

The Most Important Cue (Command) to Teach Your Dog

My apologies to the male pups and dogs – for ease of writing I am using the pronouns “her” and “she” when referring to the dog/student in this article.

With the possible exception of learning to recognize her own name, the most important lesson to teach your dog is to come to you when you call her – no matter where she is, what she is doing or what distractions are present.

This could literally save her life.

- a. **The Recall (Come Cue)** – Begin her training indoors – first with a leash and later without a leash.
 - i. Stand facing the dog (on a leash). Call her name. When she looks at you, start backing away, encouraging her to come after you.
 - ii. When she reaches you, take hold of her collar, then praise and treat (click and treat if you are using the clicker method).
 - iii. When she consistently comes to you and waits for you to take hold of her collar, start adding the cue “Come.” Do not say it when you first call her name (not yet) because she does not yet know what it means.
 - iv. When she performs the behavior successfully 8 out of 10 times, begin to practice the same exercise at longer distances.
 - v. When she is consistent and you know she will succeed, use the “come” cue with her name to call her to you.
 - vi. Do not use the “Come” cue during non-training sessions until you know she understands what it means and can be expected to obey. If she is not ready it could confuse her.
 - vii. As she progresses, take her outside and add distractions and distance. Also generalize by having other family members begin to offer the “Come” cue. Dogs don’t generalize well and need to learn that the word means the same thing wherever she is and whoever is calling her.