

Training You to Train Your Dog With an Impulse/ Stimulation Collar

Note: Put the following statement in a boxed insert:

Please read this instructional guide before you begin use of your new impulse/stimulation training collar. For best results, the use of impulse/stimulation is best used on dogs of ten months of age or older. However, the tone feature on the collar can be used on dogs of any age.

Often, the best way to learn a new skill is also the simplest approach. This is particularly true when learning to communicate with your dog using an impulse/stimulation collar.

Your new dog collar is a tool designed to let you instantly communicate with your dog from an extended distance. Since dogs can't operate cell phones and they don't have the benefit of human verbal and written language, people need to develop the skills to communicate with their dogs. More specifically, they need to communicate what they want their dogs to do, and when they want them to do it.

By learning to communicate effectively with your dog, you can clarify your expectations and establish clear boundaries that your dog will confront if he chooses to defy or ignore your expectations. This will be an acquired skill set for both you and your canine companion. Yet, although these skills need to be learned, they are not necessarily difficult. In fact, you will find that the most effective communication between you and your dog is communication that is simple and direct.

The goal of this instructional guide is to help you learn and understand these basic concepts and to demonstrate the most

effective methods available as you learn to use your new training collar to communicate with your dog.

Let's start with some basic guidelines. You may want to have a writing pad and pencil with you as you read this teaching aid. We will start with some basic training terms to help explain the training process. The terms will be italicized and **bold** to emphasize them. These terms will be defined simply and clearly in order to enhance learning. Be sure to list these terms on your pad as you read the text for easy reference.

Finding your working level

Let's begin by exploring this new communication tool. You will notice that there are two components to the training collar system. The first is a conventional-looking dog collar with a small box attached in the center. This is the part worn by the dog. The second part is the hand-held transmitter which sends a signal to the collar unit worn by the dog. This transmitter is equipped with a lanyard so that it can be conveniently worn around your neck during training. A User's Guide is provided with your unit. Please examine the User's Guide and familiarize yourself with the operating interface on the unit as described in the User's Guide. Insert the batteries provided for the transmitter and receiver and turn your collar on. Press the impulse/stimulation (blue in color) button and verify that the LED light on the receiver is lit. This verifies that your unit's transmitter and receiver are communicating with each other. When you press the impulse or tone buttons, you are applying an impulse/stimulation or

tone signal, which is essentially the method of communication.

At this point, we are going to find **your working level**. The best way to learn a new collar unit is to set it at the lowest level available and feel where the lowest impulse level begins and how wide the steps are between the impulse levels. The benefit you will gain by doing this is that you will more completely understand what your dog experiences as you help your dog go through this same process (in the next section of this instructional guide book).

First, begin by verifying that the collar is set at the lowest level and then place the receiver in the palm of your hand with the metal contact points pressed into the skin of your palm. Wrap your fingers around the base of the receiver unit and apply a slight pressure so that you feel a complete contact with the metal points.

Impulse can be applied in one of two ways:

a) Momentary impulse is applied as a short tap or nick. The collar impulse button is depressed for a short instant and then released immediately.

b) Continuous impulse is applied as a steady, continuous impulse/stimulation. The collar impulse button is depressed and held down so that the impulse sensation continues until the impulse button is released. Your collar design includes a safety feature to avoid accidental, extended impulse/stimulation. The collar shuts down automatically after 8 seconds of continuous impulse. Once the impulse button is released, the collar resets itself and impulse/stimulation is available again.

Before we begin, it is important to realize that most people do not feel any impulse when the collar is set on Level 1. This is normal.

Modern collars are designed with very soft low-end impulses so that training collar units can be used with even the most sensitive of dogs.

While the contact points are pressed into your palm, press and hold down the impulse button for continuous impulse/stimulation. Often, new collar owners are reticent to do this because of their inexperience with impulse training units and they may anticipate an unpleasant sensation. Instead of applying a continuous impulse on this first test, they will instead quickly press and release the impulse button.

I would encourage you, however, to go ahead and press it and hold it down so that you can accurately gauge the sensation produced at Level 1. As stated before, most people will feel nothing with the continuous impulse/stimulation at Level 1. Or, if you do feel something, it will most likely be just a very slight prickle or point of soft heat. Once you have explored the sensation of Level 1, go ahead and reset the collar impulse to Level 2 and once again apply continuous stimulation. Then, you may proceed to reset and apply Level 3. While going through this process, be aware of the incremental rise in impulse/stimulation. As the levels go up, you will feel the impulse/stimulation becoming sharper. At mid-level it will begin to feel like a grab as the muscles contract in response to the electric impulse. At higher levels, it can be a very strong sensation. Let your comfort level dictate how far up the ladder you wish to go.

Now that you have had a chance to explore the different impulse levels, let's start again from the lowest level and apply the impulse/ stimulation. What you will find is that once you are familiar with the sensation of impulse/stimulation and know what to expect,

your reactions to even the medium range impulse will be moderated. Dogs react in the same way and once they have felt the impulse a few times, their reactions moderate as well. You may also find that your comfort level has risen and that your familiarity with the sensation of impulse allows you to go higher up the impulse ladder.

We have used the palm of the hand as the contact point for this initial orientation, but now we will explore further by moving the collar to different locations on your body as follows: try the top of your forearm, the calf of your leg, and the skin below the back of your knee. You will notice that different areas of your body experience the impulse levels differently; for example, the area behind your knee will be more sensitive than your forearm. Once you graduate to training your dog with impulse/ stimulation, there may be instances where you choose to locate the collar receiver on portions of your dog's anatomy other than his neck; for example, on the top of his rump when teaching sit or down, or on his belly for whoa or stand or stay. Be aware that when you change location of the collar on the dog, you also change the level of his response to impulse/stimulation (just as your own personal response changed when the collar touched other parts of your body).

At this point, you should have a good feeling for the timing with which your collar applies impulse and the gradual rise in strength associated as higher levels of impulse/stimulation are selected at the transmitter.

Finding your dog's working level

Now that you have familiarized yourself with the features and range of impulse/stimulation available from the training collar, it is time to acquaint your dog, as well. Begin by finding your **dog's working level**.

Turn on and set the training collar at the lowest level, Level 1. Place the collar snugly around the top of the dog's neck just below the jaw. Fit the collar band so that two fingers can fit snugly under the collar with a medium amount of tension.

A dog's neck is narrowest at the top. A common mistake that novice collar users make is that they snugly place the collar at the middle of the dog's neck. Although the metal contacts have a proper fit in this location, once a dog moves and shakes a time or two, the collar moves forward and rests at the top of the dog's neck where the contact points no longer are in contact with the skin. This results in the dog feeling either erratic impulse/stimulation or none at all. This is not desirable because it means that any attempt to apply an impulse will be inconsistent and poorly timed, or else not even felt by the dog at all.

Begin by allowing the dog to just wear the collar for a while. We want him to forget that this new apparatus has been placed around his neck. Go for a walk with him, have a play session, or break out the dog biscuits. Thirty minutes to an hour later, while the dog is occupied with another activity and paying no attention to you, watch him from a covert location. Do not let the dog notice your interest in him. With the collar transmitter set at Level 1, the lowest rung on the impulse ladder, press and hold down the impulse button for continuous impulse/stimulation. As stated earlier, many dogs will

not feel impulse at Level 1. Study the dog for any indication that he feels some sensation. Typically, a dog may react as if a gnat is buzzing him under the chin; or, you may notice him flicking his ear or cocking his head sideways, exhibiting a quizzical expression. When you get this type of reaction, stop at that impulse level. That is your **dog's working level**.

However, if it doesn't appear that he felt anything at all, then go up the ladder to Level 2, and then onto Level 3 (only if needed for the dog to feel any impulse generated by the collar). At no point should your dog appear distressed or concerned. There should be absolutely no vocalization from the dog. Any of these negative indications from your dog means that the level of impulse is too high. Stop applying impulse immediately and go back down the impulse ladder to your dog's proper working level. Dogs, like people, all respond to impulse differently. As you found your own working level, you will also need to explore impulse levels to discover your dog's working level, as well. Ultimately, what we are looking for is the slightest sensation the dog feels at the collar unit. This will be your **dog's working level** for future training with the impulse/stimulation collar.

It is possible that your dog is ultra-sensitive or fearful and may react with concern at Level 1. A small percentage of dogs may respond in this way. Recall your own experience when you held the collar at this level. You either did not feel anything at all, or you felt just the slightest of sensations. Your dog's reaction, in this situation, is not an indication that he is in distress from the impulse sensation. Rather, it is a response to not having a context within which to

understand how something invisible can touch him. Therefore, you need to give this sensitive dog a context within which to understand this slight sensation he is feeling. Do this by extending the collar introduction as follows: Over a period of several days and multiple impulse/stimulation experiences, you arrange to make a miraculous appearance with soft words of encouragement each time you apply an impulse. Award the dog with a small tidbit of his or her favorite treat, and continue doing this until you see your dog feel the impulse, wag his tail, and immediately look for you to arrive with the goodies. Once you reach this point, you will know that the sensation of impulse is now a positive association for your dog and that your dog is comfortable with this slight impulse and ready to proceed forward with training.

Using your collar as a training tool to extend your reach

The objective of collar impulse introduction is to find the lowest level of impulse at which your dog experiences a slight tactile sensation (as described in depth in the previous section). In order to be effective dog trainers, we need to be able to communicate with our dogs in multiple ways, just as our dogs communicate with each other in multiple ways. In this section, I will explain how the impulse collar allows us to communicate through the sense of touch.

Canines communicate with other canines by means of eye contact, vocalizations, scent cues and the sense of touch. Within the canine culture, there are well-defined and predictable patterns of behavior associated with these canine communication cues. Different canine communication cues have varying physical ranges of

effectiveness.

Cues associated with eye contact work only from the farthest distance from which a group of dogs can stare at each other. Vocal cues work only from the farthest distance from which the sound can be heard by another dog. Scent is limited by the place where it emanates or is deposited. The sense of touch is the most limited, being restricted to immediate physical contact between dogs.

This becomes more complicated when we switch to canine/human communication. We humans can duplicate only a small fraction of these canine communication cues.

Eye contact is the most effective and intimate form of communication people are able to share with dogs. Dogs talk through their eyes. They ask questions through their eyes. A person can relay a command to a dog and then stare at him until he complies with the command. While this is our most effective means of shared communication, it is also the most restricted in terms of effective distance---it only works as far as a dog and a person can see each other.

The vocalizations shared between dogs and humans utilize human vocal patterns and we force our dogs to learn them. Most trainers don't meet their canine charges even part-way on this. Trainers don't bark, whine, whimper or growl at dogs while training. We address our dogs with human language and we leave the translation process to the dog to decipher. This serves to limit vocal communication between dogs and humans.

Regarding scent communication, this is really available only to the dogs. People unknowingly throw off a host of chemical scents

that dogs decipher as anger, frustration, concern, apprehension, excitement, enthusiasm, joy, etc. Over a very short period of time, your dog will learn to gauge your every emotion through the subtle scents your body releases. A dog's nose is a very reliable one-way communication tool. Unfortunately, while he is able to smell you quite effectively, you are not able to do the same. This means that our dog is reading us, but we are not reading him and therefore unable to use scent as an effective communication tool.

That leaves us with the one universal communication method used equally by both people and dogs: the sensation of touch.

There is a **zone of compliance** when you interact with your dog: the distance from which you can both give a command to your dog and have the ability to enforce compliance so that he obeys that command. **An effective trainer never gives a command that he or she cannot enforce immediately.** The breadth of the **zone of compliance** is dictated by how far a handler can reach out to touch his or her dog when the dog thinks about doing something other than the stated command.

Certainly, you can touch your dog with your hand or stare at him, but this limits your reach to the length of your arm or the distance from which you can maintain eye contact. In dog culture, to stare at something is to challenge it. This explains why dogs are very adept at not making eye contact when they don't intend to comply with a command. They pretend to be oblivious to you and then go on with whatever they want to do which is in opposition to your wishes.

You can extend your initial reach by adding a 10 or 20 foot

length of rope to your dog (called a check cord). However, you quickly reach another limitation when the dog is 21 feet away from you, and you can no longer touch the rope that touches your dog.

You can use your voice to “touch” your dog, but this is limited to the distance from which your dog will choose to hear you. Generally, that is somewhere under 40 yards and this range is mitigated by just how interested your dog is in doing something other than what he thinks you would like him to do.

In most human/dog interactions, however, where just eye contact or vocal cues are used, that range may only extend out to 15 yards. This is the distance from which a trainer can still effectively glare at the dog or use a harsh tone of voice to force the dog to comply when it is clear that he is thinking about doing something else. Use of a rope (check cord) extends this distance out to the end of the rope. As stated before, all the aforementioned methods have limitations. The **zone of compliance** is the limiting factor that a trainer must consider when he or she works with his or her dog.

Always remember: an effective trainer never gives a command that he or she cannot enforce immediately.

Using Your Impulse/Stimulation collar for Instant Communication from Extended Distances

With the development and refinement of modern impulse/stimulation training collars another, more effective, option is now available for today’s dog trainers and owners. The use of an impulse/stimulation collar allows a trainer to extend the effective range of the **zone of compliance**. By using an impulse collar, you

can physically touch your dog from an extended distance which is effectively as far as you can physically see him. The effective distance is governed by the range component built into your collar design. [Your Sidekick collar operates out to a distance of 400 yards.]

In addition to distance, the **timing of impulse/stimulation** is critical for effective communication with your dog. One of the big benefits of training with impulse/stimulation is that the collar is an instantaneous communication device. When the trainer presses the impulse button, the dog immediately feels an impulse, thereby creating an immediate association for the dog. Dogs have a very short window of focus or attention. An impulse/stimulation must be given within one second for the dog to associate the impulse it feels with the action or conduct the trainer wants to develop or teach.

Impulse/stimulation can be used in one of two ways. It can be applied during **reactive training** or during **proactive training**. It is important to explain these two different methods of impulse collar use in depth, because the method a trainer chooses will determine how his or her dog will ultimately respond to impulse/stimulation training.

Reactive Training

Reactive training requires the least amount of pre-training work, but limits the available outcomes. In reactive training, the sensation of impulse/stimulation will be associated by the dog as a negative cue.

Historically, impulse collars were used as reactive training tools. Training collars originated in the 1960's when electronic technology

was very limited. Those early collars were larger, heavier, and had very limited features and battery life. They did, however, deliver high levels of punitive impulse/stimulation. This limited their training benefits to reactive training methods only. Modern day collar designers have built features into today's training collars that were unthinkable even twenty years ago. These design features and improvements allow for the option of using proactive training strategies with today's dog training methods.

The essence of reactive training is that when a dog does something the handler doesn't want, while the dog is wearing a collar, the handler responds by immediately applying a negative (or higher level impulse) at the collar unit in order to create a negative association for the dog. The dog goes yikes!!!!!! and in an effort to stop the negative impulse/stimulation and get to safety, the dog runs back to the handler. He doesn't want the negative impulse/stimulation to happen again.

The dog quickly makes the association that the handler is responsible for the negative impulse/stimulation. In addition, in the dog's perception, bad things don't happen to him when he is complying within a close range, near the handler's side. Consequently, reactive training tends to produce close ranging, cautious dogs.

Remember as a practical guideline, the range of effective collar use is conditioned by how far away you are while still being able to see what your dog is doing. **Never use your collar to apply a negative association when you cannot actually see what your dog is doing.** He may actually be doing something you would like him to do in the

future, but by applying a negative association to the behavior, he won't ever want to do it again. And, if you didn't see the interaction as it occurred, you won't even know why your dog is exhibiting the new avoidance behavior in the future.

By default, a collar used reactively becomes a recall device: the dog's association to the sensation of impulse, regardless of the command given by the handler, is to run back to the handler. Used in this way, a collar is very effective and can guarantee a dog handler immediate and consistent recall of his or her dog while the dog is wearing the collar. Reactive collar use produces a dog which behaves predictably and immediately and tends to stay at very close range to the handler.

To find the correct level of impulse for reactive training, start at your dog's **working level** (as described earlier) and go up a level or two, depending on the amount of focus your dog is exhibiting on the task you are wishing to curtail. For example, your dog has noticed that you have dropped something into the kitchen trash can that seems appealing to him. He approaches the trash can and you glare at him and use a slight vocal cue to deter his interest. However, he continues in defiance of what he knows to be your wishes. Apply the impulse/stimulation and continue up the levels, applying only a short nick or tap, until the dog abandons his interest in the trash can. Use impulse sparingly as warranted by the dog's behavior. Apply the impulse/stimulation as a quick tap or nick. You will find that with the vast majority of dogs, once an association is made reactively, just the slightest bit of impulse will enforce compliance and the dog will return to the handler.

Once your dog has made the association with negative impulse, the tone feature on your collar should be used to warn your dog and therefore preclude the need to use any actual impulse at all. Your dog will comply with the tone in order to avoid the sensation of impulse. Once used in this way (as a reactive training method), your dog will subsequently equate all impulse as a negative and this will effectively restrict the option of using proactive training methods in the future.

Proactive Training

Proactive training necessitates more interaction and work with your dog, but it also produces a much broader range of benefits. In proactive training, the sensation of impulse/stimulation is associated by your dog as a positive cue.

Rather than a quick return to your side at the sensation of impulse (as with reactive training), your dog, instead, makes eye contact with you and waits to understand what you want to communicate to him. Used proactively, the sensation of impulse is an alert to your dog that there is an expectation coming from you, and that he needs to pay attention.

Developing this level of communication with your dog requires training before the collar is introduced. Even as a young puppy, prior to the introduction of the training collar at ten-months-old, the ground work can be laid for a proactive training relationship with your dog. The complete training will cover a period of approximately eight months (from 4 to 12 months of age) including the time while your puppy is maturing to the age where impulse can be incorporated into

his training schedule.

If you start training after your dog is older than ten-months-old, accelerate the following described training method as your dog responds positively to each step in the training process. I would estimate that a mature dog should be able to learn proactive impulse collar training in one to two weeks of daily sessions.

A new collar owner can begin using the following described proactive methods at any point in his or her relationship with his or her dog (at any point, that is, prior to the use of impulse/stimulation reactively as a negative association).

It is possible to rebuild trust with a dog once he is afraid of the sensation of impulse, but it is not an simple matter. It requires that you start from the beginning and rebuild the relationship with your dog. A trainer must wait for the fear to evaporate and for the dog to come around on his own timetable. I worked for many years as a professional dog trainer and these are the dogs often seen by pros. When a series of problems complicates to the point where the owner no longer knows what to do to unravel his or her dog's issue, the dog is entrusted to a pro to set it right.

You may have acquired an older dog, and when you attempt to use proactive stimulation, you discover that your dog is afraid of the collar and the sensation of impulse/stimulation. Often, a new owner doesn't know the history of her dog and what associations her dog acquired prior to arriving in his new home.

I would encourage a dog owner who discovers these sorts of challenges to take a step back, take a deep breath, and slowly begin anew with the dog. Dogs have a tremendous capacity for

forgiveness. They will trust people worthy of trust regardless of the experiences they lived through in the past. The more effectively you communicate with your dog, the easier it will be for him to understand you and the more quickly the two of you can build a relationship of trust and get on with the training process.

What I am going to describe to you is a method of communication. A proactive training method incorporates the sensation of impulse as an association to communication, not the other way around. In other words, the communication comes first, not the impulse/stimulation collar.

You begin by encouraging your dog to focus on you---not the other way around. This is easy with a young puppy, but the truth is that a dog of any age wishes to bond with the people he lives with and seeks attention. Your dog's purpose in the world is to be with and keep track of you. Honor your dog's need to be with you. You are his top priority. Use shared time together while training to develop enthusiasm for the training process.

I begin with two simple cues: a short soft whistle while I raise my index finger to point straight up. I do this so that the dog will look in my direction at the sound of the whistle and his eye will immediately catch the movement of my finger pointing up. While I am doing this, I watch the dog's gaze. The instant I see him looking at my finger, I move my hand across my face so that my raised finger is directly in front of my eyes. I then lower my hand out of the picture so that the dog and I are staring eye to eye. I then communicate with the dog. I may offer him the treat I am holding in my other hand. I may ask him if he wants to go outside for a walk. I may point to the ground

at my side and gesture for the dog to join me so that I can touch him.

In short order, when I look into his eyes, the dog seeks to understand what I expect of him. This is important because, as described earlier, eye contact is how dogs communicate with each other. I want to use as much common language as possible, bridging the gap between our two cultures, in order to build communication and trust. When a dog looks back into your eyes, he believes you. The essential purpose of all dog training is for the dog to believe you when you tell him something.

Once I see the dog reliably keying in on me when I request his attention, I mix in more dialogue. Again, I will describe a youngster, maybe a four to six-month-old puppy, but you may use this strategy for a dog of any age. An important reminder: **Best results can be achieved by limiting impulse/stimulation use to dogs over ten months of age.**

I begin with a request---the command, "here." This is generally the first thing that a new dog owner needs to teach his dog. I deliver it with a strong, direct voice so that the dog understands that he is hearing me give a command. Some people use the word "come." That isn't my choice because, in later conversations with my dog, I use the command "come" as a nonspecific conversational cue for him to move in my direction, as in, "I want to go this way." It is not a rigid command and does not require immediate compliance. However, when my dog hears the command "here" it means beside me---Now! "I want to touch you." "Here" is a command that must be rigidly obeyed.

Begin in a hallway, or along a fence, or any other type of linear

border where the dog can go up and back. The dog is outfitted with a length of rope called a check cord. This length of rope is used to enforce compliance and bring the dog back in once the “here” command is given. **Remember: a good trainer never gives a command he cannot enforce immediately.**

I send the dog out along the linear boundary I described earlier. Perhaps when he sets out he wants to inspect the cat; maybe, he’s after the sock stuffed with feathers I threw out before giving the command; or, maybe he is focused on the little bit of hot-dog I let him smell before flicking it out a short distance.

I give him a reason (such as the above examples) to be gone and then I cut him loose. I wait for him to divert his attention from me to something else.

I then request his attention with a soft, low whistle while I raise and lower my finger in front of my eyes to establish eye contact.

I then make a sound he hasn’t heard before...I give him the command “here.” A single command, stated only once. Then, I start a low continuous sound, a humming from my throat “ayyyyyyyyy.” As I make the sound, I gently pull the rope and bring the dog in towards me. As the dog gets to me, and I physically touch the dog, the sound “ayyyyyyyyy” stops. I jostle the dog. Pet him. Show him affection. I then send him on his way again. I reenact the above scenario several more times.

The first time the dog thinks, “Huh? He says a word, makes a noise, and then pulls on the rope.” The second time the dog thinks, “Hmm, he says a word, makes a noise, pulls on the rope and I end up with him.” The third time, with a look of recognition, the dog thinks,

“Oh, he says ‘here,’ then makes the ayyyyyyyy noise: he wants me to go to him.”

A dog is very linear in the way he thinks. If you communicate in the same way, he will understand your intent very quickly.

There are two additional things your dog learns from your vocal “ayyyyyyyyy” cue. First, when he hears that cue he learns that there is an expectation on the table. You are waiting for him to comply. Secondly, and most importantly, when the vocal “ayyyyyyyyy” cue stops, he learns that he has complied. The expectation has been met. Can you see that by breaking this down for your dog, it will be simple for him to understand and comply with your expectation?

Once you have established this verbal “ayyyyyyyyy” cue, use it whenever you are waiting for compliance. **Always remember that you do not give a command you cannot enforce immediately.** Always put into place all the necessary pieces to enforce compliance before you give a command. Do not set yourself and your dog up to fail. This may mean that during training you use a hard structure such as a fence or kennel to contain your dog. Limit your dog’s freedom rather than risk the loss of control while training. Hang a rope on your dog so that you can reel him back in when necessary. Your dog must believe that you have the means and the will to enforce compliance. Give commands only within the **zone of compliance** described earlier to ensure compliance. During all other training, keep your dog under control by using a leash or check cord.

What will develop from using your voice as a communication cue is that your dog will learn to key in on your voice. Your voice will have authority and power and your dog will believe you when you

communicate with him verbally.

Using your voice as a communication cue will also force you to study what your dog is thinking and the way he is acting as you deliver the verbal “ayyyyyyyy” cue and wait for his compliance. You are waiting to stop delivering it just as he is waiting to stop hearing it. Both parties are learning in this interaction and soon, just as your dog is learning you, you will learn to anticipate what your dog is going to do before he does it. **The mark of a good trainer is a person who can anticipate what his or her dog is going to do before he does it and interrupts the unwanted action before it gets started.**

When you get to the point where you are tracking your dog’s intentions well, begin using your voice to interrupt your dog before he acts in an inappropriate way. For example, dinner has just been finished and some chicken scraps are left on plates on the table in the dining room. You step into the kitchen and leave the table unattended. As you stand inside the doorway, you notice your dog walking through the dining room. He stops, raises his head, and sniffs in the direction of the table. He’s thinking “chicken.” You immediately bark a soft “ayyy” towards him and he lowers his head and skulks out of the room. You have interrupted his thoughts and forestalled his improper behavior without creating any negative associations between you and your dog.

Refrain from using words and phrases such as “No” and “Bad Dog.” These are typically delivered by someone after the transgression has been committed and the moment to correct the dog has passed. **Remember, as stated earlier, a dog has a very short attention span. He needs to be corrected, preferably before, but at**

least within one second of committing an infraction.

Additionally, use the least amount of volume with your reprimand as possible. You are communicating authority with your voice, and the less volume you use, the more authority that level of sound will carry to the dog.

As you now have the skills to anticipate what your dog is about to do before he does it, you can deliver a short, sharp verbal rebuke “ayyy.” This sound is delivered as a bark and meant to stop the dog’s thought process before the message can be delivered to his muscles and he does something you don’t want him to do.

Continue using your voice in this manner.

Collar Introductions with Dogs under 10-months-old

When your dog reaches the age of six months, you can begin to make your first collar introductions. Not impulse from a collar; but, the weight and feel of the unit around his neck. Give him a session or two just wearing the new unit. Let him get used to the feel of it. Make it a grand affair: the wearing of the collar, like a young prince receiving his first jeweled crown.

After a few training sessions, when your dog is comfortable wearing the collar around his neck, you are now ready to introduce the collar tone feature as a substitute for your verbal “ayyyyyyyyy” cue. **At this point, we are only discussing the use of sound (tone), not impulse/stimulation.** Your collar has a tone button. When you press that button, the collar receiver unit worn by the dog makes a soft humming sound. The collar will produce this sound for as long as you

hold down the button.

All previous verbal training has been leading up to this. As you have trained your dog to respect your voice, he will now be able to use this training as a bridge, allowing the incorporation of the sound of the collar to be a smooth and easy transition.

As described earlier, the collar extends your reach. Although you can communicate with your dog using your voice, this only works when he is close enough to you to hear your voice.

You are now going to make a change in the origination of the sound your dog hears. When your dog wears his collar, the communication sound now comes from the collar around his neck. Wherever he may be located, he can hear the sound coming from himself. Standing from an extended distance, you can touch a button on the collar transmitter and your dog will hear you.

Go back to the same location along the linear boundary where you made your initial verbal introduction. **Dogs are very place specific. When they make an association, they link it with the place where they learned the association.** Reinforce this introduction. Use place to your benefit to help your dog learn more quickly.

Run your dog through the same drill you did initially, only this time you are going to roll in a tone from the training collar.

Send your dog out wearing his check cord. Deliver the “here” command and pull in the rope to retrieve the dog. Start your verbal “ayyyyyyyyy” at the beginning of his return, but at the halfway point on his come in, also press the tone button on his collar. Your dog will hear both your voice and the hum of the collar simultaneously.

Send your dog out a second time, but this time reverse the

order that he hears the sound cue. On this repetition, start the collar tone first and at the halfway point overlay it with your voice “ayyyyyyyyy.”

Finally, on the third repetition, use only the collar tone. Your dog will understand that the two are now the same.

You are now ready to enlarge the **zone of compliance** you use when working with your dog. Allow him some freedom commensurate with his level of cooperation, but by all means leave a check cord dragging on him. When it becomes necessary, you will still have the quick option of grabbing the end of the rope to bring him back under control. A good tip at this stage of training, with your dog dragging a rope, is to use your feet before using your hands. Step on the rope to stop your dog. Then, if it is warranted, you can grab the rope with your hands and reel him in to get him under control and lead him away.

At the age of ten months, you and your dog are ready to begin using impulse/stimulation in your training sessions. You have been asked to wait until this age for specific reasons. While some dogs may be able to handle extending their training at a younger age, there are possible negatives and no benefits by proceeding with the introduction of impulse/stimulation earlier than ten-months-old.

The concern is twofold. First, you want to be sure that your dog is able to put the impulse training within context. He needs to be mature enough to understand that you are the one touching him with the impulse/stimulation. It is not a boogiemán hiding out in the grass whenever he gets too far away from you. He needs to understand that this is a communication directly from you.

Secondly, he needs to be old enough to remain focused throughout the length of the training repetitions. Young dogs have very short attention spans. They are here, then there, then “oooooh, look, a butterfly!” Your dog needs to remain focused enough to avoid any confusion regarding the sensation of impulse/stimulation.

Finally, there are no inherent benefits to fast forwarding his training, only possible negatives. At a young age, your dog needs time to mature naturally. Puppies go through a teenage time from about 7 months to about 9 months. This is a required developmental stage for a young dog. Your dog is learning to separate and be his own dog.

Often, owners of a young dog specifically look to impulse collar use during this trying stage of a canine youngster’s life to try and correct problem behaviors. What is recommended, however, is that during your dog’s teenage years, if he is rebelling, do no training at all. Instead, use hard structures such as an outdoor kennel or indoor pet porter to contain his enthusiasm when you cannot be there to supervise him directly.

The last thing you and your dog need during this complicated period of identity building are reactive corrections from an impulse/stimulation collar. Your dog is not yet mature enough to understand this type of correction. Do not pick a fight during this window of time. Have you ever tried to advise and control a teenage human? How did that work for you? Just allow your dog to work through it and try to keep a sense of grace about you. Be assured that your well behaved puppy will reappear at around 9 1/2 to 10 months of age. He will be ready at that point to again commence

training with a renewed cooperative attitude.

Transitioning from the use of Tone to Impulse/Stimulation at the age of 10-months-old

At ten-months-old, go back to the spot where you did the original verbal introduction and the follow-up collar tone introduction. In the same way that you overlaid the sound of your voice and the tone from the training collar, you are now going to transition your dog from sound (tone) to impulse/stimulation.

Before beginning this new impulse introduction, be advised that your collar has a safety feature built into its design. Unlike the continuous tone which is produced as long as the tone button is held down, when impulse is applied it will only last for 8 seconds----no matter how long you hold down the button. After 8 seconds of impulse, the collar shuts down and stops delivering impulse/stimulation. This is to prevent the accidental and irresponsible application of high level impulse to a dog over a long period of time.

For example, someone might improperly leave the collar on his unattended dog, set at an uncomfortable level for him. He then drops the transmitter into his coat pocket and sits down for a break, not realizing that the button has been accidentally depressed in his pocket and that his dog, sitting in a crate out in his vehicle, is receiving an impulse sensation.

Don't ever leave the collar on your dog when he is left unattended.

The collar will automatically reset itself once the impulse button is released. In order to use continuous impulse during proactive collar

training for periods longer than seven seconds, you must release and then reapply pressure to the impulse button. If you release the impulse earlier than 8 seconds, the impulse will stop immediately.

Before beginning this transition to the use of impulse/stimulation, consider the difference between hearing something and feeling something. The reason that the impulse collar is such an effective communication device is precisely because of the fact that it can be felt. All of us have had the experience of being alone in a room, sitting in a chair, lost in thought. A loved one enters the room and addresses you. But because you are lost, off in your mind somewhere, you don't hear her. Or, more precisely, her voice does register on your eardrums, but your mind is somewhere else. The sound can't be retrieved. The person who spoke to you senses this, gently approaches you and lightly touches you on the shoulder. Instantly, you are back and present in that room, and in that conversation.

This is the benefit of touch over sound. It overrides everything else... which in this case may be your dog thinking about putting your neighbor's cat up a tree. His attention is definitely somewhere else and he doesn't see the car coming up the street, between him and the cat. In a situation like this, sound won't get through to your dog. It will take touch to get through the adrenaline and preoccupation that your dog is experiencing.

Beginning again at your original training spot, set your collar transmitter for tone and impulse to run concurrently. Consult the User's Guide provided with your new collar for instructions on how to program your collar to do this. Set your collar at the dog's **working**

level and run the dog out. On the dog's come back, press the transmitter button. Your dog will hear sound (tone) and feel impulse running concurrently. He might look a little confused. Use the check cord and milk him in to you. Give him affection and send him out again. On the second come back, again apply sound and sensation concurrently. The confusion should be gone. When he comes in, give him more affection, and this time reset your collar transmitter for impulse only. No tone.

On the third repetition, your dog will only feel impulse, no sound (tone). He will make the translation that one, independent of the other, means the same thing.

Now, with this new impulse association that your dog has learned, broaden out to new activities and different locations. On a walk with him running loose, say the command, "here." Press down the impulse button and wait for him to return to you. As he comes in and you touch him, release the impulse button. He will understand that there was an expectation while feeling the impulse, and that now that he has complied with the expectation, the sensation of impulse has stopped. This same cue will apply while training your dog to sit, stay, lay down, heel, etc.

Use **working level** impulse in everyday conversations with your dog. Ask him if he wants to go for a walk. Press the impulse button and hold it down for continuous impulse until your dog presents himself at the door to have his leash snapped to his collar.

The purpose of using impulse and a verbal command together is that it emphasizes the communication for the dog, much like a communication between a parent and child where the parent brings a

child in close and places his hand on the child's shoulder before relaying the communication. When the parent is touching the child, he knows that he has the child's complete attention. He can look at the child and know that he has been heard.

There should be no concern or apprehension on your dog's part when he feels the impulse. This is not a negative. You will notice that your dog will get excited when you first put the collar on him because it means that training time or some other activity is about to begin. When you observe the enthusiasm you will know that you have done your introductions and training properly. You and your dog are communicating in the most effective way possible. Congratulations! You and your dog are now impulse collar trained.

Using the Collar to Immediately Stop Dangerous Behavior

Now that you and your dog are collar trained, you are ready to use the full capabilities of an impulse/stimulation collar. You will recall that I described a scenario earlier:

“This is the benefit of touch over sound. It overrides everything else... which in this case may be your dog thinking about putting your neighbor's cat up a tree. His attention is definitely somewhere else and he doesn't see the car coming up the street, between him and the cat. In a situation like this, sound won't get through to your dog. It will take touch to get through the adrenaline and preoccupation that your dog is experiencing.”

Your collar has graduated increasing levels of impulse/stimulation from 1 to 9. They are spaced evenly apart, like rungs on a ladder. They can touch your dog out to a few hundred

yards.

You have previously found your dog's **working level**. This will probably be somewhere from Level 2 to 6. You have softly communicated with your dog through voice, tone and impulse. However, as every parent knows, there are appropriate, even necessary times when one must raise his or her voice to communicate quickly and effectively.

Depending on the level of distraction and adrenaline present, and the possible urgency of the situation when you are trying to communicate with your dog, it may be necessary to apply a level of impulse above your dog's identified **working level**. In the case of the scenario of the cat and the car described earlier, it may even be a life saving requirement. If your dog cannot be stopped immediately, he may end up being struck by the car approaching on the street.

This is the overriding benefit of collar use. By using the necessary level of impulse/stimulation, no matter what the dog's level of distraction may be, you can always force compliance.

An increase of one level would be equivalent to a harsh reproach. An increase of two to three will immediately stop unwanted or dangerous behavior and focus your dog's attention back on you and your expectations of him.

Once your dog has been properly collar trained, on the rare occasion when using a higher level of impulse/stimulation is required, it will not affect his responses at his working level nor will it negate the line of communication between you that the training has developed. What it will do is be available to you when it is required to bring your dog under control and possibly save his life.

I hope this training guide has helped you to better understand the proper use and benefits of your new impulse/stimulation training collar. I wish you and your dog many happy shared days together.

Web Parton has used impulse/stimulation collars in his work training dogs, and training people to train dogs, for over two decades. He writes extensively on the subject. He is available to conduct training seminars for those wishing to learn more about training their dogs. For more information about Web and his work, please go to: www.webparton.com

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