



The Big Three

Ford, Chrysler and General Motors are nothing compared to the big three of dog training: Timing, Consistency, and Motivation. Armed with these three principles you can train a dog to do just about anything. If you are ever having difficulty in training, or it seems the dog is confused, ask yourself if you have fully observed the **BIG Three**.

Timing

A dog has a period of 1.3 seconds in which to associate a cause with an effect. This means that the old adage, “you’ve got to catch them in the act” is absolutely true. To correct a dog for breaking a sit “stay” five seconds after the fact is meaningless to a dog. A dog believes he is being corrected, or praised for what- ever he is doing at the moment. Dogs live in the present. The importance of timing has a great implication in training. It means you need to watch closely enough that you see mistakes or successes exactly when they occur and can either praise or correct them instantly. Waiting longer than 1.3 seconds may create confusion in your dog due to the time lag in communication.

Consistency

There is no gray area for dogs. Your training must be very clear. A rule is a rule For example, if you do not want your dog to jump up on you, you must consistently reinforce that principle. Say I happen to have gotten a promotion at work and I am in a great mood. I come home and let Trip jump on me because I am so happy. I scratch his head and tell him he’s a great boy. The next day, let’s pretend Smitty, my arch rival from accounting, had parked in my parking spot at lunch time, and I had to walk from

the very back of the lot. On my way back to my car, I stepped in grape bubble gum whose smell overpowered the interior of my VW Bug on the way home. Then, as I walk in the door Trip jumps on me. I am in a terrible mood so I get angry with him for jumping up. Now poor Trip is confused and doesn't know whether he's coming or going on the issue of jumping up. Should he jump up, or should he not? You must be clear, and black and white, in your training. You must be 100% consistent. This will result in a dog that feels safe and trusting within very well defined rules.

Motivation

In simple terms, think of it this way, positive makes a behavior continue and negative makes it stop. You communicate to your dog while training (and all other times as well) with praise and rewards when they are doing well. As a result, the behaviors you reward will start to occur more often. You communicate with corrections (verbal, leash, sound, etc) when they make mistakes, or are breaking your clearly defined rules. As a result, the behaviors you correct will not occur as often. Both praise (rewards) and corrections must be motivational to the dog. You want your communication to be meaningful. That means your praise or rewards must be good enough that the dog is inspired to strive for it in the future. For example if a dog doesn't like to be touched and your reward for doing something correctly is petting, that is not necessarily positive for that dog. Make sure to use the reinforcement that your dog responds to. Your corrections must only be enough to decrease or extinguish a behavior that is undesirable. Ideally, catching Trip doing the correct behaviors is the most effective way to train him.

Applying the Big Three

As you train, think of these factors. If your dog is not responding to training, or acts confused, ask yourself whether you are being clear with your dog. Does your training fall into harmon with the Big Three?

Is your timing and motivations correct? Are you being consistent?

If your answer is not yes to all fo these questions, you cnot expect miracles from poor Trip.

Practice everyday!

THE FOUR STAGES OF LEARNING

Learning occurs when your dog establishes a relationship between a behavior and the consequences. For example, when a dog barks at an intruder (such as the postman) the barking has been reinforced because the stimulus (the postman) was removed.

You will go through a process with each new exercise you teach your dog. It takes time to teach him to perform reliably and correctly. Dogs need three to six months of repetition and reinforcement to establish a behavior in long-term memory. This means that you must continue to work with your dog after your obedience class, lessons, or in-kennel training is over, if you want the training to “stick.” The long- er you take to teach an exercise and reinforce it the better your dog will perform. Below we will cover the

four phases of learning: Acquisition – Showing, Automatic – Fluency, Application – Generalizing, Always - Maintenance. If

you want a dog that performs correctly, consistently and in all circumstances it is vital that you go through each of these steps.

Acquisition - Showing

During the showing stage, we give the dog all of the necessary information needed to perform a specific behavior. The trainer should have a mental picture of what the final behavior should look like. We help the dog make correct decisions through the use of Prompts in a distraction free

environment. Show your dog what you want him to do. To accomplish this use your leash, hands, food and other tools to guide your dog through the behaviors you want. For example, if I am teaching Fido to sit, I will give the sit command once, and follow the command by gently guiding Fido into a sit. Right at the moment my dog sits I will reward him so that he knows exactly what he did to make me happy. There are no corrections in this phase. Do not expect your dog to understand and correctly perform

commands before they have been shown what it is you want. Use food and praise generously during the showing phase. Use food and praise generously during the showing phase. Training should be done in an area as distraction free as possible as there is no need to make things more difficult at this time. Repetition and patience are of the utmost importance. When your dog begins to anticipate what you want and perform without your help then you know he is beginning to understand.

Automatic - Fluency

In this stage, we give the dog the opportunity to show us what we have taught him - a schedule rich in Positive reinforcement for

correct responses and mild punishment for inappropriate responses. (Mild collar guidance or Non Reward Marker). Always keep in mind good timing with feedback is critical. Once the dog has fluency in a

particular behavior then you can enhance the speed of a response and polish the final picture.

When you have +/- 80% success rate move to the next stage. During this phase the dog should understand the command so that he has a fair chance of performing well. If your dog does not understand a command, looks confused, scared, or repeatedly makes mistakes, you should go back to the teaching phase. Start to wean the dog off any body language you are using, such as bending down when you ask your dog to "Down." If you are using food treats to bait your dog, begin to use the food as a reward for a job well done, and not as a guide.

Leash guidance should be directional. This means that your guidance should help the dog to do what we are asking. A sit correction is a tug straight up on the collar so that it guides the dog into a sit. Our down correction is toward the ground, etc.

Application – Generalization to the environment

Taking the show on the road, making it a lifelong process; setting your dog up for success while gradually increasing distractions; bringing the desired behavior under stimulus control (Bringing the desired behavior about with a cue/command). Generalizing to environment stage is where you build your dog's commitment to performing an exercise and when your dog learns that he should perform these exercises not only because they are fun but also because he has a responsibility to do so. This is done by the gradual introduction of distractions. Reward your dog when he

does something correct. Give your dog mild corrections when he makes mistakes. It is as if we are saying, “Yes, sit means sit even when a cat strolls passed.” The goal is to have a dog that will hold a down “stay” during a dinner party even when Smitty, our archival from accounting, is tempting Fido with a chicken bone under the table. During the Generalization stage expose your dogs to all different situations where they will learn from it. Set them up for success. By doing this we have an opportunity to train a dog who will perform under everyday distraction not only on Tuesday nights at obedience class. It is also important that you don’t always set your dog up to lose. Even though they are more advanced at this stage, praise and success are still vital ingredients to Fido’s outcome. Make sure Fido isn’t losing every time. If he is, that’s a good indication that you are moving ahead too fast.

Always / Maintenance

Taking the show on the road is a lifelong process. The dog is polished and performs reasonably consistent. In order to maintain a response long term intermittent reinforcement for desired behaviors must occur. If the dog fails to respond, remedial steps may be necessary.

Heeling and Walking on a Loose Leash

Why is Walking on a Loose Leash important?

Going for a walk with you provides your dog with the physical exercise required and also helps to meet his social and mental needs. Insufficient exercise can contribute to problem behaviors including destructiveness (chewing and digging), investigative behavior (garbage raiding), hyperactivity, unruliness, excitability, attention-getting behaviors, and even some forms of barking.

Why do dogs tend to pull, chase and forge ahead?

Dogs tend to pull ahead and lunge forward for a number of reasons. Dogs that are particularly exploratory, playful, or investigative pull the owners down the street as they investigate their environment or are attracted to appealing things (children, other dogs). As you pull backwards in an attempt to restrain your dog, he/she resists further by pulling forward even harder, since most dogs tend to pull against pressure. Dogs that are aggressive to stimuli (children, other dogs), and those that have the urge to chase (joggers, cyclists) are likely to pull ahead in an attempt to chase. Dogs that are fearful or otherwise reluctant to leave home may pull and forge ahead on their way back home.

The Walking on loose leash exercise is designed to teach Trip to pay attention to you and not pull on the leash. The final product of consistent work in this area is a dog that doesn't pull on your leash and knows it is his job to stay near you on a loose leash so you can walk comfortably. Yes, this applies even when passing by other dogs, people or any one of the very exciting smells a canine might encounter on Trip's daily walk. The rule is, don't pull, and stay by my side.

No Tight Leashes

Leashes communicate a great deal to Trip. A leash is like a telephone line between your dog and you. There should never be a tight leash with Trip. Tight leashes serve only to guide a dog through what you want rather than teaching the dog to make the right decisions on his own. If you train with a tight leash, always using that tension to communicate to Trip what to do, then when you remove that crutch Trip will be lost. Loose leashes are essential if you are ever to advance to off-leash work. So relax and loosen up on the reins. Have Trip start learning how to do things on his own.

How to Execute the Walking on loose leash

First, take a deep breath and let that leash loose. Hold the very end of your six-foot leash in your right hand and hold the leash in the left hand at about 2-3 foot (depending on your dog's size). If you would rather hold it in one hand then you can wad up the leash in the left hand leaving the 2-3 feet for loose leash. When your dog become distracted and starts to pull on leash, call Trip's name and then walk in the opposite direction of where trip is distract- ed. Trip will be surprised and turn around and when he does Praise & Reward him, for that is exactly what you want. You want Trip to stop drifting off and to pay attention to you instead, so when he re-focuses attention back to you, praise him and give him a treat. His new job is to pay attention to you instead of drifting away and causing the leash to become tight. Later you can substitute trips name with a heel or with me command.

What should Trip do when you stop walking?

While walking what should trip do when you stop walking forward? Trip should also stop walking forward. A good exercise

to use when halting is the sit. This will give Trip a job to do. In the beginning make sure to say sit and as you halt. With time it will become an automatic behavior trip will do. You stop he will sit.

Sit

Sit seems fairly straightforward, right? Right. Here, we will only elaborate a little bit on the ins and outs of the sit cue/command.

There are many different techniques used to teach dogs the sit and down cue/commands.

This is only one of the many ways that will work.

There is no "Stay" cue/command. It's implied in "Sit"

Stay is a redundant command except in the sense that it might make you feel better to have mentioned it to your dog. Stay is implied in "sit." When we say sit to our dogs we do not mean for them to touch their butts on the floor and then get up and jump around like hyenas. When we tell our dogs to sit it means to sit until you are released, not until another dog walks by, or until the ants in your pants become too agitated to ignore. Sit means, "sit there until further notice." You will establish a release cue/command to let your dog know when he is free from an exercise he is in the middle of performing. When first teaching the sit we don't ask the dog to hold it for very long before releasing him. Gradually we build up the time of Trip's sit.

A Few Things Sit Does Not Mean: Bark. Whine. Growl. Scoot. Scratch. Sniff. Or, Self Lick. Also implied in our sit cue is silence. Trip may take on the attitude that if he can't go up and sniff it in person he will bark at it from afar. If Trip is barking, or doing the hoochie skoochie (shuffling around or scooting forward) while he is on a sit, you will repeat the cue/command & guide him to sit

again as if to say, “No, not like that, Like This!” Picture a dog sitting very still and quiet. This is a sit. Any deviation from this picture constitutes breaking the sit and you will need to tell Trip to please cease any artistic interpretation of the exercises (give him a guidance with leash if needed). It is important that it be made black and white for Trip so he can clearly know what behaviors are acceptable and which are not.

The Release- “Free” or “Okay”: Common release words are, “free” or “okay.” You are welcome to use whatever release you like with your dog, “At ease” ...“lets party” ...or “hot damn” are acceptable. Your release cue/ command should be exciting for your dog. Say it with enthusiasm and make it active. Always direct the dog’s re-lease upwards and towards you to reinforce the attention you are trying to establish. The release command is to let your dog know when he is free from an exercise he is in the middle of performing. You can use it with sit, down, place and more.

DOWN, TRIP. GOOD BOY!

Teaching the down “stay” is similar to teaching the sit “stay”; only the direction of your guidance changes. The down can be a little more challenging exercise to teach, as it is an exercise of placing the dog into a more submissive position, which some dogs may resist at first. Persistence is the key. Don’t get discouraged.

Teaching the Down: Start with your dog sitting. Next, give your down cue/ command and show your dog what you mean. Hold leash and piece of food in your right hand about 6-8 inches from the snap. To show your dog the down you will use the food and a light guide with the leash toward the floor and with the other hand you will gently rock the dog down on the shoulders. When

you're rocking down wiggle your hand from side to side to help manipulate your dog into the down position. Guess what you're going to do as soon as your dog gets down.....? Praise, reward and release him! Understand that this exercise can be difficult for your dog so make sure you let him know how much you appreciate his cooperation. Praise like a fool! If needed you might have to move one of his legs out from under him as you guide him.

Teaching Trip that Down Also Means Stay: The next step in the down is to begin working on the stay. Begin this by asking very little of your dog and slowly build up the time and the distraction level of the exercise. To begin teaching the stay aspect of the down, first put your dog into a down. Then repeat your down cue/ command and take a step forward with right foot and then back. Always have your leash & hand ready so that if your dog begins to break you can immediately help your dog back into position then free trip! Next repeat your down cue/ command and pivot directly out in front of your dog. Again have your leash ready so that if your dog begins to break you can immediately guide your dog back in position! The guidance for the down is straight down and a hair forward on the collar. Remember the first Noble Truth of Dog Training: *Timing*. Watch constantly so that your guidance will be timely and Trip will know what you are trying to communicate to him. The guidance must occur within 1.3 seconds of Trip getting up, for him to associate the guidance with him getting up from the sit. In addition, observe the Second Noble Truth by being consistent. If you let Trip break one down after another without reinforcement, how can you ever expect him to understand what you want? Does down really mean down and "stay?" How is he to know unless you are consistent? Until Trip is performing very well do not risk

compromising your consistency or timing by walking far away or leaving the room.

Down “Stay” From a Distance: When you start dropping your leash or working on distance with trip, you need to advance with small steps and build on successes. You still need a way to observe the 1.3-second rule of timing. If Trip should break the down while you are at this stage mark the moment by simply, saying “No, Ah, Ah or wrong.....” as you briskly walk all the way over to him and guide him back to the position.

COME BACK WHEN CALLED (RECALL)

The come cue / command is going to be one of the most important cue / command’s you can teach trip. You can call him back from danger. It also gives you the comfort of giving the dog more freedom. This is how you start. You walk away from Trip who can be sniffing or checking out something. You say “Trip, Come!” and Trip explodes off the line like an Olympic track star and slams on the brakes at the last moment to sit perfectly still and straight in front of you. Trip stays sitting in front of you until you release him at which time there is much rejoicing.

Teaching Trip to Come as in the Above Description

When beginning to train this exercise we use only a six-foot leash. (Keep this leash loose. If it is not loose, then when it eventually comes off Trip WILL know it and react differently) while Trip is investigating something in front of you. Call him with, “Here” or “Come” and give a light guidance towards you on the leash. As Trip begins to come, back up and wind in the leash so that it is not all slack. Backing up helps Trip in this situation so make yourself a moving and obvious target. And, of course, praise him so that he knows that coming to you is the right thing to do. Another

way to have fun with the recall is to have someone hold Trip and you run away and call him to you. It can be helpful if Trip is unsure to bend down and encourage him. When you are showing Trip what we want we can use as much encouragement as necessary. Later you will wean Trip off so he knows to come to us whether we are cheering for him or not, backing up or standing still. As Trip gets to us on his recall we can say free and play with him or give him a treat. You want Trip to think that coming to you is desirable so make it worth his while. Once this stage is solid you can move on to calling your dog to you when you are further away. For this you will need a long line. Keep in mind that there are several different ways to teach the recall. This is just one of the techniques.

Sightseeing and other Deviations from the Norm

There is a lot of space between you and Trip when you are practicing the recall. The recall should be direct and straight. Trip should not stop to sniff, urinate or scratch himself during his recall. Trip should also be discouraged from taking any scenic route, which may happen to pass by another dog or person. If Trip should drop the ball and slack off you can give him guidance again on the leash towards you to re- mind him that he should come to you directly. Remember, if Trip is more interested in sniffing than in coming to you, maybe you aren't providing enough incentive. Make it fun for Trip!

Recap

1. Call Trip and praise him as he gets to you with lots of enthusiasm. Repeat this many times so that Trip starts to have fun coming to you.

2. Call Trip from a further distance. Praise and release immediately.

Rules of the Recall (important! Read before proceeding)

- Never correct a dog that is coming to you. A dog that is coming to you is doing something good. Don't break that trust by punishing him for coming to you.
- When you call your dog be prepared to back it up. Do not call your dog over and over again. Give Trip your full attention. Every time you call Trip and he doesn't come he learns something. Have a long line attached to Trip's collar (when supervised) if needed, this gives you the ability to back up your cue/command with a pop. The second Trip turns and starts coming to you praise and reward.
- Make it fun. Your dog should love coming to you.
- Never call your dog to you in order to give him a correction. If you need to correct your dog, walk over to him.
- Do not chase your dog. Back up, away from your dog, to draw him toward you.

Just the Beginning

This is an introductory level recall. It takes months of consistent and timely reinforcement to train a dog who will come to you off lead under distraction. The off leash recall is an advanced exercise. Train him to come while he is off sniffing the roses or checking out the interesting smells wafting from the garbage can.

Upping the Ante: Generalization

When Trip is doing a good job with walking on a loose leash, sit, place, and down in relatively distracted free area, begin to make things a little more challenging. Generalization is the last step of teaching an exercise to your dog. Without good generalization your dog will never stand up to the distraction of the everyday world and will certainly fall to the temptations of rambunctious squirrels and more! The most important advice to give with generalization is to build on success and do not set your dog up for failure.

Here are some generalization ideas:

- Walking in an erratic manner so that Trip must pay more careful attention. Switching direction often and stopping. He will learn that he has to keep an eye always on you because he won't know where you're going next.
- Walking past other dogs.
- Walking past a pile of food on the floor.
- Walking past a seated person.
- Cats, mice, raccoons, opossums, and orangutans.
- Walk up to a person but stop about four feet away and make sure Trip does not decide to go the rest of the way to say hello. If he does, turn around and go the other direction.
- Clapping your hands and stomping your feet while still holding the leash.
- Dropping the leash on the floor in front of you.
- Squat down on your knees six feet away from Trip.
- Walking a circle around Trip
- Going further and further away (be careful of making errors in consistency and timing) don't get too cocky too soon.
- Have your friends walk by Trip (closer and closer)
- Have a friend pet Trip while he is on a sit (make sure you start by being right next to Trip)
- Walk other dogs by Trip
- Throw a ball near Trip or put a piece of food in front of him.
- Play with your dog. When he starts getting really excited, have him "Sit." Then release him and continue playing.
- Don't forget to keep it fun and build on success.

Glossary of Terms

Trip- A fictitious literary device created to represent a sort of Every dog. Trip is all dogs everywhere and is referred to as a male for random reasons only. You may replace the name Trip with your dog's name as it occurs in this reader. Trip is also Starmark Animal Behavior Center's mascot and can often be seen motivating others to have fun and to participate in spite of his overly large feet and wayward ears.

Training- A constant state of being for both owners and dogs alike. You are always teaching your dog something. Like it or not we are full time example for our dogs. Are you the trainer or the trainee?

Tight- Commonly used in reference to your leash. Tight Leash Syndrome is a state of existence wherein an owner feels he must control his pupil through subtle variations of choking. See next entry for a definition of choking. A tight leash is any leash, which is under tension. Learning ability is greatly reduced when a dog is in a tight or choking condition. It is a debilitating condition for dogs and trainers alike. Rule of thumb: Look at the snap on your leash; if it is hanging straight down from the collar, you are doing well. If it is perpendicular to your dog it's tight and you need to do an attention getter.

Choking- The state of existence a canine lives in who is held on a tight leash. It is also the result of gratuitous pulling. Choke chains often exacerbate the problem due to incorrect use and fit.

Loose- The relaxed and responsible state of a dog or leash when being handled properly. A loose leash hangs limply toward the floor, on occasion even making contact. In the state of looseness a dog has the freedom to make decisions and learn.

Toy- Anything which your dog likes. Squeaky toys, non-squeaky toys, chew toys, tug toys, fetch toys etc. A toy can be a great reward for a dog that values it enough. My preferred chew toys include Booda Bones and Nyla Bones. The Foxtail is an excellent fetch toy while also being aesthetically pleasing. Ball-on-a- Rope is a great toy for stimulating play drive.

Praise- A pleasant tone of voice and/or physical contact that lets your dog know you are happy about something he/she did. Praise should be enthusiastic and sincere. The more ridiculous the praise looks, the better the praise is likely to be. Rolling on the ground, dancing and fevered oratory are preferred methods.

The 1.3 Second Rule- Rule which states that you have 1.3 seconds to make a correction or give praise for a behavior you desire or dislike.

Smitty (from accounting) - Another literary device used in this reader to represent the forces of temptation which all dogs and trainers must contend with.

The High Hat- A canine gesture loosely translated as “I don’t have time for this monkey business today I am going to sniff this other dog instead.” The High Hat is a gesture that should be immediately addressed with further obedience training.

The Big Three- Shame on you for not knowing this!! Timing. Consistency. Motivation. For further explanation of the Big Three please refer back in your reader.