

# Agility: Can You Recall?

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Practice Makes Pawfect

A Recall (basically your "Come Here" cue) is very important in many dog sports. Obedience recalls are typically done with you facing your dog and the dog coming to sit in front of you. In contrast, most agility recalls have the dog coming from behind to your side facing the same direction you are. There is no sit or down involved because you are usually in motion and going to send them off in another direction. This simple move is

the basis for many of the agility skills such as a good start sequence or a blind cross.

Training begins with the dog sitting next to you on your left. Tell the dog to stay and take a step or two forward. Have a treat in the hand on the same side as the dog. Look at the dog over your left shoulder and release them from their stay with a verbal ("OK" or "Come" or "Fido"). When they get to you praise and treat from your left hand. Keep your body facing forward even as you treat and praise them for coming into "heel" position. Have them sit/stay again and take a few more steps and release to a reward again. After 3 or 4 successes coming to your left hand, try starting with the dog on your right and looking over your



**Recall Left**



**Recall Right**



**Practicing the recall**

right shoulder to call them forward to a treat in your right hand. Only reward them when they come to the side that you are looking over. Ignore if they come up to the other side. That just doesn't get the treat. Reset and try again. They will learn that they need to come to the side where they can see your face. After 3-4 successes on the right side take a break. In future sessions, add difficulty by 1) increasing the distance before releasing the dog or 2) start switching between left recalls and right recalls or 3) release while you are in motion and reward while still moving forward.

Once the dog is great at coming to the appropriate side, then try adding a jump. With the dog on your left side, put them in a stay 5-10 feet before a low jump, walk a

couple of steps beyond the jump, look over your left shoulder through the jump uprights to recall. Treat them on your left side same as if the jump wasn't there. If the dog runs around the jump, just don't reward. Try lowering the jump and setting them up closer to it. After a couple of successes on the left, try recalling to the right side. When they are successful, add more distance before and after the jump. Once the dog is consistently coming over the jump to the correct side, try setting them up at a slight angle to the jump. Walk forward past the jump where you can still see them through the uprights for the recall. When they are successfully coming to your hand over the jump at a slight angle, gradually add more angle. Eventually you want the dog to jump even when they are slicing diagonally over the jump. Practice

blind cross. Have the dog on your left as you leave them. Go forward at least 15-20 feet, more if it is a large or fast dog. Start by looking over your left shoulder to release the dog. However, immediately after you call the dog, turn your head to look over your right shoulder and have the treat in your right hand. The dog needs to come to the side you are looking over when they get to you. Work calling from left side to right and vice versa. Once they are doing that well with you standing still, then add motion by releasing and rewarding as you continue to walk or run forward. This is essentially a blind cross, bringing the dog from one side to the other as you move.

Working on your recall is always a good idea. And remember, dogs will always recall if they got rewarded for the last time. Happy Practicing!

on both left and right sides and angles. Keep the jump height low; the point of the exercise is the recall, not wearing out your dog jumping high.

In a different training session, you can start working on your

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