



Intro to Whistle Training

Alicia's Obedience Dog Training

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Goal

The goal is to take your dog through the following exercises so that your dog has a trained response to the sound of your whistle.

Practise! Make sure you and your dog understands the exercises before moving on and remember – if you are not both having fun – you are doing it wrong!

Equipment

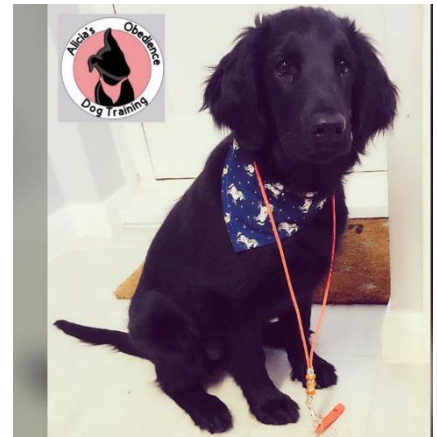
Treat Bag/Treats

Sense of Humour

Dog

Collar/Harness/Lead - at least 1 metre in length

Whistle & Lanyard



Why a Whistle?

Dogs get used to our voices and us using their names several times a day. Even if you have a verbal cue for recall this can easily become tainted, your voice carries emotion, like it or not. A whistle is consistent, the sound carries well (further than most people's voice)

The only disadvantage is you do have to remember to pick it up!

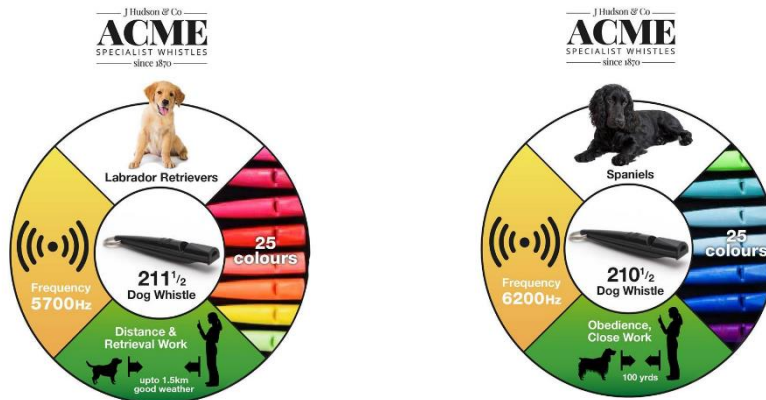
What Whistle? Oh, and don't forget your lanyard...

First things first – you need a whistle! We recommend Acme gundog whistles for all breeds, they are pitch perfect and can be replaced or duplicated and sound exactly the same! We suggest that you also buy a lanyard or two – being able to pop your whistle around your neck while training or on a walk and know you have it available at all times is super handy. Leave one in your treat bag or in the car just in case you get to the park and realise you have forgotten it.

Here's a link to you decide which whistle is best for you, if you can't decide or need help give us a shout.

<https://www.acmewhistles.co.uk/blog/choosing-the-right-dog-whistle>

You'll find some beautiful lanyards at fab prices here;



Got it! What's next?

Once you have your whistle you need to decide what it is going to sound like, multiple short pips of 3 or more are recommended. Have a blast when your dog is not around and see what feels comfortable. Make a note of how many pips you give and stick to it.

Pairing - You are going to establish a connection between the sound of the whistle and something your dog wants. Mealtimes are perfect for this. You can get your dogs interest in their bowl, gently pip your recall whistle on repeat for a few times as you take a couple of steps back and then say 'Yes' just as you place their food on the floor. You can repeat this every mealtime for a good 2-3 weeks.

Outside of mealtimes you will use some high value rewards and pip your whistle while your dog is right next to you or a few steps away and fed them some high value treats, from the floor by your feet or from your hand.

We suggest jack pot payments, so a treat, followed by another, then another, then another, then another - so your dog thinks the whistle noise brings a lottery win!

You need to do that several times a day for a 7-10 days ideally. The whistle is not to be used outside of this time.

After the 7-10 days, whilst still pairing mealtimes you can start to initiate movement - grab some treats and let your dog know you have them, start to move away from them and as they move towards you pip the whistle and feed the multiple treats.

Do this in the house, in the garden and eventually outside on the woods/park. This is called Proofing – teaching your dog that the same thing applies no matter what the environment or circumstances. Don't ever blow your whistle at this point unless your dog is already engaged in the game! You will still be using your dogs name for any formal 'recall' during this time.

Get Moving

The next step is all about introducing the right movement. Pop your lanyard & whistle on and have some treats nearby, you & your dog need to be in the same room but there should be distance between you and they should not be focused on you (this is where the lanyard is handy as your dog can get used to you just wearing the whistle) Pip your recall whistle, your dog should react instantly and come towards you expectantly, move together towards the treats say 'Yes' and pay up.

You need to do this at all sorts of random times during the day, and if this goes really well you can start to play with using the whistle when your dog is out of sight at home, but make sure they aren't already engaged with something or someone – every whistle use must be successful! Try and wait a good hour or more between times.

Get your Game on

You are now ready to introduce your dog to the wonderful world of recall games and the fact that coming back is fun. When you introduce these games it is important that you pair your whistle with the required behaviour – your dog moving towards you, ideally at speed. All of these games can be played indoors and out.

Catch me if you can

Start this game by moving slowly away from your dog. As your dog spots you and moves towards you dash off for a short distance. As you dog speeds up use your recall whistle and crouch down. When your dog makes it to you say 'Yes', pay up and celebrate! The more fun and rambunctious you make this the better!

The Whiplash Game

Use a low value treat and toss it away from you (make it a treat your dog can see easily) allow your dog to run out and grab the treat. As soon as you have seen them give it a crunch start to move away from them backwards. As you dog turns and heads towards you use your recall whistle, crouch down and place a jackpot of treats right by your feet. As your dog gets used to this game and confident with returning you can encourage speed by throwing the treat further and moving away quicker for a greater distance. When your dog is happy returning and being close to you start to touch their collar or harness momentarily as they are eating to introduce the idea that sometimes you may clip the lead back on (don't do this often at this stage)

Let's Bowl

Teach your dog that responding to your recall whistle may include a change of direction. This is super useful for teaching dogs to come away from danger or distractions. Use a low value treat and toss it away from you to your left or right (make it a treat your dog can see easily) allow your dog to run out and grab the treat. As soon as you have seen them give it a crunch start to turn to the opposite direction throw a low value treat in the other direction. Do this a couple of times until you are confident throwing and your dog has twigged what the game is. Once you are happy throw a treat, wait for the crunch and as your dog turns and heads towards you start to walk off in the other direction and use your recall

whistle, as they draw level with you say 'Yes' and pay up with your high value treat. Start the game again and be sure to practise both ways equally.

Good Luck! Have fun, Alicia xx



Photo Credit; Bob Cooper