

-- *Excerpted from Victoria Stilwell's book Train Your Dog Positively*

It's never too early to teach your puppy cues such as "sit" and "come" that you can use to build a common language between you. A good recall cue is vital for safety of your puppy or dog in all environments, and the sooner you start teaching it, the more reliable it will be.

## **The Recall Cue**

Most puppies will "come" to you whenever you decide to walk away because they instinctively like to follow you. Instilling a reliable response, however, usually takes months of consistency and positive reinforcement. The easiest way to teach your new puppy or dog the "come" cue is to begin using it as soon as you bring them home:

- Whenever your puppy or dog is coming to you on his own, wait until he is a couple of feet from you and then say his name and the word "come".
- When he gets to you, make a big fuss over him.
- With this exercise, your dog will learn that coming to you is a really good thing. After a while, you can lengthen the distance between you before you say the cue word, but be careful that you don't go too far too soon.
- If you want a reliable recall, do not chase your dog unless it is an emergency. Dogs love to be chased.
- If you call your dog a number of times and he doesn't come back to you, don't tell him off when he eventually returns. It is understandably annoying when your dog ignores you, but if he comes back only to find that you're angry with him, he'll actually learn to avoid you more. He won't understand that you're angry because he ignored you and will think you're annoyed because he came back. Coming to you should always be rewarded, whatever the circumstance and no matter how long it took him to respond.
- Motivate your dog to come by being excited, running away from him, waving a toy, or having delicious food for him when he gets to you. This will instill the idea that coming back to you is the best thing he can do.