



TRAINING GUIDE

Now you've done it! You have increased your family by one furry little, four-legged friend. Congratulations! Believe it or not, he will be as dependent on you as any child ever has been. Training a puppy or even an older dog is a very rewarding yet often times tedious job. This can be made easier when you are given the basic building blocks of training. In the following pages we will give you an outline for training a pup from seven weeks old. Each step should be considered a foundation for the next step. You will learn along with the dog as to how these pieces fit together and soon your dog will be doing things as a matter of habit from repetition and persistence rather than from a relationship of force!

Any hunting breed puppy loves to learn and please his masters. Your goal as his instructor is to make the "games" you play with him informative, educational, restrictive, structured and consistent. Stick to the subject at hand and don't let the pup dictate the lesson. If you can, follow this guide without interruption, with as little variance as possible. You will end up with an eager-to-please, well-mannered and well-trained partner.

Whether this is your first puppy or your tenth, it is always a test of patience, wills, stamina and determination. Maybe with a couple of helpful hints, we can make your adventure a little less painful.

The first thing to remember is that with any young puppy, you are working with a blank chalkboard and a small piece of chalk. Go slowly. Be consistent, repetitive and calm. But most of all don't lose your temper. Puppies can be easily scared. All dogs are keyed to voice tones and body language. A 180 pound man can and will cause some intimidation just by virtue of size. Get down to his level whenever possible to minimize this.

A good rule to remember with puppies is: don't let them do anything now that you don't want them to do when they weigh 65 pounds. This includes chewing on your shoes, jumping on the couch, sleeping on the bed, nipping at your heels or jumping up on your legs. If you allow things like this now, you will live to regret it.

Your dog's ability to learn is only as good as your ability to teach. They will learn one word commands or very short phrases if they are taught correctly through repetition and consistency. Don't over do training sessions and don't force him on to anything he is not ready for.

You will notice that throughout this booklet, we will repeat lessons already taught and extend them into new lessons. New lessons can be learned only with a good foundation. Repeat any lesson or series of lessons, as often as necessary, as you see fit. There's no such thing as a too well-trained dog!

CRATE TRAINING

Let's start with the basics. Give your new pup a place of his own. Many people prefer to crate train these little guys. This gives them their own place that is secure and peaceful and gets them comfortable with the confining elements of travel. After all, if we expect them to hunt with us, they have to have a way to get there! Nobody wants a stinky, wet, muddy dog in their lap after a long day chasing wily quail or increasingly elusive pheasant. Put their favorite toy in the crate along with a towel or blanket. This is their place, not their prison. After a while they will seek this refuge and willingly go to it. The crate can be used in the house and moved to the garage or kennel, for the night. It will become your savior when patience wains or guests arrive who don't appreciate fun loving pups.

HOUSE BREAKING

The biggest problem puppy owners face is house breaking. There are a few rules to remember that will make this process much less painful. First, whenever a puppy wakes up, exercises or eats, he will have to go. This happens every time! It is a rule of Nature! If he is sleeping in the crate and the next thing you see is a wandering puppy, take him outside. If you don't catch him in time, don't rub his nose in it. He has no way to associate nose rubbing and going outside. Tell him NO, clean up the mess with some enzyme cleaner like Nature's Miracle (available in almost all pet stores and great for coffee spills and wine stains too) and try not to miss the wake-up next time. If this is done repeatedly he will seek the outdoors as his place to do his duty. After just a few days, he will be sitting at the door to go out. Remember, when he wakes up, plays or exercises and after he eats HE WILL GO! It is your fault if he soils your carpet. He is a baby that needs supervision and guidance. All dogs will learn as quickly as they are properly taught. You are the teacher! How good are you?

PLAY vs TRAINING

When you get your pup at seven or eight weeks everything you do with him is a learning experience. This includes the walks in the yard with new smells, petting and cuddling with you and the kids and even the games you play in the front room. Puppies love to play tug-of-war. This is the worst game a hunting dog can play with people. Visualize a beautiful ring necked pheasant being torn in two; one end in the dogs mouth and the other being held by a frustrated owner. Don't play tug-of-war with any hunting dog. The meal you save may be your own!

To this end your toys should be segregated into two groups: play toys and training toys. The play toys are those that he can chew on and tear up

whenever he wants. This can include a variety of pet store toys, old rags, rawhide bones etc., etc. If you give him old shoes or knotted up socks don't be surprised when your new hunting boots have no laces, and the tongues are gone, or your dirty socks from the laundry room are shredded and strewn all over the house.

As far as training toys go, these need to be toys that are played with only when you have specific rules, i.e. bring this back to me. You may consider a tennis ball a training tool, but preferably a small canvas puppy dummy. Using a canvas dummy from the start gets your new friend accustomed to handling and carrying a training dummy. We use canvas at this young age because their teeth and gums are tender and don't toughen up until they have grown their permanent teeth. When you throw it across the room, it is to be retrieved to you, not carried off and chewed on. Coax him back to you with lots of enthusiasm like clapping and "Here puppy puppy!" Don't forget to use your whistle. A few tweets mixed in with the verbal excitement will get him used to the whistle and the reason it is being blown. When he does come back, lots of pats and praise will reinforce the good job he did.

Don't overdo the training at this young age. A few minutes several times a day is much better than one long session. You are dealing with a very short attention span that you will be able to watch grow and intensify as he matures over the next several weeks. After a few days of play/training with these "training toys", just the sight of them will initiate excitement and maybe even a puddle of excitement. (Remember the rules about avoiding accidents?)

Training should be simple. Work on one lesson at a time using one word commands like HERE or COME with lots of praise when accomplished. Mix in the "sit and stay training" throughout the day also, remembering that repetition is your best friend and frustration is your enemy. Hitting or slapping causes hand shyness and even worse, a distrust of people. If you want this puppy to be a well adjusted member of your family, mutual respect will go a long way to achieving this goal. Minimizing corporal punishment will raise a much more secure and happy dog with strong bonds to you and your family.

LEAD AND COLLAR TRAINING

With an adjustable collar and a training lead, get the new guy used to wearing this collar with the lead attached. Let him drag this lead around when running in the yard. When you want him under control, grasp the lead and get him used to you being the boss. The more he wears it with you in control, the less he will fight you as you go through the training process. This combination can be a very helpful tool when play/training with the

dummy. Usually it is not difficult to convince him to go get the dummy but many times the "bring it back to me" parts gets a little gray. Use the lead to help him "remember" the correct direction of a retrieve. Just a couple of firm, quick tugs usually does the trick.

When walking, don't let him drag you. Remember, you are taking him for a walk, he is not taking you for a drag. The same firm, quick tugs usually slow him down. Walk him on your left and "steer" him with the lead. Repeat the "heel" command often. This will take several outings so don't get frustrated.

FEEDING AND CARE

Everyone has their own theories about how to feed puppies. It is well documented that premium foods are better for your dogs and cost less per serving. There is also less waste to clean up and this high quality food promotes healthy coats, bone development and eyesight. Ask the breeder and your vet what food they recommend and don't skimp on quality. It will save you big bucks in the long run. For example, feed a premium dry puppy food, mixed with water, twice a day. Don't over feed these little guys. They should not have potbellies. Make certain they always have clean fresh water and get plenty of exercise. Lazy, fat puppies are made, not born! Be certain to worm them as instructed by your vet and keep their kennel area clean and dry. Well-fed pups are healthier, learn faster, make great hunters and live longer (so you don't have to go through the puppy thing so often). Be certain to continue with his shots and maintain this throughout his life. His breeder should have instructed you as to the shots he has already had. Consult your vet for the proper schedule.

Use a stainless steel feeding bowl for food and water. Stainless steel is easy to clean, extremely durable and almost impossible to chew up.

INTRODUCTION TO DUMMIES AND SCENT

Training a retriever can be one of the most rewarding experiences any hunter can have. There are no secrets involved: just patience, repetition, perseverance, consistency and the ability to anticipate reaction. In short, the trainer needs to be just a little smarter than his pupil. This is not always as easy as it sounds.

The goal for the hunter is to have a well-trained, well-controlled hunting companion that is easy to have around and does not hinder his ability to hunt and enjoy the few days a year that we all have to get away from the boss and the telephone.

Puppies should be started at seven weeks with playful games using the



small dummies with a few drops of scent. Tease the pup with the dummy and toss it a few yards. Your excitement will pump him up. This should be fun! As he starts after the dummy call his name. This will be his release later. As soon as he gets to the dummy, start blowing the Roy Gonia™ whistle and start running away from him. In the excitement, he may drop the dummy. Don't worry, he thinks you are leaving him. If he does drop it, just start over. When he does catch you with the dummy in his mouth, take it from him and praise him incessantly. Let him know he did well by voice and pats. Be certain to get down to his level as a large person can be very intimidating to a ten pound puppy. Repeat this several times until he's got it down. Limit these sessions to about 15 minutes so as not to create any boredom. This should all be fun and exciting for the youngster. If you can repeat this exercise two or three times a day for a week or two, your pup will start to get excited every time you grab the dummy. That's what you want!

It's good if during these sessions you can be isolated from any other activities and people. The pup's attention span is very limited at this age and any distractions will deter from his response. Also do not play tug-of-war with the dummy. This can cause serious problems later with real game.

The puppy should, after several sessions, be crazy to get this funny looking bird. When he brings it to you now, kneel down and meet him when he returns with the dummy. This time, don't take the dummy from him immediately. Instead, hold him by the collar, making certain he doesn't drop the dummy, and show him how to sit, still holding the dummy. Pet him and soothe him in a reassuring voice until he is comfortable sitting and holding. From here on, never take the dummy until he is in the sitting position.

When taking the dummy from him, always use the same word(s) and never play tug-of-war! When taking it, give the command, (e.g. drop, give, thank you), place one hand on the collar to control him and grasp the dummy, twisting it so it will roll out with pressure applied up against his upper jaw. This will allow for a smooth, easy release. Some pups like to hold on tight. If this is the case take the hand off the collar and wrap this hand over the top of his nose down to his canines, making certain his lips are between your finger and his canines. Apply a slight amount of pressure on his lips against his teeth. This is a minor pain but works well to remind him that the dummy belongs to you. When the dummy is free, pour on the praise. He's been a good boy! You are letting him know that his job is to get that dummy for you and bring it back and hold it until you take it.

Read your dog. Every dog is different; they learn and remain interested for different periods of time. Learn from these lessons when he becomes bored and disinterested. Fatigue and disinterest are easy to "read" and the duration of these sessions should be tempered by your awareness of these factors.

HEELING AND STEADYING

By now your pup should be well accustomed to hearing his name when he takes off for the thrown dummy, and sits and gives on return. Now he is ready to learn a little more control.

With the collar around his neck, attach the 4' nylon lead you received in your training kit to the collar. Let him run around with it so he gets used to the added drag. This time, instead of throwing the dummy and letting him tear after it, get down on both knees behind him and hold him using the lead and collar. Flip the dummy out a few yards and hold on. By now he really wants to go, but don't let him. Stroke him and calm him while he watches that dummy. Tell him to SIT until he does so with little or no restraint. After a few seconds of this, release him using his name as before. After a few sessions of this type of restraint, stand up and use the lead only to steady him. You'll be surprised that after only a few days of this he will be steady, at least on dummies. Don't be afraid to give the lead a jerk while giving the SIT command or if he tries to break. Puppies are very resilient. Don't be surprised, however, if the first time you think you can trust him not to break, he takes off with no warning. Be ready at all times and hold on to that lead!

It should be noted here that you are building a foundation upon which all future training will be based. Patience and repetition will be your best helpers. Learn to anticipate his reaction and his errors so that they may be overcome with as few problems as possible. During these building block sessions, always go back to make certain he understands what you did yesterday. It will make today easier. Praise will be his greatest reward. When you are having fun, so will he. NEVER give him tidbits as a reward for doing well. His reward will always be your happy voice and lots of praise! Keep in mind that he is learning how to learn, so make it as enjoyable as possible.

As you work through the steadying exercise, gradually increase the time he must wait to be sent until he is comfortable with a wait of at least ten seconds. Also, on his return, get him used to sitting next to you, usually on your left side, the heel position. By introducing the "heel" command, then "sit", he will learn that this is the ready position and the fun will come from this position only.

Gradually increase the distance of the throws until he is comfortable with 20-30 yard retrieves. As you started this exercise, all retrieves should have been in cut grass. As he becomes more "birdy", introduce him to the same retrieves in slightly heavier cover. As he gets bigger and more well trained, expose him to more hunting-like terrain for these training sessions and allow him to start using his nose as well as his eyes. Regular use of scent



will facilitate the learning of “questing” and varying the kind of scent will help him gain confidence in his ability to find game using his nose and his eyes.

Unbeknownst to the puppy, over the past several weeks, he has been introduced to SIT, HEEL, the FETCH command, as well as, his name, different scents, and delivery to hand. Take advantage of this and work on these basic drills. While on lead, walk around the yard with him at the heel position, keeping a loose lead unless he wanders astray. Make several turns so that he understands that heel means next to you no matter where you are. When you stop, say SIT until this is an automatic response. The ease at which he learns this can be enhanced by carrying the dummy in your right hand while controlling him with your left. He knows what the dummy is for and won't be very far away while you have it. Gradually wean the dummy from his view until he heels with a loose lead.

As you progress through this exercise, substitute a sharp blast with your whistle for the SIT command. This will prep him for the handling drills. Start by saying only SIT with a gently tug on the lead. Then go to SIT-TWEET and then just TWEET.

Mix this exercise in with the steady drill but be certain to make it fun and don't let him get tired or bored! Again, repetition is the key to success and enjoyment is the best way to have a happy dog and trainer. Always end your training sessions on a happy note and NEVER lose your patience. Remember also not to let him do anything as a puppy that he will not be allowed to do as a 70 pound dog. This includes everything from jumping up on you, to chewing up a dummy.

MULTIPLE MARKS

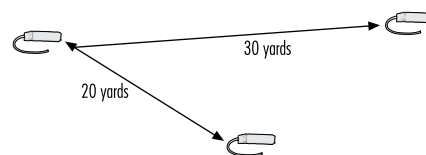
Double and triple marks are simply two or three singles – no more and no less. While one or two of the marks in a triple may have an influence on the other mark, all three birds are still retrieved one at a time. Start your youngster out on multiples by simply throwing two dummies, one at a time, from your side at a distance of about 10 yards in cut grass while your little buddy sits calmly next to you. Send him for the last dummy thrown, await the retrieve, let him sit again at heel, tell him to watch it, mark it or whatever terms you are using, until he is looking out to the second dummy. Sometimes this is a big step, so do whatever you need to get him to start remembering (e.g. walk toward the remaining dummy), get excited about it and work him through it. His attention span is very short so work this while he is fresh and ready to go. Once he realizes that when you say WATCH IT, point him toward another dummy and call his name to go retrieve it, he will begin to trust you! This is a very big step. Once you have his confidence, start putting the dummies in some cover, out of his sight. His trust in

you will be invaluable later, so spend many sessions on this exercise. Remember, he must be steady for both throws, not leave until his name is called and return and deliver to hand from the heel position. Take your time and make certain that he does all phases correctly. If there seems to be any confusion, back up and start over. This is a critical step in a hunting dog's life because this is the first time that his trust in you is going to be tested. Your ability to instill trust in him will be tested many times over in the field. Make certain that he understands that he can believe you and don't tease him at all during this phase of training.

Gradually extend the distances on the throws until you can have a training assistant throw one from out in the field, say 60 to 100 yards away. Make every effort not to have these dummies land any closer than about 45 degrees apart (See Diagram A below). You may think retrieves of 100 yards are unnecessary. However, even the greatest shot will on occasion wound a duck that slants away before dropping, or your hunting partner may drop a pheasant in some very heavy cover at the other edge of the field and could need your dog's assistance. The better your dog is at marking in all terrains and at all distances, the better hunting partner he will be. Accurate marking is only a product of repetition. If 100 practice marks is good, 1000 will be much better! Practice, practice, practice. This applies not only to marking but every aspect of training. Repetition is the key to success with dogs, so get to work!

Diagram A

Throw the dummies different distances and at least 45 degrees apart as shown:

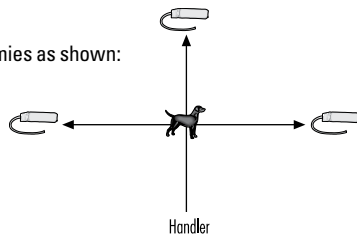


BLIND RETRIEVES AND HANDLING

Since you are not training a field dog, your handling of a dog need not be precise. Your interest is to have a dog that can retrieve a dead bird even if he did not see it fall. Since you have already worked on multiple marks and have taught the dog to trust you, you have laid the ground work for this phase of training. Lay a pile of dummies on the lawn about 20 yards in front of you. Have the dog sit in the heel position looking directly at the pile. As he is looking at the pile say DEAD BIRD and put your flat hand directly over his nose pointing out an imaginary line to the pile. As he looks out to the pile say BACK. He may not go so coax him into it by saying FETCH or GO GET IT or whatever it takes. Work him through this so that the trust you established on multiple marks carries through. Walk toward the pile until he understands that he is supposed to go get the dummy. After a few sessions he will get the picture. Gradually move him back so that he can do a blind retrieve on cut grass at least as long as his marks.

Diagram B

Set the dummies as shown:



Now that he trusts you again, let's learn some "OVERS". This is a typical "T" pattern (See Diagram B above) used by virtually every trainer in the U.S. to train handling drills. Set the dog down in the center, with the piles to his right, left and directly behind him. You stand where indicated and put your right arm directly out to your side and say OVER. Make certain he sees you. This may prove confusing to a young dog but, your ability to convince him will only be limited by the amount of trust you have established. Take your time and make certain he does this your way. Keep saying OVER until he moves to the correct pile, picks up a dummy and delivers to you. Return him to the center spot and do it again until he has this down pat. Next go to the left hand pile and then go to the "back" pile by raising your hand straight above your head and saying BACK, which he has heard before. This step of his training will be tedious, time consuming, frustrating and very testing of how you have prepared your buddy for this stage. After a few weeks of repeating this drill and extending the distance to the dummies (up to 50 yards); he will be fairly proficient at understanding the difference between left, right and back.

Now that he somewhat understands, introduce the whistle. If you remember earlier, the "sit" whistle was used during the heeling drills. This will now be transferred to the field. It may be a good idea to review this with your partner so as not to confuse him any more. In essence, take him to the center position of your handling layout, blow the sit whistle and command, blow the sit whistle again and then give our directional command.

He should fly over to the pile you selected, retrieve the dummy, and return it to you in the sit-heel position. Now, while at your side, line him up for the remaining pile that he can see, use your hand to draw the imaginary line and say BACK. When he is about 1/3 of the way to the selected pile, blow the sit whistle, yell SIT and try to stop him before he gets to the pile. If you cannot stop him, go back and review the sit whistle routine; i.e. from the heel position on lead, SIT, TWEET, SIT, then TWEET SIT TWEET, then just TWEET. Simply stated, one sharp blast of the whistle means sit down immediately!

Work through this until you can control him at distances up to 100 yards, giving him overs and backs. Remember one thing: always have a dummy or bird at the spot to which you are handling. As is the case with all aspects of dog training, the more repetitions you get in, the better your dog will respond. Handling drills are only useful when done with continuity and regularity. Remember, don't loose your temper and don't over-do these sessions to the point of boredom. Even though it only took a few minutes to read this pamphlet, it will take months to get your dog to a point that these handling drills will be easy. Old dogs do learn new tricks and a dog is never fully trained. They always need to be refreshed and reminded as to what they are supposed to do and how they are supposed to do it.

For more training equipment please contact your local dealer or call us for a SportDOG Brand® dealer in your area.

You have chosen to use the best equipment by purchasing this SportDOG Brand® Training Kit. Remember, the SportDOG Brand® is: "PREFERRED BY THE PROFESSIONALS" and there is a reason for it. We make the best training equipment available in the world. We use everything that we sell and we stand behind it 100%!

Ask your dealer about other quality SportDOG Brand® Products to help you train your new best friend:

- LEATHER DOG BOOTS FOR PAD PROTECTION
- LEADS AND COLLARS
- MEGA WHISTLES FOR LONGER RANGE WHISTLES
- TRAINING COLLARS
- WHISTLE LANYARDS
- PUPPY COLLARS
- PLASTIC AND CANVAS TRAINING DUMMIES
- ANYTHING YOU NEED TO TRAIN YOUR HUNTING DOG

ROY GONIA™ SPECIAL WHISTLE

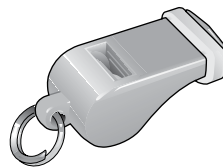


The Roy Gonia™ Special Whistle was developed over 30 years ago to fill a definite need for a clear-toned, sharp-trilled whistle that the trainer could rely on; and that was extremely audible to a dog's sense of hearing, which is considerably different from ours.

Through several years of testing and modification, we have developed what has become the most widely used and highly demanded dog training whistle in North America.

Injection-molded of high-impact plastic and individually assembled by hand, this whistle is renowned for its reliable pitch and regular tone. The Roy Gonia™ Special Whistle is the overwhelming choice among successful professionals and amateurs in all areas of field training.

ROY'S COMMANDER WHISTLE

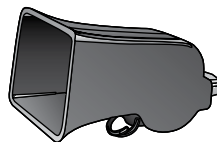


Because of the sound frequencies they emit, many training whistles fail to perform properly in thick fog or heavy weather. Roy's Commander Whistle was developed for just such conditions.

The Roy's Commander has a unique frequency range that pierces the fog, snow, and miserable weather often encountered on a hunt. It also comes with a rubber mouth-piece that provides a firm grip on even the wettest days. Many hunters carry both the Roy Gonia™ Special and the Roy's Commander to be prepared for any kind of weather.

Like all SportDOG Brand® whistles, the Roy's Commander is injection-molded of high-impact plastic and assembled by hand to ensure quality and regularity of tone.

MEGA WHISTLE



Many hunters and trainers are concerned about the effects of whistles on their hearing. The innovative megaphone design, of our Mega Whistle, projects the sound in the direction of the dog, lessening the impact on the handler's ears.

The Mega Whistle is a great choice for serious trainers and for anyone concerned with health and comfort. Many hunters have given these whistles to their hunting partners to save their own ears in a duck blind! In addition to protecting human ears, the Mega Whistle is useful for handling dogs at long distances, such as, when retrieving fallen ducks or running a 300-yard blind on a weekend trial.

ORIGINAL LUCKY DOG™ PLASTIC DUMMIES



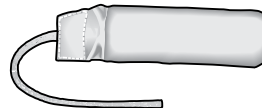
Lucky Dog revolutionized the dog training industry when they originated plastic training dummies. These dummies are manufactured of tough vinyl that is not only durable, but also soft and pliable under all conditions. This softness simulates the feel of actual game.

Unlike wood or hard plastic dummies, which a dog will “mouth” or chew, a bad habit that transfers directly to game birds, our soft dummies condition dogs to retrieve game with a “soft mouth.”

- **White** dummies are the most visible, and are used for training young dogs to use their eyes over land or water.
- **Orange** dummies teach dogs to use their nose after reaching the area of a fall. These dummies work well on blind retrieves, because they are easy for the handler to see but are virtually invisible to the dog.
- **Black** dummies are used in areas where the background is very light, such as in parts of the Midwest, where there are few forests or large hills and only the bright sky to contrast against a thrown dummy.

Our plastic knobby dummies come in two sizes, 2” x 12” at 9 ounces or 3” x 12” at 15 ounces. Both sizes are made with a valve that allows the user to adjust the weight or firmness by adding air or water - one more reason why SportDOG Brand® is proud to bring Original Lucky Dog™ dummies to the market.

ORIGINAL LUCKY DOG™ CANVAS DUMMIES



The Original Lucky Dog™ Canvas Dummies are versatile, durable and made to be the best training dummies available.

You'll notice a difference when you first see our canvas dummies - they have a rope attached directly to them. This design eliminates the need for grommets, which tend to pull out with use, and saves you the need of attaching your own ropes.

Made of heavy-duty canvas over a closed-cell, weighted foam cylinder and sewn with dacron thread, these dummies are built to last. They work equally well on land or water and can be sued with scent for trailing or tracking.

These canvas dummies come in two colors: White for training young dogs and orange for scent training with older dogs. We offer three sizes, 2” x 9” (puppy), 3” x 12” (jumbo) and 4” x 12” (goose) all with rope attached.



Gear the way you'd design it.™

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