

If you have an underground fence, do initial e-collar training away from your yard and inside your house!

A remote collar is not magic, nor is it the tool of last resort or punishment that some may believe. It is a tool, and like any tool there is a right and wrong way to use it. With correct application, it can provide fast, reliable and humane results toward your dog training objectives.

Fitting the Remote Collar

When fitting the receiver on your dog make sure that it is nice and snug. A collar that is too loose will not make proper contact with your dog's skin and will cause significant training difficulties. A loose fit will also allow the contact points to move and rub the skin. This may increase the likelihood of a collar sore/hot spot to develop.

If your dog has a long or thick hair coat, make sure to wiggle the contact points around to part the hair and ensure contact with the skin.

Place the collar strap around your dog's neck and tighten in position about two inches below the ears.

The receiver can rest on either side of the throat.

Never attach your leash to the collar strap of the receiver!

Collar Sores/Hot Spots

The e-collar does not generate heat. It cannot burn your dog. However, the friction generated by the contact points rubbing against the skin, in combination with any moisture from your dog's skin, can cause a collar sore. This type of sore is commonly called a "hot spot." It is the same type of sore that is created if a dog is licking or scratching at a particular area for a period of time. Left unnoticed and on too long, the collar can create a hot spot that may become infected and require medical intervention to heal.

Preventing collar sores/hot spots

1. Fit the e-collar snugly on your dog's neck to minimize the friction created by any rubbing movement.
2. Reposition the collar to a different location on your dog's neck if he or she or she will wear it for an extended period of time (reposition every 2—3 hours).
3. Remove the collar after your dog has been swimming or has become wet. Allow your dog and the collar to become completely dry before putting the receiver back on.
4. When removing the e-collar from your dog, check his or her or her neck area to see if any irritation is beginning. If so, follow some of the above steps to prevent further irritation.

Treating collar sores/hot spots

If a collar sore/hot spot does develop, treat it immediately with this remedy. If hot spot is infected or oozing, seek medical treatment from your veterinarian; your dog may need to take antibiotics.

1. Clip the fur and clean the area with an antibacterial product (available over the counter from any pharmacy). Allow the area to dry.
 2. Apply Desenex Athletes Foot Powder. Do this twice per day until the hot spot is dry and gone. This should only take a couple of days.
 3. Apply a solution of Listerine and olive oil (mixed 50/50) to help stimulate hair growth in the area.
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Stimulation Levels

Important Note:

Do not get too concerned with what number level your transmitter is set to when you are working with your dog. Remember, the goal is to find the RIGHT LEVEL OF MOTIVATION, rather than too low (dog is not paying attention) or too high (dog is startled by the stimulation).

Remote collars offer a wide variety of intensity levels to choose from. One of the keys to being successful in training your dog is learning what level of stimulation (or pressure) motivates him or her to act. Despite the number of choices available on your collar, we believe there are really only three levels available: too low, too high and just right. Just like the porridge in the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, just right is determined by the recipient.

The amount of stimulation (or pressure) needed to be just right is dependent on two things:

1. Your dog's individual sensitivity level

Some dogs are more sensitive than others. There is no correlation based on breed, hair coat or size. It is as individual as a human's sensitivity to hot water. Some people are tolerant of very "hot water," while others would find it extremely uncomfortable at the same temperature. Sensitivity levels are very individual. It is important not to equate your sensitivity to stimulation with that of your dog. A level that you perceive as too low or too high will likely not feel the same way to your dog. Base your selection of stimulation level on your dog's response to it rather than your emotional feeling about the numbers on the transmitter.

2. Your dog's surroundings (or the amount of distraction present)

A dog's sensitivity to physical sensation is affected by the amount of distraction in the environment. A lower level of pressure is appropriate when your dog is in his or her home with just the daily routine going on. A higher level of pressure will likely be needed when you leave that familiar environment and get into situations that offer more distractions. Rather than focusing on the numbers on the transmitter, remember to think in terms of too low, too high or just right. Too low is a level that your dog can ignore, it causes no visible reaction at all. Too high is a level that causes your dog to be overly concerned by the stimulation, he or she may jump, or cry out.

Just right is a level that gets your dog's attention and causes him or her to react in a motivated but not overwhelmed fashion. The level of pressure that is just right will vary and will vary according to your dog's reaction. So always **be prepared to adjust your control dial** accordingly. Keep the transmitter in your hand while you are out with your dog, this will always put you in a position of being prepared.

Important Note:

Sometimes you may see your dog's neck flinch when you are applying stimulation. This does not necessarily mean that the level of pressure is too high. Because the stimulation has an effect on the muscle tissue it may cause an involuntary muscle contraction. This is the same as when a human experiences a muscle twitch, there is no pain involved. It is simply a physiological reaction. If the twitch is disconcerting for you, try moving the receiver slightly to another part of the neck. This will usually solve the problem.

Training Tips

Leash/Drag Line

During the first month or two of training, your dog should have his or her leash on at all times when wearing the remote collar. This includes inside the house as well as outside. Having the leash or long line drag from you dog allows you the necessary handle to get a hold of if you need to help him or her follow through. **When you notice that your dog is responding to command and collar stimulation WITHOUT you needing to pick up the leash and provide help, you can begin to wean off of the use of the leash.**

Do not use the remote collar without the aid of a leash or drag line until your dog is responding confidently without any assistance from the line. This typically takes a few days to a week in the house or areas of limited distraction and a couple weeks to a month, outside in areas of higher distraction.

Crate

At times **when your dog is not being supervised** you should use a crate to contain him or her in order to prevent bad habits from starting or continuing. The fastest path to a trained dog is through consistency. This means you must supervise in order to provide structure and rules. At times when you cannot supervise, crate your dog. As your dog learns to behave the way you expect, new habits will form and you will not need to use the crate as frequently.

Be Consistent

Sometimes and Maybe vs. Always and Never

Two words you can't teach a dog: sometimes and maybe. You can't let the dog on the couch when dad's not home and then correct the dog for being on the couch when dad gets home or company is over. However, you can say you can **always** be on the loveseat, but **never** the couch. If you let your dog break the rules "sometimes" and expect him or her to follow the rules at other times, how can you expect him or her to learn a consistent pattern of good behavior?

Be Patient

Your dog is going to make mistakes as he or she learns these new skills and expectations. Do not assume your dog is being disobedient when he or she makes a mistake. It is far more productive to continue to help your dog get the behavior correct and issue your reminders in a calm tone of voice. Repetition is the name of the game in learning something new.

Practice; Use it or Lose it

Do not fall into the habit of practicing only during training times. Instead, leave the collar on your dog whenever you are supervising and spending time together. In this way, you can enforce your new expectations as needed. Good behavior will become a way of life for your dog rather than just during training sessions. The collar should not be on your dog when he or she is left home alone in the crate or at night when everyone is sleeping.

The purpose of teaching your dog a response to various cues or commands is to give you a functional way to communicate with him or her. Replacing negative behaviors with positive responses to commands will give you a much more pleasurable life with your dog.

For example, when your dog is pulling on leash in order to get to another dog or chase a squirrel, it is much more effective to issue your walk nicely command (Heel) than to get frustrated and yell NO at him or her. If your dog gets excited every time someone comes to your door, teach him or her to go to his or her place when the doorbell rings. Once your dog learns that he or she has to stay there until you give permission for him or her to leave, you will be able to control the excited behavior and your dog will begin to develop this new habit.

No more frustration, just fun and wagging tails as your dog learns of the rewards that come with his or her improved behavior.

Be proactive, rather than reactive in your training

Your dog's learning will be much faster if your timing in delivering information is proactive. For example, if your dog is typically distracted by a squirrel or cat and you know that he or she will lunge on leash when you pass one, you should push the button and remind your dog to "Heel" as soon as you see his or her level of awareness elevate. This way you are reminding your dog to remain in command walking nicely, rather than waiting until he or she is already lunging. **As you learn to read your dog's body language and anticipate his or her response to distractions, you will become proactive, rather than reactive.** Your success will come more easily and your dog will become habituated to paying attention to you while ignoring more of the distractions along the way.

If your dog attempts to lie down and refuses to move while you are working on the foundation exercise, continue pushing the button as you forge forward. Apply enough leash pressure to insist he or she get up and continue to walk with you. Don't let this behavior stop you from your goal of having a well-trained dog that can walk nicely beside you.

Now that you have begun training your dog to walk politely on leash, make sure you keep that expectation at all times. Do not allow your dog to get away with unwanted behavior such as pulling you. Each walk you take with your dog is a learning opportunity. It is imperative that you follow through every time you interact with your dog. Inconsistency in your expectations will lead to inconsistency in your dog's behavior.

Problem Solving

It is not uncommon for your dog to display some annoying behaviors when you begin training. He or she may jump up on you, bite on the leash or lie down and refuse to move. The most important thing to remember if any of these problems occur is to work through them rather than quit or give up. If you quit training at these problem moments you will end up reinforcing this undesirable behavior. Practice makes permanent so you would not want to practice quitting as soon as your dog displays some of the above behaviors.

Remain calm and focused and continue to push the button as you help your dog stop the problem behavior.

For behaviors that your dog can do sometimes, give the command to stop and push and hold the **vibrate, black, or red** button until he or she stops. For example, we use the "enough" command for excessive playing, licking, or scratching. These are all things your dog is allowed to do, but for whatever reason, you would like them to stop. You would say "enough" while you push and hold the **vibrate, black, or red** button. **Stop pushing the button as soon as your dog complies** with the command.

For behaviors your dog may never be able to do, like demand attention or jump, you don't need to say anything at all. Just push and hold the **vibrate, black, or red** button until your dog stops the behavior.

Proofing the Reliability of Your Dog's Training

Important Note:

Expect that your dog will make some mistakes and break position. This is normal and part of the learning process. Your job is to fix those mistakes by pushing-and-holding either **stim button as soon as your dog begins to move from position and helping your dog as needed to get back into position. Stop pushing the button as soon as your dog complies with the command.**

Important Note:

Do not get too concerned with what number level your transmitter is set to when you are working with your dog. Remember, to find the Right Level of Motivation.

Once your dog understands the mechanics of a command your job is to increase reliability of the training by proofing your dog through the **3 D's: Duration, Distraction and Distance.**

The process of proofing your dog's training will require you to become comfortable changing intensity levels on the transmitter. Your dog's adrenaline level changes when exposed to exciting things therefore his or her level of sensitivity and awareness of the stimulation can change also. It is not uncommon for levels to double or more when you go from training in a controlled environment to one that has many delightful sights, sounds and smells.

Duration

Duration refers to how long your dog will maintain the behavior. You should begin by expecting your dog to hold a stationary position for a few seconds then release with your release command. As you practice, begin to expect longer durations. Your dog will make some mistakes; just fix them by immediately pushing-and-holding the **black** button and putting him or back into position. **Stop pushing the button as soon as your dog complies** with the command. Soon your dog learns not to move until he or she hears the release command.

Distraction

Distraction refers to the activity going on around your dog that may divert his or her attention from you and cause him or her to break from a command. Distraction is part of everyday life and it is very important that your dog learn to focus even when other things seem more exciting than listening to you! Working in a variety of locations and setting up situations that expose your dog to other people, dogs, noises, objects, and movement will eventually teach your dog to focus on his or her obedience when told to. Be creative when it comes to proofing your dog. Anything that your dog might be exposed to in his or her everyday life is something you can use to proof training.

Often times your dog is **NOT** under an obedience command. He or she is then at liberty and free to "be a dog"; sleep, play, run, sniff, etc. The only expectation you should maintain at those times is that he or she continue to abide by your rules of basic manners (like not jumping on people or nuisance barking).

Distance

Distance refers to how far away you can be from your dog and expect that he or she will maintain a command. Save distance as the last factor to work on in your proofing. Going a few feet beyond the length of the leash is enough for the beginning dog. **Once your dog shows reliability around great levels of distraction it will be easier to raise the bar on how far away you want to get while you expect him or her to maintain those stationary commands.**

When you do begin to work at distances well beyond the length of the leash you may want to anchor your dog to a stationary object heavy enough to hold him. This will help your dog remain at a distance from you even if

he or she does break the command. Without the aid of this back-tie technique most dogs will come all the way to you before following through with their stationary position.

For instance if you are working on a Down/Stay position and your dog breaks the command, he or she will typically come all the way to you before lying down again and comply with the command. This is a normal part of the learning process. Your dog can be easily confused by the concept of distance. Therefore, work on proofing distraction and duration first.

Transitioning to Off Leash Control

Important Note:

It is important to recognize that your dog will make mistakes as you begin working through the transition to off leash work. Your job is to expect those mistakes and be prepared to help your dog through to success.

One of the great advantages of remote collar training is having the ability to confidently have your dog off leash. It is a great freedom to be able to take your dog on a hike, to the beach or the park and allow it to run and play, while being confident that you still maintain control when needed.

However, before going entirely off leash it is important to work through an intermediate step in the training to ensure you have solid reliability.

This step involves having your dog drag a leash or long line while practicing. Having a line dragging from your dog allows you to help your dog through any moments of confusion as you expose him or her to higher levels of distraction. The purpose of the line is that it provides you a handle to get a hold of if your dog is struggling to follow through correctly. You can use the line to assist your dog in performing the correct command.

Foundation Training: Attention and Loose Leash Walking

The foundation work is the most important step in training your dog with a remote collar. This work teaches your dog that stimulation has a meaning and can be controlled. As your dog learns to pay attention to you he or she will be better at ignoring distractions and the bond between you and your dog will grow.

Begin your work in an area relatively free of distractions. A large back yard, soccer field, park or tennis court may all work well.

Set the stimulation level on the transmitter to zero. Push the **black** button. Now gradually turn up the stimulation level to the point that your dog notices the sensation. This awareness of sensation may be expressed in a number of ways; looking at you, scratching, head tilting or freezing up are all common indicators that your dog is feeling the sensation.

Once this working level is set, push-and-hold the **black** button and walk away from your dog. **Stop pushing the button as soon as your dog willingly** moves toward you. If your dog is pulling in one direction, you should turn and move in the opposite direction.

Because stimulation is being applied as you change direction, your dog is being reminded to pay attention and stay with you. You may find that you only get a few steps and your dog goes back to the old habit of not paying attention and being distracted (pulling, sniffing, lagging). Each time this occurs, change direction and push-and-hold the **black** button as you go. **Stop pushing the button as soon as your dog willingly** moves toward you again. As you practice this exercise and enforce this new standard of walking on leash, your dog will develop the new habit of paying attention to you.

As you continue this foundation work, you will need to adjust the stimulation up or down depending on your dog and the situation. Some dogs will quickly begin to ignore the level they were first aware of and you will need to turn the level up. Others become very aware of the stimulation, this allows you to turn the level down and still get an attentive response. Watch your dog and let his or her response dictate how much stimulation is just right.

Utilize movement to your advantage. The goal of the foundation work is to teach your dog to pay attention to you. The easiest way of doing this is to move and expect your dog to move with you. If your dog is following on a loose lead, there should be no stimulation applied; when your dog begins to lose focus, move away from you or sniff, push-and-hold the **black** button. **Stop pushing the button as soon as your dog willingly** moves toward you again.

Making frequent direction changes, rather than straight line walking, is the most efficient way to teach your dog to remain focused on you. With each change of direction, push-and-hold the **black** button. **Stop pushing the button as soon as your dog willingly** moves toward you again.

If your dog tends to keep moving forward when you stop, push-and-hold the **black** button. **Stop pushing the button as soon as your dog complies** with the command. Push-and-hold the **black** button at exactly the same time that you stop your forward motion. This will cause your dog to pay attention and stop with you.