

Using the dog's name

There are disadvantages as well as advantages to using a dog's name for recall. Think about the amount of times that you actually use the dog's name to punish him.

'Ben Get Off'

'Ben Leave it'

'Ben Get Out'

'Ben you naughty lad'

Ben has no longer got a positive association with his name. Quite understandably then when someone actually calls Ben to come to them, he doesn't know 100% whether he is in trouble or not therefore makes the choice to refuse in case of being told off.

Similarly the owner, who punishes the dog for a slow return, has effectively told the dog off for coming back completely the opposite of what the owner actually wanted in the first place. Is it any wonder that we see so many people yelling at the top of their voices in the park for their dogs when it may very well have been that person's own training that has led themselves to behave in that way.

An effective alternative to using the dog's name to call it back is to use a neutral command such as 'here' or 'come' which will create a whole new association to returning when called.

When using the dog's name to encourage him towards you, the way in which you stand is also very important. Body posture can be welcoming or overpowering to animals. Crouching with open arms is welcoming, whereas bending over and staring at the dog can be quite threatening. Remember to think about what message you want to give the dog when using its name in future and how you can adapt your own positioning to achieve the best result.