

From the Author of the Amazon Best Seller  
**Canine Communication The Language of a Species**

# Enrichment Through Scentwork For Highly Aroused **Dogs**



Sally Gutteridge

# MISSION

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

**Enrichment** through Scentwork for  
Highly Aroused **Dogs**

Sally Gutteridge

# Mission Possible Pocket Solutions

Mission Possible are a series of guides designed to make positive canine coaching accessible and understandable.

Each book covers a single topic with natural progression through ten carefully created missions. Whilst small, Mission Possible books pack a punch as they are concise, professionally created and provide a huge amount of value to readers and their dogs.

Most of all Mission Possible books are fun, positive, build great dog skills and each one gives carefully presented, step by step professional guidance to learn specific skills for exceptional results.

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## About the Author

Sally Gutteridge has been a full time educational writer since 2015 holding a variety of canine certifications. She is a former professional Dog Trainer with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, former instructor with Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and has much rescue experience. Sally is a member of the Pet Professional Guild. She is a Graduate and award winner from The Writers Bureau. Through the organisation, Canine Principles, Sally along with a fantastic team, provides reputable Continuation of Professional Development for all canine professionals. Canine Principles teaches the most up to date, positive, scientific canine awareness.

Sally lives in Rural Cumbria with her ever patient husband and four rescued, cheeky terriers.

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# Introduction

Dogs that have lots of spare energy are telling us something very important, that we need to make some changes to their lifestyle to better meet their needs. Often these changes are small and have big, positive effects for the dog.

Arousal is a natural state in the right circumstances. Some dogs become over-aroused or frantic regularly though and that's not good for them, it's also quite difficult to manage. Frantic dogs are not making conscious choices to act in the way that they do, their behaviour is all that they can offer because it's how they feel.

We can make positive changes to the life of the frantic dog by doing something very simple indeed, introducing scentwork, along with calming coaching and gentle guidance. The beauty of this approach is that rather than try and bring the dog's behaviour under control by introducing obedience commands or restrictions, we can greatly enhance their lives and our own simply by teaching new skills. This applies regardless of age, breed and prior training.

The effect of scentwork based skills are amazing. The dog uses up physical energy without being walked for miles and becoming an athlete. They get to use their natural foraging instincts, using up all that spare mental energy and can truly relax afterwards. In addition, your bond will grow and together you will have lots of fun.

The missions in this book are designed to grow skill in stages. There are ten of them and by the end your dog will be searching areas like a professional, and you will be an established team. It's a great introduction to life enrichment, positive canine coaching and

professional searching with a dog. All rolled into one smart little guide.

If you would like to, please document your progress through each mission with notes and pictures. To see your evidence and read your story would truly make my day, feel free to post your story on my Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/sallyanddogs](http://www.facebook.com/sallyanddogs) visit my website at [sallygutteridge.com](http://sallygutteridge.com) or email me at [info@sallygutteridge.org](mailto:info@sallygutteridge.org). I respond to every message.

Note: I refer to dogs in the book as “him” purely for ease of reading, the advice applies to males and females in equal measure.



# Part One. Understanding

If your dog is frantic, has lots of spare energy or reacts very quickly and with excess animation to any kind of stimulation, he is likely to be susceptible to over-arousal.

Any dog may go from relaxed to aroused if he thinks something is about to happen that he likes or dislikes. That's a perfectly normal response to the environment. The dogs that appear naughty, out of control or bad mannered are often just aroused more than is good for them and this shows in their everyday behaviour. Over-arousal on a regular basis is the main cause of a frantic dog.

A common mistake that people make when they live with a frantic dog is thinking that all these behaviours are within the dog's control, when they're not. They are a result of an internal state manifesting in the dog's external behaviour. In fact, all dog behaviour is a reflection of their internal state. A dog that looks relaxed is usually relaxed inside and the dog that is frantic on the outside is usually feeling frantic too.

For example, a dog that relaxes easily might be waiting for his morning walk, half snoozing in his bed, and he hears the coat cupboard open, so becomes excited and aroused. His behaviour will become animated and he may whine, dance around and wait for the lead to go on. This is all perfectly normal excitement and after his walk and perhaps a meal, this dog will probably go back to snoozing, resting away his exercise and full belly for at least a couple of hours. The dog who spends his everyday life in a general state of relaxation

will become aroused at positive and negative events and relax afterwards.

Another scenario might be the dog that spends his life aroused and is always in a state of some arousal. This dog may be waiting for something to happen for all of his waking hours – and for some dogs most of their sleeping hours too. This can occur for a number of reasons, all of which we will discuss in this chapter.

The behaviour of this dog in the home will probably be quite different, he will be animated, maybe destructive, he may attention seek or perhaps even self-harm by chewing his paws or other areas of his body. If something does happen – like the coat cupboard opens – this dog becomes an unstoppable force of movement and probably noise, he may continuously jump up, scraping legs and arms. The guardian of this dog may start to dread walks because putting the lead on is only the first step to a chaotic and unpleasant half-hour.

Symptoms of over-arousal include:

- Barking and/or whining.
- Waiting for something to happen.
- Excessive alertness.
- Listening for sounds outside the home and reacting to them by barking or becoming excited.
- Seeking your attention by trying to play or bringing a toy all day long.
- Jumping up.
- Grabbing and nipping at your hands or clothes.
- Height seeking by climbing the people around him.
- Frantic behaviour on the lead and on walks.
- Excessive panting and sometimes drooling.

In some cases, a dog that becomes aroused may show aggression or fear related defensiveness. This will take the form of growling, barking or becoming outwardly aggressive. This book isn't written to address this type of behaviour. It is important that if the dog you're caring for does these things that you seek help. First visit the

veterinarian to check for possible health problems then find a suitable expert in canine aggression that works within the realms of science and positive, dog friendly methods.

The dog that spends his life aroused will become hyper-aroused at small events and is usually out of control. The good news is that arousal can be managed and changed when we understand the dog's individual needs and tweak their current lifestyle to suit them better.

## **The Risks**

Without this knowledge there is risk, particularly from professional dog trainers that are not well-educated, yet advise dog guardians regularly. Frantic dogs get the blame for their behaviour and are misread, punished or forced into fearful states.

An example of this is the method of leadership or 'alpha' that has been perpetuated by the media over recent years. The simplified idea that the dog needs to know who is boss and this will solve all behaviour issues is sinister and destructive. Dogs are individuals that learn through repetition, motivation and reward, the same methods that people learn from. Dogs also suffer devastating self-esteem crashes if punished, forced or scared. Even extended confusion can damage a dog's wellbeing and the relationship with his guardian. Any trainer that thinks dogs are acting like wolves, that all wolves try to gain leadership of their pack, or that punishment is a valid regular teaching tool, is confused about dog behaviour science. It stands to reason that letting them near a dog will cause the dog confusion too.

To confuse a dog that tends to become frantic will usually lead to more frantic behaviour. The only exception is when a dog is taken well beyond their ability to cope and emotionally shuts down. This is the worst thing we can do to a dog in the name of teaching, because it means they have given up trying, are scared, depressed and intimidated. Unfortunately, it does change the behaviour and the dog looks like he's being good. His body language will be slow, careful, tense and his ears pulled back, lips pulled back and he will probably

be trying to look and move away from the human that's doing it to him, eventually freezing altogether.



The picture shows a paw lift, tail tuck, tense body, head dip, half-moon eyes that show the whites and facial tension along with tense lips. This dog is scared and unhappy.

Whilst it's good to know what a worried dog looks like, we won't be condoning or delivering any of that treatment in this book. We will be understanding and channelling the dog's frantic energy into a good, relaxing Mission which will change his behaviour from the inside out – not the outside in.

Our teaching will result in a dog that looks like this, relaxed and happy.



## Defining Arousal

When we consider behaviour, we must ask what is going on inside the dog. A dog that behaves calmly and is contented usually feels the same way. A frantic dog is usually experiencing a reaction within his body, that leads to panic, fear or stress of some sort.

There are two types of stress that a dog may experience. The first is helpful and aids learning, this is termed **eustress**. Peak performance is achieved in a state of eustress, it's when the dog experiences just the right amount of environmental pressure to carry out an important task to the very best of their ability. Eustress is the reason a mom can lift a heavy car from her child after an accident or a fearful public speaker can carry out the most amazing presentation.

The second type of stress is experienced when the dog cannot cope with the environmental triggers and goes into a state of **distress**. It could be easy to believe that distress is shown by an obviously scared or unhappy dog but in many cases this isn't so. Distress is also shown by hyper-arousal and animation. The frantic dog could easily be living in a body that is continually exposing him to excessive stress hormones. He literally can't help his behaviour.

The stress system of the dog, and of the human are pretty much the same. We both react to stressors with a fight, flight or freeze reaction. For a dog the fight may be barking and trying to scare something away, flight might be hiding or trying to run away whilst freeze is linked to emotional shutdown or learned helplessness. Dogs may also fool around when stressed, so they jump up, mouth hands and act generally goofy, to try and dissipate the tension they are experiencing.

The physiological stress reaction is universal but when experienced regularly the stress hormones never really stop being produced, so the dog can never relax fully. As part of this the dog's other systems slow down. Digestion, immunity and general hormonal movement within the body is hindered in favour of enabling the body to deal with what it considers a direct threat.

To summarise; stress is terrible for the dog's overall health and wellbeing and doesn't always look like stress.

## Why Dogs Get Frantic

We must never lose sight of the fact that dogs are individuals. What worries one may not bother another and not all highly aroused dogs are stressed, some may just be bored and need an outlet for their energy. Every dog that shows heightened arousal levels may do so for one, or many, of the following reasons.

### Genetic Influence

The domestic dog comes in all shapes and sizes. Some are happy to snooze the day away and others need something to do every day that uses up their energy and enables them to rest properly and truly, deeply relax.

The broad range of canine needs and behaviours is – in part - based on the range of dog breeds and their individual genetic influence and personalities. Whilst this book is about helping the bouncy dog focus and truly relax, it's important that we discuss what drives his behaviour in the first place.

There have been many ideas presented on how dogs joined people at close quarters and stayed so integrally part of our homes and hearts. The common theme throughout the most recent theories is that they evolved into the tamest wolf type animals, because we had plenty of waste food. Early human settlements may have been attractive to the tamer of the wolf's ancestor, based on the leftovers that humans discarded, a habit that has evolved with us to the present day.

Whilst we inadvertently offered food to animals that were hungry, we naturally attracted the boldest and bravest of the bunch. They became regular visitors but at this point they were still breeding naturally and choosing their own partners for reproduction – in a process that we call **natural selection**.

Any species that has plentiful resources – food and safety – will reproduce more. More reproduction leads to a boost in the population of that species, in a process termed **relaxed selection**.



It's simply a case of ingrained species survival to reproduce whilst safe and when there's plenty of food to create strong offspring.

Whilst all this was happening it's thought that the species may have split into two types of animal. The split is considered to have occurred because the braver animals were able to get close to people and the anxious ones were not. The flightier animals moved away and continued to live in the wild, hunting for their food and naturally becoming the Gray Wolf that we know today. The closest ancestor to the domestic dog – through DNA - is considered to be the Gray Wolf which maintains this as one of the stronger current theories.

As relaxed selection occurs, early dogs became braver and friendlier towards people. Studies show that a change in evolution can actually change the appearance of an animal too. Coat colour, ear shape and general appearance have all been shown to change when a wild animal becomes tamer.

The next stage in the evolution of the domestic dog was a big one. We realised we could benefit from dogs, they could assist us with tasks such as obtaining food and guarding possessions. We may even have befriended them at this point and simply treated them as companions. We started interfering in their reproduction and **artificial selection** began. Choosing the mother and father of a litter of puppies will have an effect on the puppies so we chose for the traits we wanted to enhance. For example, sighthounds for their speed and ability to catch prey, or scent hounds for tracking over distance.

That's a brief and potted history of how the domestic dog's ancestor became the many breeds of dog that are recognised today. It's relevant to every single dog because it means that working breeds have been finely tuned to work over thousands of years, so we can't expect them to live quietly in a home with no mental stimulation. If we do expect that from them, they may develop hyper-arousal type behaviours, obsessive behaviours and habits that we consider problematic.

In many cases we have created dog breeds that are prepared for a busy lifestyle and role and then expected them to live quietly and peacefully in our homes without the mental exercise that they need. We can also fall into the trap of believing that long walks are enough for a dog or lots of retrieve games will tire them out. In many cases it will but if the mental energy is not used up then we are creating an athlete dog with excessive, untapped mental energy.

Physical fitness and unused mental energy is one of the most likely routes to hyper-arousal. A body and mind that are bursting with excess energy are not conducive to relaxation or true rest.

Lifestyle contributors to frantic behaviour may include a lot of physical exercise, triggers in the environment or fears and sensitivity to things in their life. Diet is also an important factor when we consider behaviour, particularly hyper-arousal.

## **Food**

Over recent years the dog food industry is being increasingly questioned. Highly coloured, preserved and processed foods are being replaced by dog guardians with fresh and cooked meals. Dog food is a hugely profitable niche if the manufacturer can create a big cost divide between the creation and sale price of their product, unfortunately the worst foods are heavily marketed, and the biggest cost is to the health of our dogs.

Just as bad food causes physical, mental health and behaviour issues in people, so it does in dogs. An ideal food for any dog contains all the vitamins and minerals, the right amount of calcium and all ingredients are instantly recognisable by their name. Long chemical names, cheap fillers or hazy ingredients should ring alarm bells if found on even the most expensive foods. Dog food can be supplemented with fresh vegetables, meats, beans and pulses. Variety is the spice of life and this applies to the dog's diet as much as anything else.

## **Physical Exercise**

Too much exercise can also contribute to over excitability. It's easy to fall into the trap of walking longer and longer plus throwing toys to ensure our dogs are well-exercised and happy. Sometimes though, it's better to do less physical exercise and more mental stimulation, to aid relaxation.

Excessive retrieve games and ball launchers can be counter-productive to relaxation. The dog that continually chases a ball is using only part of their natural inherited stalk, chase, catch/kill and then eat sequence. This is the sequence that their ancestors used, and the Gray Wolf still uses, as part of the carnivorous lifestyle. When used naturally, the chase and capture/kill is relatively brief and followed by a long time relaxing, chewing and eating. When we manipulate this sequence with a ball launcher, we interrupt it and the dog gets the adrenaline rush of the chase over and over – but with no effective final chew and relax. This is why ball launchers can exacerbate hyper-arousal.

## **Triggers**

A dog can learn to be over-excited by triggers in his environment. A houseful of children for example is usually considered a lively household and a puppy growing up there may become a lively dog.

Lack of learning general manners and behaviour, along with a lack of guidance can lead to a stressed dog. For example, a Labrador puppy may be welcomed to jump up when he's tiny, so he believes that's a perfectly normal way to act, and it gets him attention.

If we don't teach the puppy otherwise, when he gets to 30kg he's still likely to be jumping up but may be no longer welcome as he's quite the bruiser by this point. Then his jumping up gets out of hand and the dog is blamed, leading to him trying harder and harder to please his people in the only way he knows how because it's worked before – jumping up.

This dog is now in the position that he doesn't know what to do to make everything OK and to make his human happy with him. He just keeps doing the same thing because it worked so well in the past, leading in many cases to blame and punishment because the human

simply doesn't understand the dog's motives. Add the poor quality professional trainer that uses force and punishment to this scenario - the poor dog won't know if he's coming or going.

Luckily if we are prepared to put in the effort, we can gain plenty of knowledge of how dogs learn. We can therefore not only recognise why this dog is jumping up, but we can also motivate him to do something else instead. Via guidance and skilled coaching, we can follow a simple process of teaching a replacement behaviour and rewarding it enough that it becomes the dog's behaviour of choice.

The human understands their dog, the dog understands what is required and is motivated to change his current default behaviour to something that is less full-on. Everyone wins.

There are many, many more reasons for behaviour, the dog could be ill or in pain, having a reaction to medication, or scared. If a dog's behaviour changes suddenly, the dog should always be taken to the veterinarian to rule out sickness.

## **The Good News**

The good news is that if I have just described your dog, there is an answer. You don't have to walk your friend for miles to tire them out. You can throw away the ball launcher, or at least put it in the back of the cupboard, because there is a perfect solution to naturally relaxing your dog – life enrichment through scentwork.

Engaging your dog's brain and nose gives them a task and purpose that easily surpasses the daily walk. If you are walking miles to tire your dog out, you can stop that and split the time between scentwork and physical exercise. Balance is the key to a relaxed dog and whether your friend is a bored companion breed or a highly aroused working breed, you can use their mental energy by introducing enrichment through search. As a wonderful side effect your relationship with your dog will be enhanced, you will become a true team and together you will have lots of fun, in short - everyone wins.

## Takeaway Points

- A dog's behaviour is an external display of an internal state.
- All dogs are individuals and have individual reasons for their behaviour.
- Arousal is a normal experience usually triggered by something in the dog's environment.
- Hyperarousal is excessive arousal that makes the dog appear frantic.
- Hyperarousal is often associated with stress, but it can also be associated with lack of mental exercise, sometimes linked with too much physical exercise.
- There are a number of reasons for a dog to be frantic and every dog will be slightly different.
- Food, genetic influence, physical exercise and triggers can all cause arousal and hyper-arousal.

## Part Two. Settling and Learning

Hopefully by now you will have some idea of your dog(s) and the reason they are often so highly aroused. It might be breed type, it could be lifestyle and maybe you were doing something with best intention, but have realised it needs to change.

Arousal doesn't always mean that the dog is stressed and unhappy. It just means that they are fizzing with energy which shows in their behaviour. This could be nervous energy, or it could be excitement that's misplaced. The behaviour could be led by the stress response, or it could be learned and reinforced in the environment. By watching the dog carefully and noticing what excites them, what seems to trigger a frantic state, we can understand how the dog experiences the world. We can also begin to make subtle changes to the dog's life that will change overly busy behaviour into relaxation.

When a dog jumps up, mouths, bounces around and scrapes it can hurt. It's natural to respond by pushing them off, exclaiming the shock and pain of a scrape to a bare leg, or to greet with lots of love and chatter even though the dog is already over excited.

Settling down is paramount to positive change. If we greet our frantic dog with a high pitched voice and animated movements, we are reinforcing their own excitement. If we move slowly and quietly, we are leading the dog by example into a calmer state. If you watched your own interaction with a frantic dog, from the outside, could you honestly say that you settle or excite them with your behaviour? What about any children the dog has contact with, do they add to the arousal or calm the dog down?

Our aim in this book is to calm the dog down, for his sake and the sake of those closest to him. We can do this by using carefully delivered coaching of calm behaviours, using positive reinforcement, alongside brainwork through scent. Because we want to get going on lowering the dog's arousal quickly, we will begin introducing activities now, and use them alongside further learning throughout the book.

## **Mission One. Find the Food**

It's part of our culture to walk the dog and provide him one or two meals a day. That's food and exercise – it's how we meet a dog's needs. Dogs need much more though, like us they need the right kind of physical exercise, proper mental stimulation, play, the chance to use their natural skills and the opportunity to practice natural behaviour. This is why when the busy natured dog has had a walk and meal, he's often still looking for something to do.

Food will always motivate a dog. Eating keeps him alive and even the fussiest dogs get hungry. When we think a dog is not motivated by food, it's usually because we haven't yet learned how to use the right kind of food, in the right way, for motivation.

- Scatter feeding is simple yet can use your dog's scenting ability enough that he properly relaxes afterwards. Simply find a food that your dog loves and scatter it around the home or garden, in tiny bits and at a reasonable portion and let him sniff out the food and eat it.
- Many dogs love scatter feeding so much that they will ignore the bowl with food in but eat every last scattered scrap, engaging their mind and body simultaneously. This type of engagement will use up lots of excess energy and the dog is highly likely to settle afterwards.
- If you suspect your dog isn't going to get immediately stuck in, start with less food in a smaller area. Make it extra special to sniff, for example grated cheese or tiny bits of chopped meat and build from there.

Important note; use scatter feeding before or as the dog's meal, rather than after their meal, as a full belly is not conducive to foraging. Remember also to avoid using too much extra food, or the dog will soon not be hungry and may even put on weight.

## **Mission Accomplished**



This mission is accomplished when your dog can successfully spend fifteen minutes sniffing for food, happily and confidently.

## **Why Foraging is so Effective**

As humans we like nothing better than a plate of tasty food in front of us, I grew up eating huge carbohydrate-based meals that stretched my young stomach way beyond its capacity time and again. This has resulted in disappointment of perfectly reasonable meal sizes for many years as an adult. Food is a pleasure, a social occurrence, both comforting and rewarding for us. We can easily project that to our dogs, gradually growing the size of that meal in their bowl, when in many cases they would really rather forage.

Foraging for food has been a main Mission for dogs for thousands of years. If we offer them their meals in a bowl all the time, even though they may love their food, we are creating a missed opportunity for them. Up to a third of their life pre-domestication would have been focussed on finding food, that's a third of 'empty time' if we don't allow them to continue using that skill.

Alongside the opportunity to find their food, foraging is an excellent opportunity for the dog to use his amazing nose. The dog's ability to detect scent puts our own to shame. Long ago we too would have been able to smell things like hidden food and even sickness in each other. However, our lives have become extremely comfortable and we don't use the sense of scenting like we used to so over generations it has faded.

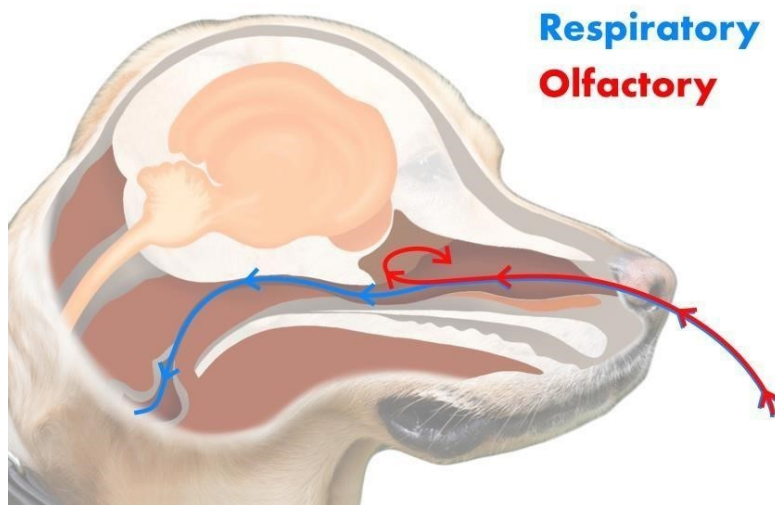
Everything has a smell which is based on diffusion. Everything in the world is made up of tiny particles, including ourselves. When particles reach the edge of something, they diffuse into the air and it's that diffusion which carries scent. Scent diffuses differently from different things, so gas and vapour smell most, oil and liquid next and then solid articles diffuse with less scent as their particles are most tightly packed. The scent that we recognise is tiny particles entering the air around the object or item.

Most food types smell quite strong. Cheese, meats and kibble are some of the strongest smelling foods there are and perfect for sniff

games. Be careful which kibble you choose though, as some dog foods are not particularly healthy. The other option is to choose cat kibble, which will be much smaller – check the ingredients in the same way though.

When a dog sniffs something smart happens. The particles enter the nasal cavity, then a split occurs. Scent and air take different routes, air carries on to the circulatory system providing the body with the oxygen it needs, whilst scent goes to the brain to be processed.

The dog then exhales the used air through the slits at the side of his nose rather than pushing the air back out directly through his nostrils which would also push out any incoming scent. This leaves the dog able to continually draw in scent through his nostrils and up towards the olfactory area of his brain, gathering information.



All this is happening whilst the dog forages which is why it is so relaxing and uses up so much energy.

### **The Scent Picture**

Dogs 'see' in scent. We walk into a room and gather information predominantly through visual information. Dogs walk into a room and gather information through their nose. So, if your dog goes into a room and realises someone has accidentally dropped something tasty, they can go right to it because the scent is diffusing from the food

and the dog just needs to follow the increasing strength of scent until he reaches his prize.

In the same way, if you're walking your dog at the park, off lead, and he catches a scent particle of nearby diffusing fox poo he will be able to follow the particles right to the poo and be shoulder down in it before you know it is even there.

Dogs don't only use scent to find the prize though, they use it to determine everything. To identify each other, to recognise us and to 'see' exactly what's going on in an area at any given time.

## **Mission Two. Introduce a Marker**

The second mission is something you may already have done, we are going to introduce a marker for when we begin to use scenting as a task later and to help calm your frantic dog as soon as possible. A marker is something used in canine coaching and particularly positive reinforcement. This connection between sound and a reward has now become one of the most used tools of positive canine coaching.

A marker is something that tells your dog that they made the right choice. A natural marker is delivering a food reward, but dogs do multiple things very quickly and it's easy to miss the exact point that we want to reinforce, so a marker is used to pinpoint the choice. Using a marker makes timing easier, because it helps us to mark the exact choice we want to reinforce, with one single, known sound. The sound is paired in your dog's mind with his motivating reward. Then it has the ultimate power for reinforcing choices to change them from awkward ones to excellent ones.

The reward used with a marker will be small amounts of motivating food. Try to consider food reward on a scale of desirability. Number one might be dry food whilst number ten is smelly cheese. In between there may be healthy dog treats, fruit, peas or types of meat. Your dog will be highly motivated by the food higher up the scale and sufficiently motivated by the food lower down. You can use food higher up on the scale when your dog needs a real boost to learn. It's a good idea to start as low down the scale as works, because that gives you options when you need to offer something special. If you start at number ten, your dog will soon be used to that tasty food and become satiated, leaving you with far less options.

When we use food to teach anything new, such as searching, it's a natural reinforcing reward. The term reinforcement simply means that we make something stronger. When we reinforce a bridge, we add steel girders to it, to make it stronger. When we reinforce a behaviour, we add a rewarding event to it, to make it stronger in the

same way. For the purpose of understanding, try to consider positive reinforcement in mathematical terms.

For example, if the dog offers a bark (**x1**) for some of your food and then you give them some of your meal, you are naturally adding strength to the act (**+1**) and the behaviour is likely to get stronger. The result that we see is a dog that barks more, because his personal steel girder in this situation is a bit of tasty food.

Food is essential for life, so it has special importance. The professional term for food in learning is primary reinforcer. We can create an association in the dog's mind with food, so when the dog hears the marker, he knows that food is coming, and he will naturally see the entire thing as associated with whatever he was doing at the time the marker was delivered.

Choosing a marker for a dog that tends to become over aroused is important, because a delivery of your marker will either settle or excite your dog. In fact, everything you do, from the tone of your voice to the movements of your body can be delivered in a way conducive to lowering arousal. So, monitor yourself carefully when interacting with your dog, are you moving in a way that helps him to stay calm and settled or are you delivering praise in a way that makes him far more animated?

All markers work so well because they are a mutual understanding of acknowledgement. You can use one marker or many. A traditional one is the clicker which makes a neutral sound to show the dog he has got something right. The clicker is a small box with a tiny plate of metal that clicks when pressed. If you press it without associating it with reward in the dog's mind, your marker won't work.

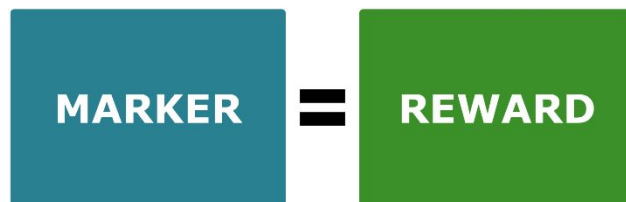
The marker is used to pinpoint the behaviour at its exact display point, and to let the dog know the specific behaviour which led to a reward.

The association between marker and reward must be carried out before the sound will have any effect. This is particularly important if you are not using a spoken marker. The first thing to do is decide which marker you would like to teach initially.

## Teaching A Marker

To associate the marker, choose a quiet area with no distraction. Along with a few handfuls of treats that your dog likes; they should be tiny, small enough to taste but not big enough to chew, as chewing can be distracting for the dog. If you have decided to use a clicker, have it to hand.

Then simply spend five minutes or so repeatedly delivering the marker and then giving the dog a small food reward. Your dog may be extremely over excited at this new game, particularly if he's generally aroused. Usually I would sit on the ground when teaching a marker but if your dog jumping on you because being on the same level gets him excited, perhaps sit on a chair or even stand up. Alternatively, if he jumps up when you're standing – sit on the floor and he may settle – it all depends on your own dog's personality and state of mind.



You can use this experience twofold for a frantic dog because after the first few deliveries he will be waiting for the marker anyway so time it well and deliver it during a pause in his movements and animation.

Dogs are smart. So, whilst you are teaching him that your marker means a treat, you can also be teaching him that the marker is most likely to be delivered when his movements give pause. It won't take long for his pauses to become more frequent and last longer.

An important thing to remember is that your dog will usually take all his behaviour from you. So even though you might feel excited that it's working, don't raise your own voice, get animated or outwardly over-enthusiastic in your success or your dog will get over excited too and that's counterproductive to our task. Keep calm, use gentle

praise, slow movements and act as you want your dog to respond, calmly and with grace.

Repeat this little exercise for five to ten minutes for a total of five times over a couple of days to ensure your marker association is nice and strong. The further along the process you get, the calmer your dog should become, because when he gives pause a marker is delivered and he gets a reward.

### **The Food Grabber!**

If you live with a food grabber, marker introduction can hurt. Small – or even large – eager teeth scraping repeatedly on the tender skin of your hand may put you off playing this game altogether. Here's a tip:

1. Put a small bit of food in the palm of your hand and close your fist around it.
2. Offer your closed fist to your dog and he is likely to try and get the food.
3. Wait until he pauses and open your hand, so he can have the food.

Practice this little trick a few times and your dog will know that the key to getting the food is not to snatch, but to offer a pause and the food will magically appear.

### **Testing A Marker**

At this point make a determined effort to have tiny food rewards to hand in the places you frequent most often. So, in the lounge at home where you sit, in the kitchen and anywhere else in the home that you and your dog share regularly. Pop a handful of tiny treats in a bowl in these areas, well out of the dog's reach because you will be using them.

During the day, when you're not in a coaching session you can test your marker, whilst reinforcing calm behaviour.

When your dog is calm or gives natural pause in his everyday life deliver your marker. If he turns or approaches expectantly you have

made a successful and positive association with the marker – Great! Give your dog his treat and go back to what you were doing.

It might seem counter-productive to disturb a calm dog but remember that your dog will always associate delivery of the marker with the exact act he was carrying out at the time he heard it. So, he will always return to that act as it produced a reward. It's a good idea to make this part of your daily routine for the next couple of weeks. It only takes a moment and repeated a few times a day will teach your dog how rewarding calm behaviour can be.

### **Things to Avoid**

Learning to time your delivery of your marker can be quite a difficult process, some people are totally natural and quick thinking, their timing leads to success very quickly. Other people have to work at it and get into all sorts of messes based on timing being a fraction of a second out of where the marker should have been delivered. Don't worry if you're one of the latter group - I am and have reinforced plenty of odd things in my dogs over the years. It does take practice to get the timing right, but our dogs are very forgiving and if you remember to keep things calm, in this instance you can't go too far wrong.

When you have introduced your marker, you must always associate it with a treat. Never deliver a click without following up with a treat and in the early days do the same thing with your marker word. If you deliver a marker regularly without giving the associated reward, your marker will lose its power and cease being a marker at all.

The other thing to remember is that the marker isn't a distractor or recall. If you use it to get a dog's attention whilst he's doing something undesirable, you are marking that undesirable act and your dog will remember and repeat it. This is particularly important with frantic dogs because we can be tempted to try and use it to initiate calm, in the heat of the moment, that's not how a marker works though. We must wait for a tiny bit of calm and mark that – otherwise we will be teaching the dog to be frantic for a reward.

### **Mission Accomplished**



This mission is accomplished when your dog fully understands that at least one marker will lead directly to a food reward. You can test this by delivering the marker when he's doing something completely unrelated (but desirable) and he responds to it.

## Takeaway Points

- Foraging for food is a natural and relaxing behaviour.
- Scatter feeding will use up a lot of energy and aid relaxation because sniffing is tiring.
- Scatter feed your dog regularly with a food that motivates him to seek it out.
- Go at your own dog's pace so if he isn't interested just drop five bits of tasty food and build his confidence and ability from there.
- Marker use is an excellent positive coaching tool.
- For a frantic dog choose a neutral or calming marker, such as a clicker or a calmly delivered word.
- Make and maintain marker association by always delivering a treat, even if you marked the wrong thing otherwise the marker will lose its power.
- Utilise the times your dog naturally gives pause and mark and reward the quiet times.
- Never use the marker for distraction or recall as this will be counter-productive.
- Have confidence in yourself and your ability to help your dog. Like everything, marker delivery and timing needs to be learned so don't worry if you get it wrong. Frantic dogs move quickly. We all get it wrong sometimes, practice makes perfect and you have already succeeded by reading this book and making positive change.

## Part Three. Inspiring Confidence

Without knowledge and investigation, it could be easy to believe that an over-aroused dog is also a confident one. This is not always the case though and often the dogs that become frantic are also low in confidence. Their behaviour is a symptom of being unable to cope in the life that they're in. They don't trust others or don't feel capable of dealing with things – which then become their triggers – in their everyday environment.

Confidence and outlook are two things we can assess by observation.

Outlook is determined by whether the dog has a positive expectation of outcome in any given circumstance, or a negative one.

Some dogs have an overwhelming negative bias which shows in their behaviour. The negative bias is natural and learned. Humans and dogs all have a natural negative bias, it's what kept us safe during early evolution. The individuals that expected danger in every situation were cautious and careful so stayed alive long enough to reproduce and pass those cautious genes on, over and over again. The ones that didn't expect danger were in danger more often, therefore may have been killed or eaten and didn't live long enough to reproduce. We have evolved to be careful and so have our dogs.

That's not the end of the story though because from the moment a dog is born, he will be learning how much danger there is in his world. He can just as easily learn a positive bias which in most situations will overcome his biological default. With nurturing throughout development and by being ever successful in his

endeavours, a puppy can learn that his actions will be successful at least most of the time, so he will have self-belief and an expectation of success.

For many dogs though, particularly the ones that have developed fear, stress or over-arousal in response to triggers, they are living within their own negative bias. Their biological program and their life so far has taught these dogs that a situation will lead to a negative result and the behaviours they show are based on that expectation. For example, the dog on a lead that barks defensively and bounces madly when he sees another dog is expecting a bad result if that dog gets any closer. The dog that has been taught with punishment expects to be punished.

The good news is that by confidence building through scentwork based tasks, we can turn that negative bias around and show the dog how successful he can be. The dog's new outlook will start to shine through and his expectations will become positive, in all areas of his life.

## **Mission Three. Building Determination**

By this point your dog should be happily and confidently finding and eating scattered food that you have dropped for him, he should be thoroughly enjoying the process.

You can tell he's enjoying the task by carefully watching his body language. A wagging tail, complete immersion in the task and loose body language all portray a happy dog. After he has found every scrap your dog should be able to relax and have at least a short rest. This process will be doing wonders for him, even at this early stage.

How quickly we introduce this third Mission depends on the confidence of your dog. Some dive straight in whilst others need some encouragement.

### **About Encouragement**

We can encourage dogs to take part in the tasks we create for them by providing vocal confirmation of their efforts. For some dogs this works great, for others it does nothing or even worst puts them off. With all types of canine coaching it's a good idea to listen carefully to your own voice when working with your dog, and that's no less important when we are setting tasks to build determination.

We can be tempted to talk way too much to our dogs at all times, if we do this, the use of vocal encouragement becomes lost in the constant chatter. For example, if you use your voice as a marker, your dog could easily miss the sound if it's delivered in a stream of other sounds. Another thing we can be tempted to do is use a high pitched, excitable voice to dogs that are already highly aroused, this can easily cause over-excitement for them and exacerbate their tendency to become frantic.

It's a good idea to use few well-timed words rather than a flow of chatter. A well timed 'yes' or 'get it' for a dog that's losing confidence but trying – followed by a gentle hooray when the task is solved – is enough.

As all dogs are individuals, yours may love those words of encouragement, not care about them or could even find them distracting. Watch your dog and you will learn whether or how much to use vocal encouragement.

My own dogs are a mixed bunch with this type of tasking;

Chips gives up easily and needs some extra help and encouragement but is so happy when he achieves.

Vinny and Posy love the tasks set to them and work methodically through them getting the hidden morsels, utilising their paws and noses to the best of their ability – needing no encouragement at all.

Holly, who was rescued from a puppy farm at six years old where I believe she was born, is another matter altogether. A small Yorkie, scared of everything but our home and immediate family, Holly is a tiny ball of determination when given a food finding task. She rips through thick cardboard like it's tissue paper, jumps three times her height and generally works the room like a bull in a China shop.

You can find out your own dog's style of task solving by watching and testing him. You may be surprised. Some dogs seem extremely confident and bark at everything they see on walks, but set them a task that's a fraction too difficult and they give in. If this describes your own dog, you can be certain that the barking outside is based on poor self-belief. The dog that doesn't believe he can do the task often barks because he doesn't think he can deal with the stranger in the park so shouts as loud as he can 'keep your distance or else'.

For this task you will need some small, motivating and tasty foods and an old towel. The idea is to take the visual aspect away and get your dog's nose working on its own. Whilst building perseverance to work a bit harder for the food. It doesn't matter where you play this but it's better to keep distractions low and only play with one dog at a time.

Show your dog that you have food then go out of his sight with it. Don't give him the opportunity to follow you, close a door behind you or create another barrier so you are out of view.

Place the towel on the ground, put the food on it then fold it in half so the food isn't obvious. Next let your dog into the area and watch.

As he has been scenting for scattered food for a few days, and you showed him you have some food, he will start looking for it immediately. This is the point where his level of confidence will show. He will go straight to the towel and will do one of two things:

1. Sniff it, realise the food isn't there and move away.
2. Start moving the towel around to get to the food that he knows is there.

At this point, as with all canine coaching, you can adapt your own responses to the capability and confidence of your dog.

If he moves away, he may return to the towel and try again. If he does, vocal encouragement might be enough to get him digging for the food. The beauty of your dog knowing a marker at this point is that you can use it to encourage his efforts at solving the task. Each time he tries to move the towel, mark and drop another treat on it. Then wait until he tries to move the towel again and mark again. Continue this until your dog finds the food inside and you have started the growth of his confidence.

Your dog might just dive right in and solve the task in seconds, that's amazing. You can work up to more elaborate folds of the towel very quickly. Making the task harder will encourage more brain and nose work, resulting in more relaxation afterwards. Dogs all react differently to their food being in a towel. Their confidence and tenacity will dictate how difficult you should make the task.

No matter how your dog responds to this task, your role over the next few days is to make it challenging for him, but not so challenging that he gives up. Make your own input, whilst he's solving the task, encouraging but not distracting or too exciting. Get inventive, use more towels, fold them so the food is well hidden and generally build your dog's self-confidence and determination whilst using up chunks of that mental energy that is making him frantic.

**Mission Accomplished**

This mission is accomplished when your dog can confidently and happily find all the food in a towel that is folded in a way that takes reasonable sniffing effort.

## **Dogs That Won't Try**

Hopefully by now you have a dog that is progressing in his capacity to try the new tasks you are setting him. Sadly though, some dogs just don't have the self-belief to attempt to solve even the simplest of tasks. This usually occurs with dogs that have previously fallen on hard times and severely lost self-confidence or have tried things in the past and learned that their efforts make no difference.

There's a term for dogs that have learned not to try, it's called learned helplessness and it's a behavioural term used for dogs and people. Based on a distressing experiment, which I won't describe here, learned helplessness is a form of choice depression specifically based on the ability to try new things.

When a puppy is born, they try all sorts of new things and if those things work the puppy will repeat them because he liked the result. With freedom and encouragement this is how the puppy learns. With positive coaching we can reward all the good choices and teach the puppy that they are worth repeating.

A dog that finds himself in a situation that he doesn't like and chooses to leave that situation usually learns to steer clear of that type of situation again. If he is in a painful or distressing scenario and doesn't get the chance to leave it, or an attempt to leave it results in the situation getting worse, the dog will stop trying and just accept his fate. He has learned that he is helpless in that situation and depending on their life experiences, some dogs learn that they are helpless in all situations so stop trying anything at all.

Holly, my tenacious little Yorkie arrived with us in a state of learned helplessness. Puppy farmers are renowned for being cruel and rough with the dogs they breed from and Holly had suffered at their hands for years. She had raised many litters in the dark and had them removed before doing the same thing all over again. She was terrified of people and just went stiff and waited for whatever was



going to happen, to occur. This little dog had learned that she had no power over her life or body so stopped trying.

In the same way if a dog is not taught via kindness and guidance, they can learn that they are helpless. Force and fear-based training often doesn't teach the dog correct choices before it starts punishing the wrong ones. For example, rather than teaching a dog to walk on a loose lead the forceful trainer waits for the dog to pull, then checks with a painful collar around the dog's neck. In this scenario – whilst the word heel may have been used before the check – if the dog doesn't know what the word means because he's not been taught, they will do the most natural thing to them. In the case of a painful collar around their neck, the most natural thing to do for them is to try and get away.

Knocked for six by that check they will try harder to get away, then be checked again and again. Hurt, confused and probably in pain, this dog then gives up trying anything at all. This scenario or ones similar to it only need to be repeated once, before a dog loses all confidence in himself.

The good news is that learned helplessness can be reversed. Depending on its severity it may take a few sessions, or it could take much longer. We can certainly teach a dog they are not helpless, that they can do everything they try to do and that industriousness pays off, by changing their life in two ways:

1. Setting them tasks that they will succeed at.
2. Offering them choices that are carefully presented to ensure their success in making the right one.

## Mission Four. Multiple Tasking

By the time your dog gets to the point where he can confidently find his food in a towel that's tied in a multitude of positions, the fun really starts. In the same way that we set-up his success with the scatter feeding and towel, we can present tasks that raise your dog's confidence in endless ways.

Your dog may have got to this point very quickly, or he may have taken longer. None of that matters though because by the time you are here, your dog's mental health and ability to relax is well on the way to improvement.

Next, we get really imaginative. Here's where we safely utilise all sorts of household items and even recycling, to present the dog with as many chances for success as possible. Tasks need to be achievable, safe and enjoyable.

Here are some ideas for easy tasks to create that your dog will enjoy:

- Prepare the towel as usual with food in but this time put it into a cardboard box.
- Put food directly into a box and loosely put the lid on for your dog to get in.
- Wrap food in paper for ripping and place a few around the room.
- Put food at the bottom of a box and some of your dog's toys on top of them, so he has to remove or forage in the toys to get the treats.
- Pop food in each pocket of a muffin tray with a ball on top, so your dog has to move each ball to get each bit of food.
- Hide food at your dog's eye level around a room or garden so he really has to sniff it out.
- Tuck some food into a few cardboard rolls and close off each end. Hide the rolls around the room or garden for your dog to find and then open to get the food.
- Use packaging for tasking. For example, an old instant gravy pot with food in and a ball on top will provide a good challenge. An

empty cereal box with food in and sealed will provide ripping fun or even the waste from parcels you have ordered can be set up to give your dog some foraging fun.

The list above is certainly not exhaustive. The only limits are your imagination, and all of them are totally free to create. A lot of the items above get thrown away or recycled anyway so why not recycle them through your dog first?

I suggest you spend a few days doing the first three activities, particularly if your dog is low in confidence. The more tasks he achieves at, the more confident he will be for the next step in your journey together.

### **Mission Accomplished**

This mission is accomplished when your dog has solved ten different problem-based tasks to get the food reward within them.

## Takeaway Points

- All dogs are different, and their self-confidence varies as much as people's.
- Some dogs have learned that making choices isn't possible for them, so they stop trying.
- We can help all dogs learn to make successful choices and build their self-confidence by providing them with achievable tasks.
- Some dogs need more encouragement than others, by watching a dog we can see how much help he needs to succeed in a task.
- Beware of talking too much or in an over excited voice as that can be distracting to a dog, or even make him over aroused.
- Marker use is an excellent way to reinforce the dog's effort and show him that he's doing the right thing when trying to solve a problem.
- When the dog has the idea, withdraw the marker and allow him to work it out.
- Tasks can be created from all manner of household items and recycling. Dogs love ripping to get to food that they have sniffed out.
- Get imaginative and have lots of fun along the way.

## Part Four. Starting to Seek

After a couple of weeks problem solving and working as a team, your dog's confidence should be nice and high. He should be relaxed and able to rest better, because he has regularly used his mind and nose. In addition, his general state of mind should be improved. If you have continued to mark and reinforce his peaceful behaviours, whilst maintaining your own, your dog should also be less frantic and easier to live with.

I suggest that you don't cease all the steps we have covered so far. They should be an integral part of your dog's life, and your life together from this point on. Even if you get hooked with searching, still give your dog problems to solve a couple of times a week because they will enrich and improve his life, plus of course they will keep him calm.

Now we can begin to teach the basics of searching for a specific scent. This is where the real fun begins.

The first thing to do is decide what scent you would like your dog to learn to find. Choosing a scent must be done with care because of the dog's tender nose. There's no point asking your dog to find something that's uncomfortable for him to sniff or that's particularly difficult to find. An excellent scent is ginger. This is because you can break a small amount of ginger biscuit and hide it in your dog's search item. Then when he finds it, he can eat it, providing your dog with extra motivation to seek and find the prize. A healthy and smelly dog treat is another choice but be sure it's not used in other areas of your dog's life, otherwise it will confuse him.

Good scents include:

- Vanilla
- Ginger
- Catnip
- Sage
- Aniseed

Scents to avoid are:

- Chilli
- Pepper
- Citrus or citrus oil
- Perfume items
- Rosemary or Lavender.
- Toxic substances.

We avoid the scents because they are too strong and may be uncomfortable for the dog to work with.

The keep things simple, I'm going to use a ginger biscuit throughout, but the choice of scent is yours. The important thing to remember is that the same scent should be used from this point on. So, the dog knows exactly what he's 'looking for'.

Next you need to decide what the scent will be in, the dog's specific search item. A search item is necessary because if we asked our dogs to search purely for ginger biscuit, they will eat them as quick as they find them, resulting in a plump dog high on sugar. We also teach search through a particular set of lessons, one of them is an effective retrieve and if you can teach your dog to retrieve a ginger biscuit then give it back, you are a better coach than me.

When we choose a search item, we must consider the following points:

- Scent particles will pass through soft materials quicker than solid ones. So, a wrapped and knotted cloth with a bit of ginger biscuit in will smell much stronger than a sealed plastic box.
- The item must be comfortable for the dog to hold, carry and play with in his mouth, because we will be doing all these things as

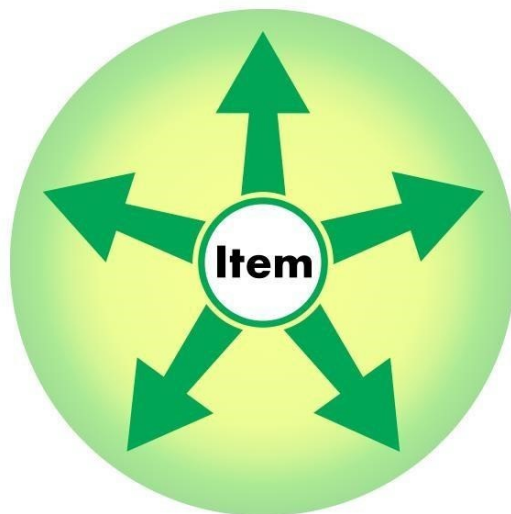
part of the lessons.

- The item must be safe and cause no danger to the dog. So be sure that the dog can't swallow it, that bits won't fall off or can't be chewed and eaten.
- Ideally the item should hold the prize, let the scent out easily and not be opened too easily or the dog will still get to eat the biscuit far more often than he should.

It's also a good idea to consider your dog's natural confidence here because the smellier a search item is, the more easily the dog will sniff it – which is a great confidence boost. In addition, the easier an item is to open, the more likely the confident dog is to get more biscuit than is good for him.

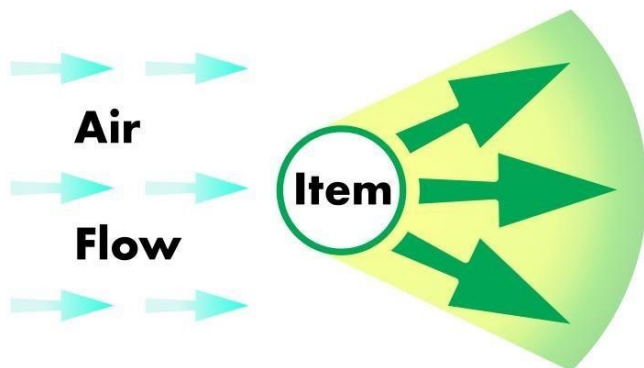
A small Tupperware box with holes in to let the scent out, put into a knotted sock is a perfect search item. The holes let the scent into the sock, which holds onto the particles and creates a scent pool in the area. It's also comfortable for the dog to hold.

The term scent pool describes the density of the scent itself as it diffuses away from the item. So as the item sits in an environment with no wind and little air movement, scent will diffuse around it in an even way, the same way in all directions. This is known as a scent pool.

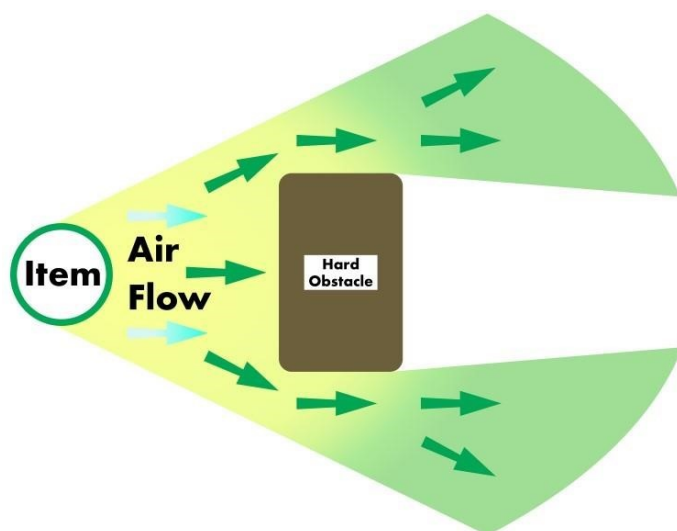


If there is air movement in one direction, the particles get caught up in that movement and generally make a cone shape as they move with

the air. It's when the dog's nose detects the scent particles that he realises the item is close and follows the pool or cone shape of scent density, right to the source – his prize.

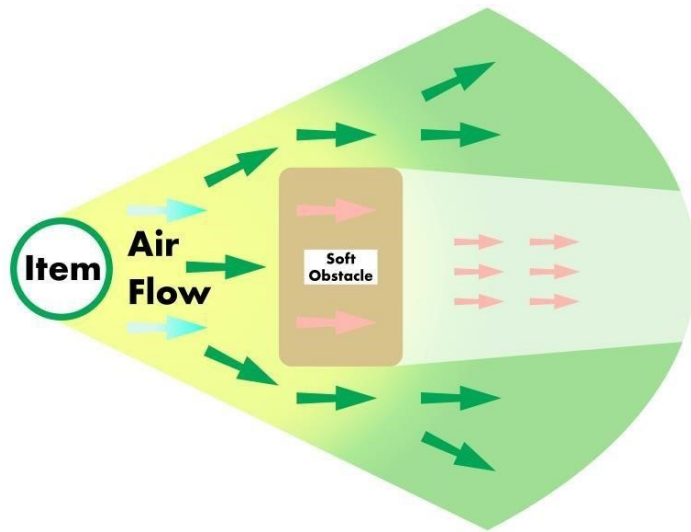


Here's how scent passes through or around items in the area based on their density. It generally passes around hard articles and obstacles.

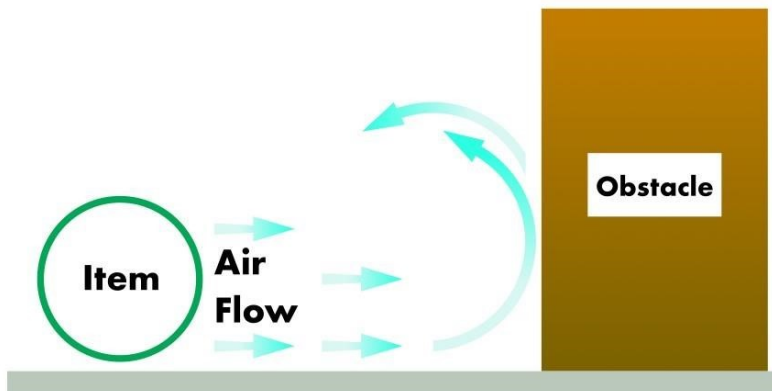


More scent will pass through soft obstacles, resulting in a different scent picture for the dog.





If the obstacle is big, like a wall or a building, the scent will usually bounce off it and back into the area, producing a turmoil of scent particles with high density.



Up until this point your dog has been building self-confidence, industriousness and (hopefully) quiet determination through solving problems to get food. Now we begin searching for a scent, where instead of him getting the reward from the find, he gets it directly from you.

To prevent confusion, we carry out this new learning in bite sized chunks, to ensure the dog knows exactly what to do.

## Mission Five. Targeting

By this point your dog should be familiar with the use of a marker when he's getting something right. We are going to use that marker throughout the next few activities. We are also going to introduce the cue word for searching.

### Cue Word

A cue word is a prelude to an act or choice you would like your dog to make so if we use the word now, we establish it nice and early. This can be simple, **find** or **seek** is perfect.

Targeting is fun and another aspect of positive coaching that can be transferred to many different activities. When we see dogs that dance with their people on TV or at dog shows, targeting has been an integral part of their learning. To target a dog to something means that they learn to touch it with their nose or paw via positive reinforcement and usually, the use of a marker.

Targeting your dog to an item is a prelude to teaching him to retrieve a specific item, in this case his ginger prize. We will then make the retrieve so complicated that it merges into search naturally and easily for your dog.

Start the session with your treats, marker and your prepared search item. Sit on the ground with your dog if he's calm enough for you to do that, if not sit on a chair or stand up. By this point he should hopefully be calm enough to share a floorspace with you.

Then you can target your dog to his search item by following the steps below:

1. Pop the item on the ground in front of your dog and wait a second. He might touch it immediately, which is great, if he does – mark and reward the touch with a treat. Otherwise you can help him by popping a tiny treat on the item.
2. When your dog gets the treat and inadvertently touches the item, mark and give him another treat. Do this a few times and then

progress to just pretending to put a treat onto the item, but still click as the dog touches it.

3. Next you can include a cue word as the dog touches the item. Then move the item around and click as the dog follows it and touches it.
4. Continue to move the item around into lots of different places and heights, then as your dog touches it, mark and reward. The stronger this behaviour is now, the better foundations to his ability to search will be laid for later.

We initially introduce the cue word as the dog makes the right choice, this is to begin the association with the behaviour, nice and early. Then we can bring the cue forward as the behaviour is learned, until the dog can offer it on cue, because he understands exactly what that cue means. The steps below break this down nicely:

**Step one: Introduce the cue.**



**Step two: Link the cue to the choice.**



**Step three: Give the cue for the dog to make the associated choice.**



## **Mission Accomplished**

Mission five is accomplished when your dog can successfully go and touch the item for a marker and reward and has repeated the process in fifteen different places, varying from nose height to ground level.

Throughout reinforcement-based learning there are three ways you can teach your dog something new. The one you use will depend on your dog and how much help he needs. Each of them are best taught with a marker for accuracy and mutual understanding. They are described below:

### **Lure**

The easiest option for the dog is to lure him and mark the desired position or choice with your marker. It's easiest because it means we show the dog exactly what we want from him by having him follow a treat into the position. This technique is good for dogs that have low confidence because it sets them up to succeed with guidance. An example of luring in this situation would be to have the dog follow a treat in your hand to the search item and as he touches the item whilst taking the treat you will mark the behaviour. Marking the position in this instance is also capturing it.

### **Capture**

To capture a choice or position means that we deliver a marker at the exact moment the dog makes the required choice. This is something you have already been doing since you began introducing the marker. Marking any choice or act is essentially capturing it, reinforcing it and making it stronger.

### **Shaping**

Shaping means that we capture a number of behaviours that lead to a desired end result. We will be shaping a search and find over the next few steps by creating a chain of less complication choices, until your dog can carry out quite a complicated search. Shaping can be carried out with a mixture of luring and capturing, depending on the dog's needs and confidence at the time.

## **Recognising Confusion**

Confusion throughout coaching should be avoided if at all possible. The steps of teaching something new should be delivered in a way that keeps the dog's confidence high and confusion low. It does happen though and even the best canine coaches can end up with a confused dog at some point in their teaching.

Recognising that a dog is confused is vitally important to productive learning. If we don't recognise confusion early, it can become stress. Signs include:

- Trying to move away.
- Scratching furiously.
- Picking up toys.
- Sniffing the ground.
- Trying to distract with play.

If your dog does any of these things or acts strangely otherwise, he may be getting confused and you could be asking too much from him too soon. Take a step back to relieve his tension, because if you don't, learning won't occur, plus he will become stressed.

Stress when it develops from confusion can be shown in the following ways:

- Yawning.
- Lip and nose licking.
- Fooling around.
- Panting.
- A furrowed brow.

If this occurs it's important to alleviate the tension quickly by changing the subject, setting an easy task then rewarding it to build the dog's

confidence.

## **Play**

Play is exceptionally powerful to learning. Not only does it make the dog feel good, but it also cements memories from the lesson that preluded the game.

Within the dog's brain there are a number of neurotransmitters that affect how he feels. One of them is Dopamine which is linked with motivation and memory. If we play with our dogs Dopamine floods the brain, making them more motivated and quickly establishing a successful memory of something that without play would take much longer to create.

## **Mission Six. Target to Retrieve**

After your dog is confident to touch the item with his nose, start to withhold the marker. Do this carefully because if you move on too soon, your dog will lose confidence and will be less capable of learning.

The idea is to withhold the marker, shaping the behaviour of picking up the item. With the dogs that find this difficult, a simple shaping session would focus on clicking the open mouth, the mouth around the toy and lots of small attempts at lifting it.

This may take a few sessions depending on how confident your dog is. Some dogs can bypass this stage altogether. The trick here is to get the click in before the dog ends the behaviour, the click will usually and naturally end the behaviour, but that's fine. A retrieve may come easy for some dogs but for others you may need to build it up by rewarding the tiniest foundation of the act then building his confidence and capability.

You can grow and strengthen the retrieve in the following ways:

1. Hold the dog, throw the toy and send him to fetch it, this can increase in difficulty as the dog learns and he will also be starting to use his nose to locate the toy.
2. Play fetch and throw a few times so he gets an extra reward of play, whilst he's still learning to retrieve.
3. When your dog retrieves successfully, start to throw the toy out of sight, into complicated areas, to encourage him to use his nose more in finding his prize.

Remember to always use your cue for finding the item when your dog is chasing it. That's a great habit to perfect now, because it will come in handy later.

## **Easy Blueprint to Retrieve**

Here's a quick recap on targeting to the scented search item, through to retrieving an item that your dog can't actually see. The following

steps can be adapted depending on your dog. Your dog might flow through them all or even miss some out because he is finding it easy. You may get stuck on some because your dog is finding it hard. If you get stuck on something, simply make things easier by going back to a step that the dog finds easy and rebuilding from the earlier level.

1. Place the item on the ground and put a tiny treat on it.
2. When the dog takes the treat, click and reward from your hand too. Repeat this a few times.
3. Pretend to put the treat on the toy and click as the dog touches it. Practice.
4. When you get to the point where the dog will touch, click, reward repeatedly start to move the toy around in the local area, always keep the toy on the ground at this point and remember not to make it too difficult in the beginning. Practice.
5. Add the cue word for search, that you have decided on and say it every time the dog touches the toy. The process should be, touch/cue and mark. The idea is that the dog links the three things in his mind with the idea that he will get a reward.
6. Start to put the toy at different heights in the area and repeat step 5. Practice this.
7. By this point the dog may be picking up the toy or may still be touching it. The main aim is that he goes to it and touches it.
8. Shape the behaviour of picking the toy up if you need to because your dog doesn't do it naturally.
9. Shape a simple retrieve and use the same cue word you have been using for search.
10. Gradually introduce complicated retrieves and out of sight retrieves by holding the dog, throwing the item out of sight and releasing him to sniff it out. Keep using your cue and practice until the retrieve is strong and flawless.

## **Mission Accomplished**

Mission six is accomplished when your dog has successfully retrieved the item from ten different places within your usual coaching area.

## **Complex Retrieves**



Here's some ideas for complicated retrieves, don't do too much too soon though. Remember to set your dog up to succeed and raise the complexity, only when he's ready. These tips are not exhaustive, so feel free to get imaginative:

- Hold your dog by his collar or harness then throw the item away and turning the dog around so he doesn't see it land. Then let him go to sniff it out.
- Holding your dog then throwing the item out of sight. There are many ways you can vary this. The item can be thrown into roughage or out of sight around a corner or into a box.
- Varying the height that the retrievable item is thrown to will strengthen the dog's resilience to fetch it too. So, hold the dog again throw the item into bush or similar raised area. This teaches the dog that his prize may not always be on the ground.
- Throwing the item into areas that the dog has to work at, to get out. Be sure not to put the dog in any danger though, no gorse bushes.
- Get imaginative when building the dog up to difficult retrieves. Make it fun, play, have an excitable assistant if possible – to help with the throwing - but never overwhelm the dog. Cater everything to the individual dog's ability and confidence.
- Use your search cue throughout, every little bit of learning helps.

## Mission Seven. Generalisation

Generalisation is sometimes called proofing and it simply means that we teach a dog to respond to cues in a multitude of situations, before we can be sure the behaviour is fully learned.

Lack of sufficient generalisation can result in a dog who knows a cue perfectly at home but loses all ability to understand it when he's at the park or elsewhere. When your dog learns something new in one environment, for example at home with no distractions, we can't expect him to know the cue in a place where there are lots of distractions.

Think of it this way, you may make coffee in your machine every morning at home, with automatic grace. When you go on holiday, everything is different in the new kitchen. You have to find the cups, learn how to use a new machine or cafetière, and turn a different way to find your sugar and milk supplies. In essence you have to learn to make coffee all over again.

Imagine if on that first day someone was stood next to you demanding that their coffee is supplied right now. They may be saying "come on you know how to make coffee" and getting frustrated with you, making you feel terrible. You might get confused, you may be a bit stressed and because you haven't practiced this behaviour in this place before, you can't think straight enough to do anything at all.

After a few days practice though, it all comes naturally to you and you have learned the task in a new situation. Your coffee making procedure is generalised, which is exactly what happens when we take our dog's newly learned behaviour into different situations.

Excellent generalising techniques re-teach the choice in new situations. It's important to avoid adding two difficult tasks together because this will cause confusion and upset the dog's confidence. When we raise difficulty, we also raise motivation. This makes sure the Dopamine is triggered and gives the dog a learning boost.

To generalise the act of targeting to your search item start in the house, move to the garden, then take it to the park or on walks. After the initial burst of walk energy is over and your dog is settled, whip it out of your bag and do a couple of minutes targeting at different heights, play with the search item and do some retrieves, then put it away and get on with your walk.

It's a great idea to pretend to throw the item then sneak it back into your bag, your dog will still believe it's in the area and that leaves him wanting more. This little addition to your walks is great fun and your dog will love it. It will also ensure you make his walks more interesting, that you could do something interesting at any time and that you're worth keeping an eye on.

General generalisation (proofing) will include introduction of everything your dog will see in life, along with adding strength to their new cue or choice.

### **Mission Accomplished**

This mission is accomplished when your dog has successfully retrieved his search item in five different areas. The areas should include indoors, outdoors, in his usual walk area with no distractions, with reasonable distractions and on a high distraction walk. The things that distract your dog will be reasonably unique to him so keep that in mind.

### **Search Item Care**

When transporting your search item, it's a good idea to remember that humans smell very strongly, and your dog could easily learn to search for your scent as opposed to his corner of ginger biscuit.

People shed hundreds of tiny skin cells every hour and those cells smell like us. If we touch the search item or place we are putting it, we are contaminating the area and item with our own scent.

Therefore, it's a good idea to keep your item contained either in a bigger Tupperware or plastic bag when transporting it, then just drop it onto the ground or hide it through the plastic rather than touching it. This will serve to keep the scent near the item and will also prevent it smelling too much like you.

It's also a good idea to clean the item regularly and certainly change the biscuit at least once every few days. To keep a fresh scent.

Remember that the soap you use to clean it will have a scent too, so you may want to simply hand wash the sock and box in water before adding a fresh biscuit.

## Takeaway Points

- Problem solving is an important life enrichment for dogs and should become a regular part of your dog's care and activity.
- Dogs can become confused when learning and we should look for the signs.
- Confusion can become stress if we don't change the situation.
- We can change the situation by asking for something simple instead then playing.
- Play increases the neurotransmitter Dopamine which enhances motivation and memories.
- Play is rocket fuel for learning and all canine coaching should involve lots of play.
- We can teach new choices by using a lure, capture or shaping. We can adopt one method or a mixture of all three.
- A cue is a word that the dog associates with a specific choice and all choices have different cue words.
- We introduce an early cue to associate it with the right choice in the dog's mind. Then gradually bring it forward until the cue preludes the dog's choice and eventually the dog knows that that specific cue is linked with the associated choice.
- Generalisation is the act of re-teaching a choice in all areas with all distractions until the dog can make the right choice no matter where he is.
- Generalising will be taught gradually at the dog's pace, with careful introduction of new areas and distractions. When we raise a distraction, we should also raise motivation for the dog as this makes the best choice the easiest one for him to make.

## **Part Five. Your Search Dog Extraordinaire**

When you have worked through the missions in this book successfully, your life with your dog will have changed. By this point he should not only be more settled but should have learned a solid foundation of scent related choices that have readied him for the next step.

If you have worked through quickly or are reading this for the first time with the aim of going back and following the steps on a practical level, great. I promise you that if you spend three sessions on each of the seven missions we have covered so far, your dog and your relationship will be calmer and easier.

Soon we will work on changing retrieve to search but first let's throw in one more calming mission for you - A quiet place.

## Mission Eight. A Quiet Place

I toyed with the idea of adding this mission in earlier but decided against it as I believe it's important that your dog gained confidence by trying new things, early in the process. However, if your dog tends to lack the ability to control his impulses, barks or jumps up and you're reading this book through first, feel free to teach this cued behaviour earlier. Just do it after you have started scatter feeding and foraging because your dog will be naturally calmer after those.

If you're teaching this as mission eight, the introduction of a quiet place is perfect, because your dog's confidence should be nice and high. Over the last few weeks your dog should have learned that he can succeed, that choices are rewarding and should have also been using up bags of energy which previously will have caused problems – because he didn't know where to put it before now. That's a great time to introduce cued relaxation.

A quiet place simply means that your dog learns to settle down in a place and practice controlling his impulses, which should be far more easily controlled than they were a few weeks ago. You may have heard the term impulse control before. It basically means the ability to take a measured approach to a current choice rather than just diving in and doing the first thing that comes to mind.

In my case, impulse control is least effective with food. I like to eat as much as possible, whenever possible. So, without taking a little mind space I find that halfway down a bag of chips is a common place to be. My own motivation for impulse control is clothes that fit and a healthy body/mind. You too will have impulses, they will be unique to your personality and life experiences. You may get angry when driving by someone that cuts you up, because you have been in a crash before, so you might swear and shake your fist if you give into that impulse. You might like sugar and getting stressed for some reason leads to an impulse to grab a donut.

In the majority we have learned to control our impulses to a socially acceptable level. Our dogs have a different experience of life to us

though. They essentially live with aliens in a sometimes scary world. Dogs are also totally natural, they act as they feel at that moment and sometimes they have an impulse to do something awkward for us but perfectly natural for them.

Teaching your dog to settle in a quiet place will show him what you want, will aid him to relax and create some space in his mind, enabling him to realise there's a different choice to unabashedly giving in to the first impulse he experiences.

For this mission you need to decide on a new and unique cue word, a second word which you will use to release and a suitable quiet place. For example, you could introduce a specific blanket for settling on, which is portable, so you can take it anywhere. You can use your cue word 'rest' and to release your dog you could use 'off you go'. Your cues should be the ones that naturally fit your impression of the situation because they will be the easiest to use.

This task really isn't too different to targeting in the beginning. Instead of reinforcing your dog's nose touching an item you will be reinforcing his whole body being on the blanket. You can do this by using the following steps:

1. Put the blanket on the ground in front of your dog.
2. Drop a tiny treat on the blanket so that your dog has to step onto it to get the treat, mark the position and provide a second reward. Repeat this a few times. Add the cue word at this early stage and use it when your dog gets onto the blanket, to benefit from the early association.
3. Feign the act of placing a treat on the blanket and mark then reward directly from your hand. Practice a few times.
4. Move the blanket around the house and repeat steps one and two. Practice.
5. Soon your dog will be getting onto the blanket and looking to you for a mark and reward, that's great. Start to bring your cue word forward and instead of rewarding him from your hand, start to throw the marker reward a couple of metres away and as your dog leaves the blanket to fetch it – add your release cue.



6. After release and when he's fetched the nearby reward, your dog will look to you for the next step. If you wait quietly he is likely by this stage to get back onto the blanket – great! Deliver your cue as he steps onto the blanket, then mark and reward again in the same way.

When your dog is going to the blanket on cue, lengthen the time he stays there. You can do this more easily if you start the act of time increase by putting the blanket in a comfortable spot such as his own bed or a place on your sofa (if he's allowed there). The act of gradually increasing the time will naturally encourage the dog to settle down, but this stage needs to be practiced over a few sessions.

To rush here will likely result in your dog moving before his release cue and that's a new habit that is tough to break. With this in mind, try to always release a fraction early. Once the dog has chosen once to break from his quiet place, all on his own, he has learned that he can, and this becomes rewarding enough to repeat. It's much easier to release your dog early than for him to release himself. The key here is not to expect too much too soon, which sets your dog up for success and teaches big behaviours in small achievable chunks.

It's better to practice the quiet place cue after an activity, walk or after a meal and when your dog has toileted. Don't expect him to settle when he's full of energy. Remember everything we do with our dogs should aim to set them up for success and a satisfied dog is much more likely to settle down than one that's fizzing with energy.

### **Mission Accomplished**

This mission is accomplished when your dog will go onto his quiet zone and settle naturally for a full fifteen minutes. This is the only mission that you do not need to complete before moving to the next one, as it can be practiced alongside continuing to learn search dog skills.

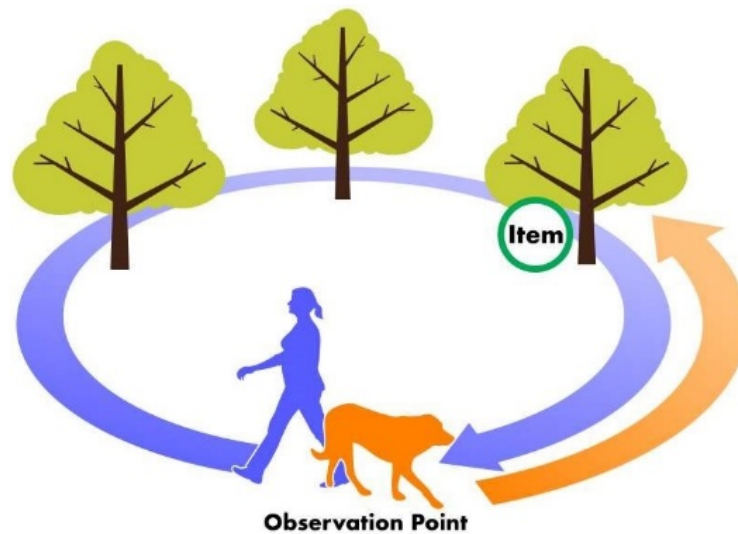
## Mission Nine. Multiple Drops

Mission nine should be carried out only when your dog can fetch his item from the most complicated places during a game of retrieve. Being able to sniff out, fetch and play with his prize is highly motivating and an excellent foundation to begin more complicated search.

Now we can start to stretch his scent recognition a bit further. You can do this on your own by safely tying your dog in a place where he can see you (preferably on a harness to prevent pulling in anticipation as that will hurt his throat) or you can enlist the help of someone else. The idea here is to provide your dog with a few options of where his prize may be, so that he can really start to use his nose for finding the scent.

Here's how to do it:

1. Choose an area where there is somewhere for your dog to stand and watch, with a few different hiding places that he can see. The idea is that he uses his nose to get to the correct one.
2. Have your dog tied or held in the area so he can see all the possible hiding places and show him the prize – your search item.
3. Move away from your dog and tuck the prize out of his sight then pretend to place it in four hiding places, but only drop it in one of them and return to your dog to show him your empty hands. Keep everything smooth at this point, so don't double back, just do one basic loop, like the image below.



Release your dog, delivering the cue to find and then watch them. I can almost guarantee that your dog will go to the last place you visited first. If he doesn't find the prize there he will go to your second last hiding place and so on. How long he looks for depends on his sniff ability and confidence.

If his confidence drops, make the task easier by leaving the prize in the first place he's likely to visit and build to the following. If your dog's confidence is high you can shake things up a bit by touching all areas you visit and adding your scent to them, plus leaving the prize somewhere a little more complicated.

When your dog gets his prize it's time to celebrate. Use the power of play to have a really good game, do a couple of retrieves, a game of tug and trigger that Dopamine for his memory.

### **Mission Accomplished**

Mission nine is accomplished when your dog can search five different possible drop off points and find his prize, even after you have touched all areas and hidden the prize almost out of sight – in five different search areas.

Include in your areas; an indoor room, your garden, a woodland with trees, a fence line with posts and an area with concrete floor with suitable hiding places – somewhere like a garage or car park.

## The Art of Just Enough

When teaching something new it's important not to ask your dog to repeat the same successful lesson more times than holds their interest, or they will get bored and probably confused. This is particularly important for dogs that learn quickly, after one or two tries at something.

Imagine you had learned to solve one specific crossword. The first time you did it, the challenge is enjoyable, but now you know all the answers, have identified the words and where to put them. Yet I ask you to do it another five times, sitting in the same seat in the same room. You would soon get bored and frustrated by my odd requests, the words and clues would no longer challenge you and you would probably resent me a little bit.

Our dogs don't really do resentment, as to err is human, the dogs that get the idea quickly will want to leave though and the ones that lack confidence will get confused and self-doubt. Either way they will show similar behaviours, they may start displacement acts such as licking or sniffing. Your dog could look like they are ignoring you, which is their way of changing the subject, or they might show signs of stress such as licking lips or yawning.

Get to know your dog's ***just enough*** learning point and don't push him beyond that or your teaching will become counter-productive. For example, if your dog does an excellent find from a complicated multiple drop in a new area that's great! Don't repeat that exact scenario. Introduce a new area, find a new hiding place or take a new direction around the hiding places, or even better – celebrate with a game and call it a day for that session.

## Mission Ten. Searching

When mission nine is completed your dog is ready to move on. It's a good idea to have a helper at this point if you can, for the first few sessions anyway. If you don't have an assistant you can tie your dog in place as you did on mission nine and do the assistant role yourself.

All previous missions completed successfully will ensure that your dog can move onto searching with ease. By this point he should know the cue for finding his prize and be pretty sure that his prize will be out there in the place where his cue is given. Then it's just a case of starting short and building up.

It's a good idea to return to a place where the dog has already succeeded in a multiple drop when you begin this next step. Instead of your dog standing in the middle of the hiding places as we did in mission nine, plan to have them facing the hiding places in a line going from closest to furthest away. The fence line practice area, with four or five posts or trees is perfect for this.

For this mission we start to get the dog's prize hidden before he enters the area. As we are moving on from big clues to actual searching on cue, this is probably the most important part of this mission to get right. Early hiding places should be obvious, they can get more complicated later, but for now we need to build your dog's confidence on this early step. The scent should be accessible and easily detected.

Consider the wind direction and any obstacles in the area. Ideally there should be little wind, so the dog can stumble into the scent pool or there should be a side wind across the hiding place, into the search area, so that your dog will enter the scent cone as he travels along the fence line. The first hide must also be only a few metres from the dog. Don't have the item hidden twenty metres away as the less confident dog may give up – remember it's the first time we have ever planted the prize without a big visual hint, so initially we need an easy hide.

1. This step will ideally be carried out by your assistant. Have your dog static and watching the assistant walk along the fence line towards him, then the assistant will briefly show their empty hands to the dog. There is no need to pretend to hide anything here, the item should already be in place. This will be exactly as they would have done at the end of mission nine. The dog's mind then from memory, when released, will go straight into searching for the item.
2. Release the dog and give the cue for finding his prize. As the fence line is a natural boundary your dog should run up it and go straight to his nearby hidden prize, grab it and bring it back. Then you should both play to cement the experience.
3. Congratulations! You have now trained a dog that can search an area on cue and find a hidden scent.
4. Next it's a case of building one part of each search at a time. Increase the distance before the find, on some searches. Keep the distance short on some but make the hide more complicated by putting something on top of the item or introducing wind that takes the scent away from the hide and the search direction. Don't be tempted to make all parts of a search more complicated at once as your dog might become confused and lose self-belief. This final mission will be ongoing even after it's accomplished – because search areas and hide opportunities are endless, even when your dog is a seasoned searcher you can find ways to challenge their new skill.

## **No Chatter**

Whilst we have covered talking earlier in the process let's recap. When your dog is searching he will be working hard to negotiate the area and detect the scent of his prize. If you chatter whilst he's doing this you will either be distracting him or teaching him to ignore your voice, just as we ignore a radio playing in the background.

There are only three specific times you should use your voice during a search:

1. To give the cue at the beginning or if your dog gives pause because he's been distracted from the task.

2. To question and encourage him when his behaviour changes because he has recognised the scent and is near the hide.
3. To reward with praise and a game when he finds his prize and brings it back to you.

Excessive chattering is like micro-managing your dog and will always be counter-productive. No-one likes to be micro-managed, least of all the dog who is using his learning to complete a task.

## **Scent Recognition**

Your dog will have a specific body language change when he detects his prize via its scent. You will learn to recognise his find language early in this mission. That's when you deliver your question and ask him what he has found. A question will spur the less than confident dog on to self-belief and the confident dog will also receive confirmation that he's doing the right thing.

When a dog gets a hint of the odour that he is searching for, he will often close his mouth. This gives him the opportunity to get more air up into the nasal cavity. This is one of the first signs of scent recognition and can be extremely brief but as you learn your own dog's habits, you may see this time and again, with the awareness of exactly what it means.

Your dog may be seeking the item but not be in the scent pool or cone, then suddenly he stops. He may do a check pace and turn his nose around to point it back to where he was when the scent hit. This is an obvious indication that the dog has scented the item.

If your dog loses the scent again he may continue in the direction he was heading. If he has hit a scent cone or pool, he will work through the scent with his nose, to detect the hidden item. As he does this your dog's body language will be more excitable, his tail will speed up and he will generally show more purposeful movement.

As we know scent travels. When an item is in an area and if it's warm, the scent particles get bigger and will rise, they may even be detected above the dog's head. Nose in the air and obvious scenting is an indication that the dog has caught a scent and is trying to work

with the particles and get closer to the item. If the weather is cold scent particles get smaller and stay close to the ground, so your dog may detect his scent lower down on cold days.

Because we teach our dogs to search for their toy and a reward, they get excited when they find its scent. This is brilliant because a motivated dog enjoys himself and finds searching easier. The body language of scent detection is genuine excitement. Your dog might seem to go onto his toes, become busier and move more quickly. When you have seen it a few times you are more likely to recognise the change in your dog's behaviour than if you're seeing it for the first time. As your searching grows, so will your ability to read your dog's body language when he finds his prize.

Later on, when hides get more complicated, if your dog shows interest in an area they are likely to have found the hidden prize. They may refuse to move away from a specific point and attempt to dig or mouth at the area.

As all dogs are different, so will be their scent recognition body language. Some may be a mixture of any of the above and other dogs may show something completely original that tells us they see the scent picture. The trick is to know your dog well enough to notice any changes and use that knowledge to encourage them.

## **Hides**

The hide is the place that the dog's search item is sitting, waiting to be found. They are split into six general types which can be swapped around for variety:

1. An easy hide is a place where the dog will detect the scent easily. For example, dropped into long grass or tucked behind a fence post. The easy hide is used early in the learning process to build confidence. It can also be used as a boost for the competent searcher, to give them a boost.
2. A difficult hide is where the scent will be more difficult to detect. For example, in a box with only a small scent escape path, at the dog's nose level on a warm day or on a windy day in a place



where the direction of wind takes the scent cone out of the search area.

3. A known hide is where you know the location of the search item. This will help you to learn your dog's language early on and question at the right time. It also prevents confusing feedback to your dog when you misread his signals and question at the wrong time.
4. An unknown hide where someone else places the search item in the area. This is good for later on, well after you have proofed this final mission. The unknown hide is best practiced when your dog is competent, and you have the confidence to read his scent detection signals. With this hide type, you are both being tested as a team. This is my favourite bit and is extremely fun and rewarding for both of you.
5. A fresh hide is a new hiding place where the item has just gone into the area and scent is still moving around. The fresh hide will have more than the scent of the item, there will be disturbance scent and scent from the person who set the hide, plus a scent footprint track to the place, all of which help the dog.
6. A settled hide is older than 24 hours and other scents in the area will have settled too. This gives the dog an accurate scent of their prize minus the disturbance of the fresh hide. Take care where hides are hidden because some wildlife love ginger biscuits and it's best to avoid sending your dog off on a fruitless mission.

## **Mission Accomplished**

Your final mission is not the end of your journey, in fact it's just the beginning. To complete it though, you need to carry out five different short searches.

1. A minimum five-minute search with an easy, fresh hide, where your dog successfully finds the prize and brings it back for a game.
2. A minimum five-minute successful search and find with an unknown easy hide.

3. A minimum ten-minute successful search and find with an unknown, easy, fresh hide.
4. A minimum five-minute successful search and find with an unknown, easy, settled hide.
5. A minimum ten-minute successful search with an unknown, complicated, settled hide.

Remember that every search should end with a reward and play as it will fuel your dog's learning, confidence and ability more than anything else you can offer.

## Takeaway Points

- When your dog is using up their physical and mental energy you can teach him to retire to a quiet place and relax. To do this when the dog is bursting with energy is unfair and likely to fail.
- The quiet place provides excellent energetic balance.
- Remember to use the *art of just enough* when teaching new things.
- Practicing multiple drops in many ways and places will provide an excellent foundation to search.
- When we make one task more difficult we must make the others easier to grow the dog's confidence and competence.
- Your dog's behaviour will change when he detects the scent of his prize, the exact change will be unique to him.
- Don't chatter or micro manage your dog as this will distract him.
- Mix and match hides, difficulties, search length and areas in bite sized chunks and one at a time until your dog can search like a pro.
- Celebrate your new skill!

# Summary

Thank you for coming on this journey with your dog. I hope you have enjoyed every moment and that your lives are enriched by the missions and your achievements. I also hope you have learned a lot along the way about how your dog thinks, learns and the motivations behind his behaviour.

I hope your dog has learned to relax through scentwork and that your relationship is greatly improved by the vast amount of new skills you have together. My ultimate aim for this book was to raise your understanding of your dog, settle your friend down and ensure that you both have lots of fun along the way.

Please visit my Facebook writing profile here <https://www.facebook.com/sallyanddogs/> and I would love to see the feedback as you work through each mission. Pictures would be an added bonus and of course, any questions are more than welcome.

Thank you!

# Tutored Study

My other dog project is an education resource, Canine Principles who provide fully accredited scentwork and professional search dog certification, along with many other dog courses, with tutored support.

If you have found this book interesting and want to take your new knowledge further, there are some reviews below. Canine Principles dog education courses can be found at [canineprinciples.com](http://canineprinciples.com)

## **Scentwork Enrichment Certificate Course.**

*“Wow where do I start. Scent work is a completely new subject for me and I started this course, so I could learn more to teach my dogs. It was hard going for me, but the course was so well written that it was easy to understand. I now feel confident enough to teach scent work to our customers. Highly recommend course”*

*“Great course to get started with scent work. Very informative and gives you a very good understanding on how to use your dog’s nose to create fun training sessions”*

## **Search Dog Handler Diploma Course.**

*“This course has helped me develop the skills needed to be a good search and rescue dog handler. Normally training covers the specific role of the dog but this course filled in all the gaps in knowledge that are necessary to be an effective dog and handler search team. Thank you for providing an excellent course”*

## **Canine Coaching Diploma Course.**

*“A brilliant course, well presented and in an easy to understand format. You can study in your own time, but because the course is so good, you just don’t want to stop! The support provided by the Canine Principles team is quick, helpful and informative. Your results are returned to you quickly and with encouraging and helpful feedback. The Facebook study group is a great resource. Great course and great company”*

## Final Note

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Reviews dictate readers, readers mean better understood dogs and happier guardians. They also get this work seen by as many people as possible, so I would really appreciate it if you took a moment to share your experience. Thank you.

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Thank you for joining me.