



OBEDIENCE

Obedience forms the basis of all dog training. Regular obedience exercises help to maintain the dog's respect for his handler. This level of respect is vital to the efficient performance of the dog, both as a guide dog and when off duty in social situations. For these reasons, it is important to continue at home the obedience exercises learned in training; just a few minutes every day in the yard or driveway can make all the difference.

- When carrying out an exercise, remember to give only one initial command to the dog. If he does not respond, you must not go on repeating the command, but rather use appropriate physical correction and one repetition of the command.
 - Always bear in mind that the degree of physical control required is governed by your particular dog's sensitivity.
- When you and the dog are a new team, the exercises should be performed in an environment that is free from distraction; however, as the dog develops good responsiveness to your commands, it is a good idea to practice the exercises in more distracting environments. The self-control the dog practices in these distracting environments will help with self-control while working in harness.
- When practicing obedience routines, you should say the dog's name first to get his attention, then the command.
- For most of the obedience exercises, the dog should be on your left side with his right leg next to your left leg and should be facing the same direction as you.
- Do not overdo the obedience exercises. Five minutes is long enough for a session.
- Do not do the exercises if you are feeling unwell or upset.
- If the dog keeps lying down during the session, he is probably showing signs of boredom.
- The exercises should include the following actions:
 - Sit
 - Stay in sit position

- Down
- Stay in down position
- Recall
- Heel to left side to finish

Heel to Finish

- **Description** - If the dog steps out of position, you will get the dog in proper position on your left side.
- **Mechanics**
 - Say “Juno, heel,” as you step back with your left leg, and with your left arm gently apply leash pressure to direct the dog to come to your left side.
 - When the dog is by your left leg, step back into a normal position.
 - Once the dog is in the heel position, you should still keep a relatively short hold on the leash, but there should not be tension on the leash.

Sit

- **Description** - The dog will lower his rear end to the ground while staying in position by your left side.
- **Mechanics**
 - Say “Juno, sit.”
 - Reach down with your left hand to confirm that the dog is sitting and not standing. Note that you are not pushing the dog down with your left hand; you are checking to make sure that the dog sat.
 - If the dog did not sit, say “No, sit,” in a firm voice that is appropriate to the dog’s temperament, and give a slight tug straight up above the dog’s head with the leash.
 - If the dog is lying down by your left side and you want him to sit from that position, the command is still “Juno, sit.” However, you may have to make your voice a little more excited since the dog may be relaxed and comfortable in a down position. You can also put your leash in your right hand and use your left

hand to pat your left leg encouragingly a few times as you give the verbal command.

- o If the dog still does not sit, you can repeat the command and give a slight tug up on the leash, or take a very small step forward. Once you feel the dog move, be ready to physically check with your left hand that he is sitting and did not just stand up.

Down

- **Description** - The dog will lower his body to the ground while staying in position by your left side.
- **Mechanics**
 - o With the dog sitting or standing by your left side say “Juno, down,” and give the hand signal for “Down” with your right hand. The hand signal for “Down” is to point with your index finger toward the floor.
 - o If the dog doesn’t lie down, say “No, down,” take hold of the leash just below where it attaches to the collar, and give a slight tug in the direction of the floor.
 - o Praise for the correct response to “Down” should be calm; if you are too excited, the dog may pop up again.

Stay in the sit or down position

- **Description** - The dog will remain in whatever position he is in when you give the verbal “Sit” or “Down” cue.
- **Mechanics**
 - o With the dog sitting at your left side and the leash in your left hand, tell the dog either "Juno, sit" or "Juno, down."
 - o Give the appropriate hand signal for either “Sit” or “Down,” as you walk all the way to the end of your leash and then turn and face the dog.
 - o You can put a little tension on the leash so that you can feel if the dog gets up, in which case you will go back to the dog, put him back in his original position, and repeat the exercise.

- When you are ready to return to the dog, repeat "Sit" or "Down" one more time and return to your original position with the dog on your left side, both of you facing the same direction.
- You must always end the "Stay" exercise by either saying "Okay," which tells the dog that he can break position, or by giving him another command, such as "Here" or "Heel."
 - The dog should not be allowed to decide if the exercise is completed just because you return. The dog should not move until you verbally release him with an "Okay" or give him another command.

Recall

- **Description** - The dog will return to you and make physical contact with you by touching his nose to your left hand. The dog will stay close to you so that you can physically take hold of his collar. It is important that the dog has a positive association with you reaching for his collar in preparation for off-leash recall in an enclosed area.
- **Purpose**
 - Safety of the dog
 - Locating the dog in the house
 - Maintaining strong recall in case the dog ever gets loose
- **Mechanics**
 - With the dog in a "Sit" or "Down" position and you at the end of the leash facing the dog, say "HERE!" Make sure your voice is firm and loud. The idea is that the dog will come to you even when you are in a panicked state, e.g., the dog is running towards a road.
 - Hold your left hand at your side with a treat in your hand. Your dog should come back and touch your hand that has the treat.
 - Grab the dog's collar as he takes the treat and give generous verbal praise.
 - Eventually you will be able to build up the response so that you can practice in your home without a leash and then in an enclosed area outdoors.
- **Solutions to Poor Recall**
 - When you next allow the dog to run free, do so in an enclosed area where there is less chance of escape should the dog not respond to your previous training.

- Should any sign of a breakdown be seen, immediately repeat the sequence outlined above.
- It is important that the dog should not only enjoy returning to you but also feel a sense of urgency – hence the use of the lead to prompt a fast response.
- Meal time can also be used as an incentive to return to you.
- Please note that regular or excessive free running can adversely affect some dogs' work as it leads to anticipation, excitability, and self-interest. If you have any worries about the effects of free running on the dog's behavior, please contact Pilot Dogs.

- **Other Tips to Improve Recall**

- Try to either stand up straight or simply crouch down when the dog is returning. Do not bend over and reach out for the dog, as this presents a grab, which can put him off from returning to you.
- Try to keep your hands free of harnesses and leads, as this can also discourage the dog.
- If possible, avoid free running only in one place. In an unfamiliar place, the dog feels insecure and will always keep you in sight. For these reasons, it is also advantageous to keep moving rather than always remaining in the same spot.
- Never scold the dog when he returns to you voluntarily, even if you have waited several hours! Grit your teeth and give him a reward. Punishing the dog on such occasions could lead him to become frightened of you and take longer to return next time.
- Allow the dog to go several times before finally putting him back on the leash.
- If the dog happens to wander back to you without being asked, acknowledge the fact with some praise.
- It is permissible to get the dog to retrieve articles as a means of encouraging him to return to you, but avoid using balls, as these can lodge in the dog's throat and choke him. Also, it is inadvisable to throw sticks, which can cause severe injury.
- Always remove the working collar before free running, and replace it with the "play" collar.
- Remember to always be consistent, and do not hesitate to return to basics to retrain your dog if the recall breaks down.

Heel

- **Description** - The dog will walk next to your left side while not actively guiding you, without putting excessive pressure on the leash.
- **Purpose** - Allowing you to walk comfortably with the dog while he is not actively guiding (for example, when you are using a human guide or walking out to the relief area).
- **Mechanics**
 - With the dog on your left side, hold the leash in your left hand with your fingers resting inside the extended oval loop of the leash.
 - Say "Juno, heel," and start walking. It is important that you take the first step to initiate the movement.
 - If the dog pulls forward on the leash, stop walking, remind the dog "Juno, heel," and pull the leash gently straight back until you feel the dog return to proper position by your left side.
 - Most dogs will pull on their leash at first when they are excited, and you may have to stop walking and remind the dog of proper position several times the first few times you practice this exercise.