

OUT AND ABOUT CHALLENGE

Why bother training for public spaces?

So you can confidently and safely take your puppy with you anywhere, and make the experience an enjoyable one for you both. Take your puppy for an extended outing this week – to a café or BBQ or picnic in the park.

How to prepare.

Step 1. Think about the types of challenges you are likely to encounter:

- An outdoor café: Other dogs and people walking by, food within easy reach, kids running around, people who want to pet your puppy.
- In a park: Other dogs, people, running children, trash on the ground, Frisbees and balls, people who want to pet your puppy.

Step 2. Decide how you will handle potential challenges. Will you...

- Move away to create distance?
- Use treats as a food lure to recapture or keep your puppy's attention on you?
- Use cues your puppy is well practiced at (sit, down, stay, come, loose leash walking, leave it) to help guide your puppy's behavior? Which will you use in each situation?

Step 3. Go on your outing. Actively scan the environment so you can respond proactively to challenges rather than reacting when the distraction is already too close.

After you get home.

Assess how the outing went.

- What did your puppy do well?
- What needs extra practice?
- Is there anything you want to do differently next time?

Training Tip: Work at your puppy's level. Is your puppy ready to do a down-stay for the full duration of a café meal? (Probably not!) Start with a shorter visit like a trip for coffee, or practice shorter stays? Has your puppy spied something on the ground? A leave it or recall from several feet away is more likely to work than when he has his nose close.

Troubleshooting: If your outing was not as enjoyable or successful as you would like, spend some time at home working on the cues your puppy struggled with. Then pick an easier outing, such as a café during the afternoon lull instead of the morning rush. Bring tastier treats and go before your puppy's mealtime, not after.