



Stay for stopped contacts

©2013 AgilityFlix All Rights Reserved Andrea can be reached at www.agilityflix.net

The stop portion of a contact behavior includes two kinds of self-restraint. The impulse control to decide to stop and the impulse control to stay until released.

Both behaviors depend upon the dog learning how to have self control and learning how to choose to tap into it in order to get something they really, really want.

Step 1: Basic Self Restraint

See the puppy foundation pages for other ideas, but here is a basic self-restraint game that you can play with your dog. The key to teaching self restraint is to present your dog with a choice - exercise self-restraint and you win a reward - choose not to and the opportunity to win the reward goes away.

Start with choices that are relatively easy and once your dog learns to master self-restraint they can not only resist greater challenges but they will love the game because while they are exhibiting self-restraint they are building anticipation for their reward.

Once you've worked through this basic exercise, take a look at some variations on the game below. The more you can make a stay behavior be part of games, the more likely your dog will be happy to choose it (and will be able to choose it) on their contact obstacle (and start line) in agility.

Because you'll train agility in a way that makes everything after performing their 2o2o really, really fun, your stay behavior has to be really, really strong. In addition, because you'll be running and pulling off laterally and hanging back etc. your dog is going to have to learn to go to their 2o2o and stay there despite the interesting cues you are giving with your body language and that takes very strong self restraint.

Step 2: More Self Restraint Games

Any time your dog is interested to do something, you can give them an opportunity to exercise self restraint in order to get to do that thing. The more practice your dog gets in choosing self restraint, the more skilled they will be. The more fun you make it to exhibit self constraint, the more your dog will want to choose it, in order to play. This will ultimately make teaching a stay behavior easy and fun - because your dog will already want to play stay games.

Step 3: Stay with Verbal Release

There are several things that are important to get right when training a strong stay behavior. Try to make sure that your dog is choosing to stay.

Try to make sure you release with a verbal release only and only one command (such as "OK")

Try to only release your dog when they are still (so they don't begin to think that something they do, such as moving a foot, causes you to release them).

In traditional obedience, Stay is only used when you intend to return to your dog to release them from your side. Wait is used when you might release your dog from a distance. Teach either or both commands.

Step 4: Make Stay Really Strong

The more you can make a stay behavior be part of games, the more likely your dog will be happy to choose it (and will be able to choose it) on their contact obstacle (and start line) in agility.

Because you'll train agility in a way that makes everything after performing their 2o2o really, really fun, your stay behavior has to be really, really strong. In addition, because you'll be running and pulling off laterally and hanging back etc. your dog is going to have to learn to go to their 2o2o and stay there despite the interesting cues you are giving with your body language and that takes very strong self restraint.