

Retriever Training Workshop Master Manual



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The Amateur's Perspective

The Amateur's Strengths:

One-on-One rapport with your dog
Time to work out problems
Your Agenda / Your pace
Access to limited-access grounds (parks, etc.)

❖ This symbol and/or use of underlines denotes material new to this edition.

Agenda	
Time	Area
Day 1	
8:00 - 8:30	Check-in
8:30 - 9:00	
9:00 - 10:00	
10:00 - 11:00	
11:00 - 12:00	
12:00 - 1:00	
1:00 - 2:00	
2:00 - 2:30	
2:30 - 3:00	
3:00 - 4:30	
4:30 -	
Day 2	
8:00 - 10:00	
10:00 - 11:00	
12:00 - 1:00	
1:00 - 1:30	
1:30 - 3:00	
3:00 - 4:00	
4:00 - 4:30	
4:30 -	

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INTRODUCTION

Why are we here?

- We love dogs and working with them
- Training and Succeeding is rewarding
- Because we are able (Health, Wealth and Friendly Cooperation)

Why are there dog events?

- More than the opportunity for immediate satisfaction
- Enhance the genetic pool with sound competent workers
- Winning/Passing results should exemplify this
- We ALL CAN'T succeed all the time
- We ALL CAN contribute to the protection and advancement of purebred dogs (AKC's purpose)

Why are we training the dogs we have now?

- To win/pass with them
- ALSO - to become better trainers for the dogs in our futures

NATURAL AND TRAINED ABILITIES

RETRIEVERS SHOULD BE JUDGED ON THEIR NATURAL AND TRAINED ABILITIES

Natural Abilities are of great importance and include

- Memory
- Intelligence
- Attention
- Nose
- Courage
- Perseverance
- Style

Trained Abilities include

- Steadiness
- Control
- Response to direction
- Delivery

The Ideal Retriever

- Marks the fall of a bird;
- Uses the wind;
- Follows a strong cripple; and
- Takes direction from the handler.

Retrievers should perform equally well on the land and in the water.

A retriever's performance should be a "FINISHED" job and pleasing to the eye.

STYLE!

Style is apparent in every movement of a dog and throughout his entire performance, including:

- Gaiety of manner, approaching the line
- Alertness on line
- Eagerness and speed on retrieves
- Water entry
- Pick-up of birds
- Return with birds

Style makes for a pleasing performance, evidenced by:

- Alert and obedient attitude
- Fast determined departure, both on land and into water
- Aggressive search for the fall
- Prompt pick-up
- Reasonably fast return

❖ Appearance of grace, even under pressure.

❖ Exuding determination and high likelihood of success.

❖ "style is something in the movements of a dog when working, which gives to the onlooker the impression that the dog is determined and likely to succeed in his task." Charles Alington, 1929

MANNERS / OBEDIENCE

Retrievers should sit quietly on line or in the blind, walk at heel or assume any station designated until sent to retrieve.

Control Includes

- Line Manners
- Walk tractably "AT HEEL"
- Assuming and staying in position on line
- Remaining quietly beside handler after delivery
- Return promptly when called
- Also: no creeping, no bird stealing

Obedience

- Heel around bird piles / flyer crates
- Heel away from obvious line distractions (bird pile, honor dog, etc.)
- Holding Blind Practice
- Heel to line and back to blind while other dogs run

Use of lead, simulate trial protocols

PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING

Natural skills: Physically fit, running, swimming, hunting.

Expected and Intended Outcomes

You must be very confident about what the dog will do
You must be prepared to react (plan / tools)

Success Ratio:

- 70% without help or correction
- 15% Testing
- 15% Certainty of correction

Note Keeping

- Inventory exposure to /status of fundamental skills
- Identify emerging problems
- Keeping balance: success/correction, land/water, marks/blinds, long/short, etc.
- Planning future training

Attitude / Confidence / Style Defined

Appearance of grace, even under pressure
Exuding Determination and high likelihood of success

Your Work Ethic: day after day, weather, planning, etc.

Consistent standards: obedience, steadiness, get in water, casting, head swinging, etc.

Establish good habits / avoid "bad baggage"

Selfish focus, as appropriate (your time is your time)

Birds: Pheasants and Ducks

Physical Conditioning: dedicated exercise time, without the mental stress of training

House time, hunting, joining-up

Goals: Be CLEAR; start with the end in mind, write it down, visualize it.....

If correction is needed on any aspect of a set-up, simplify the rest of the set-up. Avoid "piling-on" corrections for disparate faults.

3 peat of the same concept is fundamental to training (vs. testing).

TRAINING AND HANDLING APHORISMS / MINDSETS

- Believe what you see and react appropriately
- Walk in your dogs shoes - be empathetic
- Am I doing everything I can, right now, to help my dog succeed (or am I concerned with my own vanity)?
- Don't panic; this may be when your dog needs you the most
- Start your journey with the end in mind
- Our dogs will never be any better than we are (our shortcomings hold them back)
- Train a fast dog slowly and a slow dog fast (you set the tempo)
- * Watch for and respect behavior inflections
- * Education must precede expectation
- * Pressure: Appropriate level to change behavior (not more / not less)
- * Punctuate your commands!
- * Nervous? Abandon your fears, for your dog's sake!

TRAINING SEQUENCES

Time of year: Water, Wind, Cover, Temperature, Next Event Date

Repetition of Concept Singles Multiples Retired / Complexity Singles (again)

Success / Attitude (Daily Schedule)

Keeping Pictures Clear and Pure

Avoid Conflicts among marking concepts / but strive for overall balance

Blinds: isolate the component(s) of complexity and run multiple blinds on one component theme at a time

Pre / Post Event: Avoid obvious situational contrasts

Singles for concentration / x - head swinging

- Reverse back - sliding
- Trial / Training Contrast Recognition (identifiable by dog)

Expected / Intended Outcomes and Success Ratios

Specific Trial Location Planning

- Cover / Terrain
- Type of Water
- Birds
- Size of Event

GENERAL PROBLEMS / ISSUES

Introducing New Material

When to move on

Blocked? - Go around?

Escape Behavior

- Bolting, Shutdown, Cop-out

Handler Focus / Be Bold!

Highness: Trial vs. Training Behavior

Noisy

Moving on in difficulty (Hunt Test / Field Trial)

- Your Attitude
- Preparing Your Dog

Helping vs. Handle vs. Call back vs. Hunt it out

Repeating?

Attitude / Confidence / Style

Handling Strategies, Trial vs. Training

***SLOPPY TRAINERS / HANDLERS**

- White jacket not buttoned up
- No white jacket
- Hands in pockets (use your hands to communicate)
- Whistle dangling in dog's face (keep it in your mouth)
- Transmitter / Stick in pocket, not ready
- Staggered stance (not square)
- Babble at dog vs. crisp punctuated commands
- Plan / tools not set / communicated to helpers

GOOD HANDLING JACKETS

- Reach to and stay at the wrist
- Very white / Flat white (not shinny)
- Stay trim to body / arms, not harboring shadows
- Don't become transparent when wet
- Don't Hang in dog's face

PUPPIES

Long Line (rope) useful on return (to control)

Food Training

- Obstacle training - recalls with rope, then food trust

Starting doubles (idea of going again) with hand thrown marks

Walking Marks: Let them watch gunner move

- Attention/ concentration (no struggle, watch fall to ground)
- Awareness that next one is in a new place
- White chairs in foreground
- Retrieving toys (vs. bumpers / birds)
- Multiple guns / helper calls immediate attention to next throw

Hand thrown concepts in yard

- Secondary selection
- Wipe-outs
- Hip-pockets, etc.

* **"Show and Tell"**

- Using an older dog to demonstrate first (obstacles, water entry, etc.)

LEARNING TO HANDLE

(WHISTLE AND CASTING SKILLS / CONTROL)

Handling is a remote communication system

- Obvious use: Blind Retrieves
- Also, to re-connect with line and area of fall on marks

Fundamentals: Line / Go / Stop / Cast / Return

Teach Fundamentals independently; assemble them on the Double T

Prerequisites: obedience, force fetch, collar conditioning

Go / Line: Force fetch extensions: Pyramid, ladder, walking fetch, fetch / no fetch, directional fetch, stick remote pressure, collar fetch, and force to pile

Remote Stop (overlay whistle): Obedience with collar reinforcement, steady drills in yard, remote sits on recall with rope, sits on route to mark with rope, sit to pile with rope and collar

Remote Casting / Three Hand Piles with Rope: left and right backs, return (overlay whistle) and casting drills. Hand throw 2 marks, send, stop, cast to other.

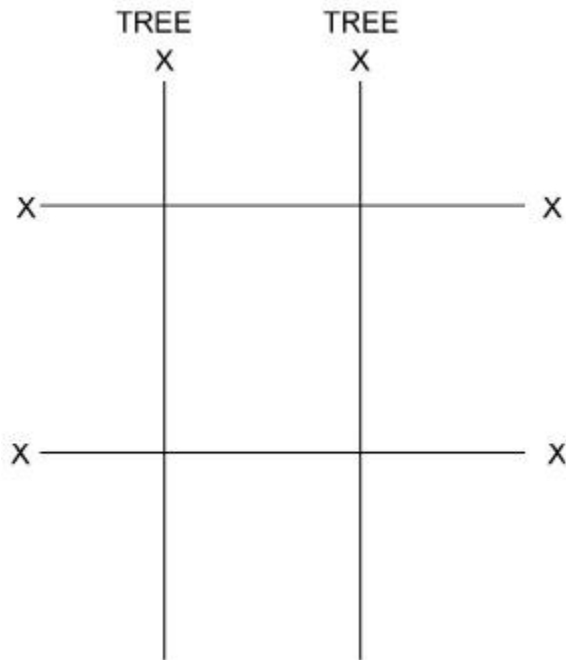
Mini-T: assemble go, stop, casting and return (less than 50 yards, more rope than "e" collar)

Emerging from the yard/basics

- Go to Double-T or Swim-by (depends on weather)

DOUBLE "T"

- Double "T" Layout
- Discuss objectives
- Confront classic faults (i.e. bugging, no-go, popping, hunty attitude, flaring, slow sits)



Non-Conventional:

- two center lines
- tree as target
- don't stop and then cast where dog was going
- reverse order and run sideways

- Teach one center line (progressively move back)
 - Teach other center line and alternate (Lining and Force)
 - Teach long overs (Remote Casting)
 - Send, whistle stop and cast to long overs
 - Put in short overs, without teaching piles (dog learns to generalize a behavior)
- Run by's (bumper in mouth) on return. Casting around without popping (discipline casting)

Reinforce "back", sit, here when sloppy / distracted

Emerging from Double "T"

- Go to Swim-by (weather permitting)
- Go to Transitions to Cold Blinds

SWIM - BY

Ideal and compromise (cove, with anchored bumpers) water designs

Objectives

- Apply collar reinforcement to "go", "stop", "cast" and "here" in water
- Acclimate to sit/ tread water
- Initiate get-in / stay-in water behavior
- Build a skill for life long water discipline reminders

Steps (with rope on)

- Teach, then collar reinforce to pile across water
- Teach sit / water tread with rope: progressively longer waits (bumper in hand, throw left/right > cast, then recall to opposite end of channel)
- Establish piles as targets at ends of channel
- Teach / coax initially to stay in channel; walking with cast, rope to regain attention
- Meet at end/ pile, take bumper, sit on shore, throw toward other end of channel, coax to cast in/over....
- Progress to casting over with bumper in mouth
- Once dog has basic idea to go to pile across, sit/tread, cast (including bumper in mouth): apply nick for failure to maintain cast (i.e. dog looks at you for info after the cast: say "over" -nick- "over")
- Keep arm down, extend arm only when the dog "pops" (looks back to you)

Future - uses

- Adjust water attitude when sloppy
- Correct return line
- Fight heavy cross-wind
- Out to sea and "dog-leg" blinds
- ❖ On return re-entries, stop and over cast out to sea (simulates cast off point, etc.)

Emerging from Swim by

- Go to cheating singles (you are now able to handle into and while in the water)

TRANSITIONS FROM DOUBLE "T" TO COLD BLINDS

Dog knows the rudiments of Go / Stop / Cast / Return with collar reinforcements.

In "Transitions" we take these skills to new physical locations and add distractions, to generalize the behaviors. Still a lot of "show and tell".

Pattern Blinds:

- Three 100-200 yard lines to recognizable yet new destinations. Start close, show pile, move back.

Pattern Blind with Diversions:

- New location / single pile
- Identify the pile from line
- Run / Handle to pile
- Add Bird Boy to side, run to pile
- Throw / Pick up mark, run to pile
- Throw mark, leave it, run to pile, pick up mark.

Take the above Pattern Blind Drills to 3-5 new locations, until smooth. Generalized behavior emerges.

Go to early cold blinds

CHEATING (SINGLES)

Puppies:

- Recalls over obstacles (with rope): logs, boats, etc
- Shift line to angle jumps
- ❖ Highly important to be a competent swimmer first (boat marks)

Pre-force/Manual Teaching (with rope)

- Need high retrieve drive to rebound from "no-here", when cheating
- Sensitivity to high success ratio
- Example: 3 correct, move back - fail? Move up for success again

White bumpers thrown progressively down channel

Handler moves line back

- Failure - "NO - HERE"
- Simply / move-up / re-throw to re-establish successful contrast (shows comparison)

Cheating Singles, rarely as memory bird

Complexity:

- Re-entry
- Angle entry
- Angle exit

Repeating: Yes, if line correction was effective on first try

Post swim-by dogs

Recall vs. Handle - want to expose to both. Applying handling skills with clear visual objective, as well as not condone poor initial lines
(How to best reconnect with intended destination?)

General rule on Recall vs. Handle

- Recall for poor initial line
- Handle for line deterioration (fading to shore)

Emerging from Cheating Singles

- Go to channel blinds (show and tell first)

STEADY

Steady: Means NO movement

Establish good marking habits

- Don't let young dogs / pups break for birds before the bird settles on the ground / water. (start with very short distances, so they will go)
- Don't let them struggle wildly while birds are thrown
- Do whatever you need to do to calmly restrain them until bird settles
- If they break or struggle, Re-throw until they focus
- ❖ Handler thrown diversions done with handler stepping out front to control
- ❖ Age to insist on formal steadiness: depends on dog's attitude

Poor Steadiness usually results from:

- Sloppy standards
- Thinking they'll get every bird seen thrown

Steadiness Tools:

- Line-mat, defines where to sit / stay
- Slip cord, until formally steady
- Stick or E Collar, which ever makes your dog less "jumpy"

Steadiness Drills

- Start in yard with remote sits, while you walk around / randomly tossing bumpers (no retrieving)
- Practice mechanics of putting hand in, calling numbers before sending to a single white bumper
- Attention drills
- Multiple dogs on line honor many short exciting marks, until well behaved
- Honor other dog before (cold honor) and after your turn
- ❖ Remote sits, while other dogs do complete marking set ups

Steadiness Corrections

- "Sit" - nick - "sit" or "sit" - stick - "sit" (not "here": as the infraction was the motion, your correction should reinforce "sit")
- ❖ After controlled break/steadiness: "Sit", then handler steps up (big corrections if more improvement)
- After controlled break / creep / head swing, almost always re-throw until your standard is satisfied
- ❖ Fundamental: No bird unless no movement (restraint, not just correction)

Degrees of difficulty to work into steadiness drills

- Gun shots / bird calls
- Other dog jealousy (Honoring)
- Short marks
- Splash in water
- Flyers
- Walk-ups

MARKING PRINCIPLES

Accurate marking is of primary importance!

A retriever should recognize the depth of the "area of the fall", stay in it, then quickly and systematically "hunt it out"

Don't expect a dog to mark what the dog did not see.

- Focus vs. struggle / head swing
- Attention Drills
- Any Doubt? - Re-Throw!!

Run to bird (vs. Gun)

Targets (base of tree, rocks, mounds, etc.)

- Slots (rows of trees, etc.)
- Moving guns while dog runs to bird
"Y" drill (angle back vs. flat throws)
Long winger throws
Throws arching over visible features

Marks that require gun dependence (shorter birds, hip pockets, etc.)

- Cues and gun help

Independence

- Ability to re-claim line vs. "go straight"
- Allowing hunts, sometimes behind the gun

Water momentum vs. technical lines

- Birds in water, with a splash, or way out
- Long, square entries / Re-entries

Retired Guns

- Intro: singles, "go bird" use umbrella or camo net

Hunt Area: tighten / staying in / perseverance

- Dirt clod drill
- Allow dogs to hunt (intervene only for safety, switching, going to old fall, totally lost)
- ❖ Help only to return to fall area, encourage to resume area hunt
- ❖ No E-collar in/around the fall area, must be a relaxed environment

MARKING/ GAME FINDING ABILITIES

Experience / Success

Goal in mind / discipline to maintain the idea

Use of eyes, orientation skill

Use of nose, hunting skill

Clear destination: visibility (bird / gun), attention, steady, quiet (otherwise re-throw)

Emphasis: attention: (no noise, re-throws, until quiet)

Clean of other influences (factors)

Balance of experiences

Progression on marks:

- Stand-up/out Singles (visible gunner)
- Stand-up/out Multiples
- Retired singles (don't send until thrower is concealed)
- Retired multiples

Add factors: wind, cover, terrain, fatigue, water, diversions, distances (long / short / mid-distance)

Selection issues

Recovery Skills

- Re-orientation after hunt
- Re-claiming line after negotiating obstacles / factor

Gun dependence / orientation

Go at bird confidence (long throws away from gun)

Line hold / re-claim

Depth perception

Retired guns are the "purest" marks: line and depth

MODEL MARKING SET UP

Awareness of wind and all other factors / hazards (weather radio/compass)

Trial vs. training season

- One-two weeks before event, keep in balance (long vs. short, etc.)
- Normal training should accentuate concepts until solid (perhaps out of balance)

Expected / Intended outcomes

Plan, tools available and communicated to helpers (radio, extra bird, etc.)

Discuss options on how to run a set up (i.e. single / multiple / pickup order, etc.)

Your agenda - head swinging, line manners, multiple mechanics, specific concept?

Side to watch / send from options

Variety:

- Attention drill
- Retired guns, teaching (umbrella techniques, holding blinds, natural hiding)
- Short diversions - anti-head swinging (delay, bulldog, deny, wipe-out)
- Friendly orders, or driving past
- ❖ Long single first, promotes long bird watching
- ❖ Walk ups
- ❖ Singles: confidence, anti head swinging
- ❖ Walk aways/"organized confusion"

Help / Correction Options

Behind Gun?

MULTIPLE MARKS

Anticipation / habit of going again and again, established at an early age

Mechanics of Multiples (practice for handler and dog)

- Setting - up, watching, move from bird to bird, Return / Delivery, Lining-up, Footwork, Hands, Voice, Bird Handling (you and the dog)
- ❖ Importance of square stance

Easing Into Multiples: Bird in mouth, diversions off line.

Momentum multiples vs. technical / stressful setups

- Just Go Get 3 or 4 birds vs.
- Key Concept Doubles vs.
- Line Critical Singles

Early Teaching of Multiple Marks

Pre-requisites

- Steady enough to focus on marks (slip cord)
- Reasonable return / delivery
- You must have control over situation
 - ❑ Request help as needed
 - ❑ Physical barriers (fence / tree) to prevent switch / return to old fall
 - ❑ Use Factors (wind, terrain) to help lead dog to memory bird
 - ❖ Short wide spread set ups

HELPER SKILLS

Communication

- Radios
- Hand Signals (stand, throw, motion, Hey-Hey, retire, etc.)
- Always acknowledge instructions / plan as understood before dog runs

Help Dog Connect / Reconnect with destination: Is dog looking? / attention drill / when to move / stand with dog at line.

Uses of the umbrella / camo net on retired guns

Reading dog's intent in route

- Watch eyes / momentum (read, report, react)
- In front of gun?
- Getting in water?
- Looking for short bird vs lead out?
- Release from hunt to switch/ locale orientation while out of sight/ dirt-clod / stay-in-area drills
- ❖ Avoid eye contact with pups (look at bird, look away to avoid cheat on return)

Intervention by helper (agree with handler in advance)

- Re-attract to hunt area
- Bird in air, then holler / shoot
- Body influences, arm motion, face bird, leaning, etc
- Blow whistle - safety /hearing / out of control
- ❖ Keep sun on white shirt, max visibility
- ❖ Encouraging hunt, "Good dog" ...

Learning to shoot flyers

- Start with dead birds and shot gun (simulates flyer, too)

Preparedness

- Hazard Alert
- Check Handler Visibility
- Extra Birds – ready to throw
- Whistle
- Gun
- Umbrella / camo net
- ❖ High visibility bumper/white tape streamers

Equipment List:

- ❖ Radio
- ❖ Birds
- ❖ Umbrella
- ❖ Pistol Pack (pistol, blanks, ear protection, bird call, whistle, marking tape, etc.)
- ❖ Chair
- ❖ White Shirt

❖ REMEDIAL HANDLING/WHISTLE SITS

Sharpen the skill in yard first

Do they understand Whistle means sit, Quickly?

Teach with rope, then overlay E collar

- Recalls / sit (rope around remote post)
- Sit in route to thrown bumpers
- Sit in route to pile

Remote sit drills

Stop to Pile drills: line type and over type

Obedience: lead + collar, then overlay E collar

Run with dog + snap sit

Bird-boy blinds, discuss

Don't permit auto-casting

Escape type collar correction

"Cemetery" blinds: opportunities to blow lots of whistles

Split-back pile (lining or remote casting)

Sloppy sits that develop after solid basics

Don't compromise standards!

❖ CONTROL AT LONG DISTANCE/CASTING

Walk behind blinds

Long – distance wagon wheel casting

Remote – handler / whistle blower

Use of swim / run-by at distance

Stop and cast over/in's on return

Emergency (against factors) blinds

Handle “all over the field” procedure (time-out from disobedience)

No auto-casting

Remote Cast blinds

Immediate whistle info for cast refusal

Walking base-ball

Use “Here” after/in place of toot-toot on attrition/recalls

Overlay toot-toot with nick, then “Here”

Allow dog to get deep of blind, practice recall whistle

Direction changes:

❖ “dog – leg” blinds

❖ Split back pile drill (As lining or remote casting)

ADVANCED MARKING

Retired Guns

The Difficulties are:

- Depth Perception
- Attraction / Repulsion of Diversions

Cheating Elements on Retired Guns

- Almost Never as memory birds
As singles: Good Drill work

Doing the Impossible Test (at the trial):

- If conventional rules aren't working, Try an alternative
- ❖ Occasionally try odd pick-up orders (primary selection, short bird last, etc.)

Water Marks:

- Resist Temptations to always setting-up technical lines
- Need a regular dose of successful (go - get - um) water marks

FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFICULT TESTS

Cycle through these Each Season / Each Year

- Short (retired) guns / “secondary selection” issues
- Long (retired) guns
- Long Swims / Stay in
- Across points and Re-entries (including scented areas on blinds)
- “Poison” Birds
- Long Blinds / Control
- ❖ Demanding Water Entries

CLASSIC CONCEPTS / CONFIGURATIONS

(READ JIM SPENCER'S BOOK "RETRIEVER TRAINING TESTS")

- Hip Pocket
- Behind Chair
- Converging
- In-Lines
- Over and Under
- Momma – Poppa
- Indent

CORE COMPLEXITIES

As your dog masters the fundamental tests, begin adding these complexities to the set-ups:

- Distance (Drive / Fatigue and Depth Perception)
- Diversions, tight or remote
- "Tightness" (or lack of): Lines and Falls
- Sloping Terrain
- Cross-Wind
- Rough Cover / Long Birds (tough going / drag back scent)
- Shorter Cover / Check Down Birds (easy to over run on "fast" surface)
- Retired Guns (Depth Perception)
- Live Bird Attraction

BIRD PLACEMENT IN TRAINING

GENERAL

Water: In the Water, with a splash, or Well up and out
Consider: Hard to get to, Easy to find
Easy to get to, Hard to find
Avoid conflicting messages from bird to bird
Momentum: Long / Square water entries: Friendly water work

MARKS

Retired guns: Avoid cheating memory birds situations (without the gun exposed, you can't clearly read dog's intent to cheat vs. having mis-marked line to bird)
River Marks with weighted bumpers (simulates cross-wind)

BLINDS

Avoid tapering away shoreline as destination (always results in giving in to shore)

- Know exact location; avoid "HUNT IT UP" ending
- ❖ Leave room deep of blind, allow dog to get deep, to practice come-in whistles

REPEATING

Natural behavior for a dog = back-trailing, scent orientation (it's hard for people to appreciate this - we have poor noses)

A lot of field testing is based on tight, but distinct, line recognition that is sight oriented.

Much of our training requires that sight orientation skills over-ride scenting instincts.

Repeating lines to the same destination reinforces the "wrong" navigation skills.

Better to repeat the concept (not the spot) under "cold" scenting circumstances.

Yet, in a measure much less frequent than people seem to think, repeating the same retrieve may be beneficial.

Don't repeat marks unless:

- Clear potential for visual orientation (correct line / destination choice is easily distinguished)
- On initial (failed) attempt, there was successful intervention and re-orientation was achieved (clean handle, for example)

❖ LONG MARKS

Success ratio / Expected and Intended outcomes

Distance as the only factor

Singles

Flyers

Easy to find

Un-retired first

Physical Features (down hill vs. up hill)

Attention to Hot/Cold Temperatures

Visibility / Background / Bird (Streamer tape)

In-route throws

Helper ready and reading dog's momentum

Boat Marks, non-cheaty

Short cover first

Help vs. Handle, discuss

More advanced

High cover / Terrain

Old / drag-back scent

Retired Guns

Foreground diversions

Multiple Marks

❖ 3peat marking drills

❖ HEAD SWINGING

Singles off multiple gun stations

- First and last set up of day
- Day before trial
- All (shorter) guns standing, don't always tell gunners you are going to do singles
- ❖ Long single first

When doing tough multiples

- Accentuate importance to watch birds to the ground
 - Double shots (at arc)/ bird calls / Hey-Hey
 - Stick / Correct and Re-throw for headswing, noise, creeping
 - Try uncovering next gun only when his turn to throw
 - If blatant headswing, drop back to singles

Set ups for correction

- False flyer stations
- Shoot, count to 3, then throw

Insist on fundamentals

- Don't honor others multiples
- Cover up long guns if not throwing them first
- Don't allow swing until you move
 - Careful attention to your footwork and other cues

Precision marking drills

"Y" drill
Through tree lines
Cheating singles
Long throws away from gun
Wingers/dummy launcher/Flyers
Walk away singles

BLIND RETRIEVE PRINCIPLES

Retrievers should respond quickly and eagerly to whistles and directions, meaning:

- Take the original line given
- Continue on that line
- Stop when commanded
- Take a new direction as given
- Continue on that line until bird is found

Blind retrieves should take advantage of natural distractions such as:

- Islands
- Points of land
- Sand bars
- Ditches
- Hedges
- Bushes
- Adjacent heavy cover
- Rolling terrain

EARLY BLINDS

- Don't fiddle about precise lines - "kick-em -off"
Walk behind dog, as he runs, keeping the dog near to you. When you blow sit whistle, he will find you close by (like the distance from you when learning basics)
- Rope is a good idea
- Multiple planted blinds with emergency options
- Mix side sends and remote casts
- Chairs, trees in foreground to distinguish lines
- Natural targets, like on Double T (trees, etc.)
- Avoid strong factors (Wind, Terrain, Cover)
- ❖ Avoid tight lines and cheating obstacles
- ❖ 3peat to teach themes and concepts

WATER

- Channels - Long axis of swim- by pond is a good place to start
- Floating, anchored bumpers in swimming water
- Cheating singles type pictures, but less cheaty.

Lining Skills, Progression

- Visible bumper/pile
- Known marker (trees, rocks, etc.)
- Choice of markers
- Relativity to markers (i.e. line between, chairs, tree, etc.)
- General acceptance of wherever you point/line them they will go!!!!

ADVANCED BLINDS

Effective Casting (Trial vs. Training)

- Anticipation / Planned approaches to and exits from Hazards
 - Maintain standards in training (literal casts)
 - Maintain survival at the trial (momentum casts) and if the first cast didn't work get more suggestive / emphatic (but keep your cool)

Rarely run a single complex water blind in training (too pass / fail, non-instructive)

Components / Tune-Up (Series) Approach

Cold Drills, Ending in Successful Understanding

Examples for drills:

- Entries
- Re-Entries
- Cast into Water
- Stay-Ins
- Up & Outs
- Poison Birds
- Chair Drills
- Past / Over / Off Points
- Obstacles

Complexity of Blinds

- Diversions, poison birds
- Tight Lines/ Multiples Blinds
- Factors: Wind, Terrain, Cover, Distance, etc.
- Water entries

Typical Problems on Blinds

- Lack of solid basics
- Control at Distance
- Hunty Attitude
- Bugging

MODEL BLIND SET UP

Awareness of wind and all other factors / hazards (weather radio/compass)

Expected / Intended outcomes

Strategies / Remedies Planned

Come to Line

- Line - up: side to send from, Push / Pull, use of Hands / Feet
- ❖ Importance of square stance

Initial Line

- Plan Approach to/exit from Hazards

Handle Away from Hazards and Into Visibility

❖ Awareness of side dog turns to on whistle, relative to hazards

Momentum Preservation

- Allow to fight factors, even if off line. Re-orientation cast should be easy
 - "Reading the Momentum Gauge": Whistles and Corrections and Attrition run it down
 - Don't let young dogs get into "Deep Holes": down wind, down hill, along shoreline
- Prevent trouble: Quick intervention, don't hope for dog to discover his error and re-gain his line

End Hazards

- Come-in Whistle, Downwind Drift tendency

Attitude: blinds are mostly trained behavior and can suffer from inappropriately high corrections ratio. Caution!

Attitude: Components of blinds, Tune - up approach, Non- conflicting, Successful outcomes

Solve acute problems (tune-up approach) before attempting more advanced skills: (popping, whistle stops, etc. must be ironed-out first.)

HANDLING STRATEGIES

GENERAL

Consider Where You Don't Want The Dog to Go

- How Can You Influence to Go Where You Want:
 - Side of Send, Lining, Voice, Order of Pick-up
- What Have Other Dogs Done? Should You Expect a Different Result?
 - Consider Alternative Tactics!!!!
- Wind Awareness: Influence on Line; Scent Cones
 - * Awareness of all factors / hazards
 - * Awareness of dog / handler visibility
- Plan Side to Watch / Send from on Each Bird
- Plan Side of line mat to send from on Each Bird; Paths?
- Paths from prior dog work?
- Arrive in time to watch test dog and to view line conditions shortly before you run
- Never give up! Earn every bird, every call back and every ribbon!
- Don't be cynical. Concentrate on how to do the test, not on what's "wrong" with it!

BLINDS

Position Dog for next Likely Cast

- Handle Into Visibility and away from trouble

Handle Away from Adjacent Hazards

- Consider Dog's Turning Tendency on Sit Whistle

Handler Standing in Sunlight (facing to keep shadows off arm signals)

Approach the Line on a Path Suggesting the Initial Line to the blind

If Your First Cast Isn't Working, Stop!!! Slow Down!!! Try an Alternative

Communicate With: Voice and Whistle Modulation and Casting Tempo

Handle Right to the Bird; Stay Focused at End

Come-in Whistle; Tendency to Fade Down-wind.

MARKS

Approach the Line on a path for the dog to View Key Bird

Watch Dog's Head as Marks Are Thrown

- You Only Need to Watch the Fall of the Flyer

Shadow Awareness When You Signal

Preparatory and sending voice: drive vs. relax?

LIFELONG MAINTENANCE / COMMUNICATION DRILLS

Wagon Wheel Lining (with Guide Stick and Pull Tab)

- Slots / Row of Trees
- Occasional Long Retrieve, for drive attitude

Push - Pull Drill, Follow Inside Leg

Heeling Drills

- Control Leg nearest dog, "here" forward and "heel" backward
- Handler Move/ Dog Called into Position, 360 heeling
1/3/5 Step heeling, figure 8, etc.

Water Drills

- Line-In
- Cast-In
- Stay-In
- Point Drill
- Straight-in recalls

Tune-Up Drills (built on a theme: entry, cross points, etc.)

Marking Drills

- Attention
- Dirt Clod
- Moving Guns (walking guns and organized confusion)
- Slot to Bird
- "Y" drill (flat vs. angle back throws)

Casting Drills

- Walking Baseball (casting off diversions)
- Wagon Wheel: straight back becomes "no-hands"
Split back pile, for direction change reminder

"Chinese" Set-ups

- Marks (simple) combined with blinds, run in "CRAZY" orders

Steadiness: walk around, tempting bumper throws while on remote sit

HUNTING TEST PREPARATION (vs. FIELD TRIALS)

Handler Must Carry Shotgun and May Point at Birds

Walk-Ups and marks thrown spontaneously (no showing of guns to dogs)

Remote Sends (Marks & Blinds) / handler in blind, dog outside

Remote Honor

Hidden Throwers

Short / Tight Marks

Winger Throws, Long and across hazards

Steadiness!

Bird-Calls / Shots at Line and behind line

In Route / Return Diversions (Bull-Dog)

Send from Boat

Hunting Attire/ Handlers and Helpers (comply with Rule but remember dog must see you)

Sit (vs. stand) next to dog

Decoy spreads: water and land

Diversion gunner (mid-field) shoots at distant thrown bird

Unusual throws

- ❖ In toward line
- ❖ Short and long throws off same side on same gun (train on Y drill)
- ❖ Simultaneously thrown marks
- ❖ Overhead/from behind the line

Defensive Handling Strategy

- ❖ Avoid double handles
- ❖ Avoid big hunts/careful about switches (tight areas)

Unusual birds: Chuckars, pigeons, etc

JUNIOR TO SENIOR TRANSITION

Steady (should have been steady before attempting Junior, despite allowance for restraint, can't use lead coming to, at, or leaving line)

Package of skills

- Calm in blind
- Heel to line
- No creeping
- No bird stealing
- Walk-up marks
- Honoring
- ❖ Solid delivery to hand

Multiple marks (Land and Water)

Basic Blinds (Land and Water)

SENIOR TO MASTER TRANSITION

Extra Steady / Honoring

Marking

More marking series (3 series and extra birds)

Triples / Quads

- Delayed marks
- Diversions marks / shots
- Marks and blinds integrated

Blinds

Diversions

Poison Birds (with mark retrieved later)

Scent

Tough Standards (Remember this is a foundation for the genetic pool)

TRANSITION TO FIELD TRIALS

The purpose of a retriever field trial is to determine the relative merits of retrievers in the field.

Can you accept a low success rate???? Brutal “call backs”, only one winner

Do you feel you could benefit from Watching more accomplished Dog and Handler Teams?

Test Distinctions?

- Distance
- Concepts, Exaggerated
- Straight Lines and No Cheating

Derby: Pin-Point Marking; Much more than natural abilities

Qualifying: Difficulty varies by trial, the very good dogs don't stay there long

Amateur: Pro-Trained Dogs and some poor handlers

Open: A Bare-Fisted Game: Sharp Dogs, Sharp Handling

❖ ATTITUDE - SOFT DOGS

Health?

Success Ratio

Friendly Orders

Flyers

Training Schedule Sensitivity

Hot/Cold Temperatures

Start/End Easy/Marks/Singles

Don't overdo it / train the dog, not for your gratification

Don't nag

Don't condone escape behavior – lagging, bugging, dog/handler eye contact
deadlocks, "bail-out" lines

Set up / corrections focused on single concepts

Avoid "catch 22" corrections

Building Hunting Skills:

Allowing to hunt

Seeding / scenting area / easy to find

Hunt-it-up practice (land and water)

Shooting preserve hunting, planted birds with high success rate

Balance: land vs. water, marks vs blinds, etc.

Reading and reacting to dog's attitude

❖ ATTITUDE – OVERLY EXCITED DOGS

Obedience (on a weekly basis)

Before trial / before last series

Public places

High Standards but: Time correction for maximum impression

Group Training

Don't run as test dog, where you can't correct!

Visit other stakes (air, heel on lead, back in kennel)

Dry Runs to Holding Blinds while other dogs work

Remote Sits / watching

Treats in holding blind (soft, chewey type)

Use lead / holding blind in training

Slow down

Don't chatter / single word commands

Don't nag, Correct! Note Opposition Nature/Reflex

Throw a few marks before trial / between series

High and consistent standards

No more than 2 consecutive trials / tests

Being a soldier from truck to line

FITTING TRAINING INTO AN AMATEUR'S BUSY SCHEDULE

Marks

- AM face west
- PM face east

Blinds: North / South lines (need forward / backward visibility)

April & October: blinds, singles and drills (limited time)

Drills under flood lights:

- Schools
- Shopping centers
- Traffic islands in parking lots = land tune-up drills

Paid Help vs. training partners

Planning:

- ❖ Schedule
 - ❖ What to work on
 - ❖ When to do it
- ❖ Equipment
- ❖ Communication with helpers/partners

Obedience:

- ❖ Always time for a 15 minute session
- ❖ Attend formal classes during winter to stay sharp

* **GROUNDS (What you need / How to use)**

List the grounds / water you need based upon fundamental skills and local event ground characteristics.

Inventory what you have, matching the characteristics to what you need.

Identify what you are missing and go find it.

Memorize N/S/E/W, to predict sun and wind conditions before you arrive on the grounds.

Plan where you need to be training according to learning phase and event schedule.

Finding water

- Topographic maps
- Dairy Farms

* BIRDS (Use, Storage....)

Don't let bird use become a contrast of training vs. trials

Bird familiarization:

- Hold / delivery
- Recognize shapes (in the air / on water)
- Drag-back trails
- Appealing distractions

Birds are the rewards / incentives that maintain attitude and bridge tough learning gaps.

Bird storage needs

- Freezer
- Drying Rack / Drying Box (away from files)
- ❖ Wish broom, remove fly eggs
- ❖ Fan to dry
- Feed sacks (fly proof, but not air tight)
- Flyer Box
- Bird Pen?

Cooler and Ice

With bumpers at water grate

* BIRDS, MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

Where to get them (Live and dead)

- Ask at / after trial / hunt test
- Tower shoots
- Game farms (yellow pages)
- Bring bird crate / bags with you

Birds can be used in many sessions by

- Drying wet birds before freezing
- Thawing birds the night before training
- Drying and re-freezing

Mixing fresh flyers with old / wet birds will quickly ruin the fresh birds

- Separate by the "eye test"

Freeze / store birds in bird bags in a quantity to supply a single gun station at typical training session (perhaps 6 / bag)...

- Thaw / carry only what you need

Use both Peasants and Ducks all year, but don't mix scents at the same station.

Don't get pheasants wet.

Learn to throw / shoot flyer by practicing with dead bird and aiming popper gun.... Good flyer simulation, too.

Rotate responsibility among training partners for getting flyers each week.

Discretion about public view / talk and humane handling are paramount!

*** JUDGING AND SPECTATING (Winning / Qualifying standards)**

To orient your journey, become familiar with the destination:

- Observe All Age / Master level work at events
- Attend a national (field trial, hunt test, breed specialty)
- Observe professional training, including skills you're about to work on (double T, swim-by, etc.)
- Apprentice judging assignments
- Distinguish between testing setups (where outcomes are less than certain and varied) and training set-ups (where outcomes should be deliberately predictable)

* HUNTING PREPARATION

Upland

- Dog bell on walks
- Bull dog sits / master sit to flush
- Hunt-em-up drills

Water Fowl

- Remote stationing / steady perch
- Long sits / down, remote
- Big decoy spreads (push through)
- Camo vest acclimation
- Lie down / cover - up with tarp / blanket
- Bird Calls, up close
- Shots overhead

Game bird familiarity

Keep a few "usual" birds in freezer, show and tell before hunting

- Grouse
- Woodcock
- Dove
- Teal, etc.

RETRIEVER TRAINING BOOK / sample pages

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Events and Personal Schedule (weekend map)
- Equipment Needs
- Equipment Inventory / values
- Trial Grounds Detail
- Training Grounds Detail / Owner Contacts
- Bird Boy Contacts
- Bird Sources
- Helper set-up / Clean-up checklist
- State dog / training / hunting laws
- Licenses / Permits (dogs, rabies, hunting, training areas)
- Dog Details:
 - Pedigree, photos, negatives (reprints in case dog is lost)
 - Registration info: Entry forms / post cards, etc.
- Pre-trial, training, travel checklists
- Veterinarian Contacts, Hospital Emergency Location / Contact

- Training Notes
 - Strengths / weak areas (based on annual re-cap, etc.)
 - Maintenance work / drills
 - Balance
 - Success / Correction Ratio
 - Future Training Plans

- Rule Books
- Membership Lists
- Trial Premiums, up-coming events

- Various Checklists
 - Pre-Trial Set-up Designs
 - Balance in Training Designs
 - Fundamentally Difficult Tests
 - Classic Concepts / Configurations
 - Core Complexities
 - Hunt Test Preparations
 - Hunting Preparations
 - Hunting Equipment

RETRIEVER TRAINING BOOK / sample pages (cont...)

* EVENING TRAINING TIMES (starting at 6:30pm)

Month	Hours of Training Time	Sunset (Philadelphia, PA)	Comments	
April	1 hour	7:35	Trial season	Build-up water skills Balance concepts
May	1 hour 40 minutes	8:10	Trial season	
June	2 hours	8:30	Trial season	
July	2 hours	8:30	Concept Emphasis	
August	1 hour 30 minutes	8:00	Concept Emphasis	
September	40 minutes	7:10	Trial season	Maintain water skills Balance concepts
October	0	6:20	Trial season	

Realistic Budget of time

- # Of set-ups
- Land vs. water
- Marks vs. blinds
- Critical maintenance items
- Travel time
- Flyers / bird inventory
- Water maintenance w/o light (Shorelines, up and outs, (re)-entries, cross-wind)
- Long bird maintenance w/o light

Clock changes first Sunday in April and last Sunday in October

RETRIEVER TRAINING BOOK / sample pages (cont...)

BALANCE IN TRAINING DESIGNS

Water

- Out to sea vs. shoreline
- Stay in vs. up and outs and long entries
- Fun vs. Technical

General

- Long vs. check down (super long and very short)
- Tight vs. wide open
- Singles vs. multiple
- Run / Swim at bird vs. Gun Dependence
- Blinds vs. Marks
- Success Ratios

RETRIEVER TRAINING BOOK / sample pages (cont...)

PRE-TRIAL SET-UP DESIGNS

Singles with multiple guns out

Designs that are clear

No out of control or multi-correction / infraction outcomes

Polemic balance, i.e. short and long

Mix up concepts vs. repetition

Use of flyer that enhances concentration

Long single (past shorter guns B then do short bird B flyer suction beyond)

Look past and drive by short false flyer

Match cover, terrain to anticipated trial settings

Include blinds, but outside of concept marks

Long, cross-winds / terrain

Simple poison bird, for control

Attention to basic obedience and line manners

Use lead to and in holding blind

Pheasants?

Extra care about potential injury

Feet

Falling down (rough terrain)

Eyes (high tough cover)

Over-exertion

Avoid resentment reactions

Nagging line-up - bugging

Cold water

Back-burn-back (promote over-runs)

Thorny cover

Large Trial?

❖ Shorter / Switching type land marks

❖ Walk-ups

❖ Technical entry water blind

❖ Tight poison birds

*** RETRIEVER TRAINING BOOK / sample pages (cont...)**

HUNTING EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

Shell Bag

Shells / shell box, gun kit
Licenses /stamps
Gloves > Shooting
Regulations
Compass
Gun Sling

Dog

Towels
Food / water
Dishes
E-Collar (Charged)
Crate Pad
ID Collar
Dog Snacks
Field water bottle

Guns / Cases

Thermos
Rain gear
Hats
Whistles
Camera / Film
Boot Dryers
Boots!!! Walking and in boat
Snacks
T.P.
Dry socks / shoes
Flash Light

Ducks

Calls
Face Net
Neoprene Gloves
Waders / hanger
Dog wet suit

Upland

Dog Bell
ID Collar
Cooler / ice

SEE TRAVEL CHECK LIST

BOOK ON TAPE!!!

Legal shooting times

Wind / weather radio (forecast)

First Aid Kit

LOCAL PROFESSIONAL TRAINERS

Ed Forry	302-378-1002
Rick Milheim	610-442-5005
Pat Nolan	301-824-2402
J.J. Sweezey and Kay Sweezey	410-778-2220

VIDEOS

Mike Lardy	
Total Retriever Training	
Total Retriever Marking	
<u>Collar Conditioning</u>	800-848-5963
Jim Kappes, Bruce Curtis, and Wayne Curtis	
Try contacting <u>Jacque Anderson</u>	<u>763-498-7562</u>
Rex Carr and Dave Rorem	<u>800-848-5963</u>
Jackie Mertens	
Sound Beginnings / Retriever Puppies	800-848-5963

TRAINING EQUIPMENT

Dogs A Field	800-863-3647
Dobbs Training Center	888-326-5527
Lion Country Supply	800-662-5202

BOOKS

- Walters, D.L and Ann
Training Retrievers to Handle
Interstate Book Manufactures, Olathe, KS 800-447-7367
- Dobbs, Jim and Phillis
Retriever Training
Tri- Tronics, Inc. Tucson, AZ 888-326-5527
- Spencer, James
Retriever Training Tests
Arco Publishing, New York, NY 800-777-7257
- Gwaltney, Dr. Jack
Training and Campaigning Retrievers
(new edition in 1999) 804-973-2620
- Hillmann, William
Training Retrievers for Field Trails
(new edition 1998) 850-893-5746 (Jeff Talley)
- Loveland, Cherylon and Rutherford, Clarice
Retriever Puppy Training
Alpine Publications 800-777-7257
- Quinn, Thomas
The Working Retrievers
EP Dutton, New York, NY
(new edition in 1998) 800-207-0799
- Alington, Charles / Susan Scales
Field Trials and Judging
Swan Hill Press Shrewsbury England
(original 1929, new edition 2000) airlifebooks.com

This manual may be printed from www.weebegoldens.com

PERIODICALS / SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

The Retriever Journal	800-447-7367
Retriever (Field Trial) News	414-481-2760
Retrievers OnLine Magazine	705-793-3556
Working Retrievers Central retrievers.com	http://www.working-
North American Hunting Retriever Association NAHRA News	540-286-0625
Hunting Retriever Magazine (United Kennel Club / H.R.C)	616-343-9020
Gun Dog Magazine	800-767-4868
AKC Afield Magazine	919-233-9767

LOCAL RETRIEVER CLUBS

Keystone Retriever Club (Hunt Tests Central PA) Rick Wise	717-252-2386
Swamp Dog Club (Field Trials, Hunt Test) Eastern, PA <u>Fran Gough</u>	<u>610-377-7530</u>
Waterland Retriever Club (Hunt Tests Eastern PA) Ann Hunter	215-646-3263
Del Bay Retriever Club (Field Trials, Hunt Tests) DE/MD <u>Lyn Yelton</u>	<u>410-885-2671</u>
<u>Westchester Retriever Club</u> <u>(Field Trials, Hunt Tests, Training Sessions)</u> <u>New York</u> Dennis McConnell	845-987-7937