

The Life-Saving Skill: Building a Strong Recall

At **Greenstone Labradors**, we focus on building a strong bond with our puppies before they ever leave our home. While "sit" and "stay" are wonderful, there is no skill more important than the **Recall**—teaching your dog to come when called. A reliable recall isn't just a convenience; it is a vital safety tool that ensures your Labrador remains under your control in any situation.

Why Recall is Critical for Labradors

Labradors are naturally curious and athletic. Whether they are following a scent, chasing a bird, or heading toward a busy road, a solid recall can be life-saving. We begin working with our puppies on these foundations at **6 weeks old**. By the time they join your family, they already have a natural inclination to follow and engage with humans. Your job is to take that 6-week head start and turn "Come!" into the most rewarding command they know.

The Secret Sauce: Praise and High-Value Treats

Labradors thrive on your approval. To build a "rocket recall," you must make coming to you the best part of their day.

- **The Reward:** Always reward a successful recall with an enthusiastic "Good dog!" and a high-value **treat**.
- **The Power of Praise:** Your Labrador wants to please you. When they turn away from a distraction to run to you, your verbal **praise** should make them feel like they've just won a gold medal.
- **The Golden Rule:** Never call your dog to you to do something they dislike (like a bath) and never scold them when they finally arrive, even if it took them a few tries. Coming to you must *always* be a positive experience.

Training Your Recall: Step-by-Step

1. **Start Small:** Begin in a low-distraction environment, like your hallway. Say your puppy's name followed by a clear command like "Come!" or "Here!"
2. **Use a Longline:** To practice safely outdoors, we recommend using a **longline from Waterdog**. This allows your puppy to explore at a distance while you maintain control, preventing them from learning they can ignore your command.
3. **Back Away:** As your puppy starts to move toward you, back away quickly. This triggers the Labrador's natural drive to follow and "catch" you, making the recall more energetic and fun.

4. **Practice Everywhere:** Once they are consistent in the house, move to the backyard and then to open spaces using your **Waterdog longline**.

Tips for Success

- **Keep it Short:** Practice for just **1–2 minutes** at a time. Labradors learn best when training feels like a game.
- **Don't Overuse the Command:** If you aren't sure your puppy will come, don't keep repeating the command. Use your longline to gently guide them to you so they don't learn that the command is "optional."
- **Management:** When you aren't actively training recall, use your **Kuranda Bed** for "place" training to build the impulse control that supports a better recall later.

Conclusion

A Labrador that comes when called is a dog that can enjoy more freedom. By combining high-value **treats**, the right equipment like a **Waterdog longline**, and your genuine **praise**, you are building a bond of trust that ensures your Greenstone Labrador stays safe and happy for years to come.

| Tool | Best Used For... | Greenstone Recommendation |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Waterdog Longline | Safety and distance practice | Essential for outdoor training |
| Treat Pouch | Speed of reward delivery | Keeps hands free for the longline |
| Whistle | Long-distance or emergency recall | Great for field work or hiking |
| High-Value Treats | Motivation and focus | Redbarn Choppers |
| Kuranda Bed | Building impulse control | Kuranda.com |