

Why train recall?

So your dog will come when it is truly important.

The 5 rules of recall

1. *Never call your dog for anything unpleasant.* Such as nail clipping, bathing, or having his leash clipped on to go home from the park. In short, anything that might give him pause the next time you call him.
2. *Never call your dog if you are not sure he will come.* All recalls should be successful recalls. Work at your dog's level: If he has a kindergarten-level recall, don't give him a graduate assignment like being called away from a cat in a tree.
3. *If you call your dog and he doesn't come, you must make it happen.* Run over to him and put a treat in front of his nose, backing up as you get his attention so he follows you.
4. *Never repeat the command.* Resist the urge to call over and over and over. It only teaches your dog to tune out the command. Call once and, if necessary, use rule 3. Make the recall happen.
5. *Fabulous rewards get fabulous recalls.* If you want your dog to stop whatever interesting doggie thing he is doing and come running to you, make it worth his while. Use extra yummy treats—no dry biscuits here!—or a well-thrown ball, if that is your dog's fancy.

How to train it

Step 1: Call your dog. Cheerful tones often produce better results—and make sure you are loud enough to be heard, especially in busy environments. Remember to actually give the command (“Fido, come!”); your dog's name by itself is not a recall.

Step 2: Make yourself interesting. Clap, whistle, squat, throw your arms out, and cheer your dog in: “Great, great, faster, you can do it...” When he arrives, have him sit, then spill the treats or throw the ball. If appropriate, release him to go back to whatever he was up to.

Training Tip: Find an extra yummy treat your dog has never had behaviour but you think he will go crazy for (baby food, Cheez Whiz, liver paste) and hide it around the house. Once or twice a day when your dog is not expecting to be called, call him and reward him with the extra special treat.

Training Tip: When working outside, practice in enclosed spaces or on a 30-foot leash (long line) until your dog's recall is reliable.

For more information about Calgary Humane Society's classes, including Toto Recall (for off-leash parks), please visit www.calgaryhumane.ca. For more information about the City of Calgary's dog bylaws, please visit www.calgary.ca. If you witness a dog bylaw concern; please call 311.