

Dog Agility Pre-School

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Susan Garrett's 1-2-3 game

Exercise goals:

- Dog builds drive to work
- Dog finds a thrown toy or tug-n-treat really reinforcing
- Dog learns to control anticipation and impulsive behaviors
- Dog learns to focus
- You find a way to get your dog's attention under high distractions

Step 3: Progressions for the 1-2-3 game

Goals:

- Keep up steps 1 & 2 goals (don't lose track of those!)
- Progression 1: finish the long cue which builds duration, anticipation, and dog's control
- Progression 2: add sits and downs, that is, you control the starting position
- Progression 3: build the "go on" by now using the thrown toy as a reinforcement for that.
- Continue to allow the dog to make mistakes, but limit those mistakes to one or two out of each 10 repetitions.

*** Build to the entire cue: one.....two.....threeeeeeee...GO!

*** Continue to be inconsistent. Randomly vary when you release, now by varying how fast you say 1-2-3. Be unpredictable.

*** Make your dog fail, 1 or 2/10 times, by enticing the dog to move and by increased duration (longer 1-2-3).

*** No more clicker: release on verbal only and no body motion.

*** Your cue: I think you should use an action cue, like GO! not your "at ease" release cue, such as OK or RELEASE. Jen Pinder confirmed my inclination in her seminar. It's OK to have multiple release cues, depending on what you want the dog to do next. If you want the dog to do a specific behavior, use a cue for that behavior. If you want your dog just to release from the former behavior but you don't have anything specific in mind, use your "at ease" release cue.

*** See if you can get your dog to drive ahead in anticipation of the thrown target...hesitate slightly and then throw. Try to build the distance your dog drives out before throwing, but don't push it too much. You don't want your dog looking back at you. Just reward the action of moving out before you throw the toy.

*** Now add a sit or a down—you specify the position...before the 1-2-3 game starts. Continue to build your "D" (desire, drive) so that your dog is quivering before the release. You might have to go back to earlier steps when you add this initial control. Don't forget DASH.

*** Keep your sessions short and intense.

*** Maintain at least an 90% success rate.

Reminders:

*** Be sure not to move your body either before or during the clicker and the release cue. You move yourself only after you've released your dog to move. Remember to be careful in all of agility not to let your dog think your body movement is a release cue.

*** When your dog goes before your release, just stand up casually and stop the game for a few seconds, then start again and make the next repetition much easier, so your dog is sure to succeed.

*** Don't delay too long in throwing the target after your release.

*** Run and try to beat the dog to the toy/target if your dog has low toy drive like mine do (if you use a tug-n-treat you always do this). Be careful though not to encourage your dog to play keep away.