



The Heel

Foundational

Definition of Heel:

Your dog's front feet are parallel with your feet. The heel command communicates to your dog to follow your side and ignore distractions until released.

Achieve Target Behaviour

1. With your dog on leash in front of you, pre-load your lure hand (side dog is practicing) and tuck it behind your back then say your dog's name.
2. Cue "heel" then pat your leg and offer your lure to assist the dog to move to the appropriate side (practice both).
 - a. **If your dog moves towards your side:** Say "yes" (duration marker) and pay your dog in position. Then tap them on the shoulder and say "break" (release marker).
 - b. **If your dog doesn't listen:** Do not reward them. Say "no" (no reward marker). Assist them with a food lure back into side position and repeat step 2. Work around less distractions or use higher value rewards, if your dog fails more than 3 times in a row.
3. Repeat this process several times until your dog is successful 3/3 times.
4. Then practice adding 5-10 steps forward before you say "yes" (duration marker) and reward your dog in position, then release them.

Adding a Controlled Distraction

3 Sets of 3 Reps or 5 min session

See *"Understanding Distractions"* for more information on controlled distractions and examples.

1. Add a controlled distraction to the environment. Your dog should be aware of the distraction but still able to respond to the cue $\frac{2}{3}$ times.
2. With your dog in heel position and a lure positioned at your belly button, cue "Heel" and walk past the distraction. Ensure the leash is in ready position to redirect and steady your dog.
 - a. **If your dog listens:** Mark and reward with "yes" (duration marker) and pay dog in position. Then tap them on the shoulder and say "break" (release marker).
 - b. **If your dog doesn't listen:** Do not reward them. Say "no" (no reward marker) and tug the leash. Assist them with the lure and/or leash back into position and repeat step 2. Keep the dog steady with the leash. Consider moving the distraction further away or using an easier one, if your dog fails more than 3 times in a row.
3. Repeat this process several times until your dog is successful 3/3 times consistently. Then gradually fade out the food in your lure and/or only rewarding with food for above average performances.

When to Advance the 3 D's

Remember The Rule of 3. If your dog easily completes three successful reps in a row, advance to longer duration, standing further away from the dog (distance), working closer to distractions or higher distractions. Only focus on challenging one of the 3 D's. If your dog fails three times in a row go back a step and make it easier.