



Dog Obedience Training Lessons for Novice, Graduate Novice, Open and Utility

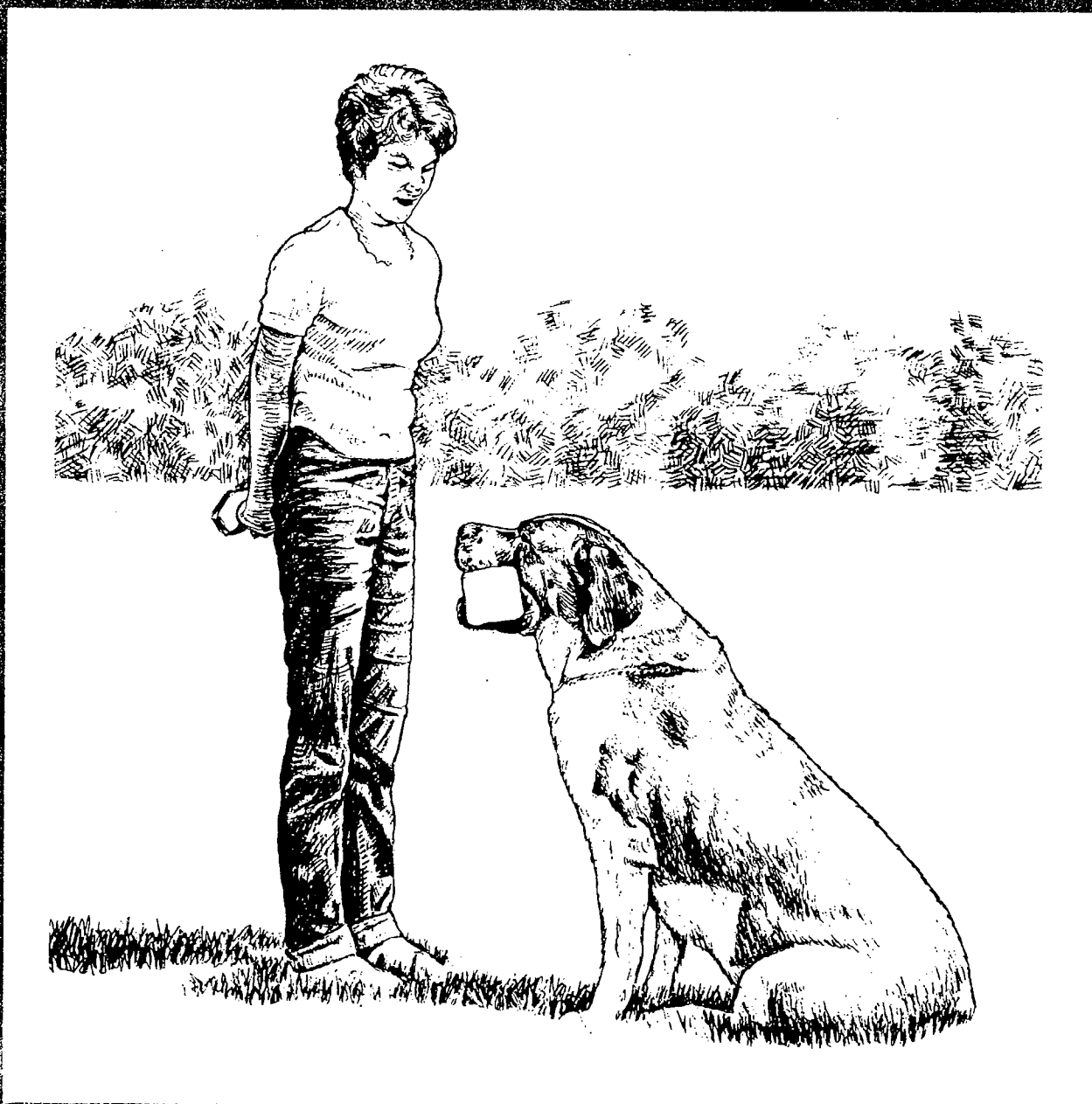


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Boys and girls who have a special talent for training dogs and who have a dog that has trained reasonably well in the Graduate Beginner class will enjoy the challenge of more advanced training. Many dogs seem to enjoy the exercises of advanced training more than in the Beginner class. Some dogs especially enjoy the jumping and retrieving exercises.

The 4-H leader may also find the challenge of advanced training more interesting.

Many boys and girls who train at this level will enjoy competing in AKC trials and will earn Companion Dog (CD) degrees and others as offered through the American Kennel Club. Through competition of this type you will meet other people who have similar interests in dogs. You will find these people warm and friendly and glad to exchange training ideas.

The Heel Off Leash

The Novice class differs from the Graduate Beginner by addition of the heel off leash exercise. Dogs should heel well on leash before starting the off leash heeling. Both the instructor and member may find it useful to review the training methods of the Beginner and Graduate Beginner course in the bulletin, "Dog Obedience Training Lessons for Beginner, Graduate Beginner, Brace and Team".

The Heel Off Leash

The heel off leash starts from the heel position. Unsnap the leash and have your dog sitting squarely at your heel.



Figure 1 - Before heeling your dog off leash, you may want to test him by hanging the leash around your neck.



Figure 2—Show confidence in your dog when he is off leash.

Upon the command, "Forward", from your instructor, step off on your left foot while saying the dog's name and "Heel". If he lags or heels wide, give him encouragement to heel by saying his name and repeating the command. If he bolts away, put him back on the leash immediately. Do not let him think you lack control over him because he is off the leash.

It is important that you show confidence in your dog when training but especially when he is doing exercises off leash. When you step off to heel, give the command in a confident manner and step out briskly. Do not hesitate and look to see if he is keeping up or your dog will almost certainly lag behind and stop. Do the heel off leash for short periods of time; then place him back on leash for more heeling.



Figure 3—Walk faster if your dog lags. Talk to him encouragingly and praise him when he does well.

Most dogs will become bored at some level of training. In the I.H. program, your dog will probably receive the Beginner's training the first year, the Graduate Beginner's training the second year and so on. Spreading out the training will help prevent boredom, but it may still be a problem in Novice and Graduate Novice courses. Training only once or twice a week or stopping entirely for a week or two may help a dog that is obviously bored with training.

The Training Schedule

The class should have nine weekly meetings of one hour duration. The instructor will usually review the exercises at the first meeting and determine the exercises in which each dog needs extra training. At the second meeting, the heel free exercise may be started. The instructor may teach the course so that each dog receives maximum individual attention with problem exercises.

Time should be devoted to teaching the correct manner of conducting each exercise. You should stand and walk arrow straight and look straight ahead while doing the exercises. When doing the recall, do not move your head when calling your dog or give a second command with your shoulders and hips when you finish your dog. Using correct posture will take concentration, especially when in competition. Execute the left and right turns and about turns sharply. Perform all the exercises in a pleasant but businesslike manner.

The Graduate Novice Course

Graduate Novice training differs from Novice by inclusion of the exercise, drop on recall. The long sit is three minutes and the long down is five minutes in duration, with the handler out of sight. Dogs will be scored using the Graduate Novice score card.

Heel on Leash, Heel Free and Figure 8

(This exercise should be practiced each week.) The heel free and figure 8 are combined into one exercise. Training methods remain the same. Remember to alternate the off leash and on leash training. If your dog lags when doing the figure 8, you may encourage him to go faster by taking short, quick steps especially on the curve where he has the outside path.

Stand for Examination off Leash

At this point in training your dog will probably do this exercise well. Repeat it often enough, especially with a stranger, to keep him performing well.

Drop on Recall

First week of training: Place your dog in the sitting position and step two or three feet away in front of him. While saying "Down", quickly raise your right hand, palm open, slightly higher than your head, pause for only a moment and bring your hand down sharply. If your dog



Figure 4—Drop on Recall. In the first week of training begin by standing only two or three feet away, gradually moving to the end of the leash.

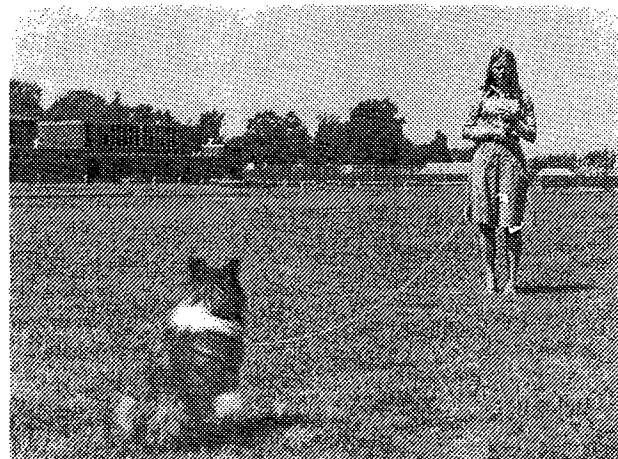


Figure 5—If he does not obey your command signal at 40 feet in the second week of training, use a lightweight cord for control.

does not obey, use your left hand to jerk downward on the training collar. After he has been down for a short time give him the command "Sit". You may need to give a jerk upward with the leash. Your dog should go down when your hand goes up. Holding your hand up for a moment the first few days of training may help him learn the signal, but it should soon be a quick up and down motion.

Vary your method of changing your dog from the down to the sitting position. Sometimes command him to sit when you are directly in front of him; other times go back to the heel position, pause a moment and then command him to sit.

After it appears that he understands the hand signal occasionally leave off the verbal command. Gradually move to the end of the six-foot leash and give the signal as a command, "Down".

Hold your hands together at your waist when doing the recall. Your dog may be tempted to nose them if you let them hang.



Figure 6—In the third week of training, teach your dog to drop from the standing position.



Figure 7—Sixth week of training. In competition you will call your dog and then drop him about half way.



Figure 8—Perfection.

Second week: When teaching the down, insist on an immediate drop, not a slow sinking to the ground. Do not forget the praise. This is most important.

When your dog seems to understand and obeys your command when you are standing at the end of the leash, you may then remove it and drop him at short distances, gradually moving to 40 feet away. If he does not obey when off leash or at a distance of 40 feet, place him back on leash and repeat the training. For more control at a distance, you may attach a 40-foot lightweight cord. If he does not work well off leash, you will usually make faster progress by placing him back on the six-foot leash.

Third week: The next procedure is teaching your dog to go down from the standing position. Follow the same steps for teaching him the down from the sitting position: Leave him in the standing position, step two or three feet away in front of him and give the hand signal and command, "Down".

Fourth week: Gradually move back to the end of the 40-foot leash, finally removing the leash and dropping him at this distance. Remember not to say his name before the command "Down".

Fifth week: Teaching the dog to drop in motion is the next step, but first be sure he understands the other steps. While heeling on leash, suddenly stop and quickly step backward saying your dog's name and "Come". When he starts coming toward you, stop suddenly and give the signal and command, "Down". If your training has been complete up to this point, he should drop on your first attempt. If he does not, give him a sharp correction by putting him down with a jerk on the training collar. After he has been down a few moments, give him the command, "Sit". Then step backward quickly and say his name and "Come". Continue backward until he is in full motion; then stop and have him sit directly to your front just as when doing a recall. Be ready to pull up on the leash to put him in the sit as he may have learned too well on the first try and anticipates a down command. After he has sat in front, send him to heel as the finish of the recall.

Alternate the down and coming to you as the recall. Do not allow him to anticipate commands.

Sixth week: The next step is taught off leash. Place your dog in the sit-stay and take a position 25 feet to his front. Say his name and "Come". When halfway to you, give the command and signal to down. Gradually increase the distance to 40 feet. Drop him at various distances. Alternate with straight recalls so that he will not anticipate commands.

If he slows down when coming to you in anticipation of a drop, start running backward and say "Come", encouraging him to speed up. Never drop him unless he is coming at full speed as it will only cause him to come in slower and drop without a command or signal.

Do not forget to vary the exercises to prevent boredom. Do not forget the praise.

In an obedience trial, you may use either the command or signal to down your dog. Using both is considered a

