

Independent Stopped Dogwalks

Introduction

Thank you for registering for the Independent Stopped Dogwalk class. I have been training and teaching this stopped dogwalk method successfully for over 15 years. Although there have been some alterations to the program, thanks in part to advances in better training methods, the ideas are the same as they were all those years ago.

As an instructor I need ways to clearly teach behaviors to students and their dogs, give students homework they can do at home away from the equipment, and help teams not only feel successful, but also feel like they are making progress. By dissecting the dogwalk into small pieces I have been able to develop a method that makes sense to not only my students, but also to their dogs.



The Goal of this Program

When training a stopped dogwalk, I strive for an independent end-behavior, forward drive over the obstacle, lateral handling distance, sendaways, and strong verbal release cues. If I must manage my dog's performance on the contact, I am not free to actively handle the course in the manner I wish. An independent dogwalk behavior gives us control of our movements on course and allows the dog to feel confident and in control in his choices, which in turn creates faster, more fluid performances.



I have found my method to be black and white and easy for both you and your dog to understand. There are no props or targets used in my methods to teach the stopped end-behavior except for the board itself- so no luring, physical manipulation, or fading are used. This helps create a training process where the dog has control. I hope you enjoy the class as much as I enjoy teaching it.

Equipment Needed

Clicker/Verbal Marker

Participants and their dog should have a clear understanding of the clicker, a verbal marker work such as “yes” or “good”, and reinforcement. How behaviors are marked and how reinforcement is delivered will determine how quickly, cleanly, and easily dogs will grasp the behaviors being taught.

Treats and Toys

A variety of treats and toys will be needed for reinforcement. Treats that are visible when tossed are preferred.

Travel Plank/Contact Board

Below is a photo of my current travel boards. They are all 12 inches wide and range from 3 feet to 6 feet in length. The surfaces vary, but all are non-slip. The pink one and the yellow one are homemade from scrap lumber that has been painted and sanded for good grip. The 5-foot board with the stars was made for me by one of my students using rubber granules.

Each board lays flat on the ground, with no lift or angle. Due to the nature of some of the exercises any lift over an inch or board angle can be a hindrance in training. These are just some references, I am certain almost any board in similar style will work. Some of my students have had success finding scrap boards in their sheds and apply yoga matting or carpet runners for traction, so there are lots of possibilities. Please let me know if you have any questions.



Tunnel

Participants will need access to a tunnel for the discrimination lesson.

Jumps or Cones

Participants will need access to cones or jumps when working on sending, entries, and exits.

Dogwalk

Participants will need access to a dogwalk once the advanced training begins.