Learning Circles

This is a skill that requires careful development as "good form" - or doing it correctly – is absolutely critical. We are going to teach the dog their "circuits" or going around. For any sheep or sheepballs work this must be a circle, in either direction, **WHERE THE DOG HOLDS A CONSISTENT DISTANCE**.

We do not want the dog circling close to you, or making an oval shape and diving inward in a spiral. The dog MUST hold their circumference of the circle.

This is achieved through 3 elements:

1.Recognising and following the cue to re-position

This is you turning the 90° patterns. You will repeat this with more flow, perhaps turn 270° – or even 360°

2. Moving at the correct speed

If you turn too fast, the dog will need to come close in around your legs and take the shortest route to capture the ball.

If you turn too slow the centrifugal elements will not keep the dog on their circuit (the circumference). This is how we shall widen the dog out at a later stage.

## 3. The reward must be delivered to meet the purpose of the circling

Your ball should be in the path, or further out of the circumference, slightly ahead of the dog. If the reward is delivered
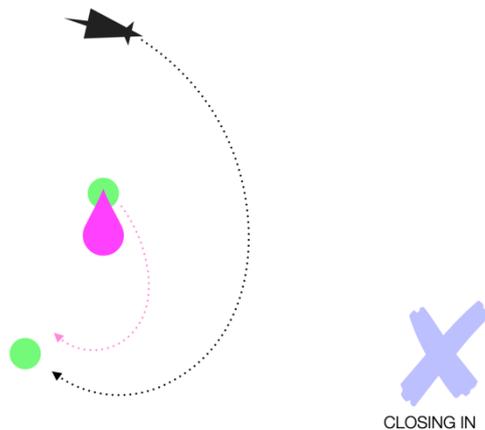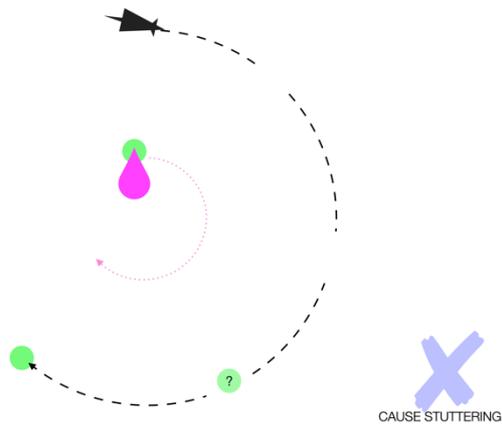
in the wrong place: too close and it will bring the dog in,

too slow: it is behind the dog, they will dog not gather good speed, or stutter and lose flow

too far ahead: will cause the dog to cut across and make a loop.

It needs to be ahead on the correct path, achievable at the correct speed

CAUSE STUTTERING

CLOSING IN
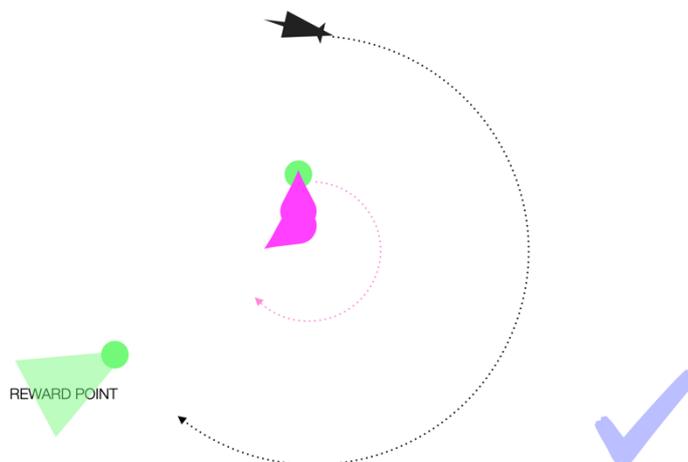
I have made a short video I recommend watching several times to pick out the points.

(Note: I use the pole to stop me falling over when picking up the ball, although he is aware of it also being a barrier to stealing the ball from me – at no time are we using poles to push the dog out)

The first circuit you can see he is "stuttering".

This is because he has been learning only quarter turns. A quarter turn does not require speed, just repositioning. Too fast and he would overrun the stopping point.

I use the hand held and throw rather than a kick

My kicking is quite inferior to the throwing. I do not recommend small toys swap between hands and feet, but these large balls cannot be mistaken as to where they are coming from.

It is by far greater importance that the reward point is accurate.

I turn well over one circuit

This is to ensure he is flowing around the correct, consistent circumference before the reward.

He will discrimination between:

hand held ball = flow around

ground ball = re-position for a quarter

Timing – I keep him in the corner of my eye, looking ahead to the destination, NOT at him. You will need to be able to turn, and be aware of his position, speed and movement. (Now you get why I carry a "steadying pole!")

It will be useful, but not essential to begin from a wait-be-ready position, but some dogs that may be a little sticky, you would begin when they are on the move, but make sure you do not ask for them to put the brakes on an change direction. Try to begin after they have relinquished the current ball.

You can also do this with the discs, if you throwing point is accurate – you have to be more aware of the wind.

https://vimeo.com/568380781/165bcaac33

What did I learn?

Not to leave the #2 ball on the floor it is a distraction

Not to leave the other dog at the window – yapping!

If you dog is learning to follow your body language that you are asking for re-positioning you can begin this activity.

Questions we may need to consider:

Do you think it matters which hand you throw with?

Is your dog showing a flow of equal quality in both directions?