

## Puppy Raising

# Whistle association

This exercise describes how to teach your puppy the association between the whistle and coming towards you for a reward.

### Quick links

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## Why

Some guide dog owners find projecting their voice difficult in an outdoor environment and instead use a whistle for recall. By using a whistle, anyone with the dog off-lead has a consistent and familiar way to recall them. For your puppy's future partner, it's therefore important that your puppy has a strong positive association with the whistle.



## Knowing your puppy

Most puppies will be intrigued by the sound of a whistle. Some puppies may however be worried by the noise if it's blown loudly. Before you look to introduce the whistle think about how your puppy generally responds to sounds. Not all puppies are motivated by the same things, so it's important you consider your puppy as an individual and associate the whistle with things they find reinforcing. For most puppies this will involve using the whistle every feeding time.



## Managing for success

- You will be given a whistle; (if you lose it, please contact Guide Line and we can arrange for a new whistle to be sent out).
- For most puppies the easiest way to fit whistle training into your day is to introduce the whistle at feeding time so the puppy associate's food with the sound of the whistle. In addition, you can also do it in separate sessions pairing the whistle with something that's really high value to your puppy, such as playing with a particular toy.
- Weigh out daily food amounts in advance.
- Whilst you're preparing your puppy's food, it may be easier for them to be in another room entertained by another family member or with an interactive toy.



## Teaching foundations

Your Puppy Development Advisor (PDA) will advise you when to start introducing the whistle at feeding time and the process is outlined below. Please read the document [Learning manners](#).

Our aim is for your puppy to build a very strong response to the sound of the whistle, associating it with something they really enjoy. That way, any time your puppy hears 3 short pips of the whistle, no matter what they're doing or where they are, they respond by coming to you and engaging in a fun time (involving food rewards, or play, or both).

Please note: At feeding time, we're still aiming for a calm puppy leading up to and after 3 short pips of the whistle have been blown.

- Make sure you have your whistle in your hand and calmly bring your puppy to the feeding area whilst the food remains out of the way, for example on the work surface.
- As soon as your puppy is calm with all four paws on the floor, give 3 short pips on the whistle and straight away put the food bowl in front of your puppy and let them eat undisturbed.

### Progression

Your PDA will advise you when to start introducing the whistle for recall.



## Being a partnership

- The important aspect of whistle association is that once your puppy hears the whistle, something they love (generally their food) is instantly available.
- Remember to use the whistle as part of your everyday feeding routine.



**Video: Whistle training a young puppy.**



Practising this exercise and building a positive association with the whistle really helps their future guide dog partner with being confident with their dog off-lead.