



## Training Plan for Betty

Objective: Recall, Breed Fulfillment and winter safety

### 1. Assessment & Progress

You did a really nice job over the last few months engaging Betty in play and being a wonderful “fellow creature” to her. Despite not having a fence (which I still think would be awesome, but do understand your reticence), you (and Jason) are doing a very nice job fulfilling her needs as a livestock guardian dog who (fortunately!) landed in Weston with you!

Our focus now shifts to refining management in the woods with a long lead, more effective prong collar and pager (vibration-only collar) and providing outlets for her specific genetic drives.

### 2. Equipment & Safety Protocols

#### The Long Line (Handling)

Try replacing the retractable leash with a **Rubber-Woven Long Line** or Biothane long line. I think that you will find handling a bit easier and if she gets away from you, it will be easier to step on a long line. Here are 2 favorite long lines. The one you have is better for recall practice exclusively.

[Viper Heavy Biothane long line](#): Very sturdy, easy to clean but can be slippery when wet. I would suggest  $\frac{3}{4}$  by 15 or 20 feet.

[Lighter, easier to grip option](#): These are what I currently use with my dogs and I really like them a lot!

## **The Prong Collar (Control)**

Introduce a high-quality prong collar strictly for better control. This serves as "power steering," not correction. Given Betty's thick fur and loose skin, this tool ensures you have physical control—preventing you from being pulled over, especially in winter conditions—without needing to use excessive force. **Fit:** Snug, high on the neck, but rotatable. This is what we used yesterday and what I use with my dogs:

[Herm Sprenger 2.25 with metal buckle. Consider ordering extra links](#) or just buying 2 collars.

### [Extra Links](#)

[Safety strap to attach the prong to her regular collar](#): Highly recommend! Prong collars can and do come apart.

## **3. Recall Strategy: The "Pager" Transition**

We are modifying the electronic collar usage from stimulation (shock) to **Vibration (Pager) Only**.

- [Educator Pager-only collar](#): Note: I have used this collar and while there are indeed levels to the vibration, they are not very noticeable to dogs. Also, this is more of a prompt and a reminder to most dogs. They do not find it to be very aversive. I think it is a great added tool for Betty, but it is not a guarantee.

**The training:** Definitely let me know if you need help with this. It is much less risky training than the shock collar work, since it is less aversive.

## **1. Preparation**

- The Fit: High and tight, behind the ears. You should be able to rotate the collar around her neck using a little pressure.

## **2. Phase 1: Foundation (Leash Only) - you have done this.**

Before turning the collar on for commands, ensure that she understands the mechanics of the recall using leash pressure alone. She must know that "Come" means "turn and move to handler."

## **3. Phase 2: "Overlaying" the Stim (Verbal Stim) - We did this yesterday, but I would repeat it after you get the collar for 3-5 sessions**

In this phase, you are teaching Betty that the verbal command predicts the sensation, making the verbal command highly relevant.

### **Action:**

1. Say "Come."
2. Immediately (within 0.5 seconds) press and hold the button (Continuous mode)
3. Apply leash guidance to bring Betty to you, if necessary;
4. Release the button only when she is moving towards you/arrives (depending on your timing preference, but usually upon compliance).

- The Logic: The word "Come" predicts the pressure. She learns that the word is the precursor to the event.
- Repetitions: Do this for 3–5 days until she immediately perks up upon hearing "Come," anticipating the pressure.

## **4. Phase 3: Transferring the Cue (Stim, then Verbal) - We did not do this. Practice 3-5 sessions.** Now that Betty accepts the stimulation as part of the recall process, you flip the order.

### **Action:**

1. Press the button (Continuous)
2. Immediately say "Come."
3. Guide her in with the leash.

4. Reward heavily when she arrives.
- The Logic: She feels the tap and thinks, "What was that?" You immediately answer, "That means Come." You are conditioning the sensation itself to trigger the recall reflex.
- Progression: As the week progresses, delay the verbal "Come" by a second. Tap... wait... if they turn, don't say anything. If they are confused, say "Come" to help her.

#### **5. Phase 4: The Silent Recall (Stim Only)**

By this stage, Betty should understand that the sensation on the neck means "Check in with the handler."

- Action:
  1. Press the button (Continuous).
  2. Remain silent.
  3. If she turns and comes, mark with "Yes/Good" and reward.
  4. If the dog does not turn, apply leash pressure to guide them in (reminding them of the obligation).

## **4. Relationship & Enrichment**

### **Your Value**

**Goal:** Increase your value in her eyes versus the environment.

- **Strategy:** Bring her favorite toy on walks. During low-stress moments, engage in short play sessions. This teaches her that you are not just the "enforcer of rules," but also the source of fun and resources.

### **Fulfilling the "Guardian" Drive**

**Goal:** Provide a biological outlet for her patrolling and nurturing instincts.

- **Insight:** Betty is a guardian without a flock. This leaves a gap in her natural drives.
- **Strategy:** Consider a trial adoption of a cat. Having a smaller animal to "watch over" inside the home can satisfy the guardian instinct in a healthy way, potentially reducing the need to seek that outlet elsewhere.

## 5. Resources & Homework

- **Literature:** Read the book! [This is also a great free hour long video on fulfilling our dogs' natural instincts.](#) At least watch the first 5 minutes!
- Practice: Keep up the training we outlined in the first plan and start pager work when it arrives!

Betty is responding nicely. This plan is simply fine-tuning to ensure her (and your) safety and her fulfillment.