

DOG TRAINING GUIDE FOR THE PAC ELECTRONIC FENCE



Whereas some dogs will be capable of learning about the new containment régime without help, introduction or training, others, especially young or nervous dogs, will not. By far the most humane and effective way of implementing the system, therefore, would be to spend a short time training your dog. Your efforts at an early stage will not be arduous, but should pay handsome dividends in the long run.

Such training endeavours will allay most fears of this mystical, new 'presence' ... and, in addition, it should certainly deter swiftly moving dogs from making a run at it; since, no matter how effective and rapid the system might be, the momentum of a fast, sprinting dog towards an open gateway will not enable him to change his mind as he hurtles across the invisible boundary. And remember, once through the zone, the system works like a double-edged sword - he will not be able to get back in! Furthermore, if the dog realises that it is possible to escape by running at it, he might try it again. Early training should minimise this risk.

Dogs will respond to this new containment system at different rates, depending on age, breed, quality and frequency of training; and previous history of wanderlust. Also, since they will not understand complex commands, during this training period, only use short phrases or words when showing what is expected of them: use words like - 'No', 'Stay', 'Come' and 'Good Boy'.

The effectiveness and success of the PAC system is a balance between the deterrent that the system imparts to the would-be transgressor - and the need, for whatever reason, to get out. If your dog has an overwhelming desire to cross the boundary, to chase the sheep in the next field; to get at that pesky, neighbouring cat; or to chase that passing horseman; then if such temptations are blatantly and continuously presented to him, there could be an occasion, in a moment of weakness, when he will make it. 'Weaknesses' include such events as loss of collar, a break in the loop and battery (or power) failure. Since it will not normally be possible to remove the presented temptations (like - the neighbour's cat), you will need to consider using methods to de-sensitise your dog either by conventional training methods (not discussed here) or even by using PAC's Remote Trainer. By turning him off sheep, for example, his burning desire to get to them will be significantly reduced.

Formal training sessions should be held 2 to 3 times a day for 10 to 15 minutes per session. In multi-dog situations, train just one dog at a time in a session. This training should be enjoyable for both the dog and for you, with lots of play and praise. Making it all appear a bit of fun and games should speed the whole learning process. Give your dog ample time to understand the new containment régime; even the smartest dog may take a little longer.

PRELIMINARIES (before formal training)

MARKING THE BOUNDARY - to make it obvious
As a temporary, visual aid to the recognition of the new boundary, it helps to use plastic tape (similar to that used by police at scenes of crime) strung between small wooden sticks (or stakes), or even a line of small, makeshift flags. The line of tape or flags should be positioned to be just inside the boundary zone. This is especially important if the area that is to be marked off is not necessarily the complete area available - for example - where you wish to keep the dog from a children's play area, swimming pool, or flower bed. Clearly, on a large garden or estate, a full demarcation system could be regarded as excessive, but it would certainly help in small stretches where, hitherto, the dog has found easy exit points - like a hole in the fence or the hedge. It would help, too, to run the tape across the surface (i.e. at ground level) of your drive or entrance, inside the gateway. Remember, this is only a temporary measure, until you are confident that your dog has understood the newly enforced bounds.

FITTING THE COLLAR

Let your dog wear the collar around the house for a couple of days, loosely fitted, so he gets used to his new-fangled collar. During this period make sure the transmitter (Control Unit) is unpowered. This preparation helps to ensure that the dog has no idea that the collar has anything to do with his containment. If he does associate the collar with the system, it is possible that he will realise that he only needs to heed the boundary when he is wearing the collar.

For formal training, the collar should be fitted to the narrowest part of the dog's neck. The box on the collar should be at the front of his neck and facing forward. It should be fitted such that it is snug and does not 'spin' on his neck... but, certainly, not so tight as to be 'gagging'. Indeed, the happy medium should be that you can insert a finger under each of the two probes at the same time. Remember that the dog will be wearing this collar much of the time, especially when he is given free, unsupervised access outside the house, so it should not be uncomfortable for him. With this in mind, it is important to inspect his neck on a regular, daily basis, to be sure there is no irritation. This is especially important in wet weather.

If the dog has a thick, hairy coat, you might need, in the area of the probes, to trim off some of his fur (down to his 'under-coat' - but not down to his skin). His fur will always grow back in a short time. Alternatively, during the training period, you can change to the small diameter probes; in which case - inspect his neck more frequently.

GENERAL NOTES

To avoid confusion for your dog, always be consistent. For example, never appear to give him an order to cross the boundary or encourage him to join you when you are standing beyond the boundary. Instead, have someone run through the boundary without stopping, without looking back, or without calling or overtly encouraging the dog. If you are using a ball to test the dog's reaction to the boundary, do not tell him to fetch it. This, otherwise, is where he could become confused: at times you are training him to respect the boundary... whilst, at others, you might seem to be ordering him or encouraging him to cross it.

Once you have started the formal training, do not give your dog freedom of the garden until his training is complete. The times, shown in parentheses for each of the following phases, are only guidelines. A compliant, easygoing dog might take less time, whereas an intelligent or headstrong dog might take more!

FORMAL TRAINING

PHASE I

Boundary Training (1-3 Days)

Connect the power supply to the Control Unit. Isolate the collar probes by slipping rubber sleeves over each of them. Thus, the most he will sense at this stage is the audible tone warning (beep, beep, beep). For physical control, he should also wear his normal collar (but not a metal choke-chain), attached to a standard lead.

Take him around the boundary, letting him move into the outer fringes of the zone at various places such that he hears a couple of beeps. Whenever this occurs give him a stern warning "NO!"... Immediately pull him back from the zone and praise him lavishly. If you are using a physical demarcation system, emphasise the physical position of the boundary zone by shaking the tape or flag, again shouting "No!"

Although the boundary training needs to be performed all around the perimeter, clearly you will need to concentrate on the weak points, such as the holes in the existing, conventional fencing or in the hedge. Most time needs to be spent at the gateways, particularly if you have a driveway whose gate is not always closed.

As you progress with Boundary Training let your dog linger longer in the zone and get somewhat closer to the loop-wire: watch whether he starts to retreat on his own accord and moves/runs away without coaxing. Ideally you should not proceed to Phase II till you are confident that the dog retreats on his own accord - when he hears the warning beeps (i.e. without encouragement or command from you). But, nevertheless, if your dog seems intent on lingering, you might need, after considerable effort, to progress to Phase II.

PHASE
II**Stimulation Training: (1-2 Days)**

Before fitting his fence collar, remove the isolating sleeves from the probes.

Keep the lead attached to his normal collar and let him enter the zone, staying long enough (for about 2-seconds) till the second stage of containment (tone + low level stimulation) 'kicks in'. By watching your dog's reaction, you will know when it happens. Note that, since all dogs vary in their reactions to different levels of stimulation, you might need to linger longer (for up to 4-seconds, or, very unusually, up to 6-seconds). When your dog finally reacts, shout "NO!"; withdraw a safe distance from the zone and praise him lavishly. You will probably only get one shot at this in each training session. Don't force it.

PHASE
III**Proofing (1 Day)**

This phase is similar to the stimulation-training Phase II, except that you will try distracting him to test his response to the boundary containment system. Use a ball, a toy or an assistant - gently and 'innocently' to entice him to cross the boundary. But... NEVER CALL OR COMMAND HIM TO CROSS IT, as this will confuse him. Always pull him back on the lead whenever he has received a correction.

PHASE
IV**Confirmation (1 hour - or as necessary)**

After your dog has satisfactorily completed the previous, 'proofing' Phase III, confirm that the system (collar and Control Unit) is ready for its first 'live' test... and then that all is well by allowing him to run free in the garden for about an hour, off the lead, but still supervised. Then leave him to his own devices, by going indoors - to watch him periodically through the windows. Satisfy yourself that he is now happy with the new régime.

Even so, there may be instances where the dog will be somewhat reluctant to venture outside, due to the mystique of this invisible new containment system. If this is the case, persevere: and within a week or two the dog will most probably have lost his inhibitions: and will enjoy unfettered freedom, for the rest of his life, within the bounds that you have set. Likewise, you too will enjoy the peace of mind that your dog is now safely bounded by the system.

Finally, if you have erected plastic hazard tape or flags to demarcate the boundary, this can safely be removed within a further couple of weeks.

ON-GOING CONSIDERATIONS**TAKING YOUR DOG 'OFF SITE'**

In most situations you will need to take your dog off site, outside the bounds of the electronic fence - even if it is just once a year for his veterinary check-up. Before going off site, always remove the dog's 'fence' collar and fit his normal collar (and lead). This avoids the unlikely, but nonetheless possible, event of an inadvertent, accidental actuation; it ensures that he cannot lose this vital, somewhat expensive collar when in the public domain. Also, please note that prolonged, simultaneous use of a second (conventional) collar can eventually damage his fence collar.

If taking your dog 'off site' involves crossing the new boundary, it should be done in such a way as to avoid confusion. There are three most common methods:

- 1 Carry him across, letting him believe that you possess powers to make it safe for him. This is OK for smaller dogs, but definitely inconvenient, or even impossible, for larger breeds. To a lesser degree, taking him across wearing his normal collar and lead might enable him to infer that walking across with you is OK because of your 'magic power'.
- 2 Take him out by car. He will not associate this with escape (unless you have taught him how to drive!), but it is clearly rather laborious to use the car just to take him out for a local walk.
- 3 Designate a wicket- or small side-gate at an exit point that is normally closed. Whilst it is closed, the containment system will operate as normal to discourage his attempts to leave, but when it is open - it will appear to be 'open sesame' - and he can cross with impunity; but in reality it is because you will have removed his fence collar.

Clearly, if you have the facilities of another, normally closed gate, this last method has all the benefits of convenience, and maintains the system's mystique.

BATTERY & RECHARGING

Check the status of the collar battery on a regular basis.

In the early days of training the collar will have used the battery reserves more heavily than normal, and it will need to be recharged after about 7-14 days. Thereafter, it might only need a recharge every month or so. But remember ...all dogs are different. Some dogs will learn to respect the new containment régime quickly and will be happy to conform; others will test the bounds on a frequent or regular basis just to check whether the mysterious force is still there. Clearly, dogs with strong wanderlust urges will run their batteries down faster than others. So, check the battery status LED by taking the collar to the boundary, at least weekly.

CHECK FOR IRRITATION

Finally, just as a reminder, check regularly that the collar is not irritating his neck. If so, rest him off the collar for a couple of days and try loosening the strap a little.

Good luck with your training... and enjoy your dog's unfettered freedom - 24/7.

SUMMARY

1. Put down markers if you consider that your dog needs some guidelines
2. Let your dog get used to his new collar in advance of formal training
3. Be consistent in your training
4. Train only one dog at a time in each single session
5. Use simple, unambiguous commands throughout
6. Fit the collar snugly (with isolators over the probes)
7. Introduce your dog to the boundary to hear just the tone warning
8. Check that your dog has started to pull back on hearing the tone
9. Remove the isolators; and linger longer to receive low-level stimulation correction
10. Check that your dog is no longer keen to get too close (proofing)
11. Check that the Control Unit and collar are working properly for the first live test
12. Let your dog off lead to experience the system for himself
13. Observe and confirm acceptance by your dog
14. Any early 'system' inhibitions are normally overcome within a few days
15. Remove the boundary markers after thorough familiarisation
16. Give thought to régime consistency, especially when going off-site
17. Remove the PAC collar, replacing it with his normal collar (& lead) when off-site
18. Check the collar battery regularly and recharge it as necessary
19. Check your dog's neck regularly for irritation
20. Enjoy your dog's secure freedom forevermore!

PACFENCE 

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