

What Can I Do During the Commercials? Or During a Walk? A Few Ideas for You.

If you have a few minutes, a dog and some treats handy, you can do repeats of some basic exercises. These are some ideas.

- Practice recalls: you can have your dog stand and WAIT, then come to you in front (facing you) or to your side, facing the same way you are. You can do them with you moving or standing still.
- Practice your lead-hand following.
- Practice WAITS: have your dog WAIT and then either recall the dog to you or go back and reward.
- Have your dog practice hand touches. TOUCH with each hand, with your hand low, with your hand high.
- Have your dog do puppy pushups: SIT/DOWN/SIT/DOWN in rapid succession. Sometimes you reward after two pushups, sometimes one, sometimes four...
- Have your dog hold a SIT or DOWN for an entire commercial (if you're watching TV). Or two or three.
- Have your dog hold a SIT or DOWN while another dog walks by (if you're out with the dog).
- Have your dog hold a SIT or DOWN while you walk around them in a circle.
- Repeat all these exercises with a STAND instead.
- Practice a moving SIT, DOWN, and WAIT. Give the command but don't stop moving. (At first you may need to move more slowly or stop momentarily.)
- Practice SIT and DOWN at a distance. Put your dog in a SIT, then move a few feet away and ask for a DOWN.
- Practice SENDs to a target plate.
- Teach the dog to jump up and put its feet gently on your chest. This is a great stretch for the dog. (Plus, if it's on cue, the dog usually does it only on cue.) My dog jumps up if I pat my chest AND say "mug me!" I use a double cue because I don't want her doing it without warning.
- If you need to amuse a child for a few minutes, teach the child how to ask for a hand touch. Then have the child work with the dog for a few minutes. Children love bossing dogs around.