

## Teaching Stopped Contacts

Barb VanEseltine

### Preparation

1. Decide on criteria:
  - nose touch (nose bobbing)
  - front feet on ground; rear on equipment
  - sit on equipment
  - down on ground
  - other
2. Teach clicker response
  - click and treat
  - Build and keep response
3. Get a good “out” from tugging
  - Try just letting go (not suitable if dog goes into “party for one” mode)
  - Trade for a cookie
  - Trap tightly against leg
  - Last resort: nose flick
4. Teach a good release word
  - Can be the same as start-line release (“ok”, “break”)
  - Dog (handler) must understand that the release is as important as the stay

Criteria must be black & white for both dog and handler. Handler must be able to determine, from a distance, if the criteria has been met.

The release word means “get out of position”. It is easier for the dog to distinguish if it is one word; easier for the handler to use multiples (name of next obstacle, come, go,...)

### Overview: three primary aspects of the contact performance:

1. End position
2. Drive to position
3. Release

### Experienced dogs who don't know 2o2o

1. Teach position
  - Click to get it
  - Many reps
2. Hop on from side: part 1
  - Restrain and hop on
  - Click & treat
  - Cookie low and forward
3. Name it (“check”)
  - Use a new word
4. Hop on from side: part 2
  - Use “check” as dog is airborne going into position
  - Pay
  - Tug in position (stop game, sigh and “too bad” if dog comes off)
5. Restrained recall over equipment (help to 2o2o; use “check”; prevent error)
  - Use handler position to get the first couple of correct responses
  - Use verbal name cue
6. Handler moves
  - Quickly get handler out of picture
  - Big party when correct
  - Do not allow multiple mistakes

The click is a secondary reinforcement. It means that the behavior was good. It is not necessary to always feed after a click, if the clicker is kept charged. “Charge” the clicker by performing many click/treat pairings. This is a lifelong process.

## Teaching Stopped Contacts

Barb VanEseltine

### Maintaining 2o2o

1. Play Ready/Steady release game
2. Hop on from side and reinforce: food or tug in place
3. Praise, release to favorite obstacle, party
4. During training, create and practice a strategy (consequence) for failures: walk off; stop and glare; or some other action. Immediately repeating the contact is not viable in most venues, so probably isn't a good long term choice.
5. Practice releases "on the flat" – that is, without the contact obstacle. Proof them.
6. Do extreme proofing: run by, send from behind, throw food, toys, layer a mile,...

### Exhibiting 2o2o

1. Praise success (at least smile)
2. Follow established strategy for failures

It isn't fair to have a separate consequence for exhibiting versus training.

### Puppies/Beginners

1. Travel plank
2. Slanted plank
3. Lowered A-Frame or Dog-Walk