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Trust Your Dog

Welcome to K9 Nose Work: Level One

K9 Nose Work® is the fun search and scenting activity that virtually all dogs and their people can enjoy. It starts with getting your dog excited about using his nose to seek out a favorite toy or treat reward hidden in one of several boxes. As your dog grows more confident with his nose, the game expands to entire rooms, exterior areas, and vehicles. Advanced K9 Nose Work focuses on increasing your dog's scent discrimination skills, adding special target odors to the search, and increasing other levels of difficulty.

Every dog has the natural abilities to succeed and have fun with K9 Nose Work:

- Dogs with no prior training experience.
- Shy or fearful dogs build confidence with each success and gain more courage to face the world.
- Reactive dogs all love K9 Nose Work because dogs are always crated and separated and nose work games are played one at a time.
- High energy dogs burn calories as they race around on the hunt.
- Aging or disabled dogs can flex their brain muscles as they puzzle out the search at their own pace.

You can begin the nose work journey at any stage of your dog's life and it can last a lifetime. You and your dog set the pace and your goal. If your goal is to make K9 Nose Work a regular play activity, there is no end to the games you can enjoy. If you like greater challenge and the excitement of competition, K9 Nose Work is also an organized, titling sport with officials across the nation.

To allow more time to play with the dogs in this class, you'll need to understand some basics about how a nose work class is structured and rules that are important to follow. Nose work is **very** different from the other dog training classes you might be used to. However the structure is very important to the success, enjoyment, learning and safety of the dogs. For this reason, some of the information described below might sound strange, but don't worry we will discuss it more in class. The first 30-45 minutes of your *first* class will be spent going over rules, process, and gear. All subsequent classes we will take turns searching for the full hour and a half.

National Association of Canine Scent Work (NACSW)

About K9 Nose Work: www.k9nosework.com

About NACSW Membership and Competition: www.nacsw.net

Basic Rules for Every Class, Every Time – No Exceptions

1. **One dog at a time.** The structure of the class dictates that one dog works at a time. Other dogs remain secured or crated until their turn.
2. **When you arrive, come into the building without your dog** to receive instructions about how and where your dog will stay when not working during the class. If the weather is safe, they will remain in your cars. If the weather is inclement or too hot, we will crate inside the building.
3. When it's your turn to work your dog, **wait outside of the search area** in the place we've designated until you're instructed to enter. In addition you'll be told to enter and exit through certain doors. It's important to follow these protocols.
4. When entering and exiting the search area or the potty area, please keep dogs a safe distance of at least **10 feet between dogs**. No meet and greets please, even if the dogs know each other! We'll explain why this is a rule at the start of class.
5. **Pee – Search – Pee!** Always potty your dog before class. Make sure to give your dog an opportunity to potty **before every search and again after their search**. Why? All this sniffing is much like listening to rushing water for us; it can inspire elimination! Getting your dog to potty before a search might be hard at first, but once they understand they get to go have FUN right after, they start getting to business quickly. The nature of this work may trigger the desire to eliminate *anyway*. If you think that your dog may be getting ready to go, excuse yourself and gently take him outside. If you're unsuccessful, do not reprimand your dog. Leave it be and gently take him outside. We will clean it up.
6. **Minimize chatting with each other during a run.** You are encouraged to observe other dog-handling teams, and note observations. In an effort to support this and give each team undivided time with the instructor, please minimize chatting with each other while another dog team is working. In addition, chatting can be a distraction for some dogs, especially fearful or anxious dogs.
7. **Instruction will vary from team to team** based on the individual needs of each team. Some runs will take longer than others, or the search may be modified. Please know this is simply to provide the experience best suited to what that team needs to be successful. You can expect to get 2-4 runs, depending on the class goals and what the needs of your dogs are in any given class.
8. **To leash or not to leash?** The dogs will work on leash at first but likely eventually work off leash; you will be instructed which to use. Safety is always the first concern. Your dog should NEVER be off leash in between searches or in potty areas.
9. **The instructor may “rev up” or excite your dog.** Please hold ground and do not release the dog until instructed.
10. **If a dog solicits social contact** during the search, please ignore them.
11. **Please don't store food/toys at your chair in the search area** to limit distractions for the working dogs. Leave these things near your crating area (but make sure your dog doesn't have access to it!
12. **Be patient with your dog and support them.** Every dog has a different approach and different needs, and some take longer to catch on to the game than others. Celebrate your dog's unique qualities and try not to get frustrated. If you can continue to keep it fun for you *both* you will get there!

13. **Leave all obedience at the door**, including “NO”, or “Leave It”. If you need the dog to leave something during a search just quietly encourage the dog to move away. Be careful not to leash correct the dog. We’ll talk about why this is important in class.
14. **Please ask questions**, but know that some may be tabled due to the time limitations of classes or to devote undivided attention to the working team.
15. **Videotaping or photography** of your own dog is allowed during runs but may not be posted on the internet including, but not limited to, public access web sites, user groups, or social networking sites without permission from your K9 Nose Work instructor.

Red Bandana Dogs

A dog wearing a red bandana in class or at a National Association of Canine Scent Work (NACSW) event is meant to signal to others that the dog needs more space from other dogs when leaving and returning to the parking/crating area. This is one of the reasons for the general 10 feet between dogs and no meet and greets rule even though not all dogs are red bandana dogs. In K9 Nose Work, we respect our red bandana dogs and there is a culture of safe inclusion for these dogs; we do not shun these dogs. We all work together to create a **safe** place these dogs can enjoy the sport and have a meaningful life.

The activity of K9 Nose Work is something that almost all dogs can enjoy and we have found that the activity has helped many dogs with sensitivities improve tremendously - sometimes to the point where they can safely navigate even a trial environment. The activity is designed for each dog to work individually and rest safely in his crate between turns. Socializing during K9 Nose Work is only for us humans. However, the sport of K9 Nose Work will not be something that is appropriate for all dogs. Our searches are often real life environments. We can't control these environments as much as class environments can be controlled and surprises do frequently happen. Furthermore, dogs with human aggression issues or extreme environmental sensitivities may want to enjoy the activity privately, with a certified trainer. My primary goal is to keep your dog comfortable and safe - no dog enjoys being put in a situation where they feel it necessary to react. For some dogs this may mean private lessons are better and others may not be suitable for trials but can continue to play happily in classes or special events.

If you aren't sure if your dog is a red bandana dog or not, ask me prior to class!

We'll Begin With Boxes

Like with any training, we teach this in very small increments over time so the dog learns this game is fun and rewarding. For nose work, we begin with a simple game of hide and seek in a box. The dog will seek something we know he really wants: toy or food. He is rewarded when he finds it. He will only search boxes at first. If he practices this enough and is successful very frequently, he learns that hunting in boxes is fun and rewarding. The simplicity and highly rewarding game of hide and seek in boxes allows the dog to become familiar with the game to the point where it desires the GAME predominantly over the environment. Once you have that desire, you can use the boxes to transfer that to hunt to objects, rooms, fields, etc. Boxes are readily recognizable to the dog and are a great cue to the search game. They limit what the dog has to focus his search. They are cheap, portable and disposable and excellent at holding stuff!

What Am I Supposed to Do?

You'll learn more about your role in class. But it's important to understand that your job at first is to simply come along for the ride and support your dog. We need your dog to have the confidence to work and think independently and not rely on you for the answers. When it comes to sniffing our dogs *are* the experts! To do this you become practically invisible at first. As you both become more experienced, your relationship in this game will change and you will become true partners. For this reason, your job as a handler is to:

- Reward heavily and quickly at source – have a party in the box.
- Maintain a safe working environment (leashes, search area, search objects).
- Be neutral while your dog searches. Don't talk while your dog is working since we don't want the dog's attention on you.
- This is the only time you will ever hear your instructor tell you to "Leave your obedience at the door before a search." No, really! Dogs don't have to sit, stay, come or otherwise do any sort of obedience or manners *when they are searching*. And we don't correct a dog while he's working. Our goal is that our dogs work independently of us humans and do the job they are designed to do. They can't do their job (and won't) if they are focused on following our orders or worried about making a mistake.
- Release your dog when the instructor tells you to.
- Trust your dog. Your dog leads the hunt, don't assume you know the best process or place to search. Your dog is the sniffing expert!
- Never tell your dog where to find the hide or give him the answer. If your dog is struggling, we will adjust the *environment* so that he can discover the answer on his own. In this way he learns to solve problems on his own, independent of having a helping human. If you give him the answer he will always rely on you.

The most important rule to remember is to have fun!

Nose work is an activity that is, more than anything else, designed explicitly for the enjoyment of your dog. You're giving them the permission to use what they want to do most in life – sniff - *and* they get FABULOUS rewards for it. What better gift to give your dog?

Smart Dog Training Center

Facility Instructions

Smart Dog Training Center

910 Curtin St, Houston, TX 77018

[Google Map](#) | See next page for map and more detailed written directions

Please help me keep things clean and orderly so we continue to be welcome to train at Smart Dog.

- I have back-to-back classes all day at the building, so for your first time to Smart Dog, leave your dog in the car and come in the building for initial crating instructions.
- I strongly suggest you have a crate in the car that you can bring into the building with you every week, if needed. There are crates in the building, but they belong to others and not always available, so it's best to be prepared with your own. If you use an existing crate in the building, take out the bedding and use your own! I also suggest a crate cover if this helps your dog relax.

The crates that are in the building belong to individuals who train and don't want to have to bring a crate every time they train at the building or attend an event. Because we only have room for so many crates (and are at capacity now) everyone who has a crate there has agreed to share with people who come in and don't have a crate. So, if you use one of the crates and your dog tears up the matting or any other items surrounding the crate, common courtesy would be to let the owner know. Either contact them directly or leave a message on the crate that you will replace the damaged item.

- Parking is self explanatory, just please conserve space as we have a lot of people coming and going at the center.
- The entrance door is in the big garage bay.
- Potty area is also obvious. The usual leash and pick up after your dog rules apply, so please, please PICK UP AFTER YOUR DOG.
- Please stay off the agility equipment as I have rented the building only and don't have permission for that.
- There is a kitchen and a fridge so you can heat up food or beverages or keep them cool if you'll be there for several classes. There are snacks and drinks we are welcome to use, but if we are being pigs and using all the resources, let me know so we can help replenish.
- There's also a nice quiet living room with TV, game console and DVD player. The building also has free wi-fi. So if you have to wait between classes you can be comfortable and get useful things done, like bills or emails!

Smart Dog is near the center of Houston, off Loop 610 which will connect you to the main freeways to go north, south, east and west. Curtin Street can be hard to see from Shepherd Drive. A major stop-lighted intersection is W 43rd St / W Crosstimbers and there is a large Sears nearby that intersection. Curtin Street and Thornton Road is by the Gulf gas station, which is the easiest business to spot clearly. Here is a bird's eye view of the landmarks and side roads. The building is a large tan metal building that is gated along the front. The training center does not have a sign out front, so don't bother looking!

