



Whistle Training

First begin by “loading” the whistle. This simply means that you show your dog that the whistle means something good will happen each time he hears the whistle sound.

To “load” the whistle, begin by blowing the whistle and give a treat. That’s it, no behavior is attached at this time – just whistle, treat and repeat. Do this several times so that your dog will make the connection that the sound of the whistle = treat or something good.

Avoid “over loading”, meaning do a few times and quit – follow up with another session later. The more you do it over and over and over will eventually wear out its welcome. Do the “loading” exercise three or four times in a training session then stop. Do two or three sessions throughout the day.

The next step is to start blowing the whistle from a few feet away from your dog. Once the whistle sound is made say your dogs name, happily – when your dog comes to you for the treat (remember whistle = treat) say “good boy” and reward.

If your dog does not come right away then move a step closer and repeat the process. If you find that you are repeating over and over without success then you have gone too far too fast for your pup.

As you practice slowly build on the successes of the previous sessions. Practice the whistle recall at increasing distances – always with in sight of your dog in the beginning. As the recall (in sight) becomes reliable start whistling from around the corner or another room. “Hide and Seek” is a great learning game for your dog – don’t forget the rewards!

It is important to remember that when training your dog practice in different locations and at increasing distractions. When locations and distractions change be prepared to take a few steps backwards – attention will decrease when distractions increase.

Don’t give up and have fun! Learning new things and generalizing commands can be a slow process – but once the connection is made your pup will want more and more fun and games with you. The sky is the limit!

Kelly Spencer, CPDT
www.welltrainedfamilydog.com