

Dog Scouts of America

Beach Buddies Training Instructions

Your dog must be able to swim to earn this merit badge. Be sure your dog can swim. If he can't, then try out for the puppy paddler merit badge. He must also know obedience.

Take the dog to about 30 feet from the shoreline and perform a simple, 15 second sit-stay exercise. Reinforce the dog's acceptance of the new context (staying near a beach). Stay at close range, so that you can reinforce desired behavior and abort mistakes, and add distractions (new contexts), ONE AT A TIME, as follows:

- Gradually move closer to the water
- Gradually increase the time requirement
- Have another dog present
- Have another dog enter the water
- Have another dog race down to the water and dive in to fetch a fun toy
- Have multiple dogs present
- Have multiple dogs splashing in the water
- Have dog stay while you go into the water at wading depth
- Have dog stay while you go out to swimming depth

Perform the above exercise with a down-stay, including all of the context changes listed, plus any others you can think of. Remember, change only ONE criterion at a time--do not try to increase both the time AND the distance in the same training step.

Set the dog up on the beach, 30 feet from shore and perform a short recall. Reinforce the dog's acceptance of the new context (coming when called near a beach). Perform the recall exercise with all of the following context changes, and any others you can think of. Remember, change only ONE criterion at a time--do not try to increase both the distance AND the distraction in the same training step.

- Gradually move closer to the water
- Gradually increase the distance of the recall
- Have another dog present
- Have another dog enter the water
- Have another dog race down to the water and dive in to fetch a fun toy
- Have multiple dogs present
- Have multiple dogs splashing in the water
- Have dog stay while you go into the water at wading depth and call him to you
- Have dog stand in shallow water and do a recall to you in shallow water
- Have dog stay while you go out to swimming depth (for the dog) and call
- Have dog stay while you go out to swimming depth (for you) and call
- Set the dog up at the shoreline and call him to you away from the water
- Have dog stand in shallow water and call him to you on the beach
- Have dog come to you way up on the shore from swimming depth