

COME!

Not COME - when you've finished chasing that rabbit - but COME now! It could mean the difference between life and death. To teach this you need to enlist the help of someone else the dog likes.

Procedure

1. With your dog on the lead walk towards the friendly person.
2. As you near the friend tell the friend to crouch down and look inviting so that they grab your dog's attention.
3. As your dog moves away from you towards the other person say the dog's name in a commanding voice. If he doesn't turn round to look at you at once, then check the lead firmly and simultaneously command his name again. As he looks to see where the check came from crouch down and say COME in your jolliest voice. All the time he is moving directly towards you repeat the word COME (always jolly), if his attention drops from you then check him again with his name (stern voice), and repeat the command COME (jolly voice).
4. His name is always used to attract his attention in a commanding voice. The word COME is used to keep his attention and is always said in a kind, jolly voice.
5. Repetition is the key to this command. Weeks of lead work may be necessary before you feel confident to let your dog off the lead and expect him to return. This needs to be practised many times a day in the house and garden, although you should be able to dispense with the lead fairly quickly around the home. Even when your dog becomes well trained and responsive you will still need to practise this command from time to time - it is hardly surprising that dogs ignore this command if they only hear it when something really interesting (like a cat) rushes past them! Every time an owner punishes their dog for not coming or for taking a long time the dog is less likely to come to their owner the next time. The word COME must always be jolly; the dog's name always commanding - you get his attention by using his name, and you entice him to advance towards you by being nice.



STAY!

This is a simpler command and can be used in an emergency situation to stop your dog in his tracks.

Procedure

1. Have your dog on the lead and calm. This is best tried for the first time after a walk.
2. While your dog is standing by your side, issue the command STAY in firm, controlled voice while you walk very slowly and calmly around him in a circle.
3. If he starts to move towards you block him by putting your hand out between him and you (like a policeman stopping traffic), and at the same time say STAY firmly. When he stands still again praise him verbally (but not so much that he moves towards you again!).
4. Once you can circle your dog freely without him moving, step up the challenge until you can run and dance around your dog while he stands still off the lead.
5. You should soon be able to issue the command while moving further away from your dog, while he stays in the same place. If he moves towards you at any stage it is imperative that you go back to him and reposition him - he mustn't slowly creep nearer to you as you move away.
6. Your dog must be given a release from this command - he can't stay in one place forever. Practise both STAY followed by COME, and also walking back to your dog while he remains in his STAY position and then giving him the OK to go about his business.

This training takes time and effort, but a few weeks of daily half-hour input will drastically improve your dog's behaviour. There are many more commands your dog can learn, and the more you teach him the stronger your relationship will become. Many Greyhounds now take part in obedience and agility classes, proving their brainpower alongside the Border Collies!

Visit our website or ask for a copy of our care booklet or CD for almost everything you need to know about your greyhound.

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basic commands



Training your dog

retired greyhound trust



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Basic commands:

Why?

Like people, most dogs need a basic level of education and socialising to enable them to feel confident and behave in a socially acceptable manner in public.

What you will need

A comfy lead. Not nylon - it can burn your hand, or chain as it hurts your dogs shoulders - leather or rope are the best types. You also need a training collar - either a check-chain or semi-restricter (both available at pet shops). The check-chain forms a slip-loop and can only be worn during training, while the semi-restricter can be worn at all times (instead of a wide Greyhound collar), along with your dogs' identity disc.

How it works

Along with your verbal praise and reinforcement, the 'check' action of the collar enables your dog to learn and understand what you want him to do (or not to do!). The neck area is used for direct communication between dogs, and we can mimic the actions of another more dominant dog by using the collar, lead and our voices correctly. Typical examples of doggy 'neck-talk' are:

1. When two dogs play and one rolls over and exposes the vulnerable underside of his neck for the other to grab - the grabber being the more dominant dog gaining a position of power and control. When dogs play, they often reverse their roles and the underdog gets to do the grabbing for a change.
2. When a cheeky pup keeps nipping mum's leg or nibbling too hard on her teats she will 'scruff' the pup by pinching a bit of spare skin on the back of his neck with her teeth. The pup very quickly learns what he can and can't get away with!
3. When two dogs can't agree (i.e. over food, toys, beds) the more dominant dog will put his head over the neck of the other, and if the submissive one does not back down the top dog will then grab the other's neck with his teeth. This action is usually enough (but also the last resort) to prevent a fight.

training your dog



The correct use of the collar enables us to communicate with the dog as his natural leader in a way he can understand with respect but not fear.

How to train

To be welcomed and accepted in a human world all dogs must recognise their name and understand these words:

1. **COME** - stop what you are doing now and come directly to me
2. **STAY** - do not move
3. **NO** - stop what you are doing and look at me. It is a universal word and is equally applicable for lunging on the lead, raiding the bin, jumping up and barking. If your dog is badly behaved teach him the word NO first. It will give you the opportunity to praise your dog for doing (or not doing) something well, and this will set you on the path to a new and strong relationship.

NO! Greyhounds are sight hounds, and like all dogs find it difficult to concentrate on more than one thing at a time. Whatever your dog is looking at is what he is thinking about, be it the cat, the bin, your dinner etc. Your training input has to intervene just at the point when the dog is going to commit the crime, so the dog learns not to even think of chasing/stealing etc - and is under the impression that you can read his mind and are always one step ahead of him!

Procedure

1. Place a bowl of food (or other distraction that your dog will lunge at) on the floor in a separate room to your dog (or outside).
2. Put your dog on the lead with his training collar properly fitted (with only two fingers gap between your fingers and his neck) and walk him casually towards the bowl on a 2-foot lead so he sees it but cannot reach it.
3. As he looks at the bowl say NO firmly. Do not delay the command until he lunges, say it as soon as he looks. If after your command he stops looking at the bowl and looks at you then praise him and repeat several times so you are sure he understands. If your verbal command

alone is not enough to divert his gaze from the food to yourself, then walk him past the bowl again and this time say NO and check his collar by quickly tugging your lead hand away from your dog and across your body. As the dog feels the tug on his collar he will turn to see where it came from. At this point you have broken his train of thought from the distraction (food bowl) towards yourself and this is the time you must praise him. He will briefly enjoy the praise and then return to the more interesting sight of the food again. As soon as his gaze starts to go back to the food repeat the NO command and then praise when he looks away again.

4. It is imperative that your dog looks away from the food and to you as soon as you say NO and check him. If it takes many attempts you are not asserting yourself strongly enough, and your dog is gaining control of the situation - knowing you don't really mean business. It is also imperative that praise is given when your dog looks away from the food - he needs to learn the difference between right and wrong in his New World of human rules.
5. Once you are confident your dog really does understand the word NO test and train him with other distractions i.e. balls, running children, the open rubbish bin, other dogs etc so he learns that NO means 'stop what you are doing at look at me'. After a few attempts you should not have to check your dog, the word alone should be enough. Soon your dog will anticipate what is going to happen as soon as he sees the distraction and will look straight at you for his praise without you even needing to issue the command - thus the lesson has really been learned - he has realised how to get praise by being good! Most dogs learn this command in a matter of minutes, however he will need repetitive reinforcement by you over the coming days and weeks to enable him to remember the command.

Tricky customers

Some dogs learn faster with additional reinforcements. If your dog does not respond to the above advice then fill a water spray bottle, and put a few nails in a tin can and tape up the top. As you issue the command NO spray his rump with water or throw the shaky tin to the ground between him and the distraction. Usually the unpleasant wet sensation of the water, or the noisy sound of the tin is enough to distract him from the cat and avert his gaze to your praising voice.