

Pivot in front

Objective: Dog approaches handler's "front" and lines up straight from any angle or distance.

Why: Recall exercises usually end in a "front", where the dog sits in front of the handler. The exercise is scored based on "straightness", so what we are looking for is that the dog and handler are toe-to-toe, the dog's nose is lined up with the handler's belly button, and the spine is straight.

The hardest part of this exercise for the dog is really understanding where to line up, and how to straighten his body to make that happen. It becomes particularly more complicated with speed, and since our +R trained dogs tend to recall with a great deal of speed, we will make sure to give them the necessary skills to be successful.

So, here we are splitting out the straightness portion of the behavior, and using the platform as a target for placing the front feet.

***Note: Since we've recently been working on using this pivot platform behavior to teach heel position, it's completely normal to see a little confusion between the positions (front vs heel). In fact, that's a pretty common discrimination issue that many dogs run across, regardless of training method. Be prepared to up your rate of reinforcement when you are playing these games to keep the dog happy and minimize frustration or confusion.**

Part 1

1. Start with your toes pointing to the platform, arms at your sides. Arrange yourself so that you are directly in front of the dog. Have treats in both hands.
2. Click and treat here about 10 times, being careful to deliver the treat to the **center of your body**. Alternate which hand delivers the treat to avoid pulling the dog to one side or the other.
3. You might include eye contact as part of the criteria here, if you choose.
4. Turn 90 degrees (either direction) and wait for the dog to line up. He will likely cross the center line and overshoot. Click as his spine crosses the center, and deliver in the center of your body.
5. He might look like a windshield wiper at first, that's ok. Time your clicks for the moment he crosses the center line, and keep being careful about your food delivery. The oscillations should get smaller and smaller until it's just one step or less.
6. Turn 90 degrees the other way and repeat. We want to work both directions from the very beginning.

Part 2

1. Start off the same way. Clicking and treating in position several times.
2. This time, we will toss the treat out a short distance (4-5ft) to reset. Toss directly behind the dog (12 o'clock), so after he eats the treat, he will be coming straight at your front.
3. Click and treat when he finds straight.
4. Click again before he moves and toss the treat out.
5. Gradually work your way around the clock, but keeping the distance of the treat tossing the same. The radius, if you will.
6. Once you've gone all the way around, start back at 12, but throw the treat farther.
7. Keep working around the clock, gradually increasing the distance.
8. Eventually the dog will be able to line up on your front and center himself from anywhere in the room without help or prompting. You are going to look like a rock star in rally!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_ULnG8PITs&index=16&list=PL3iB_cmFKZ17yhTFprm3Y1dcp9TAbbjNz

(NOTE I do it a BIT different than the directions....sorry!)

*What if he comes in crooked and sticks there?

Just move your feet away from the platform, then come back to reset.

If he still won't budge, back up and review the shaping steps you used to teach him to pivot on the platform. It's possible you still need to fade a sneaky prompt.

IF he can't come in tight, we can add a chin rest to help.