



protect. **teach.** love.



Training with an Electronic Remote Training System

www.petsafe.net

Make sure a loving relationship stays that way



Introduction

This manual explains how electronic collar training systems can be used by dog owners to overcome problems like chasing and teach basic obedience such as recall, heel and stay, by providing an improved means of communication with their dog.

In the very unlikely event that training is not proceeding according to these guidelines, then you are advised to refer to a professional dog trainer who is proficient at using remote training devices.

Electronic collar training systems consist of a **receiver collar** and a **remote transmitter**. The receiver collar has 2 **contacts** that touch the skin under the neck. When the remote transmitter is activated by a trainer, an electrical **stimulation** travels through the skin between the contacts. The contacts must not touch metallic components of any other collars worn by your dog. The trainer can vary the intensity and duration of stimulation by adjusting settings on the remote transmitter to suit particular situations.



Contents

When to use and when not to use an electronic training collar system	6
Introducing an electronic collar training system	7
Determining the correct level	8
Attention training	9
Generalisation	9
Introducing the command	10
Heel	10
Using electronic collar training systems for basic obedience	10
Recall	10
Stay	12
Stop	14
Managing chase behaviour	15
Weaning your dog off the electronic collar training systems	18
Electronic training collars	18
About ECMA™	19



**Unruly behaviour
needn't spoil a
beautiful relationship**

When to use and when not to use an electronic collar training system

Electronic collar training systems can be used for:

- Basic obedience where **reward-based** training has broken down or failed.
- Off-lead control in challenging situations, especially recall.
- Management of many behavioural problems, including chasing.
- Elderly, infirm or disabled owners who have difficulty controlling their dog.
- Fit owners with strong or unruly dogs that are not easy to manage.



Example of an electronic collar training system - receiver collar and remote transmitter

Electronic collar training systems should not be used for:

- Dogs less than 6 months of age.
- Pregnant or nursing bitches.
- Dogs that can't respond appropriately due to injury, illness or age.
- Dogs with aggressive tendencies.
- Dogs with certain anxiety related disorders, such as separation anxiety.

Anxiety symptoms in dogs might include:

- Barking
- Yawning
- Urinating in the house
- Pacing
- Shivering
- Defecating in the house
- Licking their lips
- Drooling
- Hiding under the furniture

Introducing an e-collar

The receiver collar should fit snugly around the top of the neck just below the ears. You must select contacts at the correct length to ensure they touch your dog's skin through its coat.

Leads, lines and tethers must be attached to a **flat collar** or **harness**, never to the receiver collar.

Initially, get your dog used to wearing the inactive (switched off) receiver collar over a 1 to 2 week period. Put the receiver collar on and off your dog several times a day and associate it with pleasant experiences such as walks, play or food. The receiver collar must not be left on for more than 8 hours a day to start with, building to a maximum of 12 hours a day over a week. You should check your dog's skin near the contact points weekly for signs of irritation or inflammation and seek veterinary advice if you feel there is a problem.

Putting the receiver collar on and taking it off regularly reduces the chance of your dog becoming **collar-wise**, which is when dogs will only follow a command when they are wearing a receiver collar.



This collar is incorrectly fitted because it is too loose – the receiver collar should fit snugly around the top of the neck.

Early training must be in a safe environment with no distractions. Use a flat collar (which sits lower on the neck than the receiver collar) or a harness, with a lead or a line attached. Lines can be dragged behind your dog on the ground or held. If necessary you can step on the line to stop your dog. A line 7 metres long is ideal for most training but lines up to 25 metres are useful for recall.

Avoid tension on the line unless using it to guide your dog during training.

Learn to operate the remote without looking at it, so that you can concentrate on your dog's behaviour and ensure timely stimulation is delivered.

Your dog should be familiar with the remote transmitter, but must not associate it with stimulation. Never point the remote transmitter at them when activating stimulation. An observant dog may become **remote-wise** and no longer follow commands without stimulation.



Leads and lines must be attached to a flat collar and not the receiver collar.

Determining the correct level

Once you are familiar with the remote transmitter and your dog is accustomed to the receiver collar, the next step is determining the minimum stimulation intensity that your dog can recognise.



Find your dog's minimum recognition level - look out for any indication or reaction to the lowest level of stimulation.

Check the system is working correctly by holding the receiver collar so that the contacts touch the palm of your hand. Starting at the lowest intensity, push the **continuous** stimulation button on the remote transmitter. Increase the intensity until you feel a mild prickle. If you reach maximum intensity without feeling any stimulation, the system is not working correctly and you should refer back to the operating guide.

Once you have determined that the system is working correctly, return the setting on the remote transmitter to the lowest intensity. Leave the receiver collar switched on and put it on your dog to determine the minimum stimulation intensity that your dog can recognise.

Without any indication to your dog, press the continuous button on the remote transmitter for 1 to 2 seconds then release it. Watch your dog for any indication or reaction. Your dog may give a little shake of its head, turn its head, show a surprised expression, raise or lower their tail, raise or lower their ears, blink or look towards the collar or scratch at the collar with a hind foot. If you don't see a reaction, increase the stimulation intensity by one graduation and repeat the procedure until you notice that your dog has just recognised a slight tickle. This is your dog's **minimum recognition level** and you should remember this setting.

Attention training

Having determined your dog's minimum recognition level the next step is to start **attention training** using the **follow me** technique. This encourages your dog to pay you attention using the electronic collar training system, praise and treat rewards but without any commands.

First attach a 7 metre line to a flat collar or harness worn by your dog. Walk away from your dog and press or **tap** the continuous button on the remote transmitter repeatedly once or twice a second while it is set at the minimum recognition level. Encourage your dog to follow using gentle tension on the line. As soon as they start to follow, stop the stimulation. Reward them with encouragement and occasional treats as they come alongside you.



Use the remote transmitter at the minimum recognition level to encourage your dog to be attentive and follow you.

Change direction and tap the button until they start to follow. Dogs quickly learn to be attentive and follow you to avoid stimulation.

Training sessions need only last about 15 minutes but can be carried out several times a day. Your dog's co-operation will become a habit, but until your dog is reliable, the receiver collar should be worn on all occasions when you may need to get, and retain their attention.

Generalisation

Once your dog understands that paying attention when requested turns off the stimulation, the attention training should be consolidated. It is vital that training is practised for **longer durations** in many **different places** with gradually increasing **distractions**. This is known as **generalisation** and once you have generalised attention training you can start training other tasks such as heel, recall, stay and stop.



Gradually increase distractions during training, known as generalisation.

Introducing the command

The **follow me** technique is used to gain attention and teaches your dog that its co-operation avoids any annoying stimulation. Follow me is similar to the **heel** command so this is the easiest skill to teach next.

Heel

- 1) Once your dog understands that paying attention and following you will turn off the stimulation, the heel command can be introduced. When your dog runs ahead, falls behind or is not close enough, tap the continuous button and give the command 'heel' at the same time. When they move close to you, immediately stop the stimulation, praise them and occasionally reward them with a treat. The command 'heel' is associated with their proximity to you and the stimulation stopping.
- 2) When trained, your dog will not require stimulation to encourage it to comply with the command. Typically, after about 2 weeks there is no need to use a line in safe environments and your dog will respond to the command without stimulation.
- 3) Finally, the training needs to be generalised and once all the training is embedded, the process of **weaning** your dog off the electronic collar training system can begin.



When your dog moves close, stop stimulation, praise them and occasionally reward them with a treat

Using electronic collar training systems for basic obedience

It is helpful if your dog has some idea of what you want it to do before you use the active electronic collar training systems.

Recall

Some dogs will **recall** reliably using rewards but the majority will not if there is a strong distraction. Electronic collar training systems help to teach a reliable recall avoiding many problems.

- 1) In addition to the receiver collar, your dog wears a flat collar or harness with a long line (up to 25 metres, depending on the terrain). Hold the line loosely, allowing them to wander away. Following the attention training described above, your dog understands that returning to you turns off the stimulation.



Teaching recall using the electronic collar training system.

- 2) Tap the continuous button and give the command 'come' at the same time. If necessary guide them towards you with the line. When your dog moves towards you stop the stimulation. When they get to you, deliver enthusiastic praise and perhaps a treat.
- 3) With practice your dog will respond to your command and commence a journey toward you promptly so that the stimulation is switched off quickly.
- 4) After a week or so of instant responses, no stimulation is applied with the command.
- 5) If your dog fails to respond instantly to your command or falters on their way back to you because of a distraction, reissue the command 'come', and reapply the stimulation until they comply.
- 6) Your dog will soon respond to your command immediately and not falter on their return to avoid stimulation completely.
- 7) From this point training is generalised and when all the training is embedded, your dog can be gradually weaned off the electronic collar training system.



Practice recall between several people.

There is a situation that may temporarily occur if the electronic collar training system is used only for recall or heel. Your dog may think the area close to you is a place where stimulation never happens. This can encourage your dog to **stick** tightly to you and not leave you. For most owners this is not a problem and will usually resolve in 2 to 3 weeks.

This issue/problem can be avoided completely by practicing recalls between several people, so your dog runs from one person to another. Teaching 'stay' will also help. Ultimately, your dog will learn that the stimulation is not about their proximity to a person or place, but their behaviour.

Stay

This command gives control over any of your dog's undesirable activities. For example, they can be taught to 'stay' instead of jumping up. **Stay** is used to teach your dog to remain in one position until you return to give the release command, such as 'ok' or 'go play'.

However, your dog will be confused if you tell them 'stay' when you leave the room to answer the door. If you don't need them to remain in one position until your return, say something else instead, such as 'I won't be long'.

Stay is one exercise that is best taught without treats.

- 1) Pick a space where there are no distractions and use a flat collar or harness with a line or lead attached. The receiver collar remains inactive until your dog starts to understand what is required (stage 8).
- 2) Hold the lead and place your dog in a sit or down position. Other than for competition purposes, it doesn't matter if they move from sit to the down position. Remain facing them whilst holding the lead loosely.
- 3) Never use your dog's name as it may encourage them to move. Say stay in a quiet, firm voice and use a hand signal: the flat palm of your hand directed toward the front of their face. Hold the lead and remote with your other hand. Facing your dog, take one step back on the right leg, keeping the left leg still.
- 4) Focus on your dog, fixing them in the stay. You can quietly tell them that they are doing the right thing by occasionally saying yes-yes-yes. If they move, say nothing, and ignore them completely (don't even look at them) for about 5 seconds. If they persist in moving, after being ignored several times, give a little flick of the lead at the moment of movement.
- 5) Ideally, return to your dog before they move. On returning, praise them before giving a release command, say ok or go play.
- 6) Over a couple of days, repeat steps 2 - 5 a few times in different places.



Hold the lead and place your dog in a sit or down position.

- 7) Gradually increase the time before returning to praise them, starting with 5 seconds, and then 10 seconds building up to 20 seconds. At that point gradually reduce the quiet reassuring yes-yes-yes until it is phased out completely.
- 8) By this point, your dog will be familiar with the word 'stay' so the electronic collar training system can be introduced to complete the training.
- 9) As before, gain your dog's attention and command them to stay in the sit or down position. If they remain, return to praise, and then release them. If they start to move, tap the continuous button, immediately guiding them back with the lead to their original stay position. The stimulus is stopped as soon as they are back. Repeat the stay command and continue until your dog understands they shouldn't move.

- 10) When your dog stays for 2 minutes on one command, gradually increase the distance to 2, 3, 4 paces and so on, moving backwards while still facing your dog. Apply stimulation as soon as they move, guide them back and stop stimulation immediately they are back in the original position.
- 11) As the stay becomes more reliable, step away with your back to your dog. Once you have reached a suitable distance turn to face them.
- 12) Be ready to use stimulation at the first indication that your dog may move such as, ears pricking up, head movements and tail wagging.
- 13) Gradually increase the time they stay before releasing them or increase your distance from them but never both together.
- 14) Never be tempted to call your dog from the stay. Always return to them to praise and then release them.
- 15) Generalise the stay in various places, and then introduce distractions. When distractions are introduced don't move too far or make them stay for too long. Start from short distances for short times with gradually increasing distractions. If necessary increase the intensity of the stimulation a little if your dog is distracted.



Apply stimulation if your dog moves before you have issued the release command.



Whilst walking your dog alongside you, turn and face them whilst giving the stop command.

Stop

In contrast to stay, in this exercise your dog is in motion when it is asked to **stop**. This is a useful command to prevent dogs from chasing. In addition to the receiver collar your dog wears a flat collar or harness with a 7 metre or longer line.

The receiver collar remains inactive until stage 4 when you use a tap on the continuous stimulation button or a **brief pulse** or **nick** button, if your system has this facility.

- 1) Your dog is on the long line in a place without distractions.
- 2) Walk with your dog alongside you with the line slack. Say stop, not stay, while giving a hand signal: arm raised the palm flat towards your dog's face. While giving the command and signal, give a brisk, little flick on the lead - **slack, flick, slack**. This is just sufficient to make them wait and is neither rough nor heavy.
- 3) As your dog stops, quietly praise, pet and reward him. Remain vigilant to stop any movement using the lead with a brief flick as above.

- 4) Concentrate on quietly rewarding and praising your dog for stopping. If he attempts to move, use the lead to give a quick flick to check him. At the same time tap on the continuous stimulation button at their lowest recognition level. The nick button can be used for this exercise. You can soon phase out the flick of the lead and rely on stimulation to check their movement.
- 5) As your dog starts to respond, occasional treats can be given as a reward when your dog is stationary. Care must be taken to avoid making this a signal that they can move.
- 6) When your dog is proficient at stopping, repeat steps 2 - 4 when he is a foot ahead of you.
- 7) Repeat the exercise, walking backwards with your dog on the lead walking towards you. When the stop command is given, deliver a brief stimulation while keeping the line slack.
- 8) Continue practicing with your dog on the line until they stop instantly at any distance on the voice command and, if necessary, stimulation tap.
- 9) Remove the line and repeat the training from step 7. If your dog fails to perform, return to using the line.
- 10) To generalise this skill, practice the exercise on the line in many different environments, with varying intensities of distractions until your dog will reliably respond. It may be necessary to increase the stimulation intensity to counter the distraction.



Combine the voice command 'stop' with a hand signal.

Managing chase behaviour

Many electronic collar training systems are purchased to manage chase behaviour. When you have determined your dog's **minimum recognition level** and have perfected attention training in many locations with various distractions, you can move to this section. However, ideally you would complete all of the basic obedience training

first. Provided your dog is not aggressive, you can use this method to prevent unwanted running towards people, animals and vehicles. Training may not carry over from one group to another so it may be necessary to train your dog for each situation; people, game, livestock and other dogs.



Electronic collar training systems are an effective method of managing chase behaviour.

Attention training conditions your dog to return to you on feeling electrical stimulation. Therefore, stimulation will encourage your dog to come back to you when it is applied even if they are starting to run off. Management of chase behaviour is like using attention

training with the ultimate distraction. Stimulation must not be delivered to your dog when they are out of sight unless you are confident that your dog will return when they feel electrical stimulation.

Managing Chase Behaviour continued...

- 1) Ensure that your dog will return to you reliably when you deliver stimulation with all sorts of distractions, apart from the chase target. Once your dog will reliably return to you, you can remove the line.
- 2) Pick an area where a chase can be safely set up. Somewhere your dog is likely to run off with an undisturbed line of sight for at least 100 metres, so that you can see them clearly once they take off and have time to react. If feasible, a chase target is hidden and then revealed; more often than not, this will occur naturally.
- 3) Put the receiver collar on at least 2 hours before training and leave it on at least 30 minutes after training. Increase the intensity of stimulation two levels higher than your dog's minimum recognition level and be ready to increase it further if necessary. Some remote transmitters have a button, which gives stimulation two levels higher than the current set level. This **boost** function is useful if you suddenly need to use stimulation at a higher intensity.
- 4) If possible allow your dog to see the target and as they start to chase, quickly tap the continuous button until they start to return to you. Give no commands. Praise enthusiastically and reward them for returning.
- 5) If your dog does not immediately respond increase the intensity of the stimulation until they do. Use the lowest intensity of stimulation necessary to interrupt your dog's chase behaviour.
- 6) Repeat stages 1 - 4 in at least 5 different locations to generalise the training.
- 7) Up to now, no recall commands have been used, because by the time you realise your dog has started to chase they may be out of earshot. However at this stage a recall command can be introduced to reinforce your dog's return to you. This is done by introducing the **come** command. Your dog must never be allowed to ignore this command which is why the electronic collar training system is used.
- 8) Eventually your dog should not look to engage in chase behaviour or it should return to you instantly following a command. The collar is left on for a month after the last time that you had to use it and then your dog can start to be weaned off it. The collar can be put back on your dog occasionally, especially if there are signs of chase behaviour returning.

It is important that you do not find yourself in a situation where your dog can chase without you being able to apply stimulation and guide them back to you. Every chase must be interrupted. If a dog catches what they are chasing they learn to run through the stimulation to achieve their goal.

With determined chasers, you may have to repeat training many times before a dog accepts that returning is always more rewarding than chasing. When the instinct is strong and ingrained, your dog may eventually regress and start chasing again; if this happens they must be re-trained immediately.

In summary

- Get your dog used to wearing the receiver collar without switching it on.
- Find your dog's minimum recognition level.
- Start attention training with no commands where there are no distractions. For safety your dog should have a line attached to a flat collar or a harness.
- Repeat in many different locations, where there are no distractions.
- Introduce mild distractions at various locations to thoroughly generalise the training so that your dog reliably returns to you when it feels stimulation. At this stage do not introduce any distraction that may tempt your dog to chase.
- Remove the line. Increase the stimulation intensity two levels higher than the minimum recognition level. Set up a chase.
- When your dog gives chase, tap the continuous button until they turn around.
- If they do not respond immediately, increase the stimulation intensity until they do.
- Repeat in several locations with differing conditions to generalise the training.
- Put the receiver collar on without using it at random, so they do not associate it with stimulation. Attach the collar an hour or two before going out and leave it on for 30 minutes after returning.
- You can now introduce a command for recall.
- Leave the collar on for one month after the last time you had to use it, before you finally wean your dog from the collar.
- Occasionally use the electronic collar training system, especially at the first indication that chase behaviour is returning.

Weaning your dog off the electronic collar training system

With practice, training becomes embedded and you no longer have to use the electronic collar training system. If the system has not been used for 30 days you can start to **wean** your dog off it. The receiver collar can be taken off occasionally during periods when it would usually be worn, such as walks. As long as your dog does not lose training or revert

to bad habits, the receiver collar can be worn less frequently and ultimately left off. Occasionally dogs which have been weaned off electronic collar training systems lose their training or revert to bad habits making it necessary to reintroduce the system for a short period.

Electronic training collars

Used correctly according to these guidelines, electronic training collars are effective, humane and harmless, providing a channel of communication between you and your dog, unaffected by distance. Your dog is more likely to follow instruction if they are within a few metres but become less co-operative as the distance increases. Remote training systems give

your dog the impression that you are always close so they are far more likely to follow directions. You and your dog become a single entity, your dog has the impression that you are beside them, monitoring their actions. This helps your dog to willingly co-operate with you, ultimately providing them with greater freedom and a better quality of life.



ECMA™ - Promoting the use of humane static stimulation training products

As a founding member of the Electronic Collar Manufacturers Association (ECMA™), Radio Systems® Corporation is proud of its role within this organisation. ECMA was formed in 2004 with the purpose of regulating the industry to promote the quality of life of your pets, giving them harmony and integrating them into everyday social life.

ECMA promotes the use of humane static stimulation products for pet training which respect the well-being of animals and enhance the communication between pets and their owners. The organisation ensures the owner recognises the importance of following the training instructions accompanying each product.

All members of ECMA commit to meet the requirements laid out in the standards for all pet products on sale in EU countries. These requirements apply to static and spray collars (remote trainers, anti-bark applications and containment fences), pet tracking systems and other companion electronic training devices.

ECMA is committed to the safety of companion animals and to the responsible use of members' products.

Written by **David Chamberlain** BVetMed, MRCVS in conjunction with **Mike Grantham** BSc (Hons)

Training Advice provided by **Mike Grantham**

Animal Welfare Assurance provided by **David Chamberlain**



protect. teach. love.

Radio Systems® Corporation, 10427 PetSafe Way, Knoxville, TN 37932 USA
© 2011 Radio Systems Corporation. All rights reserved.

400-1476

