Coming back is the best bit.

A dog who comes back when called is a joy to walk (and a safer one too). Start at home, keep it fun and make coming to you the best thing that can happen.



1 Start indoors

Practise at home and in the garden where there's less going on. Say their name and recall word once, in a happy voice, and reward big when they reach you.

2 Pick one recall word

Choose a word or whistle that only ever means "come back", like "here". Everyone at home should use the same one.

3 Make it worth their while

Save your tastiest treats for recall, plus a game. Coming back to you should always beat whatever they were doing.

4 Never call for bad news

Don't call them to tell them off, have a bath or end the fun. If you need them for something they don't love, go and get them instead.

5 Use a long line

A long training line (5 to 10 metres) clipped to a harness lets them explore while you practise recall safely outdoors.

6 Call, reward, let go again

Call them back lots on a walk, reward, then send them off to play. That way coming back doesn't always mean home time.

7 Stand still when they pull

If the lead goes tight, stop. The moment it loosens, carry on. They soon learn a loose lead keeps the walk going.

8 Reward by your side

Treat them at your leg when they walk nicely next to you. Short, regular practice beats one long tug of war.

Before they go off lead

Wait until their recall is reliable at home and in quiet places before letting them off in busy parks. Build up around distractions bit by bit, and always keep them on a lead near roads and livestock.

This guide is general advice for new puppy owners. Every puppy is different, so if you're ever worried, your vet is the best person to ask.