

Here is your Top Tip number

7..



Top Tip #7

Recall. "Toby... COME BACK!!" ..

Hello Once more, and here is your 7th Top Tip.

And this one is probably in the top 5 of dog problems I get called about.

And that is RECALL.

So, without further adjure, let's take a look at what can be done to help with this common issue.

Regards... Glen Stanford.

The UK Dog Whisperer.

A lot of people seem to have a problem with recall. Their dog is having a great time at the local park, and finds everything much more interesting than returning to mum or dad for no good reason. Sound familiar?

Although this can be a frustrating problem for any owner, the advice I would suggest is relatively simple, but I will add at this point, that if you are unfortunate to have a dog with what I would describe as 'working blood', I know your patience will be tested to the limit. For those who are not sure of the term, I am referring to dogs that come from a long bloodline of working stock, particularly field dogs. They have been bred to be busy, and also to be able to go to work quite independently from a handler. A Springer Spaniel of this type for example, is bred to run around flushing birds, with boundless energy, completely wrapped up in its own little world. Not to be distracted by someone shouting and whistling at the top of their voice. So, you are going to have a tough time dissuading a dog like this to stop his activity, as mother nature and selective breeding made it exactly for this task in hand. But assuming you do not have a high endurance dog that can run all day, and is happy having a burst of energy at the local park, and still hasn't quite got the idea that sometimes 'playtime is over', then here is what I would do.

First, buy a 'longline'. These, as the name suggests, are long lines, or long training leads. I must admit, in all the years I have had dogs, I had never heard of them until I started working with dogs for a living. But I wouldn't be without one now. They are an excellent tool for this job, and worth every penny.

Basically, they can be any length from 5 metres to as long as you want, but I find 15-20 metres is about right. They can be of varying thickness (or width), and you will want to buy the one that is about right for your particular size of dog (because a thick 20m lead can get rather heavy when it is wet and muddy). My advice would be to only buy the cotton woven types. They are heavier than the nylon type, and probably more suited to a bigger dog, but they do not knot up so quickly, and they are much kinder to your hands. The nylon one can almost cut your fingers off if they slip through your hand at high speed, because your dog has unexpectedly run off.

On that note, here is a quick tip. Tie a knot about a metre from the end of the longline, and another right at the end. That way, if the line is slipping through your hand, you will feel the first knot slip through, and you can clamp down before you get to end of the line.

You can get these longlines most places, but I get mine from EBay for under £10, and like I say worth every penny, as it's got to be better than having to run around a park, or worse still, watch your dog disappearing over the horizon!

So here is what you do...

Let your dog burn off some energy running around, sniffing, exploring, or whatever. Once you see the general pace slow down a little, wait for your dog to be doing something less active, like smelling something. (There should be some slack in the longline, allowing you to walk 3 or 4 paces before it goes taught). Now is the time when you start leading the exercise. You turn away from the dog and slowly walk away from him. At the same time, give a good loud clear command "**COME**" or something similar, and keep walking. If you have taken up the slack of the line, and the dog has not paid any attention to your command, then repeat it, and simultaneously give a little tug on the line to

break the concentration of the dog's preoccupation. Not a hard yank, just a tap. Hopefully the dog will break away from its interest, and head in your direction, if it does, and walks close to you that's great. If it doesn't, and steers off at the last second, or runs straight past you, then change direction away from the dog, and repeat the process. You don't need to wait for the dog to be smelling something every time, but you don't want to be attempting this in the early stages while the dog is running around full of energy. Of course, you can enlist the help of some tasty treats to offer the most stubborn dog, but I like to try it without treats first, because if you don't need them, why use them?

Another tip is beginning this exercise somewhere quiet to begin with, away from the excitement of other people and dogs. Get the training working consistently, before going to the local park, where all manner of temptations can lure your dog away from its attention on you. You will get there in the end, but for now, 'set yourself up for success'. Don't make it harder than necessary.

The message you are trying to say to the dog is *"I understand you need to run around for a while, but at some point, you have work to do, and that work involves following me"*

So, there we are. Something for you to try, and working a dog on a longline is something I do with all rescue dogs. It gives me a chance to watch their behaviour when I am not in close proximity. It can tell you a lot when you observe from a distance, rather than go straight into the typical close quarter obedience type training. But that's because I have to evaluate dogs that I have never met before. So, unless you have just got yourself a rescue dog yesterday, you should know your dog well enough to start the recall training straight away.

Good luck with it, and remember consistency and perseverance will pay off in the end.

Best Wishes... Glen



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