops (lead goes on, walk ends, told off), your dog has learned recall is a lost cause; they might actively avoid it or turn it into a game of chase. Add distance, add excitement, the battle is over, you have lost.*

### THINGS TO TRY THIS WEEK

- 1 **NEVER lose.** Every time you use your recall command, they must recall, 100% of the time, never again will you say "Come" and be ignored. They will certainly ignore you. So use a longline! Do not say the word unless you have control of the situation. If you are in a situation where you cannot get to your dog or pull them toward you, you are 50 steps beyond where you should be. 50.
- 2 **50 steps forward.** Have you recalled your dog in a lowly stimulating environment successfully 50 times (maybe a bit less if they are really doing well)? Have you used the word when they are not paying any attention and sniffing at the skirting board? Did they come? If your answer is no to any of those questions, you do not have enough successful repetitions to move forward.
- 3 **Rule of recall.** Recall does not mean the end of freedom; it means the beginning of possibilities. Don't always put the lead on, or end the game, getting back to you must mean everything to them. Keep reading.
- 4 **Callback.** You have to actually teach the dog separately that they must come back to you even if something valuable is on the line (something stationary and then moving). Did you manage to recall mid fixation from food? Toys? The doorbell? If any answer was no, your recall command is not proofed enough to be ready for the chaos of the outdoor world. (Free doorbell tip)
- 5 **You are better off waiting.** If you stand somewhere outside, it won't take long for something distracting to pass by. Take your longline, call your dog back, reward with fun and freedom, get in your wins, don't make sessions too long (5 mins MAX), and be patient.

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*"Real progress, one to one, with real-world proof."*

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