



TEACHING ADVANCED STAY

Putting the 3 Ds together.

Combine distance, distraction, and duration slowly. For example:

- Choose a quiet area and work on duration stays.
- Another day, choose a quiet area and work on distance stays.
- Another day, choose a quiet area and work on duration and distance, making both easier than on occasions where you only worked on one or the other.
- Choose a slightly busier location and work on duration stays.

And so on.

Whenever you practice in a new place, adjust (make easier) the distance or duration of the stay until your dog is successful despite the new place being interesting. Novelty wreaks havoc on canine concentration, so be prepared to compensate. Building your stay in small steps will lead to a strong, consistent behavior.

How to practice.

Step 1. Stand in front of your dog. Tell your dog, "Stay" in a cheerful tone of voice, pause for a second, then give the stay hand signal: Hand out in front of you, palm facing dog. Step back with both feet. Immediately return to your original position. Click and treat. Repeat several times.

Step 2. First, add a bit of duration. Tell your dog to stay, pause for a second, give the stay hand signal, and take a small step back with both feet. Pause here for one second (one-one-thousand) before you return to your original position. Click and treat. Repeat several times.

Step 3. Slowly increase the number of seconds you wait before you return to your original position. Remember to click and treat each successful try.

Step 4. When you can stand 2 feet away for 5 seconds without your dog getting up, switch to working on distance (if you are in a place where it is safe to let go of the leash—or work with your dog on a 30-foot leash.) Tell your dog to stay, pause for a second, give the stay hand signal, and take a couple of steps back, immediately returning to your original position. Click and treat. Repeat several times.

Step 5. Slowly increase the number of steps you take back, each time stepping right back in front of the dog. Remember to click and treat every time. Work up to a distance of 5 feet.



ADVANCED STAY (CONTINUED)

Step 6. Now move your practice sessions to a new area with a bit more activity. Each time you change location, go back to the basics, asking only for one-second stays or one foot of distance. Slowly build up.

Step 7. If at any point during the above exercises you encounter a distraction, such as a dog or person walking by, a loud noise, or scurrying critters, click and treat immediately before your dog breaks her stay. The idea is to reward her before she has a chance to make a mistake.

Step 8. If your dog starts to get up, tell her, "Ah-ah." If that makes her hold her stay, praise her. Wait a couple of seconds, then reward. If she gets up, tell her, "Too bad," ask for an easier stay and reward her for that. Then work your way back up.

Step 9. Place dog in stay. Walk away and turn back. Then walk away again. This teaches the dog that facing toward her is not a release.

Step 10. Do stay with distractions. Take your dog to a low distraction area to begin. Place in a stay and toss treats or a toy. Release to get the toy and play. Then, during the stay, go to the toy and kick it around before releasing.

Step 11: Teach your dog that you moving does not indicate release. Place her in a stay and run out and around in different directions. Throw toy, run and pick it up; run again and throw toy. Release your dog to get it.

Training Tip: Don't be tempted to add both distance and duration at the same time, even if things are going well. Stick with a few seconds and a distance of a few feet until you have practiced in many different locations.

Training Tip: When you make one thing harder, always make something else easier. For example, if you add duration to your distance stays, make the distance shorter than before you added the duration.

Troubleshooting: If your dog is making more than the occasional mistake, you are going too fast. Go back to something easier and work your way up from there. Remember, the secret to teaching stay is to start easy and go slowly.