

Manual for 12-Week
Retriever Training Video

Journey Into Greatness

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Introduction

Read this before beginning your dog's Journey into Greatness.

Before you begin this journey into training your dog to greatness, first of all keep in mind that greatness can be defined many different ways. We each have our own definition of what that is. It really has nothing to do with, or at least shouldn't with what anybody else's definition is. So don't get too caught up with how someone else defines it.

Before you get started on this journey I want to go over a couple of things and advise you on how I think the program should be used. Though in the end, how you use it is obviously up to you.

First of all I want to state that my goal is not only for you to get Great results with this program but to enjoy the process (at least most of the time) while cultivating and producing a positive working attitude in the dog, and you for that matter. As I mention throughout the program to get "results" in a manner that produces a poor working attitude in the dog I would not consider successful. Dogs have many different ability levels and our job is to make them the best they can be while cultivating a positive working attitude. I have far too often seen dogs that do the things a hunting dog needs to do but who's psyche has been severely damaged in the process. This I consider a total FAILURE. Yet at the same time having a happy, out of control dog that is a nuisance to others as well as quite often out hunting (have we not all seen or experienced this while out hunting, or in the parking lot or clubhouse before hunting?) is also unsuccessful. The good news is that **IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE BOTH A WELL TRAINED DOG WITH A POSITIVE WORKING ATTITUDE.** That is what I hope to help you accomplish with this program.

I recommend you go through this program lesson by lesson or week by week. What I mean by this is though some of you may move through the program in some instances quicker than a week and others may spend several weeks on one week or one lesson; don't proceed to the next lesson until the previous one has been finished. Each week or lesson builds on the previous one and to skip ahead will not only NOT produce the best results but may even cause problems that will effect the dogs learning attitude and the overall time it takes to SUCCESSFULLY finish the program. Go in the sequence that the program takes you through. It is not necessarily the time frame that is important but the proper sequence. This is a comprehensive program with 12 DVD's (one DVD per week/lesson) and over 12 hours of video. If you want to watch the whole program before starting or before finishing the process by all means do so, just adhere to the sequences the program takes you through.

My goal was to use dogs with different temperaments as I went through this process to try to show how to handle each of these different types of dogs. Though you can learn from all of them if you want to skip through the dogs that don't match what your type of dog, feel free to do so, though watching all them will make you a better trainer. These training sequences were not staged as most videos are, as far as I did not run the dogs through the process ahead of time to make them look good (which would do you little good). These sessions were shot as, and how, they unfolded which is part of what makes them so valuable. We shot the video in all weather conditions and climates so hang in there on a couple of sessions that made shooting video a challenge.

In closing I want again to let those know who may be interested, that on a limited and first come first serve basis, I also am offering a consultation part to the program, where I personally coach you through the program on a week by week basis. For those interested

in this service you can contact me at
dennis@dennishayrekennels.com

I wish you the best of luck and would love to hear any comments
you have about the program as well as your success stories.

Thanks again,
Dennis Hayre

WEEK ONE

- Throughout the entire training process make sure your dog is fresh before starting training session.
- I realize that it will not be possible for everyone to do all of these things I am recommending, in the time frame I suggest. This would be ideal but you will have to do the best you can with time and resources you have available to you. There are probably few people going through this program who will be able to do all things exactly as stated. It will at times take some creativity on your part to get some of these things done. Just do the best you can. Don't get too caught up in the time frames. These are only guidelines.

Obedience:

- I am assuming at this point (your dog is probably at least six months old) your dog knows the basic obedience commands such as here, heel, sit, stay, and possibly down. We will also be including some other tasks such as heel to side, and kennel (the dog may know this one as well). It is not important that your dog responds to these commands perfectly, even well for that matter. It is critical that the dog knows what the words mean. Many, if not all of these tasks, can be worked on and reinforced throughout the day without a formal training session being planned.
- Start e-collar conditioning on here: You will start this with the dog on a long line (see video). Again it is not necessary the dog responds perfectly to here, but the dog must know what here means. If the dog does not know what here means DO NOT start the e-collar conditioning.
- Incorporate the whistle with the here command: You will say here, followed by tweet, tweet, tweet (see video). Spend 5-10 minutes a session on this. As in most of these tasks if you

have the time you can do more than one session a day. Once the dog shows it understands the corrections you can progress by beginning to add some distractions such as kids, other dogs, etc. Progress incrementally. By the end of the week if all is going well the dog will be off the long line. You will know it is time to take the long line off when the dog is responding with the nick with the e-collar without any guidance with the long line. The purpose of the long line is so that when you begin to correct the dog with the e-collar you can guide the dog into the correct response, and so that the dog will not be able to bolt, leave the scene in response to the correction. Start the dog on the lowest level on the e-collar then evaluate the response and adjust the level accordingly.

Force Fetch:

- **Teach hold:** Start hold with an object the dog will not be retrieving, such as a wooden or plastic dowel. This is done so the dog will not associate the fun of retrieving with the not so fun force fetch process. Patience is critical in all aspects of training but especially so in the force fetch process. Some dogs will hold quite naturally and easy right from the start, others will really fight it. Some dogs will be able to begin moving, while holding, in a few days. Other dogs getting a five second hold fairly stable will be a big deal. Don't get concerned if your dog is the latter, in the end the result will be the same. The video goes into more detail. Spend about 5-7 minutes per session. If you have the time you can do several sessions a day as long as the sessions have several hours in between.

Other:

- **Bird Introduction:** Introduce the dog to a dead bird such as a pigeon, duck, or pheasant. The bird should be as fresh as

possible. I do not recommend using a dove or quail for the dog's first exposure to birds. The dog is much more likely to mouth or even eat one of these birds. Also introduce the dog to a live clipped wing or shackled pigeon. When introducing the dog to a live shackled or wing clipped pigeon make sure to toss it in an open area, and away from anything the bird will be able to run into and hide in or under. Such as under a vehicle or a deck or in a wood pile or something like it (see video).

If the dog tries to eat the bird, don't freak out. One option if the dog is trying to eat or mouth the birds is to use a frozen or semi-frozen bird. Force fetching will take care of any handling of the bird problems.

This introduction to birds does not have to be done every day, a couple of times would be fine. A few minutes on each session is plenty. At this point we are just evaluating and cultivating the dog's birdiness. Make it fun! Use a long line if the dog has a problem bringing the bird back. DO NOT use the electronic collar for this!

- Introduction to decoys: Do this on land first. Spread a few decoys out on the lawn and with the dog on leash just casually walk by and then through the decoys. If the dog tries to pick one up gently tug on the leash, calmly say leave it and continue to walk. Don't make a big deal about it. If the dog wants to sniff the decoy a bit this is fine. If the dog shows no concern with the decoy's throw a few retrieves where the dog has to run past and then through the decoys. Make the retrieve well beyond the decoy's, far enough so the dog is not tempted as much to grab a decoy instead of the bird or bumper. Do this in a small area starting close to the decoy's so 10-15 yards beyond them should do it.

If the dog on the return stops at the decoys use the here command that you have been teaching along with the whistle, tweet, tweet, tweet. If the dog does not respond to this DO NOT use the e-collar to correct. If you have to throw another

bird or bumper behind you to get the dog's attention and out of the decoys. This is only week one, don't make a big deal about it if the dog gets hung up in or even picks up a decoy. If the dog does pick up the decoy just firmly say AAAhh, take it out of the dogs mouth and say leave it and continue on. Use a long line if you have to. The goal here is to introduce the dog to decoys, not turn the session into a test on their obedience. Once the dog is comfortable with the decoys on land and is swimming well move it to water. It is wise when introducing the dog to decoys in water to have no strings attached to the decoys for them to get tangled in.

- Introduction to gunfire: Most gun shy dogs are created not born. With a little common sense we can avoid any problems in this area. There are many ways to introduce a dog to gunfire, many of which you may be familiar with. Regardless of the method used, there are two critical things to keep in mind: 1) Have the dog's exposure to gunfire be associated with something positive. Such as watching another dog retrieve (which is the method I use). 2) Start a long distance away (100 yards or so) and gradually move closer if no problems arise. In most cases you can move up within 20-30 yards the first day, but there is no rush. Be cautious if you see any signs of concern out of the dog. I start with a 22 blank pistol then move up to a shotgun. Though you can start with a shotgun taking care to be extra cautious. You don't have to be shooting right over the dog the first day. Another way you can expose them to gunfire is while you are throwing a bumper or bird for the dog while the bumper in the air have someone fire a shot. When I do this I try to time the shot at about the top of the arc of the throw. Again, when starting this be around a 100 yards away from the person shooting and gradually have them move closer to you if all is going well. Just use good common sense.

Don't make the mistake some do and pull the shotgun out and let it rip with the dog being 10 feet away or worse yet

have the dog's first exposure to gunfire be out hunting! Some people have done this. I have had numerous dogs through the years who I have attempted to fix because someone without thinking much about it made the mistakes mentioned. Some of these dogs were never really "fixed" and the problem could have been avoided by using a little common sense. Are there dog's out there that's first exposure to gunfire has been has been out hunting or by someone pulling out a shotgun and letting it rip, without any problems? Yes. But is the risk worth it? What a shame it would be to ruin a potentially great dog by trying to take shortcuts when there is no benefit to it.

- Introduction to water/water retrieves: If the dog has not been exposed to water or swimming start short and make it fun. Before anything is actually thrown for the dog to retrieve find a spot where you can wade in with the dog. Find a spot that is shallow (a couple of inches) and that gradually gets deeper until the dog begins to swim. Once the dog is swimming move back into the non-swimming depth and do it again. If the dog looks confident walk out a little farther next time. If the dog at any time looks panicked move quickly back into the shallow water. Having another dog show the youngster the way can also be a great and fun way to introduce to water and swimming.

Whatever you do don't get frustrated and force the issue. The dog may not be swimming in one day. Doing this during warm weather is best, but the time of year and where you live will determine this. If it is really cold try to pick the warmest day and warmest water possible. If your climate or the weather dictates it you may be better off waiting a few weeks or even a month to introduce the dog to water. The sooner they are swimming the better.

Many owners when starting this program will already have had their dogs swimming. So much the better. When starting with retrieves in the water start very short in non-swimming water and gradually increase the retrieve so they are

swimming. Do not hold the dog back at all at this point. Some dogs will be hitting the water hard and swimming out 50 yards or more the first day. Other will need their confidence built up. The more often you can get them into the water the better, especially at the beginning. Do the best you can with what you have.

- Marks: End every session with a few retrieves. I am assuming at this point your dog has been retrieving for probably several months and hopefully is very enthusiastic about it. If this is the case hold the dog back by holding onto his collar, or use a short lead, until the mark hits the ground. Then release the dog on its name. The dogs name will be used to release him or her on marks. See the video for do's and don'ts on this. For those dogs that are not yet showing enthusiasm to retrieve DO NOT hold them back at all.
- Happy Bumpers: What the heck or happy bumpers you say. Happy bumpers are bumpers that are thrown for a dog that are totally for fun. They are great for rewarding a dog, giving a dog with a little less desire a kick start, and they can greatly improve water entries. They are basically free retrieves because there are few rules involved.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

Note: This schedule is only a guideline and it is only meant to guide you through the process in the most efficient way. Just do the best you can.

Teach Hold- Five days during the week. Do two sessions a day if possible, 10-15 minutes a session.

Electronic Collar Conditioning on Here- Five days a week, about 10 minutes a session.

Introduction to Birds- Dead birds at least once, if there are no problems do more. Live birds at least once.

Introduction to Decoys- Once or twice should do it.

Introduction to Gunfire- At least once, but more if you can.

Introduction to Water- Two or three times if you can and the weather permits.

Retrieving/Marks- Daily if you can. Keep it fun, if the dog is wild about retrieving you can hold the dog back a bit. Don't worry about throwing marks into cover at this stage. Determine the distance of the retrieves based on the dog experience and retrieving desire.

WEEK TWO

Obedience:

- Continue to teach and/or review obedience. Same as last week: sit, stay, heel, down, kennel, heel to side, walking sit, and here. Spend about 10-15 minutes daily on the obedience. Continue to incorporate the whistle on sit (tweet) and here (tweet,tweet,tweet). Again, many if not all of these tasks can be worked on and reinforced through out the day without a formal training session being planned.
- Review collar here: Remember to include the whistle (tweet,tweet,tweet) Hopefully it is going well enough to take the long line off. Each day progress into more distractions such as other dogs, people, etc. Before collar conditioning on here is complete the dog will need to be de-bolted (bolting was defined last week). Start this on the long line then do it without the long line. The video goes into more detail.
- Start e-collar conditioning on heel: This should go fairly smooth because of the knowledge the dog has from e-collar conditioning on here. Start on leash and progress to off leash. The video will be helpful here but basically as far as timing with the e-collar goes whenever you would use the leash for a correction would be when you would use the e-collar correction.

Force Fetch:

- Teach/Review hold: Review week one notes and video. Hopefully you have the dog holding while he or she is moving. This should be done on leash. You can have a perfect hold at this point when the dog is stationary but when the dog moves they instantly drop the dowel. Don't panic, this is fairly typical. Holding with movement can be a big step. If the dog does drop the dowel with movement, calmly replace the dowel back in the dogs mouth say hold and tap

the dog under the chin. Repeat hold followed by the tap under the dogs chin a couple of times. Try to end the session with taking a step or two while holding. The video will go into more detail. Spend 10-15 minutes daily. If you have the time you can do two sessions a day at least two hour apart.

- Start ear pinch fetch if hold allows: The dog does not need to be doing hold with movement to start the ear pinch fetch but the dog must be holding for a long enough time to reward for a successful fetch. In other words as the dog opens it's mouth on fetch you want the dog to be able to hold the dowel long enough, 3 or 4 seconds, so you can praise them, and allow them to enjoy the success. The video goes into more detail. Work on this 10 minutes daily. You can do two sessions a day if you have time.

Other:

- Bird Exposure: If possible include a session working with a fresh dead bird. The more often we can expose the dog to game birds the better. 5-10 minutes on this is plenty, you just want to continue to cultivate the dog's birdiness. Just remember make the birds fun!
- Expose the dog to a live shackled or wing clipped pigeon again this week if possible.
- Include a session of exposure to gunfire this week if possible. If all went well last week continue to decrease the distance of the gunfire.
- Get the dog out to the water again for at least one session, more if possible, especially if the dog is not yet confident.
- End each session with some retrieves. See last weeks session for information on holding or not holding the dog back.
- Don't forget to include a steady diet of happy bumpers during the week.

SCHEDULE FOR WEEK

Note: Again this schedule is only a guideline and it is only meant to guide you through the process in the most efficient way. Just do the best you can with the time and facilities that you have.

Incorporate Obedience into your day to day household activities. Lay the ground rules and be consistent.

Review Hold- Go to hold with movement if all is going well. Five days out of the week, 10-15 minutes a session. Several sessions a day spaced out is fine.

Start Ear Pinch on Fetch- Only if hold allows. Meaning the dog have to hold long enough for you to reward the fetch. Five days out of the week. 10-15 minutes. Several sessions a day is fine if they are spaced out several hours. This should be incorporated with hold.

Review Collar Here- 1-2 days if all is going well, 5-10 minute sessions. Before going to e-collar heel the dog should be responding well to here with correction of lead.

Start Collar Heel- Four to Five days out of the week, 5-10 minutes a session. Several sessions a day are fine if you space them out.

Include a session or two during week throwing a few retrieves using a fresh dead bird and evaluate response. If your dog is being rough on the bird hold off until force fetch is done. If your dog is hesitant or uninterested do as often as possible.

Expose your dog to a live bird again if possible.

Include a session or two of exposure to gunfire. If all is going well decrease the distance of the shots.

If weather permits try to get your dog out to the water a couple of times during the week. If your dog is aggressive in the water extend the distance. Make sure you end the session with the dog still craving more. If your dog is a little hesitant, be patient, don't overdue it. You may need to coax the dog into the water using another dog, or you wading in.

Retrieving/Marks- Daily if you can. Keep it fun. If the dog is wild about retrieving you can hold the dog back a bit. Don't worry about throwing marks into cover at this stage. Determine the distance and difficulty of the retrieves based on the dogs retrieving desire, experiences and responses.

WEEK THREE

Obedience:

- Review obedience: See week one and two adding increased distractions. Work 10-15 minutes daily.
- Review here with the e-collar. Increase the distractions. Remember to incorporate the whistle (tweet, tweet, tweet). Work 5-10 minutes daily.
- Review collar conditioning on the heel command, or begin if you did not start it last week. If you began last week and all is going well, work on it off leash. See the video for more details. 5 minutes daily.
- Start collar conditioning on sit/stay. 5-10 minutes per session, two sessions a day is fine if you have the time.

Force Fetch:

- Review hold: Work on hold with movement. 10 minutes daily. Two sessions a day would be great if you have the time. Many of you may be well past this. Fantastic. If your not don't worry about it. You will get there.
- Begin the ear pinch part of the force fetching if you have not already. Remember the hold does not have to be perfect to start this. The dog just needs to hold long enough to reward for fetch. The video goes into more detail. 10 minutes daily. Again, you can do two sessions a day if you have the time.

Other:

- Do a few retrieves during the week using dead birds and a wing clipped pigeon if possible.
- Spend a day or two doing retrieves in the water. Start swimming the dog through decoys if dog is swimming well.
- At least one day during the week use gunfire. If you have been using a blank pistol move to a shotgun if all is going

well. Decrease the distance of the gunfire to 20 yards or so if all is going well. Be cautious here.

- Extend retrieves in land and water and make the retrieves more difficult if dog is confident. Throw some retrieves (marks) so the dog has to go through some cover. Also throw some marks where the dog has to go over a piece of land and back into the water (a re-entry). The video gives some examples.
- You should be working on steadiness with the lead, with the only pressure being tension on the lead.
- Work on hold with bumper, then bird if all is going well with dowell and the dog has a strong desire to retrieve birds.

SCHEDULE FOR WEEK

Note: Once again this schedule is only a guideline and it is only meant to guide you through the process in the most efficient way. Do the best you can with the time and the facilities you have. Have fun with it!

Continue to incorporate obedience into your day to day activities as well as during your formal training sessions. Remember to be consistent.

Continue to work on hold if necessary. Try to get in a couple of sessions a day if possible at about 10 minutes a session.

Begin or continue ear pinch fetch. Try to do 5 days during the week with about 10-15 minutes per session. If your dog is starting to reach for it continue to progress with the dowel farther away.

Review and progress with e-collar here with distractions. Try to do this 3-4 times during the week. Add more and more distractions like kids, dogs, out on walks, etc. You should be getting close to the point where your dog will probably start needing less and less corrections.

Review collar heel/off lead if all is going well- Try to do this 5 days during the week with 5-10 minutes per session.

Start collar conditioning on sit- 5 days during the week 5-10 minutes per session. Watch video.

Do a few retrieves using a dead bird and live bird if possible. You want the dog fired up for birds. If not keep it very fun. If dog is not handling birds well (like trying to eat it) don't use birds until we are farther along in the force fetch process.

Work with decoys in the water. Only if dog is swimming well. Once or twice during the week would be great.

Move gunfire in closer if all is going well. Play it safe, there is no hurry.

Extend retrieves in land and water and through cover/tules if dog is showing plenty of desire. A bumper gun/dummy launcher with a helper comes in handy here. Do this as often as you can throughout the week. Make it fun. Continue to progress the dog if all is going well, by distance and difficulty of retrieves. Do some water reentries if all is going well in the water?

Continue steadiness with lead on all retrieves (except fun bumpers of course) if dog is showing plenty of go. If not, don't hold your dog back. Keep it fun.

Work on hold with bumper and bird a couple of times during the week if all is going well with down and your dog likes to retrieve birds.

WEEK FOUR

Obedience:

- Review obedience commands with distractions. 10 minutes daily.
- Review collar here and collar heel off leash with increased distractions. 5-10 minutes daily. The goal is for the dog to understand the corrections with the e-collar and respond crisply.
- Review collar conditioning on sit/stay. Daily 5-10 minutes.
- Start collar conditioning on down. Daily 5 minutes

Force Fetch:

- Review hold with movement if necessary. Transfer the dowel/bumper for a bird. Use a pigeon, duck, and pheasant and any other bird you may hunt if you have one available. Hopefully you are progressing on fetch with the ear pinch.
- Continue force fetch, hopefully your dog has started to reach for the dowel very readily. If this is the case begin moving the dowel farther away (some of you may be doing this or possibly even beyond it). If things have progressed even more quickly your dog may be grabbing the dowel off the ground. 10-15 minutes daily.

Other:

- If gunfire has not been a problem shoot a bird over the dog. Some kind of game bird, a duck, pheasant, pigeon, or chukar, no blackbirds or blue jays. Do this only if the dog has had no big issues handling birds. This is best done with you handling the dog while someone else shoots the bird. Have the dog lead steady. The video demonstrates what lead steady is and how to do it. At this point the dog should not be tugging

wildly. Again the video will show how to go about this. Do not release the dog until he is under control.

- Continue to extend and make retrieves more difficult land and water. This will vary with each dog. Challenge your dog while keeping confidence high.
- Continue to work on steadiness.

SCHEDULE FOR WEEK

Continue to incorporate obedience into your daily activities as well as your formal training sessions. Remember to be consistent.

Review hold if necessary with dowel. Move to bumpers and birds. Daily 10-15 minutes per session.

Review collar here and heel with increased distractions. 5-10 minutes a couple of times during the week.

Review collar sit/stay. 5-10 minutes daily.

Start collar down. 5 minutes daily.

Shoot live bird for dog at some point during the week. I realize this may not be feasible for everyone, just do the best you can.

Extend and make the retrieves more challenging land and water while maintaining the dogs confidence. As often as possible. Much will depend on what you have access to. Again do the best you can.

WEEK FIVE

Obedience:

- Review here, heel, sit off leash. Work on any problem areas. Work on walking sits and remote sits. Sit at this at this stage means stay until another command is given. Video demonstrates this. Evaluate collar conditioning on all commands with increased distractions. Remember to incorporate whistle on the here and sit commands. 10-15 minutes daily. The video demonstrates some examples.

Force Fetch:

- The hold with movement hopefully is done. If not really focus on it. Incorporate a bumper and bird into the hold. This is usually an easy transfer since you have a strong foundation on the hold already. The video demonstrates this.
- Force fetch with ear pinch is hopefully almost done, meaning the dog is picking the dowel up off the ground, without your hand being on it. Once this is done you will incorporate a bumper then a bird. Once the dog is grabbing the dowel off the ground on fetch with and without the ear pinch the transfer over to the bumper and then the bird is usually smooth. The video will also demonstrate this.
- Introduce the collar on the force fetching instead of the ear pinch once the dog is fetching the dowel off the ground without your hand on it. The procedure and the timing of the stimulation with the collar will be the same as it was with the ear pinch. Usually this transfer from ear pinch to collar can be done in a few days. The video demonstrates the procedure.

Other:

- Continue to make retrieves more difficult in land and water. Be creative with this. Try to expose the dog to the type of retrieves that could be common place with your type of hunting. If the dog has been good with the gunfire, introduce the bumper gun if you have not done so. The video will demonstrate the bumper gun. Use the bumper gun as often as possible. Since the dog is not yet steady (not going for the retrieve until sent), you will need a helper. Later when the dog is steady the bumper gun is a great tool to get the dog to follow the gun as well as extend the distance of the retrieves.
- Continue to work on steadiness with the dog on the short leash. Insist the dog sit there quietly and under control. Do not release the dog until there is not pulling or tension on the lead. The video demonstrates this.
- Start to use as often as possible anything you will use hunting. It will make things a lot easier on opening day, if you are not introducing the dog to a bunch of new things, such as quads, dog blinds, large spreads of decoys, boats, platform blinds, motion decoys, etc. Do this just often enough to get the dog comfortable with whatever it is your introducing. The less surprises opening day the better.
- When possible use the type of birds you will be hunting in training. Do the best you can with this as not everyone has access to birds easily.
- It would be nice if you could shoot a live game bird for the dog once a week, but for many this won't be possible. In some areas you may need a permit to shoot training birds. The more often the dog has birds shot over him, obviously the better. But I realize some of you won't be able to do this very often.
- Work on any problem areas that may have come up in all areas.

- If you will be using your dog for upland hunting get the dog in the field and begin that process. Most dogs learn to work a field for upland birds quite naturally. At this stage basically just go for a walk in the field with the dog while telling the dog to hunt'em up. I usually plant some dead pigeons or dead pheasants in the field for the dog to find. The idea is to get the dog working out in front of you in gun range. If the dog gets out of gun range just give a beep, beep with the whistle or a verbal close command. Try to avoid any big pressure here, we want the dog to be comfortable working out in front of you, and too much pressure will have them walking at heel. You can give some minor nicks with the e-collar if the dog will not respond at all. The video demonstrates this process. Be patient let the dog have some fun. You have plenty of time to get the dog experience on upland work. For those of you that do more upland hunting than waterfowl incorporate more of the upland training into your training program. Once the dog is at this stage, force fetched and collar conditioned, which is the foundation, we can start to specialize the training program to the type of hunting you will mostly be doing.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

Review collar conditioning on all commands with distractions daily if possible.

Hold with movement. Incorporate bumper and birds. 5-10 minutes at five days during the week.

Ear pinch with bumper and birds. 10 minutes daily until it is solid.

Force fetch with collar. 5-10 minutes five days during the week.

Make retrieves more difficult as often as possible land and water.

Work on steadiness daily but only if dog has plenty of desire to retrieve.

Incorporate things you will use hunting as often as possible into your training.

Use game birds as often as you can.

Shoot live game bird as often as you can.

Work on any problem areas daily.

Introduce dog to upland hunting skills

WEEK SIX

- Review all the obedience commands the dog has been e-collar conditioned for. Increasing distractions as necessary. Concentrate on any weak or problem areas. Remember to incorporate the whistle with the here and sit commands. Don't forget the walking and remote sits. The dog should now be ready to be corrected in the field with e-collar on any of the obedience commands. 10-15 minutes daily.
- Review collar down. Make sure this is solid. This is critical for most duck hunters. If the dog is doing well increase the difficulty by blowing a duck call with the dog in the down position. If the dog breaks from the down position you can correct with the command down followed by a nick with the collar. Then repeat. The amount of pressure you use of course depends on the dog. The video demonstrates this. 5-10 minutes daily.
- Hopefully the force fetching is done. If not let's finish it. If so a quick review would be good, using birds and bumpers. Then go to water to really test it. Dogs tend to want to drop the bumper or bird to shake coming out of the water so this will be a good opportunity to reinforce the force fetching.
- Continue to make retrieves more difficult land and water by increasing distance and using terrain. For example in water have a dog cross a piece of land back into the water onto another piece of land (a reentry), retrieves into Tules, across checks, ditches, etc. Be creative. Create retrieving situations that will mimic your hunting conditions as close as possible, but don't get stuck on doing one type of retrieve, mix it up.
- Start steadiness off lead. If your dog is showing indications of lacking desire to retrieve, don't do this yet. At first just

throw some short bumpers by hand with no shot, and if the dog moves say sit and nick the dog with the e-collar. Repeat this process daily for 5-10 minutes until the dog is doing it well then include a shot. Eventually we will include calls, birds, multiple shots, etc. For now concentrate on getting the dog steady to simple hand thrown bumpers with a shot. At this point we want to cultivate the habit of steadiness with a lower level of excitement on the retrieves. If you have a really gung ho dog, you may move quicker on these exercises. The video demonstrates this.

- Work on any problem areas.
- Continue upland work. Put out some dead birds, scattered throughout the field in manner that will get a dog moving out like we want. The video demonstrates this. Keep the dog in gun range by the close command and beep, beep with the whistle. Some dogs will move out and cover a lot of ground maybe to much to fast, others will be almost at heel. Work some ditches as well. Depending on how much upland hunting you do will determine the amount of time and frequency you want to focus on this.

WEEK SEVEN

Obedience:

- Review obedience commands with increased distractions, be creative. Use other dogs, people, kids, etc. Focus on any weak or problem areas. Don't forget to include remote sit stays. Remember to include whistle with sit and here commands. You can now use the e-collar for any corrections that may be necessary. 10 minutes daily.
- Review collar down/stay with distractions such as duck call. Again if dog breaks from down stay, say down and give the dog a nick with the collar. The video demonstrates this.

Force Fetch:

- Force fetch should be done.
- Continue to work on and enforce steadiness. If the dog is steady on bumper throws with a shot move to a bird and multiple shots. The video will go into more details. Be careful not to do anything to break the dog's spirit. Some dogs have more desire than others, other dogs are more sensitive, and some are wild and crazy and need more pressure. You can now be incorporating this in all your retrieves (except fun bumpers).
- Start some simple wide doubles. The video demonstrates how to go about this.

Other:

- As in each of the previous weeks continue to increase the difficulty of the retrieves using terrain, distance, cover, while maintaining confidence. Progress and confidence must be balanced in that the dog should not be progressing without being confident in each degree of difficulty. Try

to mimic hunting situations as often as possible using decoys, duck calls, birds, gunfire etc. The bumper launcher works great for shooting over the dog. Shoot live birds as often as you can.

- Do some upland training. The amounts of this you do depend on how much upland hunting you plan on doing. If you won't do much upland hunting there is no need to spend much time on this. The previous training you have done on this hopefully has the dog working out in front of you within gun range. You can continue planting dead birds out in the field, it is a good idea to drag some bird scent throughout the field to give the dog something hunt for. The video demonstrates this. You can use pheasants, chukar, or any game bird you will be hunting. This is where the licensed game bird clubs come in handy. In my part of the country there are many of these types of pheasant clubs. They may not be wild birds but I don't think the dogs know the difference, and it is great experience for them. They are able to get real hunting experience on birds much quicker than they would otherwise. In my area you can buy 20 bird pheasant cards/or 40 bird chukar cards for around \$500 (possibly go in with a buddy). This gives you a place to hunt and work the dog. The cost is well worth it, especially if you do a lot of upland hunting. If you have the place and the birds and the necessary permits to use live game birds you can plant the birds yourself. There are different problems that can arise in the field; from the dog who when you miss a bird chases it into the next two fields over, to the dog that want to stay at heel.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

Review obedience and collar conditioning with distractions five days during the week.

Review force fetch/Delivery to hand coming out of the water as often as necessary to clean up any problems.

Work on and enforce steadiness daily if possible

Increase difficulty of retrieves and work on doubles as often as you can. Try to mimic your specific hunting conditions as much as possible.

Continue to work your dog on upland work if you plan to use your dog for this. Do this as often as you feel it is necessary.

WEEK EIGHT

Obedience:

- Review obedience commands. Obedience should be solid at this stage. Don't forget to work on the remote whistle sits. Focus on any weak areas. Continue to make the tasks more demanding. Be creative. 10 minutes daily.
- Continue to work on down stay with the call. If all is going well on the steadiness you work on steadiness in the down position. Once shots are fired you can allow the dog to sit up to see the birds fall depending on your preference. If you want the dog to stay in the down position until released start that now. You can also work on this in your yard without the calls and shots as well. The neighbors may not appreciate the duck call or gunfire if you live in town. Work 10 minutes daily.

Other:

- The dog should be handling birds and bumpers well and delivering to hand both on land and water very nicely.
- Continue to increase difficulty of retrieves. Work on steadiness off leash with more distractions such as calls, shots, birds, etc. Appropriate corrections with the e-collar on steadiness are legitimate at this stage. Again, if your dog is lacking retrieving desire don't push the steadiness.
- Continue the upland work in applicable. If you can plant some live birds or have access to a bird club this would be ideal.
- If possible get a live duck or pheasant and introduce the dog to a live bird if you have not already done so. The video will demonstrate how to go about this. This will give the dog the opportunity to learn how to handle and trail live birds, as well as how to come up with a diving duck.

- Continue to do simple doubles. Take to the water if all is going well. You can also use the bumper gun.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

Review obedience in many different situations and with continually more difficult distractions at least five days during the week. Get creative you don't need to go anywhere to do this.

Review handling of the birds and bumpers and delivery to hand on land and in water as often as necessary to get a polished delivery with proper handling of birds and bumpers.

Work on steadiness at every opportunity. Continue to challenge the dog if desire to retrieve is very high.

Work dog on upland game if possible and if applicable.

Work dog on live/simulated cripple birds land and water at least once during the week if at all possible.

Continue to work on doubles land and water if all is going well.

WEEK NINE

Obedience:

- Review sit whistle at a distance daily.
- Teach dog back to pile for those who want a handling dog. Work on this daily.
- Review any problem areas as often as needed.

Other:

- You are on your way now. The force fetching is done, obedience is strong. The dog has hopefully had a few shot birds, some challenging retrieves on land and in water, some upland work, and is becoming steady.
- Review down stay with distractions, duck call, etc. 5 minutes daily.
- Work on delivery to heel if this is something you want. The video will discuss and demonstrate this.
- Create more demanding steadiness situations such as shot birds and multiple shots with duck calls, and begin the honoring process. The video will go into more detail. The bumper gun is also a great tool for this.
- Continue doing land and water doubles and make more difficult if all is going well. 15-20 minute sessions a couple times during the week would be great.
- Continue to make the single retrieves more challenging. Mimic the type of retrieves your dog will get in the type of hunting you will be doing.
- If possible work with a shackled duck or pheasant again. Spend some time on the upland training if applicable. Continue with the same procedures as the previous weeks.
- For those of you who want a handling dog and want to continue the training process beyond the 12 weeks, you can start three handed casting (the first step in teaching a dog

handling). A handling dog is a real bonus. And the process of teaching it is great way to increase your communications with your dog, and can be fun as well. The video demonstrates this in detail. 10-15 minutes daily.

- Review sit whistle at a distance.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

Put your dog in more challenging situations regarding obedience and continue to challenge your dog on retrieves. Do this as often during the week as possible.

Work on and/or polish up delivery to the heel position if that is something you want your dog to do- 5 minutes daily.

Increase difficulty of steadiness using birds, calls, multiple shots etc, for those who want a steady dog and where the dog is showing plenty of retrieving desire-at least twice during the week.

Work on honoring with your dog, if you indeed want a steady dog that honors. Start with bumpers. Don't overdue pressure. Twice during the week if possible.

Work with shackled duck at least once during the week.

Start teaching 3 handed casting for those who want a handling dog-daily.

WEEK TEN

Obedience:

- Much of your fine tuning on obedience now will be done in your day to day activities with your dog and during the training sessions in the field. In other words unless there is a problem area you won't need to have a separate training session just for obedience.
- Work on any weak or problem areas daily.

Other:

- Continue to work on steadying the dog and continue to make it more challenging. Include some honoring. Video demonstrates.
- Use birds as often as possible. Continue to make retrieves more challenging on land and in water. Try to have retrieves mimic the type of retrieves that may be common in your environment.
- Continue doubles land and water. Make more challenging while maintaining confidence. The bumper launcher is great for this. You can shoot both marks of the double with the bumper gun. The video demonstrates this.
- Continue upland work. Work the dog with another dog if all is going well.
- Continue three hand casting. Video will demonstrate how to go from one cast to the next. 10 minutes daily
- Review line to back pile
- Teach dog to sit to back pile, and to cast to back pile, for those who want handling dogs and want to proceed beyond the 12 weeks. 10 minutes daily. Video demonstrates and goes into more detail.
- Teach sit to flush concept. 5 minutes daily. The video will demonstrate how to do this.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

Work on problem areas daily if possible.

Work on steadiness to retrieve/include honoring at least twice during the week.

Use birds on your retrieves as often as possible. Watch bird handling.

Work on doubles at least three times during the week land and water. Two to three sets per session is good.

Work on upland hunting, possibly with another dog if you will be doing a lot of upland hunting at least twice during the week.

Work on 3 hand casting daily for 10 minutes per session. If you have time you can do two or more sessions a day.

Review line to back pile daily. No longer than 10 minutes, weather permitting (in other words if it is not too hot). You can do more than one session a day.

Teach sit to Pile. Work on daily. DO NOT STOP DOG SO OFTEN IT BEGINS TO SIT EVERY TIME EXPECTING THE WHISTLE.

Teach sit to flush if this is something you want. Work on daily if possible.

WEEK ELEVEN

- Review any problem areas.
- Review down with call/distractions
- Demand steadiness. Use shot flyer when and if possible, with multiple shots. The video demonstrates this.
- Continue with longer and more difficult retrieves. Try to incorporate the type of retrieves that will match your hunting environment/s. The video demonstrates some different type of retrieves.
- Do/teach walking singles/remote sends several times during the week if possible. The video demonstrates this.
- Incorporate into your retrieves as often as you can anything you will use hunting such as boats, decoys, motorized decoys, different types of blinds etc.
- Do doubles with dummy launcher as often as possible as long as all is going well on singles. Also introduce your dog to diversion bird/bulldog concept. See video for explanation and demonstration.
- Work on upland hunting. Plant and shoot bird at least once during the week if you can.
- Teach sit to flush with bumper in the field several times during the week. The video explains and demonstrates this.
- Continue three hand casting drill. Start to incorporate all three casts if all is going well. 10-15 minutes daily.
- Review line to back pile. 5 minutes daily.
- Continue to work on sit to pile.
- If all is going well on casting and back pile work, teach the Single T drill. The video explains and demonstrates this. This will only be for those who want to put in the time and effort it takes to have a handling dog (a dog that does blind retrieves).

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

Review any problem areas as often as you can.

Continue to work on steadiness. Shoot live bird for dog if possible. This is only for dogs that are ready to steady up. Work on steadiness daily.

Continue to make retrieves more difficult and that fit in to the type of hunting you will do.

Teach walking singles. This will be fun. Do three times during the week if possible.

Make doubles more difficult if singles are going well. Do at least three times during the week. Include working on bird or bumper thrown while coming in with a retrieve.

Work on upland at least once during the week, more often for those of you who will be doing mostly upland hunting. Also work on sit to flush several times during the week for those who want to take the training to this level.

Review and polish your casting drills in the yard daily if possible for those who want to teach their dogs to do blind retrieves.

Review line to back pile, make sure it is going well before starting single T drill.

Review sit to pile daily. Make sure you send many more times than you stop the dog.

Teach the single T handling drill for those who want to teach their dog to do blind retrieves. Work on daily if possible.

WEEK TWELVE

- Review any problem areas.
- Review down with call. Mimic hunting conditions as close as possible.
- Demand steadiness. Shoot birds over the dog with multiple shots as least once during the week. Use bumper launcher at other times.
- Continue to make retrieves more difficult on land and water, varying distance and terrain. One way to do this is by doing walking singles and remote sends. The video will again demonstrate how to go about this. Do this several times during the week if you can.
- Again use any equipment you will use while hunting as often as possible.
- Use live wing clipped bird at least once during the week so your dog continues to gain experience on handling and trailing cripple birds.
- Continue to do double's daily if possible (you can do these in a park or your yard if necessary). Use bumper launcher in the field as often as you can.
- Review sit to flush with bird if you can. The video demonstrates this. Do as often as you can. Even if you do not, or will not upland hunt this can come in handy if you do any jump shooting.
- Work on upland hunting, plant live birds if possible and evaluate sit to flush. Be careful on corrections. We will discuss this in our consult time as well as go over it on the video.

- If all is going well on handling drills continue Single T on land and water.. 15 minutes a day if possible for those who want a handling dog.
- CONGRATULATIONS! You should now have a well trained hunting dog. You have put in a lot of time and effort and you will soon see it paying off as you take the dog out to experience the real deal. Not only do you have a well trained dog but you have developed a bond with your dog that will be life long.
- For those of you who are interested in continuing the process and want to take your dog to the next level, we can discuss your options and strategize a game plan for your future training.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

Review problem area's daily.

Review any problem areas daily.

Demand/Maintain steadiness. Shoot birds over dog, use multiple shots, duck call, etc. as often as possible. This is a life long maintenance skill.

Do walking singles as often as possible a minimum of twice during the week for the purpose of extending the retrieve and making the retrieves more difficult, and to work on steadiness.

Use a clip wing bird at least once during the week to make sure your dog is comfortable with picking up a live bird and handles them properly.

Do doubles daily if possible.

Review sit to flush. Use live bird if dog is ready for that at least once during the week.

Work on upland work as often as you can if your dog will hunt upland birds.

Continue to work on Single T drill land and water daily for at least 15 minutes. You can do several sessions a day if you have time. This drill will be continued until your dog is ready to start blind retrieves.