

Dog Training Articles
By Beth Bradley

Consistency in Handling

Most of the complaints are the same: Fido doesn't come when called; he just wants to play when he sees another dog, he chases squirrels, he doesn't understand hand signals or he doesn't look at me, etc. Contrary to popular belief it is not that he is not responding to commands, but that he is not paying attention. Dog Attention is the first exercise taught and the first exercise forgotten. All problems are the result of lack of the dog's attention. If he were paying attention to you he wouldn't chase the squirrel. Your dog shouldn't just go through the motions; his eyes should be on you never knowing whether to expect another command or an 'Okay'. If you need to use food or a ball to initially get your dog to look into your face, that's fine but your dog must realize that if his attention strays, there is going to be a correction.

Most people don't know when to praise or feed the dog during an Attention exercise. In the beginning the praise comes immediately, then the praise comes later demanding his attention for a longer period of time. But not only does the praise come immediately, correction must come as soon as the dog takes his attention off of you.

Attention must be practiced every day and distractions should be added as the dog responds better. The more training you do with your dog, the better attention you should expect.

Remember, if you don't have time for training, at least save some time for attention-every day. Your dog must realize he must give you his undivided attention whenever asked, under anyconditions.