

PROOFING THE COMMANDS

Proofing is one of the final stages in your dog's training and should be started only when you are confident your dog has a solid obedience foundation. Proofing is the process of improving your dog's reliability to perform commands around all levels of distraction, and to perform commands at a greater distance from you. During Proofing, we begin to expect more obedience from your dog. Your dog understands the meaning of each command, therefore we expect adherence to given commands at all times.

In the proofing phase of training, there are three areas we test to make your dog more reliable and obedient:

1. Duration

This refers to the length of time a dog will follow a command. For example, when we give a command, we expect the dog to stay in the command until released.

2. Distraction

Distractions refer to your dog focusing on something other than you. Other dogs, a squirrel, another person, or even a loud noise could become distractions. Your dog's training and execution will be more reliable if you practice keeping your dog's attention around several types of distractions.

3. Distance

This refers to the distance between you and your dog when giving a command. Your dog may listen when he/she is within 5 feet of you, but to get reliability, you need to practice the commands at greater distances.

When proofing, we suggest you work on each of the variables separately before you combine them. For example, if you are working in a highly distracting environment, do not get too far away from your dog (distance). Staying close to your pet will help him/her be successful. **In fact, it is best if you practice duration and distraction thoroughly before you add greater distance to your expectations.** Your dog must be clear on expectations and staying close is the best way to help him learn. After you are confident your dog understands, begin to proof distance. If using a remote collar, one of the key advantages is the ability to have your dog execute commands from greater distances.

Proofing is one of the most important parts of your training. Proofing your dog in many different environments and for different lengths of time will ensure that you will have a happy, well-trained dog in **any** environment.

10 IDEAS FOR PROOFING

- 1. Practice everywhere!** The park, the pet store, the car wash, groomer, veterinarian's office, ice cream parlor or an outside café are great opportunities for your dog to learn.
- 2. Use Toys and Treats!** If your dog has a favorite toy or treat, use it as a distraction. Place it on the ground and teach your dog to sit, down, or heel around it. When your dog is successful, release him/her to have the reward.
- 3. Change your body position when you give your dog a command.** You should be able to call your dog to you even if you are not facing him, or have your dog go to his place while you are sitting on the couch. Practice giving commands when you are not right in front of your dog.
- 4. Practice the "Place" command during dinner or while watching TV.** Use your normal life's routines to practice your dog's training.
- 5. Send your dog to "Place" when the doorbell rings.** This will prevent your dog from getting too excited. You will need a helper to achieve this at first (someone to open the door while you train your dog to "Place"), but eventually the sound of the doorbell/knock will cue your dog to go to his place. Do not release your dog until he is calm. Only then, should he be allowed to greet your guests.
- 6. Increase the distance slowly.** You can move away from your dog while he remains in a sit position or on his place. To help your dog be successful, tether him to something sturdy so that if he does make the mistake of getting up, he cannot come all the way to you.
- 7. Train one-dog-at-a-time.** If you own multiple dogs, practice training with one as the other dog remains in a "Place" command. Use a tether or tie-back to help the dog stay on his place. This way, you are actually training both dogs at the same time!
- 8. Practice calling your dog away from distractions.** If your dog likes to chase squirrels, take him to the park. Keep him attached to a long line so you can practice your recall ("Come") after he runs to chase the squirrel. Be prepared to get control of your dog because he will be very excited. Practicing this on a leash will proof your dog so that he/she listens to you at high distraction/excitement levels.
- 9. Practice having your dog heel (walk beside you) as you walk up and down stairs.** Many dogs want to rush up or down the stairs in front of you. Shorten your grip on the leash as you give your dog a reminder to "Heel" and stay next to you, step by step.
- 10. Use other objects for teaching a "Place" command to your dog.** Any object that your dog can safely fit on can be used as a "Place". Items such as a park bench, retaining wall, boulder, beach towel, tree stump, or chair will teach your dog to be versatile.

Most of all, remember to have fun while practicing with your dog!!! If you have any questions, call No Leash Needed and speak with one of our trainers.