

# **8-WEEK ATTENTION COURSE**

**For all intent purposes, these exercises must be practiced 3 to 4 times a day each week, in order for this to be effective.**

**These are VERY WORTHWHILE exercises if you do the steps and do not cheat.**

## "ATTENTION" COURSE

### WEEK 1 - SHOW

#### Before you start:

1. Make sure your dog is hungry.
2. Work in a distraction-free area
3. Pick a word that will mean "WATCH, i.e., 'READY' or 'YES'".
4. Pick a release word, i.e., "OKAY" or "FREE".
5. From now on, do not allow your dog to sit in the heel position unless he is looking up at your face. Step out of the heel position or break the dog out of it, **unless** you intend to work "Attention".
6. Have a large supply of bite-size soft food ready. Choose a food your dog loves: hot dogs, cheese, liver, marshmallow, etc

#### Preparing to start:

1. Sit your dog in the heel position
2. Gather the lead in the RIGHT hand, accordion style
3. Place your RIGHT hand on your LEFT hip, keeping your shoulders **square**.
4. Put the dog's collar up behind his ears
5. Keep lead taut and bring it up and from under dog's RIGHT ear.
6. Have 5 or 6 bits of food in your LEFT hand.

#### Start:

1. Show your dog the food.
2. Give your command word, i.e., "WATCH" or "READY".
3. Bring your LEFT hand up to your LEFT chest, keeping food in dog's vision.
4. Lower food to dog by keeping flat of LEFT wrist riding down your **body from your LEFT chest, to your LEFT side, and down your LEFT leg.**
5. Repeat command, "WATCH". Praise with "good dog", and then **give food**.  
Ideally, the dog should eat with its head up.
6. Continue lowering food, repeating command, praising and **rewarding with food**.
7. Encourage the dog to stretch up for the last piece of food.
8. Release the dog, using your release word or step out of **the heel position and play** with your dog

Repeat above exercises 3 to 4 times a day.

## "ATTENTION" COURSE

### WEEK 2 – REINFORCE

Continue as in Week 1 with no distractions.

If your dog, moves its eyes at any time:

9 TAP muzzle.

2. If your dog, looks away at any time:

9 POP ..... for looking away.

➤ PRAISE.....for looking up.

➤ COMMAND.....to remind the dog.

➤ REWARD .....with food for looking up.

3 ATTENTION IN FRONT:

9 Pick'up your RIGHT foot, and pivot on the ball of your LEFT foot to face your dog. You are now in front of your dog, toe to toe. Follow same procedures as when your dog is at your LEFT side, EXCEPT keep food between your dog's eyes and your face.

## "ATTENTION" COURSE

### WEEK 3 - MILD DISTRACTIONS

Up until now, you have been working in a **distraction-free** area. Now **it** is time to proof your preliminary training by introducing MILD distractions. These are distractions that are NOT aimed directly toward the dog, such as:

- your neighbor cutting the grass
- 3 another dog that is across the street.
- a street corner where there is some traffic flow.

- If your dog Responds or Looks toward the deliberately provided **distractions**:
  - POP.....for looking away.
  - PRAISE.....for looking up at you.
  - COMMAND..... to remind your dog.
  - 9 REWARD .....with food for looking up.

If the dog **does not** Resvond or Look toward the distractions:

- 9 PRAISE.....for looking up at you.
- 3 COMMAND.....to remind your dog.
- REWARD .....with food to reinforce the correct response.

Work in both the HEEL and FRONT positions. Release and play with your dog.

- Remember, still working 3 to 4 times a day.

## "ATTENTION" COURSE

### WEEK 4 - STRONGER DISTRACTIONS

- These distractions are aimed directly at the dog. With your dog on leash, have a friend come close to the dog and talk to you, talk to the dog, drop their hat, etc.

#### If your dog is distracted by your friend:

- POP..... for looking away.
- PRAISE..... for looking up at you.
- COMMAND..... to remind your dog.
- 9 REWARD ..... with food for looking up

#### If the dog does not respond to your friend:

- PRAISE..... for looking up at you.
- COMMAND..... to remind your dog.
- REWARD ..... with food to reinforce the correct response

As the week progresses, the need for the POP should decrease. If it does not, then go back to Week 3. You have probably proceeded too quickly for your particular dog, OR you have not been consistent in your training.

- THE DOG CANNOT BE CONSISTENTLY WRONG AT THIS STAGE. HE MUST BEGIN TO SUCCEED OR YOU MUST BACK UP TO A POINT WHERE HE WILL SUCCEED.

## "ATTENTION" COURSE

### WEEK 5 – WITHDRAWING FOOD

- Work in both HEEL and FRONT positions. Work for **45 – 60 seconds** of TOTAL ATTENTION.
- If your dog is successful:
  - PRAISE..... COMMAND PRAISE.
- If your dog looks away:
  - POP..... COMMAND..... PRAISE.
- Release at the end of **45 – 60 seconds** with FOOD.
- At first, work in a distraction-free area.
- When your dog can be successful:
  - add mild distractions.
- When successful:
  - add stronger distractions.
- When practicing with more attention, work in a LEVEL, pothole free area with no obstacles for your dog to trip over. If you allow him to trip or stumble, you will lose all confidence you have built up!
- The game. While under command, try to catch your dog not watching you. Loose leash in both hands, and dog in heel position. Keep your weight on your LEFT leg, with your RIGHT foot out to the side, ready to move.
- Add distractions.
- If your dog is distracted or looks away by turning his head:
  - EXIT TO THE RIGHT, with a firm POP correction!
  - Immediately PRAISE and PLAY with your dog.
  - Set him up again, and repeat the above steps.
- REMEMBER: THIS IS A GAME AND NOT A NECK STRETCHING EXERCISE!
- If your dog only moves his eyes:
  - TAP his muzzle as a reminder.
  - repeat the WATCH command.
  - PRAISE.

## "ATTENTION" COURSE

### WEEK 6 – ONE STEP

Roll leash in your LEFT hand with food in between the thumb and forefinger.

2. Hold the food just above your dog's head
3. Take ONE step only (forward) using your RIGHT leg as a start, and **bring** your LEFT leg up to it, as if in the HALT.
4. At first, work without distractions, and use food to keep your dog's head up
5. It does not matter if you move slowly
6. Add MILD distractions slowly.
7. If your dog needs to be corrected:
  - If the head moves, correct with a POP.
  - If the eyes move, correct with a muzzle TAP

## "ATTENTION" COURSE

### WEEK 7 - TWO STEPS

Following the above procedures, start on the LEFT leg, but only take TWO steps.

- 2 When your dog can handle TWO steps with his head held up, slowly increase the number of steps to TEN, working slowly on your LEFT side.
- 3 REWARD with food at the end, whether it is TWO steps or TEN steps.

## "ATTENTION" COURSE

### WEEK 8 – MULTIPLE STEPS

Dog and handler aim to walk slowly in a large LEFT circle with the **dog's head up**, paying **full** attention to his handler.

2. If your **dog** moves his head:
  - Correct with a lead POP straight up.
  
3. If **only** the eyes move:
  - TAP muzzle as a reminder
  
4. At first, reward your dog with food, after TEN steps. Then increase the **number of** steps gradually, until you are rewarding at the end of a circle.

From here, you have a decently solid foundation of attention. This needs practiced at least every other day, even for 5 minutes in order to perfect the skill.