

# Wesley's Training Tips

By Ch Bonavista Drummer Boy aka Wesley



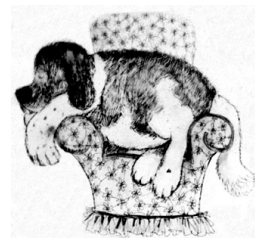
**At some stage in your owner's life he or she may decide to instil some basic control on your way of life and this must be gradually trained out of them. Humans are strange creatures and may even take you to classes to try to teach you. My Dad did, but I devised the following set of rules and conditions which if you also abide by, should result in your speedy retirement from obedience circles**

The first stage is to develop a range of expressions concentrating mainly on the eyes. "Deep Mournful" looks and "Sideways Glances" are important, but not as critical as the pitiful "Don't Whip Me" look.

The golden rule is that you can get away with anything, so long as you eventually trot back to the heel position and ply your owner with "Sweet Innocent" looks. He cannot punish you, but threats of growlings should evoke the ultimate "Don't Whip Me": look which if done right, will convince all others present that your owner is the Marquis de Sade in disguise.

The first steps of basic control are

heel on lead and sit. Heel on lead is easy to master, simply drag your head along the ground, tail between the legs, as slowly as possible. Any jerking on lead should be greeted by "pitiful whimpering" and "deep mournful" looks. Variations can include sudden springing forward which can result in your owner dislocating shoulders or better still falling flat on his face. Wait for fingers to get entangled in choker chains then spring with all your might to see how many fingers you can catch. A good firm thrust should break at least one finger.



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The sit is quite easy to master. On command "Sit Newf" start to slowly angle rear end toward the ground, shuffling slightly and looking bemused. Stop at any stage before actually sitting so that a further command is necessary. If ground is damp or cold, keep rear end one inch above ground level. This gives you a distinct advantage to spring away suddenly. Ensure tail goes into muddiest puddles then when it is really wet and sticky, wag tail with glee especially when several owners are around.



The stays are particularly easy to master. Sit stays can be destroyed by smiling at your owner and slowly sinking to the down position. Down stays are easy, for all humans think that once a Newf is lying down he will not hurry to get back up again. However, always remember to do good down stays until exam day. Then you should run away and disturb as many other dogs as possible. A big bonus is gained for keeping out of owner's sight for five minutes.

Learn to recognise the commands humans use such as "Exercise Finished" and react accordingly.

Once you have mastered these exercises you can try heel off lead, basic recall and retrieve. Heel off lead is particularly easy for you can gradually work it to get out of arms reach before dashing off. Retrieve is OK, the only rule is to never pick up the dumbbell. It's ok to spring forward on command and run towards it, but either continue running, or sniff the dumbbell and return perfectly to owner without it.

Recall is one of my favourite exercises as there are limitless possibilities. One of my favourites is to await the command "Come" and then slink forward, belly on the ground, tail between legs, grovelling, "whining pitifully" and "pleading innocent" looks. This always convinces other humans of how cruel your owner is. Another good one is to spring forward on command, run to owner and sit diligently directly in front of him. On the 'finish' command (because confidence has grown) either rear up on hind legs or roll over on the ground, play dead or likewise. If sitting just outside arms reach then spring away and cavort with other dogs.

Remember other dog etiquette - always greet members of the opposite sex with the usually intimate Newf greeting, and if you're a dog remember the maxim to treat all bitches as if they are in season.

Leg cocking is probably the only punishable offence in obedience and is best left alone. Anything else goes. And remember, you can't be punished, and if you do the odd thing right (and this doesn't bore you too much) then "warm praise" and "big cuddles" will be given.

However, once you have got your owner well trained you can revert to the old habits and no objection will be heard.