



The British Veterinary Centre

# Information Centre

## Training your Dog

This can be one of the greatest challenges to new dog owners. How many times have we witnessed some unfortunate owner shouting across open space while their beloved pet completely ignores them? This is annoying and sometimes even dangerous.

There are various factors involved, including breed (different breeds have a different disposition towards reacting to commands) and past experience of the pet (punishment when finally caught will make the dog less likely to approach the owner next time - many people don't grasp this important point!)

### A few points will help you train your dog more effectively:

- Start with a fenced area so you have control and your dog is safe.
- Use a long leash in early lessons but only for safety - don't pull it to make your dog come to you during training
- Use a level inviting tone of voice and be consistent. Shouting louder will not help in the longer term.
- DO NOT GET ANGRY - it can be tough in the face of willful disobedience but anger will make your dog back off more.
- DO NOT PUNISH when your dog does not come to you. It is counter productive for this exercise.
- Use body language along with voice command. Backing away, crouching down and clapping your hands or patting your legs, opening your arms and even lying down on the ground will encourage your dog to approach.
- Praise strongly when he does approach
- Petting on arrival is effective if your dog likes this.
- Rewards with small food items, a game or a trip in the car, anything your dog likes, are also helpful. Do not show the reward before the dog gets to you - that would be a bribe.
- If you use a word that your dog has learned promises something (e.g. "walkies") you must follow through on the promise every time.
- Don't repeat recall instructions if they are not working - they will lose meaning. If possible walk away from your pet or take a wide circular route to approach your pet in a way that is not perceived as chasing.
- DO NOT CHASE - most dogs can outrun their owners if they so choose.
- Short lessons with happy endings are essential. Persevering until it is done right in one session is boring and counter productive. Puppy lessons start with just a minute or two, working up to ten minute sessions when able and then only if willing.

### **The Golden Rules - Do not get Angry Do not Punish Do not Chase**

For more information on pet behaviour counseling please contact us at the BVC.