

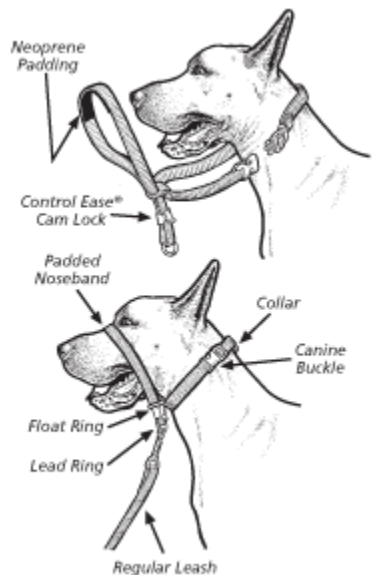
# How to train your dog with Control Ease® Head Collar

By  
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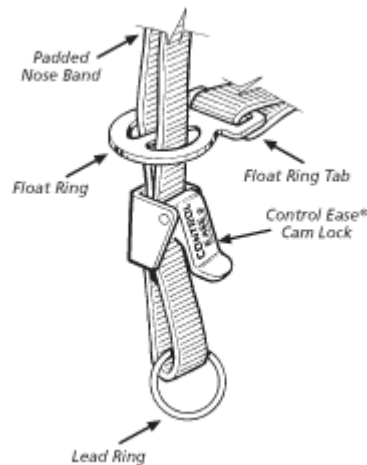
The information contained in this manual is presented as a general guide to assist you in establishing clear communication with your pet and to aid with his/her training.

## History

The idea of training animals with a head collar is not new. The basic principle of a head collar is simple enough; control the animal's head and the body will follow. Horse trainers have understood this concept for centuries. An added benefit of this principle is that little or no physical force/strength is needed on the part of the trainer to attain high levels of control.



When fitting with the Control Ease make sure the collar is not too snug. You should be able to fit 2 fingers in between the dog's neck and the collar. Cam lock under the dog's chin should be adjusted snug enough for the dog to pant. **Be careful not to over tighten.**



## Before Starting please remember:

Control Ease is the perfect tool to use in a training program that focuses on positive motivational training.

If your dog is food motivated, use small bite sized pieces of his/her favorite healthy treat.

When training your dog use praise, love, patience, understanding and rewards to make each training session a positive experience for all!



Avoid yelling or angrily scolding your dog as this may cause your dog to become fearful and can negatively impact your dogs training. Remember, patience and praise.

### **Getting Started**

Some dogs will accept a head collar with little or no complaint, while others need to learn to wear one comfortably.

**If you have a dog already used to wearing a head collar or she accepts the collar with little or no resistance, skip this section.**

If your dog constantly paws at the collar or rubs her head against various objects in an attempt to remove it, please ask yourself the following questions and then try a few preliminary steps.

1. Is the collar on correctly? Be sure to re-read the instructions and make sure it's not uncomfortably tight or too loose.
2. Assuming it's on correctly; let your dog wear the Control Ease® head collar for approximately five to ten minutes. During this time, be sure to praise, feed, and play with her to make the experience of wearing Control Ease® head collar extremely positive. This typically serves to distract most dogs, thus preventing them from attempting to remove the collar. It is also important to avoid taking the collar off just because your dog resists wearing it.

Any attempts to remove it should be addressed by distracting your dog even further. This can be accomplished through the use of a favorite squeaky toy, ball, or even a small super special treat. If she gets the collar off, simply put it back on and continue your lesson. Do not attempt any obedience during these initial sessions. Avoid scolding your dog for any reason and make the sessions as positive as possible.

When five to ten minutes have passed, remove the collar. After two to four sessions, most dogs will wear the Control Ease® head collar with little or no complaint.

When your dog reaches this point, skip the rest of this section and move to obedience.


If your dog is making some progress, i.e., is less resistant than when you started, try another four sessions and reassess. Most dogs will accept and readily wear the Control Ease® head collar after minimal amounts of training.

If after these sessions your dog is still resistant and has made little or no progress, try the "Extra Resistance? No problem!" training suggestions in this manual.

Remember: Never leave your dog unattended or tied-out, on your Control Ease® head collar.

### **Extra resistance? No problem!**

If you have a dog that is still resistant to wearing the head collar, don't worry. Teaching a resistant dog to accept a head collar is fairly simple provided some basic rules are followed.

1. Start by showing your dog the head collar. Do not put the collar on the dog. Give her small treats or some other reward when exposed to the head collar for at least two or three days. After that time, your dog should be extremely positive when she sees the collar.
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2. Once you see your dog consistently acting in a positive fashion, i.e., tail wagging, excited, when exposed to the collar; put the head collar on your dog, treat, and then remove the collar. Repeat this process three times per day for about a week. Assuming she remains positive, slowly get the dog used to wearing the head collar by increasing the time she wears it at the rate of one or two minutes per day. This means after a week's worth of work, your dog will spend anywhere from seven to fourteen minutes wearing the collar during each session. After seven days, three sessions will add up to anywhere between twenty-one to forty-two minutes per day.
  3. After seven days of wearing the Control Ease® head collar, start attaching a leash to the head collar when the dog is wearing it. Let the dog drag the leash around and treat the dog during this process. After a week of this you should be able to easily train your dog with the head collar.
  4. Remember it is critical for you to create a direct association between the Control Ease® head collar and fun quality time. To facilitate this you can try a number of things including:
    - A. If the dog likes the game, play fetch while she is wearing the head collar.
    - B. Take the dog for a fun walk when wearing the head collar.
    - C. Play with your dog and her favorite toys while she is wearing the head collar.
    - D. Give your dog a special treat while she is wearing the head collar.
    - E. Pay constant attention to her while she is wearing the head collar.

### **Obedience**

Training your dog to listen to simple commands (a.k.a. cues) with a Control Ease® head collar has never been easier. Obedience cues are important skills for all dogs to learn. They enable you to take your dog safely in public and could very well save your dog's life. The first cue to teach your dog is the sit.

## Sit

To teach sit, stand directly in front of your dog or with her on your left side. For food motivated dogs, take a small kibble sized treat and conceal it in your closed hand. If your dog isn't food motivated, try training when she's hungry or hold a favorite toy in your hand instead. Hold this hand approximately one inch in front of the dog's nose. Many dogs will look at your hand and/or perhaps sniff it. Once your dog has clearly noticed your hand, slowly move it up over the top of the dog's head. As you move your hand, be sure to keep it no further than an inch or so from the dog. Most dogs will follow your hand with their head. This will cause the dog's weight to shift backwards, at which point she will probably sit. As soon as the dog starts to sit, begin praising. The instant the dog sits, say "sit" and reward with the treat or toy.

*Common Question:* When I bring my hand over the top of the dog's head, my dog fails to sit and instead either backs up, jumps up trying to sniff my hand, or shifts to one side without sitting. What do I do?

*Answer:* Your hand may be too far away from the dog. Remember to keep it no more than an inch or so from her. You may also be moving your hand too quickly. Slow and easy is the key. Finally, initially try teaching this cue with no distractions.

If your dog still won't sit using this method, have Control Ease® head collar come to the rescue. To utilize Control Ease® head collar, follow the above directions with the following extra steps.



In one hand, hold the leash approximately three to five inches from the control ring. As you bring your other hand (with treat or toy) over the top of the dog's head, gently pull the leash out in front of the dog about six to eight inches. Then gently move the leash up and very slightly back to make your dog's muzzle lift up. This will cause her weight to shift backwards, at which point she should sit. As soon as the dog starts to sit, begin praising. The instant the dog sits, say "sit" and reward with the treat or toy.

## The four stages of learning.

One of the reasons people don't make as much progress in obedience as they'd like is because they don't know when (or how) to advance to the next level. To eliminate this challenge, dog owners need to understand the different stages of learning and teaching behavior.

Professional trainers and behavioral experts have identified at least four stages of learning. These stages are: acquisition, automatic, generalization, and maintenance. Each stage must be mastered prior to advancing to the next one. Let's take the sit cue as an example.

### *Acquisition*

Once you have mastered the mechanics of getting your dog to sit, she will need to learn that this new (sit) behavior is rewarding. She will also need to understand what sit means. How do you know when she's learned it? When your dog sits nine out of ten times before you complete the entire sit process outlined above, you are ready to move to the automatic stage of learning.

### *Automatic*

When you reach this stage, start giving the sit cue before using your hands or leash. When your dog sits each time you say "sit" without any use of hands or leash and you get this response at least nine out of ten times, you are ready to advance to the generalization stage.

### *Generalization*

It is here that the dog learns to respond in different settings and sometimes with different people. Your dog might sit in your living room, but will she sit in a group class with ten other dogs or when you have company? She may listen to you, but will she listen to other family members as consistently? When your dog responds 90% of the time under a variety of circumstances and with multiple family members, you can advance to the maintenance stage.

*Training Tip:* When the dog reaches the generalization stage on sit, you can typically start teaching simple heeling or loose leash walking.

### *Maintenance*

In this stage, you continue to work with the dog to attain as high a level of proficiency as you can under a variety of circumstances. Once at this stage, most people find it relatively simple to maintain an excellent level of proficiency, as long as they practice.

## **Simple heeling or loose leash walking**

These cues teach your dog to walk with you, as opposed to dragging you down the street and/or pulling you in every direction. Heel means your dog will maintain a constant position at your left side with his front leg roughly parallel with your leg. He will maintain this position regardless of whether you speed up, slow down, or turn in either

direction. A good heel can take time and effort on the part of both dog and handler to master.

Many trainers elect to teach a less rigid version of walking called “loose leash walking” (LLW). In loose leash walking, the dog is still encouraged to walk at your side, but given far more leeway regarding his position. In short, during LLW it’s ok for the dog to walk a little ahead or a little to one side, so he can enjoy the walk and be a dog. Regardless of which version you teach, the Control Ease® head collar will make the task much easier.

To teach LLW, have the dog start at your left side. Stand in one place and reward the dog with pets and occasional treats as long as he remains at your side. If he walks in front, to one side, or behind you, say nothing unless he gets to the end of the leash and starts to pull. At that point, say “no” and encourage the dog back to your side. Once at your side, reward with treats and praise. In the event your dog doesn’t respond well to simple encouragement, a very gentle guiding tug on the leash should start him back in your direction. Once he moves back toward you, start to praise. Most dogs will learn very quickly that it is best to remain close to your side, acceptable to wander off a bit, but not ok for them to pull on the leash. Once your dog masters this concept, you can start walking. If the dog remains at your side when you walk, he can get praise and treats. If he wanders off slightly, that’s ok too. The instant he pulls on the leash, keep walking, say “no” and encourage him back for more positive strokes.

The Control Ease® head collar makes teaching LLW a breeze. This is because any pulling on the leash can be eliminated by gently guiding the dog back in your direction.

To teach heel, stand with your dog at your left side, his leg roughly parallel with yours. Bring your hand, with a treat cupped inside it, in front of the dog’s face. Once the dog focuses, i.e. pays attention to your hand and remains in the proper heel position, praise, say “heel” and give the dog the treat. At that point, release the dog by encouraging him to get up and move around. Then repeat the process. Do this until you can say “heel” and the dog assumes the proper position. Once that occurs, you’re ready to start walking.

To walk, step forward with your left foot and in a happy positive tone encourage your dog to follow you. Remember to keep your hand in front of the dog’s face. Take one giant step forward and give your dog the treat when he follows. Then repeat the process. Do this for ten or fifteen steps in a row. After four or five days, start taking two steps instead of one. If the dog has no problem with that, graduate to three, five, ten, and then twenty. Remember to give the treat after the dog follows, not before. By the time you reach twenty steps, your dog should have no problem walking right next to you. Regardless of how many steps you take, it’s important to remember you are the leader, so walk with determination and don’t hesitate as you move forward. When your dog is at your side, praise continuously.

Although it is normal you to instinctively keep pressure on the leash, resist this temptation. Remember, Control Ease® head collar is designed to place guiding pressure on the back of the dog’s neck and his muzzle if he is not in the proper position. As such,

it is vital that you avoid putting pressure on the collar by holding the leash tightly when your dog walks properly. One way to avoid holding the leash tightly is to make sure your leash hand is held at your side with your arm fully extended. Control Ease's design makes old fashioned "leash pops" obsolete. Leash pops, which involved a sharp jerking motion on the leash, were often used with old style choke chains. That type of correction is totally unnecessary with Control Ease as a gentle guiding motion is all that is needed.

*Training Tip:* When giving the "no" correction, it is neither necessary, nor desirable to yell at your dog.

If your dog doesn't want to walk with you or lags behind you, make sure to enthusiastically praise any attempts on his part to walk. Remember, not all dogs are food motivated. The key is to find something your dog loves. For many dogs, it's not a treat, but a toy. If your dog falls into this category, keep the toy in your hand and let him play with it after successfully following you for one, two, five, ten, and twenty steps. Many handlers make the mistake of stopping when they see their dog doesn't want to walk. If you do this, your dog will learn all he has to do to stop you from walking is to stop walking himself. Instead, walk with determination. Remember to praise any steps your dog makes in your direction.

If your dog pulls ahead, be sure to hold the leash steady. Doing so will result in a gentle pull as the dog reaches the end of the leash. When this occurs, give the dog the "no" cue. This combined with a gentle pull typically causes most dogs to turn their head in your direction. At that point, loosen the leash and as the dog slows slightly (and stops forging ahead) offer praise. When the dog moves back to the proper position, reward with a treat. Remember to walk at your regular pace. Don't speed up to keep pace with your dog.

### **Teaching Sit-Stay**

The stay cue is important for every dog to learn, as a consistent sit and down-stay can be extremely useful in real life situations. For example, having your dog stay before opening a front door or requesting your dog sit and stay just prior to a guest approaching can really come in handy. The sit-stay cue teaches the dog to sit and remain in position until a release cue is given. Down-stay means the dog remains in the down position until a release cue is given. Please note: your dog should be completely used to wearing the Control Ease before attempting to teach this cue. Additionally, since the stay concept requires a bit of focus on the part of your dog, it is best the dog already has a working understanding of the sit, down, and ideally heel/loose leash walking cues prior to teaching stay.

#### Starting off: How to teach the sit-stay and release cues

To teach sit-stay, start by putting some of your dog's favorite treats in your pocket. If you're worried about treats staining your clothing, consider a treat pouch. Regardless of what you put them in, don't let the dog see you conceal the treats. Granted, some dogs may smell the treats, but it's much more difficult to teach this cue if the dog sees you

conceal them as well. Next place your dog on a leash and Control Ease. Then take him to an area with no distractions. The training area should be enclosed. This is important as you will initially teach stay by putting the dog in a corner. This may sound funny, but the reason is the corner makes it easier for most dogs to stay and far less likely they'll try to escape.

Once in the training area, have the dog assume the heel position. This means he stands at your left side, his shoulder roughly even with your knee. Since he's in the corner, this will mean your back will be against the wall. Have the dog sit, praise him and once he is focused on you, bring your right hand across your body with your palm directly facing the dog's muzzle to within approximately one or two inches of his face. Most dogs will simply look at your hand and remain in the seated position. Be careful not to bring your hand too quickly toward the dog or it may cause him to flinch and stand up. While the dog is still focused on you, step away leading with your right foot, pivoting on your left foot so that you're facing the dog while bringing your palm up. Your hand should remain one or two inches from the dog's face. Please note the palm up stay "hand signal" resembles signaling someone to stop. While standing directly in front of the dog, make and maintain eye contact. Slowly drop your hand back to your side and silently count to three. Then give your dog a release cue.

Your release cue can be anything from "OK" to "take a break." If the dog remains in the sit-stay position after you give the release cue, gently coax the dog from the sit-stay. When he stands up, say "good" which clearly communicates to the dog he's done the right thing. This is called "marking the behavior." After marking, reward with a small treat. If the dog gets up on his own after hearing the release, immediately mark and reward. The reason we teach a release cue before we teach the stay cue is because it is easier for most dogs to grasp the concept of release. Many people who are used to the old style compulsion training method for teaching stay initially find this a bit different. Please try it and you'll find it works really well in almost every case.

If at any time before the release cue is given your dog breaks the stay, gently guide the dog back to where he was sitting and repeat the process. If after three times he still breaks, reduce the amount of time you're expecting him to stay to one or two seconds. Teach this two times per day for approximately ten stay and release sequences per time.

#### Introducing the stay cue and adding time

When your dog is repeatedly successful (90% of the time) with the current amount of staying time for at least one day, increase the time by a five second increment. When you get 90% consistency at this level for a day, try two new things.

One, with your dog still at your left side, give the stay cue at the same time you bring your right hand across your body with your palm directly facing the dog's muzzle to within approximately one or two inches of his face. Then step off with your right foot pivoting to face the dog. Please note: Since this is the first time your dog is actually hearing the stay cue, you only want to give it if the dog is actually staying. After telling

the dog to stay and reaching whatever time goal you've set, mark and reward the dog. If the dog moves from the sit-stay position before being released, simply say "eh, eh," gently reposition the dog in the stay position and repeat the stay sequence.

Two, add another five seconds. Work this until you can get to thirty seconds. When this occurs, you're ready for the next level.

#### Introducing more time plus distance to the sit-stay.

At this level, your dog already understands the stay concept and will consistently comply with the cue for up to thirty seconds. It is now time to add additional time and distance. To start, simply increase the amount of time your dog stays by ten second increments insisting on 90% consistency for one day before adding additional time. Your goal is to work to sixty seconds. When you can get sixty seconds consistently, you're ready to add distance.

To accomplish this, decrease the amount of time you expect the dog to stay back down to thirty seconds. Then giving the stay cue and pivoting directly in front of the dog, start to count. When you get to fifteen, slowly take a giant step backwards. At this point some dogs will become confused and stand up. If this happens, gently say "eh, eh," guide the dog back to the original position and repeat the process. When you can take a giant step backwards and your dog remains in the stay 90% of the time, graduate to taking two giant steps backwards. At this point, you should be approximately six feet away from your dog. Once this is mastered, try moving your dog to a new corner and repeating the process starting with one giant step backwards. Once your dog is proficient for fifteen seconds at six feet in the new corner, try a third corner. When your dog is 90% consistent regardless of what corner you put him in, you are ready to try the stay cue away from the corner.

To start, put your dog in the heel position in the middle of the room. Then following the directions at the beginning of this article, say "stay," bring your hand to the dog's face, step off on your right foot pivoting to face the dog. Assuming he remains in the stay position, count ten seconds, give the release cue, mark and reward. 90% consistency here means you can add time and work up to thirty seconds after which you can include distance by taking a giant step backwards, graduating to two in very little time.

The next step is to make this a little more difficult. Challenge your dog by taking steps from side to side. Start six feet away and take a giant step to the right. Then try one back to center. Then to the left. If your dog has no problem with that release then mark and reward. Then try two giant steps in each direction. Continue this until you can stand anywhere around your dog from up to six feet away and your dog will remain in the stay position. Please note many dogs find it difficult when their handlers start to move out of their sight, meaning when your side steps take you behind the dog. Some dogs may shift slightly, but should not be allowed to stand up without being gently repositioned back to the original spot. It is here that Control Ease can be very valuable. This is because it is so easy to gently guide even a large dog with Control Ease. Once you can walk 360 degrees

around your dog in either direction for up to thirty seconds, increase the time in fifteen second increments to a minute or a minute and a half. Once here, you are ready for the next level.

As you increase time, you may elect to practice fewer stay sequences per lesson. After all, one stay sequence can take up to a minute and a half, so ten stays could take as long as twenty minutes. That's a long time, especially for puppies. Generally your stay training sessions should last seven to ten minutes, two times per day.

### Intermittent timing

Once your dog has consistently mastered sixty second stays, consider mixing the times up a bit. Many dogs have a great internal clock and after a while will start to anticipate how long you expect them to stay! To address this challenge, have your dog stay for sixty seconds, then try a twenty second stay, then forty, twenty, and back up to sixty. This will keep your dog guessing and much more focused on you.

### Introducing distractions to sit-stay

Ultimately in order for a cue to be "real world" functional, your dog must respond consistently around the types of distractions he would normally come into contact with in the real world. The key is to introduce the distractions gradually, remembering to start your training at a simpler level when adding greater distractions.

To start simply change the training environment to a similar one with no distractions. Why? Because it's sometimes difficult for dogs who have learned a cue in one place to respond consistently when the environment is different. This is why you taught the dog to stay in three separate corners before moving to the center of the room. Try a totally different room (you don't have to use the corners) and see if you can get your dog to stay for sixty seconds while you stand approximately six feet away. If not, decrease the time a bit and if necessary move in closer to the dog. If you are successful, start moving around the dog until ultimately you can walk a full circle from six feet away while the dog stays for at least a minute to a minute and a half. When you can do this, try yet another room. Generally when you can get your dog to respond to at least the 90% level in three separate non distracted environments, you're ready to work with distractions.

Note on distractions: The objective here is to set the dog up to succeed, not to fail. The best way to facilitate this is to carefully consider the types of distractions your dog would realistically come into contact with and classify them into two basic types. Type A are distractions that would likely make your dog break the stay. Type B are distractions that may cause your dog to lose focus, but not break the stay. Often B level distractions are simply A level distractions seen, smelled, and/or heard from a distance. For example: squirrels in a tree ten feet away might initially prove impossible for your ten month old puppy to resist. This would be an A level distraction. However, if you put your puppy by that same tree thirty yards away, while he might be highly distracted, the distance

might be great enough that he wouldn't break. This would make the thirty foot distance a B level distraction.

When working with distractions, start with B level first. To begin, decrease your initial time back to five seconds without distance. In other words, go right back to almost the beginning. If your dog stays for five seconds 90% of the time for at least one day, increase the time by a five second increment. When you get 90% consistency at this level, add another five seconds. Work this until you can get to thirty seconds. When this occurs, start to add distance much the same way you did at home. When you can walk 360 degrees around your dog, add more time until you can stand anywhere within six feet for at least a minute to a minute and a half.

Once your dog is 90% consistent around a level B distraction, slowly decrease the distance between the dog and the distraction. In the case of squirrels in the tree, instead of thirty feet you might try it at twenty feet. Remember to start at the beginning when increasing the distraction and work all the way through until the dog is 90% with distance and time. Then graduate to ten feet with the same rules in force. This method can be time consuming, but it will insure a rock solid understanding and foundation amongst a variety of distractions that in time will allow you to teach your dog to listen under most any circumstances.

## Weaning

For many years trainers believed using food treats in training was a bad idea. The belief was based on the idea that the dog would become dependent on the food and not want to respond without it. Nowadays, trainers understand that it is possible to get a dog that works very well without food provided you go about weaning or fading the food out properly.

There are many different ways to wean a dog off food. The key is to find one that works without negatively impacting your dog's performance. One of the best ways is called "upping the ante." Make a list of some of the things your dog loves. As you write it out, list items your dog is crazy about, those he likes, and those that he's less motivated by. For example: a food motivated dog might be crazy for a small piece of steak or a moist dog treat and not be motivated much at all by a dry dog biscuit. The same thing goes with a play motivated dog. Some dogs go crazy over the opportunity to chase a ball, like a squeaky toy and have very little interest in a tug toy. Please note these are your dog's preferences, not yours. We're looking for the things that motivate him. Using food as the best example, once you have your list of favorites, it's time to carefully observe and rate your dog's behavioral performance. Start off with your dog's strongest stay response. That will probably be stay with little or no distractions. If you look carefully, you probably notice that some of your dog's responses are better than others. When you give the stay cue, your dog might stay while remaining extremely focused on you for at least a minute and a half. At other times, your dog's attention may wander, he may shift positions, etc. This second example would clearly be rated substandard when compared to the first one. To start weaning food, stop rewarding lackluster responses and instead give a super special treat for a great response. Since not every response will be great, this will automatically reduce the number of times you reward the dog with food. A word of caution. Don't set the standards so high that your dog practically never earns the reward. Ideally, your dog should get the food at least 80% - 90% of the time when you first start off on the weaning process. Most dogs will quickly respond by improving their performance to earn the food. When this occurs, raise your performance expectations. For example: your dog now has to stay on cue and remain focused on you for the entire time he stays, as opposed to maybe half the time. If the dog looks away or loses focus during that time, you can mark at the end, but not reward with anything beyond a pat. Again, set reasonable standards. Following these guidelines, you can significantly reduce the number of treats used in training in about a month. Most trainers elect not to completely wean their dog off food for the simple reason that there's no reason to if your dog performs either way.

While the above way is among the best, some handlers find it a little difficult to grasp. Another way to wean the dog off food is to simply and systematically cut it down based on repetitions. For example: in the beginning, you might do ten repetitions of the stay sequence using food every time. When your dog has mastered this, simply reduce to eight out of ten for two weeks. Then reduce to six out of ten for another two weeks, four out of ten for two weeks after that, until you don't use food at all. This way may sound simpler, but most trainers find it doesn't work quite as well.

## Off leash control

A word about off leash control. At the start of this article, it was suggested that the dog learn the sit-stay cue on a leash (typically six foot) and Control Ease collar. While it is always recommended that you walk your dog in adherence to local leash laws, not to mention being safe, some people find it necessary and desirable to attain a level of off leash control with their dogs. To accomplish this, several things have to happen. First, you need to avoid giving any cues off leash that you're not prepared to reinforce. This means not giving the stay cue off leash until you have reached an excellent level of control on leash around distractions. When this occurs, you can start working with the dog on the stay cue off leash with little or no distractions in a safe contained environment. This might be a room in your house or in a quiet fenced backyard. When working off leash, move back to the beginning and work your dog all the way through the process until he is perfectly responsive with distance and time. Once there, try different non distracted environments until the dog works perfectly under a variety of settings. Since most people's need for off leash control only extends to their house and yard, this is all our article will focus on. If you desire off leash control in a public place around distractions, you would be better off working with a professional trainer that can supervise and assist your attempts to attain that level of proficiency. Remember, have fun. Good training is all about patience and love.

## **Teaching Down**

Teaching your dog to lay down on cue can be important. This is because often times down is paired with stay making it an effective and functional skill. A dog with a good down-stay can be taught to go to a spot and remain there for long periods of time. This is great when you're eating dinner and don't want the dog joining you at the table. It can also assist those people with relatively small living environments when they have guests, especially small children, in their home. Rather than have the dog underfoot, teaching the dog to go to a spot, lay down and stay can be most helpful.

Years ago the down cue was taught through the use of physical force. With head collars like Control Ease and the introduction of more humane training methods, it is no longer necessary to teach in this fashion. In fact, it is not only possible, but desirable to teach your dog to lie down without any physical force at all.

Before teaching the down cue, your dog should have already attained a complete understanding of the sit cue. For instructions on how to teach this cue, please refer to the How to train your dog with Control Ease® Head Collar manual. Additionally, your dog should be completely used to wearing the Control Ease before attempting to teach this cue.

## Starting off: Luring the dog into the down position

To teach down, start by putting some of your dog's favorite treats in your pocket. If you're worried about treats staining your clothing, consider a treat pouch. Regardless of what you put them in, don't let the dog see you conceal the treats. Granted, some dogs may smell the treats, but it's much more difficult to teach this cue if the dog sees you concealing them. Next, place your dog on a leash and Control Ease. Then take her to an area with no distractions. Ideally the training area should be enclosed and soft. If indoors, consider carpeting. If outdoors, consider grass. Try to avoid hard asphalt or rough surfaces. Additionally, be aware of heat and cold. Trying to teach your dog to lie down on cement when it's 100 plus degrees is not a great idea.

Ask your dog to sit. The dog can either be sitting in the heel position or sitting directly in front of you. Conceal a few small training treats in your hand. This is called "baiting your hand". Place your baited hand approximately one inch directly in front of your dog's nose and encourage her to touch your hand. Once she does, begin slowly moving your hand downward toward the ground. Her nose should remain right on your hand. Aim for roughly two inches in front of the dog's front paws. Once you have successfully lured the dog's nose to the ground, begin slowly dragging your hand along the ground away from the dog's body until she lies down. Moving your hand slowly is of critical importance. If you move it too fast, the dog may lose focus or stand up out of the down position. Assuming your hand is moving slowly, your dog's nose should stay on your hand the entire time you are luring her. If her nose moves away from your hand or the dog gets up, say "eh eh" and immediately stand straight up, moving the food treat out of the dog's reach. Then try the entire sequence again.

When your dog follows the food lure into the down position, wait for the instant the dog's front and rear elbows touch the ground, immediately say "good" and place several treats on the ground between her paws. Saying "good" as soon as the dog is in the down position clearly lets the dog know she has done the right thing. This is commonly known as "marking the behavior." Putting the treats on the ground is important as it teaches the dog to orient toward the ground and placing them between her paws encourages her to remain in the down position for a few seconds. This is critical as we want the dog to remain in the stay position long enough for you to be able to give her a release cue.

Your release cue can be anything from "OK" to "take a break." If the dog remains in the down position after you give the release cue, gently coax the dog from the down position, then mark and reward. If the dog gets up on her own after hearing the release, mark and reward. The reason we teach a release cue before we teach the down cue is because it is easier for most dogs to grasp the concept of release. Many people who are used to the pre Control Ease old style compulsion training method for teaching down initially find this a bit different. Please try it and you'll find it works really well in almost every case.

If at any time before the release cue is given your dog breaks the down, gently guide the dog back to where she was sitting and repeat the down process. This is where Control Ease is such a great tool, as it allows you to gently guide even the largest dog in a very positive and easy fashion. In addition, try making the dog really want to remain in the down position by giving her a small pile of three to seven treats every time you

successfully lure her there. If after three times she still breaks the down, reduce the amount of time you're expecting her to remain in the down position to one or two seconds. Over the next day or two or until the dog is easily lured, teach this two times per day for approximately ten down and release sequences per time.

### Goal

90% compliance, two times per day, ten repetitions per time, for two days at the following level. Your dog follows your baited hand into the down position, remains there for three seconds and responds to a release cue by standing or sitting up out of the down position. When you attain this, go to the next level.

### Exercise #2

In this exercise, we will teach the dog to lie down from a slightly different position. Teaching your dog to respond to this cue from several different positions will make it easier for the dog to respond in a variety of circumstances.

Bait your left hand. With your dog standing, place your baited hand in front of the dog's nose and allow her to touch your hand. With her nose stuck to your hand, slowly move your hand toward the ground. If her nose moves away or she moves forward or sits, immediately say "eh, eh" and stand up, moving the food out of her reach. Then try again. When bringing your hand toward the ground, remember to aim for the spot between the dog's front legs. This maneuver will cause most dogs to start lying down. Once your hand reaches the ground, slowly drag it along the ground away from the dog. The dog's nose should stay on your hand the entire time. The instant your dog's front and rear elbows touch the ground, say "good" (AKA mark the behavior) then reward by putting several more treats on the ground between her paws. Before she moves out of the down position, give her the release cue and mark and reward for a proper response.

This exercise is a little more difficult. Some handlers elect to mark and reward when the dog's front elbows touch the ground. This means she looks like she's bowing with her front paws on the ground and her rear in the air. It is acceptable to mark and reward for this, although once you get 90% compliance for a couple of days at that level, withhold the initial mark and reward until the dog completely assumes the down position.

Repeat this exercise until your dog will consistently follow your hand all the way into the down position, remain for at least three seconds and then respond to a release cue.

### Focus, the next step

Now that your dog is easily lured into the down position, it's time to teach her to look up at you as well. This is called "focus." To begin, lure your dog into the down position. However, once your dog gets into the down position, do not mark or reward. Instead, immediately stand straight up. The moment your dog looks up and makes direct eye contact with you, mark and reward. Then, bend down and place several additional treats

between the dog's front paws and return to the standing position. As the dog is finishing her last treat, bend down again and place a second small handful of treats between her paws and return to the standing position. Do this five times in a row. On the fifth time, let the dog finish her treats and do not offer her another or say anything. Most dogs will, upon seeing no more treats are coming, look up wondering when you're going to give them more. Once the dog looks up from the down position, mark this behavior by saying "good," put a few more treats between her paws and return to the standing position. When she finishes again, she should look to you for more. If she does, wait one long second then mark and reward, followed by the release cue, mark and reward.

Note: Don't worry if the dog doesn't look up at you. Be patient. She will look if you give it enough time. If she gets up out of the down position, gently guide her back to sit, lure her into the down and repeat the focus process over. This initially takes a little time and it's important to keep your food treats small. We're not looking to ruin the dog's appetite or create a weight problem by giving too many rewards.

### Goal

90% compliance for two days with two sessions per day of roughly ten repetitions per session. Your dog will easily assume the down position and offer focus behavior immediately once she is down, holding that pose for at least two seconds before being released. Once you've reached this level, you're ready to teach your dog to associate the verbal down cue with the down behavior.

### Asking for the down by name

Start off with something your dog already knows; being lured from the sit position to the down position. The only difference is that this time you will give the cue "down" immediately before you lure the dog into the down position. After two to seven days, most people find their dog starts to lie down after they hear the down cue. When you see your dog starting to lay down after the cue, but prior to your hand lure, move to the next step.

With your dog in the sit position, keep your hands at your sides and give your dog the down cue. Then wait two seconds. Many dogs will lie down and focus. When this occurs, immediately mark/reward and after an additional one or two seconds, give the release command and mark/reward again. When your dog will respond 90% of the time to the down cue by laying down and focusing for at least two to five seconds, as well as releasing on cue for at least two days with two sessions each day, you're ready to advance. Remember, ten repetitions per session.

If your dog doesn't lay down two seconds after hearing the cue, bring your hand in front of the dog's face and slowly lure the dog toward the ground. Instead of going through the entire hand luring process, stop once the dog starts to lie down and see if she will complete the behavior on her own. If she does, which also includes the focus,

mark/reward, then release and mark/reward again. When you get 90% compliance with a half lure for two days at two sessions per day, try again without any hand motion at all.

When your dog lies down on cue 90% of the time from the sit position, try the same position in another location. When you can get 90% compliance in two or three non-distracted locations, move on to teaching the dog to respond to the down cue from the standing position.

To teach down from the standing position, the same rules apply. For the first few days, give the down cue prior to your hand lure. When you see the dog responding to the cue before your lure, stop luring and with your hands at your sides, simply give the cue. If you need to go to a half lure, that's fine but only if necessary. When you get 90% compliance from the stand, try two or three different locations shooting for 90% compliance in all of them. When you reach this level, you're ready to introduce distractions.

### Teaching down with distractions

Ultimately in order for a cue to be "real world" functional, your dog must respond consistently around the types of distractions she would normally come into contact with in the real world. The key is to introduce the distractions gradually, remembering to start your training at a simpler level when adding greater distractions.

Note on distractions: The objective here is to set the dog up to succeed, not to fail. The best way to facilitate this is to carefully consider the types of distractions your dog would realistically come into contact with and classify them into two basic types. Type A are distractions that would likely cause your dog to not respond to the down cue. Type B are distractions that may cause your dog to lose focus, but not refuse to obey the down cue. Often B level distractions are simply A level distractions seen, smelled, and/or heard from a distance. For example: squirrels in a tree ten feet away might initially prove impossible for your ten month old puppy to resist. This would be an A level distraction. However, if you put your puppy by that same tree thirty yards away, while she might be highly distracted, the distance could be great enough that she would still respond to the down cue. This would make the thirty foot distance a B level distraction.

When working with distractions, start with B level first. To begin, have your dog in the sit position then give the down cue. Get focus for at least two to five seconds, then mark/reward and release. When you get 90% consistency in which your dog lays down on cue, focuses and releases, try another level B distraction. When she masters this, try a third. Once you successfully teach your dog to respond to at least three level B distractions, try level A distractions with the same rules in force.

To increase the duration in which your dog down stays, simply increase the time in which you expect your dog to focus and remain in the down position by five or ten second increments. Using this method, you can teach your dog to stay for surprisingly long periods of time. When adding time to the stay, it is best to start with no distractions and

only attempt to add time during distractions when your dog has mastered at least one to one and a half minutes worth of staying with little or nothing going on.

This method can be time consuming, but it will insure a rock solid understanding and foundation amongst a variety of distractions that in time will allow you to teach your dog to listen under most any circumstances.

### Weaning

For many years trainers believed using food treats in training was a bad idea. The belief was based on the premise that the dog would become dependent on the food and not want to respond without it. Nowadays, trainers understand it is possible to get a dog to work very well without food provided you go about weaning or fading the food out properly.

There are many different ways to wean a dog off food. The key is to find one that works without negatively impacting your dog's performance. One of the best ways is called "upping the ante." Make a list of some of the things your dog loves. As you write it out, list items your dog is crazy about, those she likes, and those that she's less motivated by. For example: a food motivated dog might be crazy for a small piece of steak, enjoy a moist dog treat and not be motivated much at all by a dry dog biscuit. The same thing goes with a play motivated dog. Some dogs go crazy over the opportunity to chase a ball, enjoy a squeaky toy and have very little interest in a tug toy. Please note these are your dog's preferences, not yours. We're looking for the things that motivate her. Using food as the best example, once you have your list of favorites, it's time to carefully observe and rate your dog's behavioral performance. Start off with your dog's strongest down response. That will probably be from the sit position with little or no distractions. If you look carefully, you may notice some of your dog's responses are better than others. When you give the down cue, your dog might take one or two seconds before slowly lying down, sniffing around a bit and focusing on you. Other times your dog might lie down instantly on cue, focusing on you for the entire time. This second example would clearly be rated better than the first one.

To start weaning food, stop rewarding lackluster responses and instead give a super special treat for a great response. Since not every response will be great, this will automatically reduce the number of times you reward the dog with food. A word of caution. Don't set the standards so high that your dog practically never earns the reward. Ideally, your dog should get the food at least 80% - 90% of the time when you first start the weaning process. Most dogs will quickly respond by improving their performance to earn the food. When this occurs, raise your performance expectations. For example: your dog now has to lie down on cue and remain focused for ten seconds as opposed to three. If the dog looks away or loses focus during that time, you can mark at the end, but not reward with anything beyond a pat. Again, set reasonable standards. Following these guidelines, you can significantly reduce the number of treats used in training in about a month.

While the above way is among the best, some handlers find it a little difficult to grasp. Another way to wean the dog off food is to simply and systematically cut it down based on repetitions. For example: in the beginning, you might do ten repetitions of the down sequence using food every time. When your dog has mastered this, simply reduce to eight out of ten for two weeks. Then reduce to six out of ten for another two weeks, four out of ten for two weeks after that, until you don't use food at all. This way may sound simpler, but most trainers find it doesn't work quite as well.

### Off leash control

A word about off leash control. At the start of this article, it was suggested that the dog learn the down cue on a leash (typically six foot) and Control Ease collar. While it is always recommended that you walk your dog in adherence to local leash laws, not to mention being safe, some people find it necessary and desirable to attain off leash control of their dogs. To accomplish this, several things have to happen. First, you need to avoid giving any cues off leash that you're not prepared to reinforce. This means not giving the down cue off leash until you have reached a high level of control on leash around distractions. When this occurs, you can start working with the dog on the down cue off leash with little or no distractions in a safe contained environment. This might be a room in your house or in a quiet fenced backyard. When working off leash, move back to the beginning and work your dog all the way through the process until she is perfectly responsive. Once there, try different non distracted environments until the dog works perfectly under a variety of settings. Since most people's need for off leash control only extends to their house and yard, this is all our article will focus on. If you desire off leash control in a public place around distractions, you would be better off working with a professional trainer that can supervise and assist your attempts to attain that level of proficiency. Remember, have fun. Good training is all about patience and love.

### **Jumping on People**

Most people have experienced an overly friendly dog leaping all over them. While some people initially don't mind, most recognize that the behavior can become tiresome over time. There is also physical danger when large dogs jump on small children or adults who may be unstable on their feet. People have been knocked down and injured by exuberant dogs, which is one of the many reasons why it's a good idea to teach proper greeting behavior.

When dealing with any behavior challenge, the key is to address the underlying cause(s). In other words, figure out why your dog jumps. Most dogs jump for several reasons. These include: being encouraged by their owners, wanting attention, and not understanding how to greet people appropriately.

Some people encourage their dogs to jump when they play rough games in which jumping is an acceptable behavior. Still others encourage jumping when they greet the dog in an excitable fashion and are inconsistent about when jumping is or isn't ok. For

example: they don't mind when the dog jumps on a weekend when they're wearing casual clothing, but get upset when the dog jumps during the week and they're dressed in nicer work clothing. In dealing with any behavior, consistency is critical. If you want to teach your dog not to jump, stop all rough games and any encouragement of the jumping behavior. It can never be acceptable for the dog to jump during the training process.

### *Jumping for Attention*

Many dogs jump because they want attention and most get it when they jump all over people. While there is nothing wrong or unusual with a dog wanting your attention, it is best to teach your dog appropriate non jumping ways in which to receive it.

To stop your dog from jumping, an appropriate alternative behavior must be taught. A good one is to teach the dog to sit as opposed to jump. The better your dog understands the sit command, the greater the likelihood of you successfully curtailing the jumping challenge. When your dog jumps, the best thing to do is to simply ignore the jumping behavior. Turn away, walk away, and say nothing to the dog. Most dogs will simply jump on you again. When this occurs, turn and walk away. You may need to do this four or five times, but eventually the dog will come back to you and not jump. When this occurs, praise. Then tell the dog to sit and when the dog sits, praise and treat. Although this can take several weeks, all dogs can learn that the best way to greet people is to run up and sit to be petted. Once you've taught the dog to appropriately greet you and family members, you can teach the dog to appropriately greet guests.

Since guests cannot be expected to train your dog, it will be up to you to do so. It is here that Control Ease® head collar can help. Make sure your dog is wearing a Control Ease and leash when she greets guests. Holding the leash in one hand, allow the dog to approach your guest. When she reaches the guest, give the dog the sit cue and encourage the guest to treat the dog for a proper sit. If the dog jumps, say "no" and gently pull the dog away from the guest. Then guide the leash forward approximately six to eight inches and slightly up and back to make her muzzle lift up. This will stimulate the sit response, at which point she can be praised and given a treat by the guest. If you can have a guest practice greeting the dog, this training process will succeed more quickly.

One of the biggest mistakes people make is not having the dog on the leash and collar every time she greets guests. Patience and consistency is extremely important during the training process. You should only consider allowing your dog to greet guests without the Control Ease® head collar when she has greeted all people appropriately with no mistakes for approximately four months while wearing the head collar and leash.

If you are working with a trainer, you may find their directions are exactly like this or a bit different. There is no one way to train a dog, but please remember that consistency, patience, love, understanding, and excellent training tools, like the Control Ease® head collar, will make the job easier and more rewarding.

Have fun and good training is all about patience and love!!

Steve Appelbaum is the President of Animal Behavior College, where dog lovers become dog trainers. For more information call 800-795-3294 or go to [www.animalbehaviorcollege.com](http://www.animalbehaviorcollege.com).

**Additional resource for training**

If you are interested in finding a local trainer near you, please go to [www.animalbehaviorcollege.com](http://www.animalbehaviorcollege.com). At the center of the page, scroll down approximately half way and click on “search the ABC Certified Dog Trainer directory”.