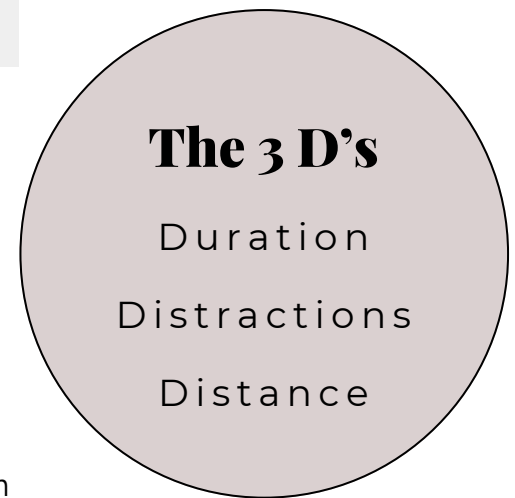# Training Skills

Understanding Generalization

Before teaching any command to your dog, ensure they have the motivation to follow a lure. This is how you can shape their behaviour effectively. If your dog is having difficulty understanding a cue, break it down into baby steps. Dog's struggle to generalize and it's more likely you are moving to fast and expecting too much. It's important to provide them with direction if they fail more than 2/3 times.

There are 3 things to break down when helping your dog understand their cues; Duration, Distractions, Distance. Focus on introducing one at a time during your training.

The 3 D's
Duration
Distractions
Distance

3 Steps to Training All Obedience Cues

Step 1 Introduce the Target Behaviour

No cues are used in this stage. You are simply using a lure to guide your dog into position to then mark and reward it. Once the dog is able to fluidly do the behaviour by following the lure, move to Step 2.

Step 2 Introduce the Cue

Before you assist your dog with a lure, clearly say the cue you wish to use, pause, then begin luring your dog into position. It is key, *not* to lure & say the cue at the same time, in order for the dog to learn the verbal cue without the visual cue (read that again!). Once your dog is showing that they can achieve the behaviour without using a food lure, move to the next step.

Step 3 Begin Generalization

Now build on the 3D' (duration, distraction, distance). Focus on 1 at a time vs multiple (ie. just focus on building duration vs challenging duration & adding distractions). In this step you are teaching your dog the behaviour in every context you may use the cue with. Examples of distractions may be working outside vs inside or walking away from your dog vs standing next to them. If your dog is struggling, make it easier!