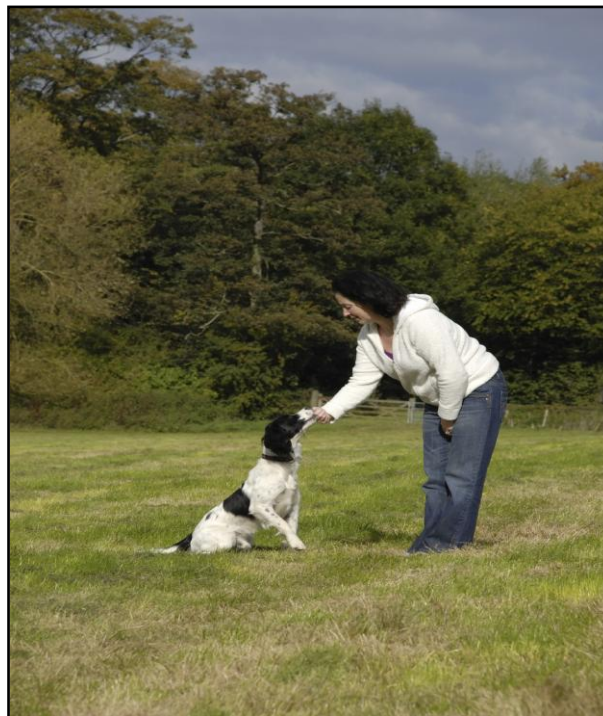


Getting your dog to come back to you when you want him to!

Top Tips:

- 🐾 **Always** praise and reward your dog for coming to you.
- 🐾 **Never** punish your dog when he comes back to you – no matter how long it has taken him.
- 🐾 **Train and practice as much as possible. Build up the distractions very gradually.**
- 🐾 **Do allow him some time to greet and play with other dogs before calling him back to you.**
- 🐾 **Make it FUN!**
- 🐾 **Read on for more tips on teaching your dog to come back to you.**



When you want him to and not just when he's ready!

All dogs need a good run off-lead in a safe place at least once a day to help them stay happy and fit and to get rid of some of that excess energy that can lead to mischief making. However, it's an owner's legal responsibility to ensure that their dog is under control at all times in a public place – so being able to get your dog to come back to you when you call him is very important.

Stage One - introducing the basic idea that coming to you is a good thing

- Feed your dog normally (preferably at least twice a day) – if you are worried that your dog may be overweight, reduce the size of his main meals slightly during the training period. Your vet will be able to provide professional help and advice about your dog's diet - weight issues are best tackled early and veterinary nurse's often run clinics at vet practices.
- Find treats he really likes e.g. small pieces of liver, chicken, hotdog sausage or cheese. Keep a pot in the fridge, so you have access to treats at any time of the day.
- Pop some in your pocket and at random times, when you are in the same room, call him to you in a happy voice and give him a treat. After he has finished, say something like "good dog – off you go!".
- Repeat frequently during the day, for a few days, until he is coming to you quickly every time.

Tips for better success

- **Never train when he's hungry** - this can make him frustrated and it'll be difficult for him to concentrate.
- If calling "come" hasn't worked up to now, this is a good time to change it. Try "here" or even a whistle which can be easier for a dog to hear when out at the park.
- Once you choose a new command, stick to it - or you'll confuse him and he may never learn what you really want him to do.
- Even if he is already happy to come when you call him in the home, still do this initial bit of training and turn it into a great game for your dog. Skipping a stage may affect the rest of the training.
- Initially, walk your dog on a long or extending lead until you complete all of the stages.
- If you punish him in any way for not coming to you on a walk during this early training time, it may undo all the good work.

Stage Two – coming when he can't see you

- Now it gets even more fun for your dog! Do exactly the same as in stage one, but call him from another room or part of the house.
- When he comes every time, call him from the garden as well.
- Your dog should be having great fun by now trying to find you when you call him. Do this for a week and if he's coming every time when you call, you can move onto the next stage.

Stage Three – keep him guessing and he'll try even harder

- Change the type of treat from time to time and sometimes give him more as a big 'jackpot'. Other times reward him by playing a game with his favorite toy or just give him lots and lots of praise and cuddles.
- Change the reward every time that you call him, to make him try harder to get it right and hit the 'jackpot'. You can use this with training any command – not just the recall.
- When your dog understands exactly what the recall command means he should respond to it at speed, every time you use it. Now try it outside in public places.

Stage Four - the great outdoors

- Find a quiet area - other dogs running around may be a distraction. It's important your dog gets the command right every time at this point, then you can slowly build up to higher levels of distractions but only as long as your dog keeps getting it right.
- Feed your dog 45-60 minutes before training on walks.
- Keep your dog on the extending lead or long line, so he can't get away or out of sight. Let him go to the end of the lead and enjoy sniffing around.
- When ready, call him to you and wait. Don't pull him to you - he must come out of choice.
- When he does, give him his reward, praise, then "good dog – off you go!" and let him go off sniffing again.
- Repeat this several times during his walk, so that he learns that coming to you will not automatically mean it's the end of his walk.

Tips for better success

- Do this outdoors training for around two weeks and if possible, try to do it in different locations – i.e. the park, a friend's garden, a different park from usual, the woods, a country park etc. This will help your dog to learn to come to you wherever you are in the future.
- Never tell your dog off if he doesn't come to you on command. If your dog thinks that you are going to punish he won't want to come to you at all. Always praise him for coming to you, no matter how long it has taken him.

Free running – but still in control

- Once your dog has learned to return every time when called on the long line, you can try letting him off the lead completely.
- Initially try this in a quiet area, so he doesn't forget his training at the first sight of another dog.
- Again, build up the level of distractions slowly, so you can make sure he sticks to his training. If you are not careful, he could quickly go back to old habits.
- Let him have a play with other dogs if he's friendly with them. Call him after a few minutes; he should come to you if trained well.

- Once he knows his recall command, start to gradually reduce the treats, but always give treats occasionally.
- Try to have fun on your walks by taking his favourite toys and playing games, getting him to come to you and then letting him go again to play. If you keep his interest with enjoyable games, he won't want to run off in the first place.
- Walks are one of your dog's daily highlights – involve yourself actively and your dog will want to be with you.

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