

Week Five Homework—Intermediate Life Skills

Building on successes!

Last week, your homework was to identify what you and your dog are doing well with, and what you are struggling with. This week, we want to continue with that theme. For highly successful behaviors, practice this week in three NEW locations. For more challenging behaviors, practice three times in one NEW location. Behaviors to practice are: **attention, settling, stay, leave-it, coming when called, and loose-leash walking.**

Troubleshooting

If you are struggling in new locations consider:

- Are distractions too high for your dog? Have you worked through your distraction list to this level?
- What is your rate of reinforcement? Are you rewarding enough for the new situation?
- Does your dog have the foundations down well enough?
- Does your dog have another need that has not been met (for example, exercise, needing to eliminate, or a social or socialization need)?

Gaining fluency

The goal is for your dog to be able to listen and do as you ask in most situations, most of the time (keep in mind that there are situations where it is not reasonable for your dog to follow your directions...). To gain fluency, you must:

- Do structured practices in various locations.
- Gradually build up distraction levels.
- Reinforce generously.
- Make at least 90 percent of the exercises doable—90 percent success rate before raising your criteria.
- Practice regularly and over time.
- Expect occasional setbacks and plateaus.

Review your homework and handouts if you need reminders.

<https://www.gooddogsantacruz.com/handouts/>