

## TRAINING WITH A LONG LINE

Long line training builds your dog's skills and confidence at a distance and leads to off leash obedience skills.

Long lines are a line with a clip on one end. They can vary in length from ten to thirty feet. Of course you can make your own with a clip and a piece of line any length you like. I like to start with ten feet.

Your dog needs to have basic obedience skills: come, sit, down, stay, to begin long line work. Take your dog to a place with some open space where you can work without the chance of getting tangled in things.

Start with "Come." Let your dog wander, letting out the lead. When you're ready, call him to you with enthusiasm. If he doesn't come running, gently reel him in, repeating "come" a time or two, giving him the chance to respond appropriately, praising when he does. Then let him wander again and repeat the process. Always praise for a good recall. As he progresses, let him move further and further away. You can also back away as he comes to you, making him come even further. Have some fun with the game of "Come" and your dog will enjoy it more. Do not roll up the line. Let the tail drag, concentrating on the line between you and your dog.

To work on sit/stay and down/stay, have the dog in the position you want to work on and back away, feeding the long line out through your hand, letting it have some slack but not enough to lay on the ground between you and your dog. Stop at some distance away and take a breath. Tell your dog "Good sit/down and good stay." Every time before you move you can remind your dog, "Good sit/down, good stay" so he knows he's doing the right thing and does not need to move when you do. Move away repeatedly, sometimes farther away, sometimes closer. Return to your dog regularly to praise the good behavior. If they start to move, say "No!" Return to them, put them back where they started and try again. The first time you try this you may only want to work for a few minutes and stop on a successful trial.

As they get better you can move farther away, and move more erratically, stomping feet and waving hands for distractions. You can stand still and do nothing. You can turn your back on them. Use your imagination remembering to return to them and praise when they do well.

Start with short sessions and build to longer ones, trying not to bore or frustrate your dog (or yourself). As their obedience with the long line grows you can walk them in open spaces with it, calling them back to you occasionally so they keep slack in the line, teaching them to be comfortable at a distance and to respond well while away from you.

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