

Emergency Whistle Recall

An emergency whistle recall can be a fantastic tool for dogs who have difficulty recalling around distractions or triggers. This is because a whistle is more noticeable and cuts through environmental noise better than our voice.

This is meant to be used rarely and rewarded heavily. If our reward is lackluster or we overuse the whistle, our dog will not be as responsive to it as we would like.

Step 1: Prep

- **Pick a whistle.** Aim for a whistle with a loud, noticeable sound. If you have used a whistle before without success, pick one that sounds different.
- **Pick a special recall food.** This is something your dog does not receive for anything else. Think the best food they have ever had (e.g. fresh chicken, steak, cold cuts). We want to blow their minds!
- Prepare food at least 1 hour prior to practicing this exercise. Be sneaky! Your dog should not be aware you are preparing to call them.

Step 2: The First Recall

- **Inside your home, when your dog is not paying attention**, blow your whistle and follow with clapping, happy talk and your best cheerleader impression.
- When your dog comes to you, **surprise him/her** with a handful of your special food.
- **Repeat a maximum of 3x per day** at random times. Do not practice outside of the home yet!

Step 3: Distractions

- Once your dog comes running enthusiastically at home, pick the **quietest outdoor space you can imagine** (e.g. your backyard, a tennis court, very quiet park). Try your recall there and reward generously
- Use a long line the first few times you practice outside so you can ensure your dog doesn't run off when you call them
- If your recall is 100% reliable in the quiet environment, try in a slightly more distracting place. Think going from a park with no dogs to a park with one dog. **Only try your recall with more distractions if it is very strong in the current environment.**
- Things that will make your recall harder include more dogs, people or critters in the environment and how long s/he has been there. The more recently you have arrived, the more difficult it will be for your dog to come back.

Recall Don'ts

- **Don't** ever scold or punish your dog for coming to you, even if it took a long time
- **Don't** overuse your whistle; this should be a very rare event. If you are calling your dog in non-urgent situations, use their name or another recall word.
- **Don't** stop rewarding heavily each and every time!
- **Don't** only call your dog when you are leaving the park/the fun is ending