



MAKE EVERY DOG **EXCEPTIONAL**



E-COLLAR BASIC OBEDIENCE

TRAINING BOOK

WRITTEN BY **PAT NOLAN**

DOGTRA TRAINING BOOK



“Within the Dogtra line of electronic collars, there is a collar that is suited to your dog and your training needs.

These collars are safe, reliable, and effective.

With them, you have the tools you need to work your dog toward your goals with maximum training efficiency.”

PAT NOLAN

Founder of Tactical Directional Canine

E-Collar Introduction

Whether training companion, working, or sport dogs, we all want a happy and willing worker that responds quickly to directions at a distance under distraction. Your new Dogtra collar is a versatile training tool that can help you reach that goal.

Your Dogtra electronic training collar (e-collar) is a safe, reliable, and effective training tool. With it, you can make corrections suited to your dog's temperament and the distraction level of the moment, at the proper time for maximum training efficiency.

However, correcting to stop unwanted behavior is only a small part of what you can do with your e-collar. More importantly, the e-collar is a powerful tool for encouraging desired behavior.

Before you can use your Dogtra e-collar for teaching new behavior, you must suspend notions about the e-collar being only for correcting. Your dog also must learn from experience to act in response to the e-collar and that by his actions he can control the sensation of the e-collar, which we call the "e-tap." Once those two things happen, you can use the e-collar to teach and encourage desired responses and yes, to discourage or eliminate undesirable behavior.

You will find this system of using the e-collar is even gentler than traditional leash training methods, offers increased reliability, and accelerates your dogs learning by providing instant feedback to your dog.

Training Approach

TRAINING APPROACH



Understanding the Training Approach

Have you noticed how excited a child gets at discovering she has the power to make a room go light or dark by flipping the light switch? She will turn on the switch repeatedly. This excitement in the moment of discovery is often called the “aha!” experience and is one of the keys to this new approach to e-collar training.

We have designed each learning situation so that your dog can “discover” for himself how to stop the e-tap in each new situation. Just as the child is excited with her newfound power at the light switch, your dog will be excited to discover that he has real control over his situation. Your dog will become fully engaged in the training process.

You will be amazed at the positive attitude and speed of learning possible with your Dogtra e-collar when your dog learns to work in response to the e-tap and that he can control the e-tap by his actions. The mechanics of this approach can be summarized as follows:

Overview of training

Teach

To teach a new action, begin tapping rapidly on the Nick button (at the lowest perceived intensity setting) as you guide your dog into the action you want. Stop tapping as your dog completes the action.

Add a command to the action

When your dog knows what you want and is performing the desired action as soon as the tap begins, add the command as you tap.

Phase out tap

After many repetitions, begin to phase out the tap on the command.

You will learn how to use this approach beginning on page 13 in “Getting Started.”

Guidelines for Structuring Training

Teach your dog what to do first and then teach him what not to do.

It is best to use your Dogtra e-collar to train your dog through the basic obedience program before using it to stop unwanted behaviors. Many problem behaviors will disappear because of training; all unwanted behavior is easier to stop once your dog learns to work for you and responds to the e-collar.

Even if your dog already knows the basic obedience commands, follow the procedures given. Your dog must learn how to respond to the e-collar for each command before you can use your Dogtra e-collar for training at a distance.

Continuity

This program is set up in an orderly fashion. Each step lays a foundation for the next, so it is best to follow the sequence given.

Consistency

Set rules or boundaries for your dog and stick to them. It is unfair to allow your dog to jump up on you one day and then correct him the next for doing the same thing.

Do not be tempted to take the e-collar off and “try and see if he does it without the e-collar” — this is a prescription for teaching him to be “collar wise,” a dog that acts differently with the e-collar on.

During your training and daily interactions with your dog, do not give any commands that you are not prepared to enforce.

Fairness

Introduce each command on leash or line so you can gently guide your dog into the desired response. Quickly fade out the leash guidance. You want your dog to choose to respond to the e-collar, not the pull of the leash. When he is off leash, there will be no leash pull.

It is unfair to change the rules haphazardly. Gradually increase the distances you are working your dog; gradually increase the difficulty and nearness of distractions.

Introduce one new command at a time. If you introduce several new commands at the same time, your dog may have trouble connecting the praise and rewards of training to a particular response, which slows learning.

Maintain a balance in training

Many people buy their first e-collar to fix a problem. While you can use your Dogtra e-collar this way, it is not the best way. If you use the e-collar for one problem, you will have a problem teaching other responses. Put equal emphasis on all the commands to keep a good balance of responses.

Repetition

Your dog can learn new responses quickly, but many repetitions are required to form new habits. Therefore, begin and end each session with a few minutes of review of previous lessons learned.

Try to train at least five days a week

Most dogs will do well with sessions of about 20 minutes each. Some high-energy dogs do better on longer sessions and two sessions a day.

Praise

Remember to praise your dog with a pat, scratch, and your voice for good performance. Also, the chance to retrieve or chase a favorite toy is a powerful reward for many dogs.

Retriever trainers call these reward retrieves “fun bumpers,” which helps maintain a good training attitude and keep dogs interested in obedience work.

To throw a reward/fun bumper, give a release cue (hup, hup, hup, or hey, hey) that tells your dog it’s okay to break and charge about while you swing the bumper or toy. When you’ve teased his interest to a peak, throw the bumper. Throw one retrieve and then go back to training. “Fun bumpers” are like seasoning in cooking – used well they enhance the flavor and essence of training; applied too liberally they overpower it.

**Train first
and then
teach e-fence
boundaries**

Your dog can learn to obey off leash using your Dogtra remote training collar and respect boundaries with your e-fence system. Simply follow the program outlined here and then train him with the e-fence boundaries.

Don't worry if you have trained your dog with the e-fence system first. Just don't start his e-collar obedience training in the same area where you taught him the e-fence boundaries, as this could confuse him.

Confinement

Confine your dog to his crate or kennel for an at least an hour before training. He will look forward to training and the chance to work with you. Confine him after training for an hour to allow his lessons to soak in. He will learn faster and retain more of his lesson.

**E-collar
ready?**

Follow the instructions in your owner's manual to make sure your Dogtra collar is fully charged, turned on, and is snug on your dog's neck.

Good. Let's get started.

Week One

WEEK ONE DAY ONE

Teaching Time Frames

The lessons presented offer suggested teaching time frames. Many of the steps can be taught in a day or over several days, depending on your dog and meeting the touchstones set out in the paragraph “Moving on” included with the objectives.

Getting Started

Objective 1 – Find the right initial e-collar setting for your dog

Every dog perceives the stimulation from the e-collar slightly differently. Also, as the distraction level of the environment changes, you will need to move the intensity up and down to keep your dog focused on training. But first you need to find a good starting point.

To use the e-collar in early training, you need to identify an intensity setting that is high enough that your dog notices it, but is not so high that it upsets him.

Bring your dog from confinement to your training area. He should be wearing his e-collar and another collar, either a flat buckle or slip-type collar. Attach a 15-foot line to this collar and not the e-collar. Allow your dog to relax and explore his surroundings (see below).



As your dog explores his surroundings, determine the correct intensity setting.

With the e-collar on your lowest intensity setting, press the Nick or momentary button to e-tap your dog. You may see no reaction. Now continue to e-tap at random, increasing the intensity setting each time. Watch carefully, as the first signs that your dog notices the e-collar are usually subtle. When they first feel the e-collar, some dogs stop and look up; others may turn to look over their shoulder or shake their head; some sit and scratch at the collar.

When you see that your dog has noticed the e-tap, stop increasing the intensity setting. After a short pause, repeat a few taps at this setting to make sure that your dog did, in fact, notice the e-collar. If he did, this will be the introductory or teaching setting for your dog. (Occasionally, once the dog realizes that he feels something from the e-collar you can reduce the setting; do not reduce below the level that your dog responds to.)

The most effective intensity setting for teaching with the e-collar is one that is just high enough that your dog notices the e-collar, but not so high that he shows any panic or distress. If panicked by the e-collar stimulation, reduce the setting; if he shows no reaction, increase the setting.

Review

- 1** Work on a 15-foot line attached to a second collar.
- 2** Start at your lowest intensity setting. Use no commands.
- 3** While your dog explores his surroundings, tap and increase the intensity setting until he notices the e-collar.
- 4** Repeat a few times at this setting to make sure he really has noticed the stimulation.

Command: Here

Objective 1 — Your dog discovers he can turn off the e-collar tap by moving towards you

Still working on the 15-foot line attached to his other collar and the e-collar intensity set at your introductory level, wait until he is engaged in exploring his environment.

Begin tapping with the e-collar as you gently pull on the line to turn your dog towards you. Stop tapping and praise as soon as your dog moves towards you. Release him to return to explore with an “OK”. Repeat. Work several of these.

Review

1 Begin tapping on the e-collar without command as you gently pull on the 15-foot line.

2 Stop tapping as soon as your dog moves towards you. Praise him. Pause and release him with “OK”. Repeat.

Moving on . . .

When your dog is consistently moving towards you as soon as he feels the e-tap, you are ready to move on.

Objective 2 — Add the command “Here”

With your dog on the 15-foot line attached to his other collar and the e-collar intensity set at your introductory level, wait until he is engaged in exploring his environment.

Command “Here” in a normal tone of voice and begin tapping with the e-collar as you gently pull to turn your dog towards you with the line. Stop tapping and praise as soon as your dog moves towards you. If he stops before reaching you, start tapping and repeat the “Here” command.

Praise him for coming and wait a few moments for him to return to exploring. Repeat. Work several of these recalls. Remember to praise your dog each time he comes to you before releasing him on “OK” and allowing him to return to exploring.

Don’t wait to see what he does when you call; begin e-collar tapping immediately after your command and add gentle pressure or pull on the line. The correct sequence is: command “Here” and begin the e-collar taps and gentle line pressure at the same time. Both the e-collar taps and the line pressure stop as soon as your dog starts to move towards you. Your dog discovers that he can stop the tap by coming to you when called.



As soon as your dog moves towards you, stop tapping.

Review

1 With your dog exploring on the 15-foot line, command “Here” and begin e-collar tapping. Stop tapping as soon as your dog moves towards you. Praise him when he gets to you.

2 Pause before giving an “OK” command to release your dog to return to exploring. Repeat.

3 If your dog doesn’t come all the way to you, repeat the command and start tapping again.

Moving on . . .

You are ready to move on to shaping the “Heel” response when:

- a)** your dog responds immediately to your command and tap on “Here”;
- b)** he begins to linger longer near you after each recall; and
- c)** even while exploring, your dog is mindful of where you are.

Command: Heel

Now that your dog knows to move towards you in response to the e-tap, let's use that response to shape the "Heel" command. We want him to discover that moving into heel will stop the e-tap.

Heel is not just a position, but a relationship. When he is at heel, your dog is to stay by your left side facing the direction you are, his shoulders even with your legs, close but not touching. When you move, he should move; when you stop, he should sit. Your dog should watch you and stay in position. You should not have to constantly remind him with commands or leash tugs.

Objective 1 — Your dog learns to pay attention to your movements and stay within five feet of you

From your work on the recall, your dog knows to move towards you to stop the e-tap. Imagine a five-foot circle on your left side. Step off on your left foot and begin walking.

Each time your dog moves out of this five-foot circle, move away from him opposite the direction he left the circle and begin e-tapping. Each time he moves back toward the circle, stop tapping.

Always start walking on your left foot. If your dog lags behind outside the five-foot circle, move faster and tap until he moves toward you. Continue walking.

If your dog forges past you, turn right-about when he passes outside the five-foot circle and tap with the e-collar until he moves toward you. Praise him when he returns and keep moving.

If your dog passes behind you to walk on your right side, use your line to pull him back to your left side as you tap with the e-collar. Stop tapping when he is again on your left. He will quickly learn the five-foot circle and work to stay inside it.



When your dog moves outside of the five-foot circle, move away from him in the opposite direction and begin tapping. Stop tapping when your dog moves toward you.

Review

- 1 Think of an imaginary five-foot circle on your left side.
- 2 If your dog moves outside this area, move away from him and begin tapping with your e-collar. When your dog moves toward you stop tapping and continue walking.
 - If your dog forges ahead, turn right-about and begin tapping.
 - If your dog moves wide left, turn right and begin tapping.
 - If your dog lags, increase your speed as you begin tapping.

Moving on . . .

When your dog is working to stay inside this five-foot circle, you are ready to add the command “Heel” and to increase the demands on his attention by reducing the size of your imaginary circle to two feet.

Objective 2 — Add the command “Heel” and shape the heel response

Replace the 15-foot line with your six-foot leash. Start off on your left foot and command “Heel” each time you start to walk. Every time your dog drifts outside the two-foot circle, move away from him opposite the direction he left the circle and command “Heel” and begin tapping.

Review

1

Step off on your left foot and command “Heel” each time you start to walk. Command “Heel” each time you turn away from your dog and begin tapping.

Moving on . . .

When your dog is focusing attention on you and working to stay inside the two-foot circle, he’s ready to learn to sit when you stop.

Command: Sit

Objective 1 — Your dog discovers he can stop the tap by sitting



To Place Your Dog To Sit:

Take a short grip on the leash with your right hand and pull up and a bit forward on the leash. At the same time, place your left hand on the dog's back at the loin, thumb towards you, and gently squeeze while pushing down. Use the raised leash to control his front end and only use enough tension to prevent him from swinging away. Squeezing the loin muscles helps to relax them and gives you a better grip, ensuring that you can place the dog into position. Every time you stop at heel, place your dog to sit and begin to tap with the e-collar. When you feel him relax his muscles and begin to sit, stop tapping.

Review

1

Every time you stop at heel, place your dog to sit, e-collar tapping as you do. Stop tapping as soon as you feel your dog relax his muscles and begin to sit.

Moving on . . .

When your dog is melting into the sit position as you begin to place him, you are ready to add the "Sit" command.

Objective 2 — Add the command “Sit”

Now command “Sit” as you begin to tap and place your dog. When he is sitting as soon as he hears the command “Sit”, you can stop placing him. If your dog balks or stops halfway down, place him right away.

Review

1 Command “Sit” as you begin to tap and place your dog.

2 Stop placing to sit.

3 If your dog balks or stops halfway down, place him right away.

Moving on . . .

Practice enough repetitions (10-15 a session) so that your dog is sitting quickly on command. From now on have him sit every time you stop at heel. You want this to become a deeply ingrained habit.

Command: Kennel or Place

On the command “Kennel” or “Place”, your dog shall go away from you to a designated spot and stay there.

This is a very useful command. First, it balances out e-collar response. The “Here” and “Heel” commands both ask for movement towards you, and “Sit” is initially taught by your side, but the “Kennel” command requires your dog to move away from you in response to the e-collar. In the house, the command is useful to send and anchor your dog. To start, use the bottom half of an airline shipping crate. Many dogs are familiar with these crates and the crate sides help direct the dog into the proper spot. As soon as he is kenneling on command, we will flip the crate half over and use it as a raised platform. Once he knows the command well, you can substitute anything he can see as a target for “Kennel.” If you don’t have a shipping crate, any visible target that is big enough for your dog to get comfortable on will work.

Objective 1 — Your dog discovers he can turn off the tap by getting in the crate

Walk with your dog on leash towards the open end of the kennel. As you approach, shorten your grip on the leash to make it hard for your dog to avoid the crate. When you are about two feet from the crate opening, begin e-collar tapping. Continue walking and pass on the right side of the crate to put your dog in line with the opening. When your dog is in the kennel, stop tapping.

After a short pause, step back to face the open end of the crate and call your dog out. Praise him for coming and walk him off the spot. Take a short break before returning to “Kennel” him again.

If you have a lot of trouble getting him to go into the crate, step in yourself and call and guide him in with your leash while you tap. Stop tapping when he gets all four feet in.

Objective 2 — Add the command “Kennel”

When your dog is quickly stepping into the crate as soon as the tap begins and he doesn't need leash guidance, add the command “Kennel” as you tap. Use the same approach and walk-up you have been doing, but now just before you begin to tap, command “Kennel.”

Moving on . . .

When your dog willingly enters the crate on your command “Kennel” and tap, you are ready for the next step.

Objective 3 — Your dog learns to move away from you to the crate on the command “Kennel”

Now when you are walking toward the crate, stop about two feet from the crate and give the “Kennel” command. Your dog has to leave your side to enter the crate, as shown in the bottom photo.



Review

- Walk your dog into the kennel and tap from two feet away.
- Add the “Kennel” command.
- Send your dog from two feet away to the kennel.



Week One

WEEK ONE DAY TWO



Training Distractions

Use sights, sounds, and smells that will invite your dog to disobey. Be sure to include people and animals.

Ongoing and New Work: The Formal Recall; Add Distractions; “Kennel on Top”

Objective 1 (new work) — “Here” around distractions

Start your training session with review on the work “Here”, “Heel”, “Sit”, and “Kennel” on the six-foot leash.

Attach the 15-foot line to your dog and give him an “OK” release. Approach a distraction and allow your dog time to investigate and get interested. In a normal tone of voice, call your dog “Here” and start tapping. Remember to stop the tap as soon as he moves towards you.

If for any reason he should stop in route, resume tapping and repeat the command, “Here.”



People and animals, both new and familiar to your dog, make good distractions for recalls.

Objective 2 (new work) — Add “Sit” after the “Here”

Henceforth, whenever you formally command “Here,” have your dog sit in front of you when he gets to you. As he is coming in, command and tap for “Sit.” Praise him for coming when called and for sitting in front. Pause, and then command “Heel” as you pivot 180 degrees in place and step off on your left foot to do some heeling before another recall.

After the first few sits in front on recall, start refining this sit-in-front position. Work to teach a close, straight sit in front (remote sit) from the beginning. As your dog comes in, use your leash and body language to guide him into a straight sit facing you. He should be sitting close enough that you could pet him without stretching, yet he should not be touching you. If he tries to sit out of position, take one step back as you command “Here” and begin tapping. Again, try to guide him into a straight sit in front. You are not correcting for a poor sit — you are teaching or defining sit in front.

Objective 3 (ongoing work) — Increased attention at “Heel”

Walk at heel towards one of your distractions. If your dog leaves your side to go to your distraction, do an about turn and tap until he moves to return to heel. When your dog is paying attention and you cannot catch him with your right-about, include right turns near distractions.

Be sure to work on “Sit” command near your distractions. Whenever your dog is so interested in a distraction that he doesn’t feel the e-tap or chooses to ignore it, increase the intensity setting with every tap until he decides to obey. When he does, return the intensity setting to the teaching level and continue training.

Objective 4 (ongoing work) — Introduce elevated kennel platform

Flip over the crate half and have your dog “Kennel” up on top of it. Most dogs seem to enjoy the view from the elevation, but spend a few minutes and introduce this new kennel destination just as you taught “Kennel” the first time.

Review

1 For “Here”, work around distractions; add “Sit” to the recall.

2 Continue to work on “Heel” with “Sit” on command at every stop. Heel around distractions.

3 For “Kennel”, turn the crate over and have your dog kennel onto the elevated top.



Keep the opening away from you when working on top of the crate half.



Once your dog will kennel up you can introduce many different targets for him to kennel on.

WEEK ONE DAY THREE



Left or Right Side?

Many trainers teach their dogs to heel and run from the left only. Some choose to run dogs on both sides. If you do, simply use the mirror image of the steps below to teach finish to the right side.

Ongoing and New Work: Introduce the Finish; Add Distance on “Kennel”

Objective 1 (new work) — Introduce “Finish” (your dog learns to move to heel position from the remote front sit)

Now that your dog knows to come when called and sit in front, we need to teach him to move to “Heel” from this remote sit position on command.

There are two ways your dog can get to “Heel” from the remote sit. First, he can move forward to your right and pass behind you, ending at “Heel” on your left. Alternatively, he can move to your left and pivot, swinging his rear wider than his head, ending up facing forward sitting at “Heel.”

If your dog finishes behind you as in the first method, he is out of sight; some dogs will try to take advantage of this. Teach the second method, the “swing” finish, and you will keep him in front and in view at all times.



Teaching Step for the “Swing” Finish Exercise:

After praising him for coming when called, place the leash in your left hand with a short grip, leaving no slack. Command “Heel”, begin e-collar tapping, leave your right foot in place, and take a big step back and out with your left foot as you sweep your left hand back and away from your body.

If you are standing on the center of a clock facing 12, your step and arm sweep would be toward seven. This step, the sweeping left arm signal, and the taps will move your dog wide and behind you.

Next, step forward and tap at the same time. As you do, pull the leash forward and into your body. Your dog’s head should turn into you as he changes direction; your step forward will bring you back to your original position. He is moving at heel so have him sit when he stops moving. Once he is seated by your side, pause and then praise him before heeling off.

Do not pause after stepping back. This should be one smooth, two-step motion.



Work on a long, light-weight line when sending your dog more than five or six feet to the kennel or place board.

Objective 2 (ongoing work) — Increase the distance you send your dog to the kennel

Begin with a review by having your dog “Kennel” from two feet away. When your dog is working smoothly at the two-foot distance, begin to send from a little farther each time. Continue to walk toward the kennel and command and begin tapping at the same time, but stop tapping as soon as your dog starts toward the kennel. If he stops on the way or fails to get up on the crate when he gets there, repeat your command and resume tapping; don’t stop tapping until he is on the kennel.

1 Introduce the Finish. Use the teaching step with sweeping arm signal.

2 Increase the distance you send your dog to the kennel.

- As you increase sending distance, stop tapping as soon as your dog leaves your side.
- Your dog learns that moving toward the crate stops the e-collar tap.

Week One

WEEK ONE DAY FOUR



Ongoing and New Work: Automatic Sit

**Objective 1 (ongoing work) — Heeling around distractions;
continue teaching the “Finish”;
increase the distance you send to the kennel**

Your dog will learn new commands faster when distractions are not competing for his attention. Then, once he knows a command, it is important that you train around distractions. If he will only obey when there is nothing he would rather do, he is not really trained.

You can bring distractions to your training area or you can take your dog to the distractions. Begin working your dog on all known commands around distractions. Gradually work closer to stronger and stronger distractions.

Kennel: As you increase the distance you send your dog to the crate, don't be too quick to call him off the crate. Mix up the ways you move him off the crate — sometimes go to the crate and heel your dog off rather than calling him. He needs to learn to stay until you tell him something different.



When you train with friends, you can be distractions for each other. One dog works on stay while another practices heeling.

Objective 2 (new work) — Teach “Automatic Sit” on the stop at heel

Since the “Heel” command was first introduced, every time you have stopped at heel, you have placed or commanded your dog to “Sit.” As a result, he may have begun to sit automatically, sometimes when you stop at heel before you can give the command. If so, he’s ready for you to drop your verbal command to “Sit” on the stop. From now on, the only cue to sit when you stop at heel will be the fact that you have stopped walking.

Now, stop at heel and pause to allow your dog time to sit. If he does, praise him and step off at heel. If he doesn’t sit, begin tapping and then command “Sit.” Allow time for him to choose to sit, but once you start the tap tell him to “Sit” so he knows how to respond.

Review

- 1** Begin to work known commands around distractions.
- 2** Add the Automatic Sit.
- 3** Increase the distance you send to the crate.

Week One

WEEK ONE DAY FIVE



Ongoing and New Work: Finish on Command

Objective 1 (ongoing work) — Heeling around distractions;

Automatic Sit;

**Increasing the distance you send to
the crate to up to six feet**

Kennel: Begin to send him to “Kennel” from the remote sit position after calling your dog off the crate. Until now, your dog has always been in motion and facing the crate when you have sent him to “Kennel”, so start close. Call him off and have him sit facing you. Then step toward the crate as you command “Kennel” and begin tapping. Stop tapping as soon as he turns toward the kennel. Repeat your command and tapping if he does not follow through.

Automatic Sit: Begin to stop near your distractions. Practicing the “Automatic Sit” near distractions will pay off in increased attention at heel.

Objective 2 (new work) — Finish on command

Drop the Teaching Step on the “Swing” Finish: Call your dog “Here” to sit in front, praise him, and pause before giving the “Heel” command. Keep the leash in your right hand and without stepping back and out with your left foot, command “Heel” and tap as you give your sweeping left hand signal. Stop tapping as soon as he begins to move and when he gets into heel position, praise him.

If he fails to move on command or stops halfway through the motion, resume tapping and use your instructional step (see Week One/Day Three) and leash to guide him into position. Do not stop tapping until he gets to heel by your side.

Week Two

WEEK TWO

Review is Key to Learning

Starting each training session with a review keeps your dog's attention focused on training and acts to move newly acquired skills from short-term to long-term memory areas in his brain.

Command: Sit-Stay; Left Turns at Heel

Objectives: By the end of week two your dog should be able to do a one-minute Sit-Stay, and improved work on “Heel”, “Here”, “Sit”, and “Kennel”. You will add the left turn for forging at heel.

Command: Sit-Stay

Objective 1 — One-minute Sit-Stay, on a slack six-foot leash, near distractions

Using a place board can help teach the “Sit-Stay.” Your dog should already be very comfortable waiting on his kennel. Take a few minutes and introduce him to a place board. Make a quick pass through all the same stages you used to teach the “Kennel” command the first time.

Be proactive, not reactive, on the stays. Don't wait for your dog to break or leave the spot. When you see he's about to move, tap with the e-collar and repeat the command “Sit.” He will learn much faster if you tap him to remain seated than if he breaks the stay and is corrected back to “Sit.” If he does get off the place board, use your leash or line to replace him. It is important that you return your dog to the same place and that he be seated facing the same direction as before he broke the stay. Tap to start him back and once again when he is on the spot.



Give your signal before stepping off.

Objective 2 — 15-second “Stay”

Heel up to your place board and stop with your dog sitting on it. After praising for a good sit, command “Stay,” lower your open left hand, palm toward the dog, stopping in a position in front of his face, and raise your right hand holding the leash above and a bit in front of your dog’s head until it is snug.

Pivot on the ball of your left foot as you step across with your right foot. You should end up facing your dog, standing about one foot in front. From this position, most dogs will not try to break the stay. If your dog tries to move, increase the tension on the line and tap and command “Sit.”



Count to 15 and then reverse direction. Step back on your right foot and when you are again in a heeling position, lower your left hand, followed by your right. After a short pause, praise your dog for this first stay. If he breaks from position — taking your return, the relaxing of the leash, or your praise as a signal that his job is over — tap on “Sit.” Do several of these each day mixed in with your work on the other exercises.

Hold your stay signal in position in front for the first two days.

Objective 3 — 30-second “Stay” three feet away

Stop at heel with your dog sitting on your place board. Give your stay signal with your left hand as you command “Stay.” Now, drop your hand signal and the slack in the leash. Keep your thumb in the hand loop so as not to lose control of the leash, and step off with your right foot. Take one step, turn, and face him. Don’t ask your dog to hold the stay in this new situation any longer than he has in the past. After 15 seconds return to stand at heel, pause, and then praise him for the good stay before you heel him off.

If your dog takes the increased distance and the slack leash as an excuse to move from the spot, correct him. Move in and guide him with the leash to the place board, tapping as you go. When he is sitting on the board facing the direction you left him, stop tapping and step back. Pause and have him do a short stay so you can return and praise him.

Do several of these each day mixed in with your work on the other exercises.

Objective 4 — One-minute “Stay” six feet away

From the heel, stop with your dog on a place board. Give the signal and command “Stay.” Drop the slack in the leash, but hold on to the end of your leash and step off on your right foot. Walk out the full six-foot length of the leash, and turn and face your dog. Count off 30 seconds, then return to stand at heel by your dog’s side. Pause and then praise him for holding. After you pause, command “heel” as you step off on your left foot.

After several 30-second stays at the new six-foot distance, gradually increase the length of time you are leaving your dog on the stay. Build up to one minute from six feet by the end of the week.

People, Places, And Things: Do some stays near distractions. Work in different areas and near people and animals to make sure your dog understands that the “Stay” rules apply in distracting situations.



After the first two days, drop the signal when you step off. Keep the leash slack.

Command: Left Turns at Heel

Objective 1 — Add left turn for forging at heel

Some dogs will heel just far enough forward that they will be in your way if you turn left, while others will “heel by feel,” keeping body contact with your left leg so they don’t have to watch you.

A big left turn into your dog will correct both of these. From the heel, pivot on your right foot and step off big on the left; e-tap when your leg is bumping into your dog. The combination of your leg, the e-tap, and his realization that he needs to avoid that turn will ensure that your dog doesn’t heel forward enough to be in your way.

Review

1) Sit-Stay

1 First two days: 15-second Sit-Stay, standing directly in front of the dog.

2 Third / fourth days: 30-second Sit-Stay, one step in front of your dog on a slack leash; use distractions.

3 Fifth day: One-minute Sit-Stay on a slack six-foot leash; use distractions.

2) Left Turns at Heel

1 Add left turn for forging or crowding at heel.

Week Three

WEEK THREE



Command: Down; Kennel Into Car

Objectives: By the end of week three, your dog should be able to do a “Down” on command; a send to crate on “Kennel” from 10 feet away around distractions; and Sit-Stay on the ground. Continue work on “Heel,” “Here,” and “Sit.”

Command: Down

Objective — “Down” on command

Stop at heel. After praising for a good automatic sit, turn, kneel, and face your dog. Hold a short grip on the leash with your left hand and place your left forearm over your dog’s back at the shoulders. With your right hand, reach behind the front leg and take hold high up on the left leg, palm forward. Pull his legs forward as you press down on his back and place your dog on the ground — e-collar tap as you do. Praise him when he is down, then stand and heel off.



When your dog is melting into the down you can add the command “Down” as you place your dog. When he is downing quickly on command, stop bending over to place him but be prepared to step in to back up your e-collar tap with leash guidance if he doesn’t down without you placing him.



Begin Down-Stay as soon as your dog will down on command with you standing, not bending over. He already knows “Stay” from your work on Sit-Stay.



Some handlers will find placing their dog to down on a table easier than working with the dog on the ground. The mechanics for placing are the same.



Most dogs seem to enjoy an elevated table for stationary work. Maybe they like the view.

Command: Kennel

Objective — “Kennel” into and out of the car

It can be dangerous for your dog to jump out of or into your car as soon as you open the door. Work in a safe area away from traffic and teach him with your “Kennel” and “Sit” commands to wait for your direction to enter or exit your car.

Have your dog do some stays in the car where he will ride. It’s much easier and safer to teach him to stay when you don’t have to watch traffic and drive. Your dog knows “Stay” and “Kennel”. Teach him that the same rules apply around and in the car. Work on a slack 15-foot line and e-collar tap on “Sit” for any break of stay or slow “Kennel” on command.



For his safety, do not allow your dog to bolt into or out of your vehicle.

Waiting At Gates And Doors: Do you find yourself passing through a gate or door only to have your dog charging through at the same time? Teach your dog to wait at gates and doors. Have him stay at the door and wait until you release him to enter. Use the “Kennel” command at the door or gate to mean “enter.”

Practice opening and closing the door while your dog stays. Never allow him to charge the entrance. If he does, stop him with your line and tap him back to the same place and position you first left him.

Command: Here

Objective — “Here” on longer walks

Your dog should be reliable now on the recall or “Here” command. It’s time to incorporate this into life outside the training pattern. Have your dog wear a 15-foot line and go for a walk in a dog-safe outdoor environment. Allow him the freedom to explore and run about if he wants, but see that he stays within a predetermined distance. Wide open areas permit greater freedom than wooded ones, but for the first few walks keep him within 30 feet. When he exceeds this distance call and tap him to sit in front. Mix in a few stays after these recalls before releasing him with “OK.” You want him to relax and enjoy the world around him but also be ready to answer to your command at any time.

Review

1 Place to down.

2 “Down” on command.

3 Start Down-Stay.

4 Begin to “Kennel” into and out of car.

5 Introduce Sit and Wait at doors and gates.

6 Long walks at liberty

- Your dog should wear the 15-foot line on these walks, longer if you think you need it.
- Decide in advance how far you will allow your dog to wander from you and then recall on command with tap every time he exceeds this distance (I use 30 feet).
- Periodically call your dog to heel and have him do a short “Stay” before resuming your walk.

Week Four

WEEK FOUR



Objectives: Polishing

There are no new commands to introduce this week, just polishing work on exercises your dog knows. If you haven't done so before now, make a special effort to work in several different areas this week. Show your dog that his newly learned way of life is not restricted to one training field or your backyard.

Review

1 Continue to polish the work on "Heel," "Here," "Sit," and Finish.

2 Send to the crate on "Kennel" from 15 feet away.

3 Sit-Stay on the ground
- Build to three minutes from 15 feet away on a long line; use distractions.
- On the six-foot leash add physical examination by others on Sit-Stay; include touching his feet, ears, and teeth.

4 Down-Stay
- Build to five minutes from 15 feet away on a long line; use distractions.

5 Continue to "Kennel" into and out of cars.

6 Continue Sit and Wait at doors and gates.

7 Long walks at liberty
- Periodically call to heel and do a short "Stay" before resuming walk.

The “Tap” Dance

Our end goal is that our dogs respond reliably to command (not to the e-collar tap) off leash around distractions. How do you know when it's time to stop tapping on a command? Do you simply stop or is there a weaning process?

Teach the desired action

Tap and guide your dog into the desired response. Stop tapping as soon as your dog completes the action.

Add a command

When you first teach each new command, tap with the e-collar every time you give the command and stop when your dog begins to obey. This rewards your dog every time he chooses to obey and ensures the fastest learning. However, if you continue to reinforce every command with the e-collar and then abruptly stop using the e-collar for this command, your dog's trained response fades quickly. If you were to stop your work at this point your dog would be e-collar dependent. To prevent this:

Phase out the e-collar

Once the dog knows the proper response to a command and has many repetitions (several weeks of daily training using the new command), begin to e-collar tap on every other command, then two in a row, then every third, and so on.

By tapping on a variable schedule, your dog is reinforced frequently enough to continue to form proper habits of obedience, but he never knows which repetition of a command will be reinforced, so he learns to work harder and faster even when you don't tap. He becomes obedient to your command, not the e-collar.

Finally, stop tapping on command and only tap for disobedience or refusals.

Once your dog knows a command, NEVER repeat a command without adding e-collar taps

If your dog takes the absence of the e-collar tap or the presence of a distraction as an excuse to refuse to obey a known command, repeat the command and begin tapping. If disobedience to a known command only results in another command, your dog is no more likely to obey that command in the future.

During training, do not give any commands when your dog is not wearing the e-collar

If you give commands when you are unable to control the results of your dog's actions you are teaching your dog that obedience to command is optional. Dogs aren't naturally "collar wise" — they are taught that.

Congratulations!

If you have worked through the program, you have accomplished a level of control over and freedom for your dog that few people ever know.

The end of the course is just the beginning of a whole new way of life for you and your dog. In addition to periodic tune-up training sessions, remember to look for ways to incorporate training into daily life outside the training session.

Pager Mode

THE NON-STIMULATING PAGER MODE

Your Dogtra's Pager function can serve as a silent command or as a reward signal. Decide which of these best suits your needs and do not attempt to train both responses to the Pager or change from one to another.

The Pager as a Silent Command

It is easy to teach your dog to recognize the Pager as a silent command. However, it is difficult to teach a dog more than one action in response to the Pager. Decide in advance which action you wish to teach and do not try to add or change responses.

We will teach a recall response to the Pager as an example, but the basic steps are the same for any command your dogs knows.

Pair the Pager with a known verbal command and response

First, follow the instructions given in this manual for teaching your dog to come when called. When he will respond reliably in distracting situations to your recall command, you are ready to teach him to respond to the Pager vibration.

Start in an area of low-level distraction. Your dog should be wearing his e-collar and a choke chain or flat buckle collar. Attach a long, light line to this second collar.

Push down and hold the Pager button on the transmitter. When your dog notices the vibration, release the Pager button, give your verbal command "Here," and begin tapping on the Nick button. As soon as your dog moves toward you, stop tapping and praise him. Have him sit when he gets to you. Praise him and then give him your release command such as "OK." Allow your dog to relax and return to exploring the area. Repeat.

After a few repetitions, you will see that your dog begins to come to you when he feels the Pager and before you can give your recall command. He has shown you that he understands that the vibration from the pager means the same thing as the verbal command. You are ready to drop the verbal command.

Drop the verbal command

With your dog exploring on the light line and wearing his e-collar, push and hold the Pager button for two seconds. Release the Pager button and without giving any verbal command, begin tapping on the Nick button. As soon as your dog moves toward you, stop tapping and praise him. Praise him when he gets to you. If your dog does not respond correctly, use the line to guide him toward you. When your dog shows that he understands how to respond to the Pager without the verbal command, you are ready to begin using the Pager as a command in training situations around stronger distractions.

Review

- 1** Decide on one and only one response you want from your dog to the Pager.
- 2** Teach your dog the desired response to a verbal command first.
- 3** Pair the Pager vibration to the verbal command and response.
- 4** Finally, drop the verbal command.

Conditioning the Pager as a Reward

Initially, the vibration from the Pager is perceived as neither good nor bad by your dog. You must condition your dog to recognize the Pager sensation as a signal that a reward is coming.

To start conditioning choose a high-value reward for your dog. This could be a food treat, a chance to wrestle with a tug toy, or the opportunity to retrieve a ball or bumper.

Start with your dog on a light line or leash close to you in a non-distracting environment. Depress and hold the Pager button down. When your dog shows you that he felt the vibration, give him his treat or toy, or throw his retrieve object.

The sequence is: first, your dog recognizes the vibration, and then his treat, tug, or chance to retrieve follows closely after. The reward must closely follow your dog's recognition of the vibration from the Pager so that he will pair the vibration with his reward. Repeat.

Do this 8 to 10 times in each of the first few sessions to condition your dog to recognize the Pager as a reward signal. When you see your dog begin to respond with excitement when he feels the pager, you are ready to begin using the Pager in training.

Using the Pager to reward

You can use the Pager when teaching new behaviors to mark or identify exactly the behavior you want to reward. Additionally, you can use the Pager periodically as a reward for good performance on known commands. Be sure to follow every use of the pager with his treat, toy, or retrieve.

Your dog will know a reward is coming when he feels the Pager and will often stop what he is doing to look for the reward. Use the Pager at the end of the action you want, not in the middle.

Using the Pager to mark the correct response for your dog has distinct advantages over rewarding with food or your dog's toy alone. These are:

Timing

The Pager lets you time the vibration to precisely match your dog's correct action. If you toss food to reward him, he almost certainly will have completed the correct action and moved on to another possibly undesirable action by the time the food treat gets to him.

Distance

The Pager on the Dogtra systems can work at farther distances. In contrast, your dog must be very close by for you to reward with food or a toy.

Direction

Your dog does not have to be looking at you to reward him with the Pager and so it does not encourage looking back as if for a treat.

Review

1 First, use the Pager and reward.

2 Then, once your dog knows that the Pager signals that a reward is coming, you can use the Pager to signal or mark exactly which action or behavior brings the reward.

Once you have conditioned your dog properly to the Pager, you can use the Pager when teaching new actions as well as rewarding trained responses.

Problem Solving

Dog-on-dog or dog-on-handler aggression can be dangerous to address.

- Seek professional help; do not try to fix these problems yourself
- Find a professional with a track record of resolving such issues

Dogs need exercise and mental stimulation

Many problem behaviors are a result of boredom. Your dog will enjoy the mental stimulation and increased interaction with you that comes from basic obedience training. Additionally, games such as Frisbee or retrieving a ball are good ways to exercise your dog and provide a healthy outlet for his energy.

It is easier to prevent a bad habit from forming than to correct it later

Some cute puppy behavior, such as tugging on your pants leg or sleeping on the couch, is not cute when the pup is grown and weighs 60 lbs. Do not allow your pup to practice doing what you do not want him doing when he is grown.

One excellent way to stop unwanted behavior is to train an incompatible action

For example, many dogs jump on people to greet them. You can correct the dog for jumping up, or you can teach the dog to sit when he greets people. Teaching an action — sit on greeting — is positive; correcting an action — jump up when greeting — is negative. During training, your dog will learn to respond to both correction and encouragement from the e-collar, but it is always better to train a desired action than to correct the undesired.

Decide if you want to teach stop doing or not do

If you command “No” or “Out” and begin tapping after your dog has started an unwanted behavior, you are teaching your dog to stop doing the action on command. If you e-collar tap without command when the action starts and then stop tapping when the action stops you are teaching your dog to not do the act.

Intermittent correction makes behavior particularly difficult to eliminate

Once you begin to correct an unwanted behavior, DO NOT allow your dog the opportunity to participate in the action when you cannot correct him for it.

Guidelines for eliminating undesirable behavior

Set your e-collar intensity at your introductory setting. Watch your dog and when he begins an unwanted behavior begin tapping on the Constant button and increase the intensity setting if needed until your dog stops. Return the e-collar to your introductory and wait to see if your dog will try again.

To eliminate jumping up on you

As soon as your dog jumps up on you turn to one side to deflect the jump as you begin tapping. Stop tapping when your dog gets down. If it takes more than one or two taps to encourage your dog to get down or if you have to repeat this lesson often, set your intensity level higher to start.

To eliminate jumping up on others

Arrange with a friend or friends to help you with this. Try to set this up so your helper can walk from out of sight or from a short distance away. Walk toward your helper with your dog walking on a slack line but not at heel.

Be prepared as you approach your helper. When you are almost close enough to shake hands, give your dog a "Sit" command and tap. Chat a bit, then walk away. Repeat this several times daily until your dog takes the approach of others as a signal to sit and not an invitation to jump.

Next, set this up in your home. Enter the room with your dog on leash and walk toward your seated helper. Command "Sit" as you tap when you get close to your helper. Vary this and occasionally have your helper rise to greet you. With repetition, your dog will take the approach or greeting of others as a signal to sit and not an invitation to jump on them.

To eliminate unwanted chewing

Pups need to chew! Direct that chewing. Give your pup a few healthy chew toys. Do not allow your pup access to items that you do not want him to chew. Crate your pup if you cannot supervise him. Later when he has all his adult teeth, you can correct him for chewing on unwanted items.

When you are ready to correct your dog

Leave the object of your dog's chewing attention where he can get to it. Watch unobserved by your dog if possible, and wait for him to begin chewing. The moment your dog picks up the item, begin tapping. Your dog should spit the item out. If he was slow to drop it, increase the intensity setting.

You may have to wait some time before your dog tries again. Every day for a week, provide opportunities for your dog to chew when you can control the outcome of his attempts. Do not slip up and allow your dog the chance to chew when you cannot watch him. Crate him to prevent him from chewing if you are unable to remove the objects from his presence when you cannot watch him.

To eliminate digging in the yard

Put your dog in the yard where he likes to dig. Watch unobserved. Make sure your e-collar is set at a level you have found effective around distractions.

As soon as your dog begins to dig, begin tapping and increase the intensity setting while you tap until your dog stops. Wait to see if your dog will try again.

Provide opportunities for your dog to dig every day for a week when you can watch him. Do not allow your dog the chance to dig when you cannot correct him.

To eliminate unwanted chasing

The sight of something moving rapidly often invites a strong desire to give chase in dogs. This chase or prey response is instinctual and very strong in some dogs.

Instinctual behavior can be hard to eliminate, so it is best to offer an outlet for the drive that is healthy, such as flying disc or retrieving games, and tug toys.

To eliminate unwanted chasing, first make sure your dog is well schooled on the recall or “Here” command. Find situations that will entice your dog to refuse to come when called. With lots of repetitions, you will find an intensity setting that is right to persuade your dog to come when called no matter what he sees or wants to chase.

Then work on a long line and set up situations where your dog will give chase. Try to find areas where squirrels or other animals might dash by. Begin tapping and call as soon as your dog starts to chase. Offer many opportunities when you can control the results of your dog’s attempt to chase.

If your dog likes to chase bicycles, have someone ride a bicycle past your dog. For safety, work behind a fence and with your dog on a long line. As soon as your dog gives chase begin tapping and call “Here”. When your recall work on line has persuaded your dog he must obey in the face of the invitation to chase, you are ready for the next step.

Leave him in a yard or fenced area where you can watch him unobserved. Have your helper ride by on the bike. As soon as your dog starts to chase begin to tap; rapidly increase the setting if needed. Repeat daily until your dog takes the passing of the bike rider as a signal to relax rather than pursue.

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