

TRAINING YOUR DOBERMANN

WEEK 1

Heel Work

The dog always works on your left hand side on a check-chain. Hold the folded lead in your left hand in front of your left leg raised to waist level.

Call your dogs name to the "HEEL" command at the same time and step off briskly with your left leg. Do not wait for your dog to move he has no option as he is attached to the lead. **IMMEDIATELY PRAISE.**

Start by walking in small left-handed circles (slightly larger for bigger dogs!) using your right hand for attention. Ask the dog to "**WATCH ME**" and at the same time clicking your right fingers towards your face; he should be then gently turning his head to watch you.

If the dog is pulling the tension on the lead, jerk the lead across your body whilst (pulling the dog closer to your left leg) firmly saying "**NO**". Once he is back in the correct "**heel**" position praise him. You may have to do this hundreds of times before he gets the message, although some are quicker to learn. Don't give up or get frustrated he will never learn if he gets away with pulling just once!

Sitting

In the "heel" position say the dog's name whilst transferring the lead to the right hand and ask him to "**SIT**". At the same time raise your right hand above the dogs head and place your left hand gently on the dog's rear. The correct position for the dog is to be with his shoulders level with your left leg, facing the same direction as yourself and not with his rear pointing sideways. When his rear touches the ground Praise him immediately. Every time he obeys to "sit" in the correct position Praise him.

Dogs are not mind readers, **TELL, SHOW & PRAISE.** Some people may feel that this may be easier taught with a treat, but then he may always expect a treat & could get despondent.

Recall

This should be a pleasurable experience asking your dog to perform a simple task in a pleasant tone. You should never call your dog to punish it or even "rugby tackle" to empower him or her, this is a trust bonding measurement that should be enforced throughout its life. A dog that is frightened of you could lose its life or cause an accident that could cost you severely!

Get a helper to hold your dog in an enclosed space to start with & make a big fuss of him and then you want to run away. Should you do this in a big wide open space he may run away or get distracted? After a few yards turn around & face the dog, back away and then call the dog's name with a pleasant encouraging command tone "**C-C-c come**". When he does, make a big fuss of him and let him jump around to get his confidence (he possibly thinks that you are running away from him & he may think he has done wrong). However should he run away, the helper should be pleasant and catch the dog and bring him to you giving him lots of praise to start the exercise all over again (no matter how much you want to shout & strangle the dog that is why it is better to do it with a partner!)?

Heelwork recall

Walk whilst your dog is in the "heel" position and let the lead go loose. Back away from your dog, call him (as in recall, "**C-c COME**"), keep on backing away and gather the lead in both hands in front of your body slowly encouraging the dog. Do

not drag the dog, let him be enthusiastic and if he goes to the side, flick the lead gently and carry on backing away calling his name. He will eventually walk towards you when he acknowledges the trust, praise him.

Sit Stay

Do not attempt to this exercise directly before or after the “recall” exercises as this will confuse the dog, play a game or take him for a walk. Calling the dog’s name will always denote a movement to the dog, so in this exercise do not say his/her name) In the “heel” position command the dog to a sit position. Let the lead loose and hold the lead at the end. With your right hand firmly command “**STAY**” and bring the palm of your hand slowly down and close to the dog’s nose as possible. If he moves repeat the exercise again until the dog has sat for a full 30 seconds. Once he has learnt this, kneel down by his side, place your left had on his rear and praise him into the sit position. After the exercise let the dog get up and move him from the spot from where he was sitting.

Down Stay

In the “heel” position sit your dog, hold folded lead in right hand and place your left hand behind the dog’s shoulders. Command “**DOWN**” at the same time pressing firmly on the dog’s shoulders and pull downwards and slightly forwards with your right hand. Encourage the dog to lie on his side, whilst this is not important he is less likely to move and praise him but not too much or he may get up.

Loosen the lead whilst slowly getting up bringing the palm of your right hand towards the dogs nose and command “**STAY**” (as per “sit, stay” movement), hold the lead at the end whilst gently standing upright keeping a watchful eye. If he moves kneel by his side and repeat the whole scenario without petting him. Once he has mastered the technique start counting the seconds gradually building this up to a minute or two. At the end kneel beside him placing left hand on his back and praise, and then let him stand up and praise him enthusiastically!

Note: **TELL, SHOW, PRAISE**. A few minutes two/three times a day is all the time. You need for you & your dog to learn new tricks. Always practice somewhere quiet with no distraction’s for either of you. Do not try to train when you are not happy or in a bad mood. Never let the dog get away with having the upper hand, always end the session with something he does well in and give him lots of praise.

WEEK 2

Heel work

Hold folded lead in left hand, in front of your left leg. Use your right hand to encourage your dog. Start off as in week 1. Left hand circle work, gradually making the circle larger until you are walking in a fairly large square.

Left Turn

Keep your body upright & your feet under your body (don’t attempt to take large strides, especially when turning). Look at footwork patterns. Make sure that your dog is correctly heeling before you get to a corner, call your dogs name and command “**HEEL**” or “**CLOSE**” giving a small check of the lead and bring your right hand across your body. Tell your dog “**BACK**”, turn left immediately and remember to praise. If you pull or hold the dog back he will be in the incorrect position and would be far behind you going around the corner through no fault of his own.

Every time you halt during heelwork the dog must be placed in the sit position. He

must sit on command sitting squarely beside your left leg. (Cruft's obedience winners all sit like this whilst training).

Sit Stay

As per Week 1, but when he is in the stay position, you should step away from your dog, using your right leg to move one pace. If there is any movement in your dog, place him back in the sit position and use the "**STAY**" command. Repeat this for 30 seconds. Upon returning to him do not speak, or touch him unless he moves and then gently kneel by his side & praise.

Down Stay

As per Week 1. Take a pace away, make sure the dog remains in the down position for a count of 60, return to him as in the sit stay. After these two exercises, make a big fuss of him.

Stand Stay

This is an important control function and is used whilst you are grooming the dog or taking him to the vets & should be taught in the early stages of your training regime. Have your dog sitting in the heel position holding the short lead in your right hand, say your dog's name followed by the command "**STAND**" or "**UP**" at the same time putting your left hand over the dog's back and then under his tummy. Bring your right hand forward and present the palm to your dog's face as the stay signal and command "**STAY**". Remove your hand from his tummy, stand up straight keeping your right hand in front of his face for a time. He should not move at all, if he does place your hand under his tummy and repeat "**STAND**" or "**UP**". Build up the time in these positions.

Heelwork

Watch the footwork patterns in The About Turns.

During heelwork make sure your body is upright and feet underneath your body and inform your dog that you are turning round. Walk with dog in correct heel position, say dog's name followed by command "**HEEL**" or "**CLOSE**", bring right hand across body and grasp lead close to the dog's head as possible. This will bring the dog closer to your left leg and at the same time turn around, command "**ABOUT TURN**" or "**TURN**" or "**LEFT**" or "**RIGHT**" etc. Step off briskly and praise, releasing your right hand from the lead.

Recall during Heelwork

Walk dog in heel position, slacken lead and back away from dog (as per week 1). Call the dog's name and "**C-c COME**" pleasantly, keeping both hands in front of your body gather the lead and when your right hand reaches the clasp stop backing away. Move the right hand up, whilst reaching over the dog's behind with your left hand and say command word "**SIT**". Your dog should have his nose as close to your knees as possible whilst his bottom is facing directly away from you. Praise your dog. This is called the present position.

Note: Your body positions are important and give confidence. Avoid bending over your dog, apart from giving yourself backache, your dog will sit further away from you. Don't flap your hands or move jerkily otherwise your dog will copy your action. Do go to dog handling and show classes to learn from others.

Mix the previous exercises between new work and always try to alternate them.

Make it a game!

WEEK 3

Heelwork

Introduce fast and slow pace for short distances keeping the dog at Heel position. In heelwork, work in right handed circles for a dog that lags (falls behind) and left handed circles for a dog that work's forward. The dog should pay attention to what you are doing and should not be told to change direction.

Sit Stay

Say dog's name, command "**STAY**" and hand signal. Step 1 large pace forward away from dog with your right foot, turn and face dog. Do not stare him in the eyes but watch for warning signals of movement, i.e. shuffling feet, wagging tail etc. Repeat command & hand signals where necessary, but do not call his name during this exercise.

Recall with Helper

Helper holds dog's lead & makes a fuss of him, position does not matter. Run away calling dog's name, followed by request of "**COME**". As dog approaches bend down and welcome with open arms, lavish & praise getting hold of collar. Do not force him or punish him it must always be a pleasant experience.

Down Stay

Place dog in Down Position as per week 1. Give "**STAY**" command & hand signal. Step off sideways with right foot to end of lead, turn then face dog (as in sit stay) count up to 30 seconds, command "**STAY**" before you return to the heel position. Count to 3, bend down with left hand on dogs back, praise with voice & right hand.

WEEK 4

Heel Work

Same as previous weeks adding neatly right or left turns occasionally.

Stays

Sometimes do down stay before sit stay taking care that the command is obeyed correctly with praise. After giving "**STAY**" command & signal, place lead on floor. Repeat command & signal before walking to the end of lead & placing foot on it. Watch dog at all times for signs of movement. Count to 20, command "**STAY**" return to heel position, do not pick up lead, count to 3, bend down, praise as sit stay (week 2) or down stay (week 3).

Recall

Practice all three types of recall during this week, i.e. "**COME**" (see week 1).
Recall in heel work (see week 2).
Recall with helper (see week 3).

Walk around dogs

In the heel position, the dog is sitting with the lead in your left hand, say your dog's name and command "**STAY**" and hand signal. Step off with right foot & circle around dog in anti-clockwise direction back to the "**HEEL**" position. Keep the left hand in front of the dog's eyes at all times giving hand signals and voice commands where necessary to keep him sitting. Voice praise whilst dog remains sitting.

The FINISH position

Dog sitting in heel position. Handler moves to recall position, after "**STAY**" command

(see week 2).

Handler in recall position, the lead folded in right hand. Say dog's name, command "**HEEL**" simultaneously move right hand and right leg backwards to get the dog to its feet, replace right foot to original position. Transfer lead from right hand to left hand behind your back, repeat the command of "**HEEL**" as necessary, immediately change lead to right hand by left hip and apply aids to place dog in sit position.

Praise.

For small puppies try the lead crossing behind right calf and the loop of the lead in the hand, call dog's name, command "**HEEL**", then flick the lead with right calf. Repeat command if necessary transfer short lead into right hand. Watch dog & be ready to place in sit position when dog reaches correct heel position then command "**SIT**". Use the aids for sitting as per week 1 and praise. Practice what suits your dog best.

WEEK 5

Heelwork

To keep the dog's interest in heelwork, introduce these exercises:

Double About Turn (2 about turns, so that you continue walking in the original direction).

One Pace Sideways from your dog, remember to give "**STAY**" command first, or One Pace Backwards, or One Pace Forwards, remembering to step off on the right foot as well as command "**STAY**" each time. Walk around dogs (see week 4).

Recall

Check chain in correct position, dog sitting at heel position. Dog's name, command "**STAY**", step off with correct foot (see sit stay week 3), walk to the end on the slack lead, turn & face your dog, count up to 5, say dog's name, "**C-c COME**", shortening the lead as the dog approaches and be ready to command and place dog in the sit position. Praise whilst in this position.

Do not practice stays immediately after doing recalls, otherwise your dog will become confused.

Stays. As week 2, but with dog off lead, remember to put lead out of sight.

Sit stay. As the dog has already learnt this exercise on the lead, progress should be quicker to reach a count of 30, 2 paces away from the dog.

Down stay. Very Similar to off lead & increasing length of time and distance from dog.

Now this is the time to start varying your training locations whilst out on a walk etc..

Remember a happy dog is a well trained dog!