

Dog Training Articles
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Problem Solving and Getting Back to Basics

All advanced commands are based on the basics: (1) dog attention, (2) sit, (3) down, (4) stay and (5) come. When having a problem with an advanced exercise, break it down into small segments. Once the dog is performing each segment separately, put them together to form the exercise. For example, in the beginning the sit/stay is performed standing directly in front of your dog. As the dog understands the exercise you move further and further back. If you are up to a long distance sit/stay and your dog is breaking the stay, take a step (or many steps) closer to the dog until he is doing a close stay - for an extended period of time - perfectly.

If teaching the Drop on Recall, break the segment into 5 segments: (1) down from sit/stay (15 feet distance), (2) down from sit/stay (15 feet distance) then call the dog, (3) come followed by a down command and return to the dog (in the down), (4) 2nd come command after the down, (5) drop on recall w/ finish.

If you are still having problems at the basic level, the problem is either lack of attention or the correction is not a deterrent enough to stop the disobedience. Begin all training sessions with dog attention and make sure there are not too many distractions in your training area for teaching a new exercise.

If attention is not the problem then your correction is. A correction should occur as soon as the undesirable behavior happens. A correction should immediately stop the bad behavior if the dog understands the exercise. If the dog is making the same mistakes and he knows the exercise, then the consequence to disobedience is not a deterrent. You must then step up the level of correction and praise immediately for the correct behavior.

Remember, if your dog believes he can get away with disobedience he will always attempt it. Simple disobedience seems unimportant but the lesson the dog is learning is that disobedience doesn't have a consequence.