

Tracking thru Drive



By Ed Frawley



Leerburg Kennels

Foreword

When you view this eBook in PDF format. Click on **BOOKMARKS** on the top left side of your PDF reader, these bookmarks are eBook chapters.

[Leerburg Kennel](#) and Video is owned by Ed Frawley.

Ed has owned German Shepherds (GSD) for over 45 years. Since 1978 he has bred over 350 litters of German working bloodline GSD's. His dogs work in law enforcement, as S&R dogs, as competition Schutzhund dogs, and as family companions and protectors.

Since 1980 Ed has produced over 120 dog training videos and DVD's. He was a police K-9 handler for 10 years, competed in several dog sports, including AKC obedience and Schutzhund. In addition he has built one of the top dog training supply businesses in the world.

If you go to the web site **Leerburg.com**® you will see that it has over 10,000 printed pages. The Leerburg Web Discussion board has over 10,000 registered members and over 120,000 posts in the archives. Learn to use our site search function.

Training Police Tracking Dogs “Tracking Through Drive” vs. “Foot Step Tracking”



[Information on our Level 1 Police Tracking Video](#)

[Information on our Level II III Police Tracking Video](#)

[Information on our video on How to Lay Tracks for a Police Service Dog](#)

There are two different training styles being practiced in North America to train police tracking dogs. The first is called “Foot Step Tracking” (FST), and the second is called “Tracking

Through Drive" (TTD). The vast majority of American police service dogs (99.9%) are trained in FST. This article will explain to the reader why I believe TTD is more productive. It will also explain why FST is so widely used in America.

Let me explain what FST is. This is the style of tracking used in the sport of Schutzhund, or in the WPO DPO Police Dog Certifications. This training is done using food that is dropped along a 400 to 800 yard track. There is usually a ball left at the end of the track that's used as an additional motivator. The dog is expected to track at a slow walk and stay within a couple of feet of the actual footsteps of the track layer. This is a very precise form of tracking but also a very slow method of tracking.

**Training Tracking Dogs for
Police and S&R Dogs**

\$65.00 +s&h



2 Hours Long

If you are a canine handler whose dog is trained in FST you already know that your "tracking find ratio" on actual suspects is less than 5%. Notice that I said "track find ratio" and not "area search

find ratio." These are 2 different exercises. The difference is a track is done on line with the dog following the path that the suspect takes no matter what the wind direction. An area search, on the other hand, is usually done off leash and into the wind. The handler gets down wind of the suspect and works back into the wind until his dog picks up scent. At that point the dog works the scent cone which leads to the suspect. The dog should always be trained to track before it is trained in area searches. If there is an option to either track or do an area search, tracking is the preferred method to locate people.

If a K-9 officer and his FST partner arrive on scene just minutes after a suspect has escaped through a perimeter, the officer will never catch the bad guy by tracking unless the suspect goes to ground within 1,000 yards. FST tracking dogs simply cannot track fast enough to make up enough distance to catch someone that keeps moving.

It is also physically impossible to expect a foot step tracking dog to follow a 3 to 5 mile long track. This style of work takes too much concentration on the dog's part. The dogs begin to peter out at about 1,000 yards, long before they have traveled even a fraction of most rural tracks.

If you are a canine handler whose dog is trained in TTD you know that your overall find ratio on

tracks is close to 50% and that if the suspect is loose in a rural area and stays rural your find ratio goes up over 90%. TTD is an entirely different training concept. In TTD the dog is allowed to follow its natural instincts and run along a track. The handler runs behind on leash.

The concept of TTD training is to expect the dog to over shoot the corners because he is moving with such speed. Even though a dog can smell scent for a long way past a corner (in many cases 50 to 100 yards past the corner) he is trained to give a "negative" when he is 20 feet past the corner.

A "negative" is an indication of track loss. The most common form of a negative takes place when the dog is running along with his nose to the ground and all of a sudden the nose comes up off the ground and the dog begins to circle.

When the handler sees the dog give a "negative," his job is to get the dog back on the track as quickly as possible. He can either circle the dog to cut the next leg of the track and continue on, or the handler can back up along the track to a point where the dog actually had scent and then help his dog locate the turn.

The motivator for TTD is the fact that from the very first day of training there is always a person at the end of the track. When a dog gets out of a squad and gets into his tracking harness he knows for sure there is someone out there for

him to find. His motivator is the possibility of a fight at the end of the track.

Notice that I said “the possibility” of a fight. This does not mean that the dog is allowed to get a bite on every training track. It does mean that there will always be someone at the end of the track and occasionally that person will fight with the dog. This possibility of a fight is what keeps the tough dogs going when a lesser dog will tire and quit.

Track Laying for Police Tracking Dogs

\$30.00 +s&h



55 Minutes Long

TTD was developed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Since 1935 TTD is the only training method the RCMP has used at their Police Dog Training Center in Alberta. Over the past 18 months I have spent 3 1/2 weeks at their school filming TTD tracking. After producing three training videos on this subject I have become a convert. If a police department is serious about increasing the effectiveness of their canine unit, they need to learn TTD.

In 1993, on my first trip to Alberta, the instructors took me out and showed me a young dog in Level I training (there are three Levels to certify at before graduating) we followed a 5 KM unknown track in the country that was 45 minutes old. The dog tracked at a dead run. This dog has been at the school for about 6 weeks and had 54 training tracks. There were 5 or 6 road crossings, 4 articles, a dead end where the track layer doubled back and jumped off to one side and more corners than I could count. I was only able to keep up with the handler for the first third of the track. In 35 years of dog training I had never seen anything like this. I was an instant believer.

In 1994, on my second trip to Alberta I saw a number of dogs in Level III training follow 1 1/2 mile, 25 minute old, unknown tracks right through residential neighborhoods during the middle of the day. These tracks went down alleys where dogs were barking behind fences and the dog tracked right past them. I saw dogs flush cats, track right by garbage cans, ignore dog waste in the yards, and track through groups of kids playing in back yards. These dogs still had a month of training left before they certified out of Level III and graduated from the school. I could not believe it.

So while there is no question that TTD has a 58 year proven track record that produces 10 times the results that FST produces, TTD faces an uphill battle to become the accepted training style here

in America. The main reason for this is the police dog vendors that supply departments with handler training and dogs.

I have to say that before I went to Canada I was in the FST boat along with everyone else. I thought FST was the “only” way to train a police tracking dog. I took a 25 page outline on an FST tracking video with me to Alberta on my first trip and threw it in the garbage the night I saw the 5 KM track.

The problem vendors face is that they have traditionally supplied imported dogs with either Schutzhund style training or dogs with the Dutch KNPV training. Both of these dog sports have inherent flaws in them that result in the dogs not being able to deal with TTD.

To begin with, I believe that Schutzhund is a great dog sport, but it is FST. It is also not uncommon for Schutzhund trainers in Europe to “force track” their dogs. Force tracking takes the drive right out of a dog. Once force tracked, a dog will never be trained in TTD. At the very least the amount of restraint placed on a dog in Schutzhund or WPO tracking restricts the dog to the point where an inexperienced handler will probably not be able to train the dog in TTD. The RCMP has not been able to take a Schutzhund titled dog and retrain it in TTD.

KNPV, on the other hand, is a Dutch sport that does not have any tracking at all, but it does have

an area search exercise in the woods. This creates another problem, a dog trained in building search and/or area search before it is trained to track will almost never be able to be trained in TTD. The RCMP has also never tracking certified a KNPV trained dog at their school.

So not only are service dog vendors faced with a learning process on this new style of tracking, they are also faced with coming up with a new source of dogs for departments that want to get involved in TTD. This is going to be difficult because this work takes an extraordinary dog. What works best is actually finding young dogs from all working bloodlines with no training but a lot of socializing. These dogs not only require good defensive drive (which can be difficult to spot at that young age), they also have to have a really strong prey drive, the kind of prey drive that we want to see in our narcotics dogs.

If a vendor wants to train dogs that will certify in Level III tracking, he must be prepared to put 100 to 120 tracks on a dog. This is an awful lot of time and work. I have a great deal of respect for a vendor that would put this kind of work into dogs that he sells. I will tell you one thing; departments are not going to be buying dogs for \$7,000 and getting 8 weeks of handler training and a Level III certified dog. No vendor can afford to put that kind of work into a dog and then sell it for so little money. If they do, they will not be in business very long.

I believe we will begin to see a few vendors offering these dogs, but the price is going to be above the \$10,000 range. I also think we will see departments going out and buying young selection tested dogs and doing the tracking (and maybe the training) themselves. The bottom line is that a young, untitled dog with no training is cheaper than a titled import. But a word of caution on selection testing: it is called "buyers beware." We are looking for extraordinary dogs. The RCMP goes through an average of three dogs for every handler that graduates from the school. Maybe this will be the subject of a future article.

Training Police Tracking Dogs

\$65.00 +s&h



2 Hours Long

What I think will happen in this country is the development of a few really good tracking teams at various departments in each state. These will be highly motivated teams with great dogs that will build their reputation through their find ratios. When something serious happens in other localities, these teams will be requested by neighboring departments.

This is the direction that tracking has taken in Europe. The basic patrol dog coming out of police dog school is trained in FST to pass a WPO, DPO, or PSP certification. When something really serious happens, they don't call for the basic dog, they have their special dogs that are called out. These are their super tracking dogs. In Canada, every RCMP dog (and there are only 110 of them) is a super tracking dog. It's not uncommon for an RCMP handler to have to drive 150 to 200 miles and then track and catch a felony suspect. It happens every day in Canada. With work, it could be happening here in the States.

After this article was written there was an article that appeared in Dog Sports Magazine that tried to justify foot step tracking. Trying to justify foot step tracking is foolish. My response to the article is as follows:

Police Dog Tracking Through Drive A Response to a "Foot Step Tracker"

Over the years I have written a number of training articles, but my article on police tracking through drive (TTD) has produced more interest than all of the other articles combined. For the

last two months I have been getting calls or letters on a daily basis. Every single contact has been a positive response from officers telling me it's about time someone tells them why the old foot step tracking (FST) does not work.

The one and only negative comment on this style of tracking came in the May issue of Dog Sports. Joe Laney tried to justify foot step tracking (FST) for police service dogs. As far as I am concerned it is very important that every young K-9 handler understands that there is no justification for FST in police service dogs. Joe is a nice guy but he is way off base here. I think the problem is that Joe only read my article and did not watch the three videos that I have produced with the RCMP on this subject. Joe has never been to Canada and seen the TTD in action and he just doesn't understand this new training system.

I am going to address Joe's arguments against TTD in an item by item fashion. I would like to do this in a fashion that I hope is not taken personally by Joe. It is certainly not meant that way.

To begin with Joe says that TTD is too fast for almost all cops. He says that "K-9 cops are physically not going to go out and run 5 miles behind their tracking dogs." I agree with Joe on this point. Most K-9 cops are out of shape and can not run long distances. But just because we have the wrong handler behind the dog does not mean that the training system is flawed.

To begin with, a FST tracking dog is never going to be able to follow a 5 mile track. In his article Joe admits that after 1,400 paces his own FST dog's temperature goes up to 106 degrees on warm days. So how could it ever track 5 miles? The answer is "it can't." But 5 miles with a TTD dog is not that big of a deal. The fact that a handler can't keep up with his dog is not the training systems fault. I am 47 years old and had knee surgery last year after an injury sustained while running behind my police dog. At this point I am not sure if I will ever recuperate to the point where I can continue this style of training. Just because I may not be physically able to keep up with my dog does not mean I should switch to FST. I am currently training a younger officer on my sheriff's department to run a dog. I will continue to work my drug dog and area search dog.

Joe's second point concerned officer safety with tracking at this speed. If I led someone to believe that a K-9 officer should run behind his dog on a swat call, it was a mistake and I did not mean to imply that. You would have to have a death wish to be so foolish. On the other hand 99% of the normal K-9 calls are not swat calls, in those cases you run.

In Canada the RCMP has dedicated ERT teams (Emergency Response Teams or Swat Teams). Many of their ERT teams will not go out without a dog. They have trained with K-9 and developed their own tactics to work together. The RCMP

dogs are so good at article identification that they naturally point out booby traps. In reality, what is a booby trap if not an article left by the suspect?

In non-swat calls the K-9 officer needs to move quickly if he wants to make up distance and catch a suspect that's 15 or 20 minutes ahead of him on a track. Many times it's a good idea to take a backup officer with a long gun, but this needs to be an officer that can run and has had training with the dog team. He needs to understand the tactics of the dog team as it moves along the track. If the track turns out to be a long haul, it's a simple fact that most backup officers can't keep up. They don't have the advantage of the dog pulling them along.

As far as Joe's "Man Trackers" are concerned, we don't have any in Wisconsin or Minnesota. My feeling is a "Man Tracker" is a rare item. I don't have any experience with these people. I have heard about them but I know that the average police department or sheriff's department does not have access to "Man Trackers". Besides, when someone starts to claim that they can track better than a dog, I start to question the training of the dog.

The question of officer safety vs. speed has come up before. I have a couple of standard comments to people who are concerned with officer safety on normal police tracks. First - I ask them when are they an easier target - Running or Walking

Slowly behind Their Dog? Second, if the danger of a normal police track overly concerns you, it is time to get out of K-9.

I think the RCMP would be inclined to argue with Joe when he implies a lack of guns in Canada. Don't kid yourself; the bad guys in Canada have guns. Many use sawed off shot guns rather than pistols. If I had a choice I would take a hit from a pistol any day before a shot gun.

Joe made a comment on TTD dogs missing articles on a track because of the speed. Article training is something that needs to be done correctly. It makes no difference if it's TTD or FST. If the training is done poorly a dog is going to miss articles in either style of training. You see this all the time on the TV show "Cops" where the dogs can't find a gun thrown in a back yard. I always laugh at this because a gun is the easiest article in the world to find. Guns stink like hell to a dog.

Bite Training Puppies

\$65.00 +s&h



2 Hours Long

Article training is a very big part of the RCMP program. It goes way beyond just article indication on a track. Their dogs go through small article training (similar to KNPV work) and alley searches. In small article training the dog must indicate on items the size of buttons and bullets in a given area. In alley searches they have to indicate on articles lying next to garbage cans and up against back yard fences. They must learn to ignore dogs that are barking on the other side of the fence. While this training is done "off a track" it still improves a dogs indications "on the track." What I am trying to say here is that there is a lot more to article training than most K-9 Officers know. I am currently working on a training video for article indication.

In my Level One training video you will see a solid black dog tracking in an open wheat field. There is a 40 to 50 mile per hour wind blowing across the track. This is a young dog with less than 50 training tracks. It is following the track about 40 feet off to the side of the track (because of the cross wind). When it gets to an article it comes back to the actual track, indicates the article and then goes on. If you listened to FST trainers you would expect this dog to miss these articles. Dogs with the correct training don't miss articles if there is scent available.

Joe made a comment that in FST tracking, the dogs track with closed mouths so they can concentrate and in TTD they track with an

open mouth. He also said that “if a dog’s mouth is open when it reaches a corner, it will likely miss the corner.” This is a widely held belief of SCHUTZHUND trainers and it is wrong.

Let me quickly explain the concept of corner training in TTD. Under the right conditions, a dog has the ability to smell a track 100 yards past a corner. In TTD training the dog is taught that even though he can still smell the track leg way past the turn it is unacceptable to go more than 20 or 30 feet past a turn before he gives a negative and starts to circle. This is the “KEY” to corner training. The dog’s nose is sensitive enough to differentiate the declining level of scent. It’s our job to teach the dog to indicate corners at 20 or 30 feet past a turn.

Tracking Thru Drive in America vs. Canada

There have been discussions on the PD-L about my training articles and videos that I did with the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). Some people think it’s nothing new (they are wrong), some people think you should do foot step tracking and tracking through drive (they are also wrong).

There are some points on Tracking through Drive training for service dogs that the RCMP uses that

will not work in the States. I have seen someone mention on the PD-L that it takes a special dog. This is very true, it does. The RCMP has a difficult time selection testing dogs. They look for dogs with strong prey drive and good nerves. They also have to have a dog with a defensive drive that can be naturally balanced with prey. From those they finally select - they wash 50% out. So this is not an easy thing to define because even half the time the pros make a mistake.

This would not be done here in America. What canine supervisor is smart enough or has the authority to wash a dog out of training (after 4 or 5 weeks) because the dog had 4 days of not wanting to track? Maybe I should say "What agency has enough money to allow this to happen?" Maybe the federal government can afford these practices. More and more I am beginning to feel that the FBI or some other federal agency needs to set up a training facility like the Police Dog Training Center in Alberta. Up there the Federal government funds these RCMP dogs, while cities and municipalities have their own programs - but few of these have the standards of the RCMP.

Anyway, what happens in Canada is if a dog has 4 or 5 days where he will not follow a country track and they are certain that he is not sick. They drop the dog from the program. If the dog does not have the drive to do this work they give him away as a pet and start with a new dog. We just can't

do that down here - but this is also what makes the RCMP canine program what it is.

I have had extensive conversations with the instructors up there about food tracking, Schutzhund tracking or foot step tracking - what ever you want to call it. All of the instructors have over 10 years of street K-9 experience in addition to years of instructor experience at the school in Alberta. These guys don't argue theory - they explain reality. There explanations come from experience. Every instructor agrees - you can't do both foot step tracking and tracking through drive. You can not foot step track a dog through Sch III (or OPI III or DPO III) and at the same time expect the dog to track through drive in police work. This is especially true if a dog has had any force in the track (which is stupid for service dogs - anyone that force tracks a service dog is on a one way road to failure on the street).

If a handler feels that his dog needs force to get over a hump, we have 2 things happening. First we have the wrong handler - trainer. Second we have the wrong dog. If you are a new trainer and you have a sport person telling you to consider forcing a dog through a problem, forget the help. You don't need this kind of advice.

The association that the dog needs to track has to be the knowledge that there is a human at the end of every track and not food. If a dog has drive and the training is started right he will track 500

to 600 yard straight leg human tracks the first day. There is no place in track training for food on a service dog. Sport dogs and DPO dogs are a different story. But if your goal is to get a dog that can track a 5 to 8 mile tracks in the country it will never be a food trained dog. The only dog that will ever do this is a dog that's doing it with his heart not his stomach.

I laugh with people or at people on this topic. I ask how many pounds of food do you put on an 8 mile track? I am thinking maybe 20 or 30 pounds would do a reasonable job.

If a trainer wants to play with puppies and food to scent associate up to a year of age by using food that can't hurt. If you slow the dog to make sure he finds food - that hurts.

When I explain "tracking through drive" it goes like this: this is a method of tracking where the supposition is the dog is going to lose the track because of the speed. We expect him to overshoot at corners. The training comes in at "teaching the negatives". Reading the negative is the key to a handler. A negative is when my dog gives a track loss. Some dogs lift their head, some just give a slight head turn (you learn your dogs negative on known track - so you know where the turn is and read the response of your dog). You have to be a good enough handler to read the negative on the un-known track or you are lost.

The goal of the negative training is to make a dog give you the negative within 20 feet of the turn. When the dog does this there is little time lost on reacquiring the track. This is a key point of training.

So if you expect a track loss when you start tracking, and you expect a negative within 20 -30 feet of the turn you are going to catch people.

What I say to the old "NAY SAYERS" is this isn't theory. This is simply the only way to track a service dog. This goes on every day all over Canada.

There is also a group of people who say that this is nothing new. They say that SR (search Rescue) people have been training trailing dogs for years. It's easy to be flippant. But I talk to a lot of SR people. I have never found one who has tracking down to the science that the Canadians have.

Getting out and following a trail with speed is 5% of what this system is all about. Just because SR people run trails does not mean they are using this training. If they all did, there would be a lot more people found and more SR organizations would have better reputations than they now do. Don't get me wrong. Not all are bad, but many hang their shingle out and call themselves experts and SR after one or two seminars. I am sorry but this is wrong.

Basic Dog Obedience

\$40.00 +s&h



4 Hours Long

In Canada the SR can not be called out unless they are certified on Level 1 RCMP tracks by the RCMP. I would hazard a guess that 75% or more of the dogs in America would never be allowed to work in Canada. So we don't want to be using these people (the 75% anyway) as our authority figures.

There are some groups in this country that are diligent trainers. They do a fantastic job at SR. They have serious training standards and let their records speak for themselves. Those are the people novice trainers need to listen to. It's the old story, to hell with theoretical arguments - put your dog's abilities where your mouth is. That's what the RCMP does. That's what makes them so great.

The bloodhound people are another group that makes all of these crazy claims about their dog's abilities. Dogs following scent down roadways

for 7 miles when the suspect was inside a car and the track is 24 hours old. Give me a break. These claims are asinine. I would be embarrassed if someone I train with ever made a claim like that. The most common claim is “this track is too fresh for a bloodhound, we need to wait 3 or 4 hours for it to age so the bloodhound can follow it.” Sounds like a training problem to me.

The big difference in how the RCMP train and everyone else is in the small details not the main concept. It’s the small details (details in training and details in tactics) that make the difference between success and failure, between catching the suspect or finding the lost person and not finding them and having to come up with excuses why the dog couldn’t do the job today. I can write a book on excuses. I used a lot of them before I learned how to train tracking dogs.

There have been a few comments on article identification in this tracking on the PD-L. If the well trained dog can smell the article he will come back to it. Never forget the main goal. That is to catch the bad guy; it’s not to find articles. If the dog finds evidence along the track, that’s great. That’s why we train for it. But if he blows by evidence, the K-9 officer should always try and back track after a suspect has been found (assuming the time and manpower will allow it). This is what the RCMP recommends and I have done it a number of times - it works. Many times

the dog will get the article on the way back. They learn very quickly what is expected.

The American police that don't have the skill to train tracking through drive, or that don't have the dogs that are capable of learning this method are forced to become area search dogs or foot step trackers. But remember - foot step trackers only catch 3 to 4% of those suspects they go after. The RCMP catches 50% of all the people they go after. How can anyone argue these numbers?

I was talking to a friend last week (an RCMP handler). They have found that the longer a dog spends tracking in the sterile environment of the country (before being moved to the urban-suburban areas of level II III (where there are more distractions) - the better the life long success of that dog. It's in Level II III where the distractions are added. So in a nut shell, this means the dogs learn to track in level I. If the dog is rushed through this country training it never becomes as good of a tracker as it would have been had it stayed in the country a little longer. The RCMP like their dogs to do 60 tracks in the country.

Big city Police handlers fall on their face when they think "I work in the city," so why spend all this time in the country tracking. In reality, these guys have the most difficult tracking conditions and therefore should spend the most time in the country training.

The long and short of the entire thing is that anyone that is in SR or Police Service dog training should be doing tracking through drive if their dog has the talent to do it. Don't ask me how to select the dogs that have this talent - I can't do it.

If you want to read another articles on this, read [Tracking thru Drive vs. Foot Step tracking](#). If you want to learn to do this training, buy these videos:

[Training Police Tracking Dogs - Level I - with the RCMP](#)

[Training Police Tracking Dogs - Level II III - with the RCMP](#)

[Training Track Laying for Police Service Dogs - with the RCMP](#)

Questions and Answers on Tracking

Search & Rescue Tracking, Police Tracking and Sport Tracking



I try and answer every question I receive on dog training. I may often come across as a little on the blunt side, (some may call it brash). That is because I consider myself an advocate for dogs and not dog handlers. I am an advocate for common sense dog training and not the latest fad that appears on the horizon. Good dog training is not rocket science. It's common sense.

1. [When I start tracking through drive must I have the dog track me first?](#)

2. Is it necessary to always give a bite at the end of every track in TTD?
3. Our 5 month old dog isn't interested in tracking. What can I do?
4. I'm not a police officer but my local department asked me to track an arson suspect last week. I didn't do it because my dog doesn't have experience on night tracks. What would you recommend?
5. I have a dog that has no interest in tracking. What can I do to train him?
6. Is the video you did on Competition Tracking filmed in America?
7. Who is the instructor on the video Competition Tracking?
8. Is this video much different than the Dildei tracking video?
9. How do you eliminate food used in training a competition tracking dog?
10. What kind of food do you recommend using on the track for sport?
11. It's winter here in Canada. My dog tracks too fast. Should I slow it down and what

about tracking in snow?

12. When can I start my puppy on tracking?
13. A good idea I just heard to help trainers with new handlers that don't praise enough during tracking training.
14. When I re-train my dog in TTD how far back in training do I go?
15. Does the level 2 & 3 training video teach a dog to circle at the end of a dead end?
16. When should I consider looking at level 2 & 3 (urban/suburban) tracking?
17. Your video shows young dogs tracking with the wind at their back. Most trainers I have talked to track to the wind. Can you tell me why it should be done your way?
18. I have a 1 year old dog that is being trained in TTD. We are following the advice you give in your Level 1 video. My dog runs the entire track as fast as she can. Do I need to slow her down using force?
19. Is it better to start tracking training with a dog that is younger?
20. I am looking for a K-9 German Shepherd

with a Sch III title.

21. Can you train a dog in footstep tracking and then move to TTD?
22. Can a dog be trained in S&R and Personal Protection?
23. I want to train my police dog to track, but I don't want to use food...
24. My dog becomes nervous, extremely anxious and out of control in strange places. How can I break this so I can do S&R work?
25. My dog tracks, but when I down him on articles, he's always looking at to throw the ball and won't restart the track. What can I do?
26. What is your opinion on the tie out test used by many S&R groups?
27. A local fire department bought a young dog for S&R. It's very fearful around strangers. Do you think they made a mistake?
28. Is tracking thru drive stressful on the dog?
29. My two dogs pull much too hard when

tracking. What can I do?

30. I would like to tell you the results of my purchasing your tracking tapes.
31. Can you help explain how to train the article search to a police dog?
32. My dog has a problem keeping her nose to the ground, she is more interested in prairie dogs and coyote scat. What can I do?
33. I currently own 2 rots. I have joined the Rot Rescue Club and will be taking in 2 new rots. Do you have any advice?
34. I have a 6-month old female that I want to train in S&R. How would you recommend that I proceed?
35. My patrol dog urinates a lot on the track. He has done this when he is very close to a suspect and in my opinion he knows they are there. What can I do to stop this?
36. What is your opinion on using food to train a sport tracking dog?
37. I have a very high drive sport dog. He has scored very high in Sch I, but I am having a problem slowing him on the track. All

the methods suggested to me have not worked. What would you recommend?

38. I have been trying to teach my service to track using food drops and a pile of food at the end of a 20 yard track. I have some problems. Can you help me?
39. My new police dog lifts his leg all the time on the track. My voice correction does not seem to faze him. What should I do?
40. When should I start articles on my track and should I introduce the articles on the track or off the track?
41. What is your opinion of using a TOY at the end of a track to motivate a dog in tracking training?
42. I am a little confused on the method to use for my Schutzhund tracking dog. Should I use only food drops in the footprint or a food drag?
43. My dog has some issues with articles on the track. There are times he will not indicate and then when he does indicate he wants to CHARGE out of the "down position" after the indication is made. What can I do?

44. I live in the UK. My 2 1/2 year old police dog was started on area search before his tracking was finished. Now I want to train him in "tracking through drive" and he is missing corners.
45. My dog has problems tracking cement. It does very well on vegetation. What can I do?
46. The female I bought crawls on her belly when I take her to track. What can I do?
47. What should a non-K9 officer do if bitten by a police service dog?
48. I am an Australian K9 handler. I have read your articles on Hard Surface Tracking we do scent discrimination here in my department.
49. My dog has no food drive. Can you help me?

[For More Q&A on Tracking](#)

1. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I do not have someone I trust to read my dog properly when I first start tracking him. Can I not start him tracking a stranger with me handling the dog?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

The first tracks in tracking through drive are straight leg tracks that are 500 to 600 yards long. There is little to no handling involved. If you set the track up properly you will be in a position where you can watch the entire track and see any problems as they develop.

The fact is that is a dog learns at a young age what the word track means (which is put you nose to the ground and look for something) it may not be necessary to start on handler tracks. The RCMP buys adult selection tested police dogs - they do not do any puppy training so they do not have the advantage of this.

If you are forced into a limited period of time to finish a service tracking dog and you do not have the luxury of taking your time to train, you will need to start on handler tracks. Few dogs have the tracking drive to follow stranger's tracks from day one.

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Training a Competition Tracking Dog

\$65.00 +s&h



2 Hours Long

2. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Is it necessary to always give a bite at the end of every track in Tracking thru Drive (TTD)?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

This is something that is really misunderstood about TTD.

It's not necessary to always give a bite at the end of every the track. The fact is that most of the RCMP tracks that have bites at the end are "prey bites" that involve little to no defense or stress. The concept is to put PEOPLE at the end of the track. I have used my kids and my kid's friends. I will give them a ball or a hot dog or something that the dog really likes. The idea is to build drive and let him know there is always a PERSON out there to find.

If there was serious protection work at the end of

every track there would be a concern of making a dog a little too aggressive for S&R work.

An exception to this rule is the specialty dogs that are used in HARD SURFACE TRACKING (in Holland and other European Countries) are dogs that have a superior genetic ability to track do not need people at the end of every track. These dogs have so much drive to track they will do it for toys.

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3. QUESTION ON S & R TRACKING:

Ed,

I have a 5 mo. old GSD female named Dixie. I have had her for about a month now. Dixie is already about the size of our 2 yr old GSD Sandy.

When we got Dixie, we put her in with the other GSD and Rott. They get along great. Question is, I want to train Dixie in SAR work like our other GSD, and Dixie does not want to pay attention to me. My husband does not want Dixie in house, so how can I bond with her without having her in the house?

Our jobs also hinder the idea of having pooches in the house. I spend as much time with her as possible, but it doesn't seem like it is working. I am considering getting a personal obedience trainer to help Dixie and I. Dixie has an excellent

play drive, which is one reason why we chose her for SAR work. When I work with Dixie, I walk her away from kennel and other dogs to eliminate distractions. This still doesn't seem to work. I'm running out of ideas, please help.

Tiffany

ANSWER TO S & R TRACKING QUESTION:

My obvious question would be why do you need another dog? It would seem like you have enough irons in the fire for your current life style.

You need to change the way this dog is housed. If it can not be in the house, it needs to be kept in a separate pen and not allowed to have social contact with the other dogs when you are not there. This dog looks to the other dogs (not you) and her buddies. This needs to stop and the only way to do it is through separate pens. If this is not possible then get a dog crate and crate the dog when you are at work. For an adult dog this should not be a problem. Just do not feed her before you leave and then stick her in the crate.

There is a small possibility that your dog can not smell properly. This can be easily checks by you and your husband taking the dog to a new place in the country. You go out and hide in a field (where the dog can not see you). Make sure the wind is blowing from you into the dog's nose (you are up wind of the dog). When your husband gets the dog out and walks it towards

you, we will see the dog get into your odor cone. On a day with a slight breeze, this will be some distance from you (it can be as much as several hundred yards down to 50 yards). If the dog has a nose problem it's not going to react to your odor cone.

If you separate the dog into its own private pen, then you need to obedience train the dog. This is going to improve the bond and teach the dog to work for you. My personal feeling is that you would be better off with my [Basic Dog Obedience](#) video than a personal trainer. Take the dog as far as you can yourself and then if there are still problems seek help. But at this stage a personal trainer is putting the cart before the horse.

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4. QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

I am not a police officer. Our local department asked me to track an arson suspect last week. I did not do it because my dog does not have experience on night tracks. What would you recommend?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

I do not agree with a civilian volunteering to track felony suspect. It's a bad policy for departments to ask people like you to come out and do this work. It's a dangerous thing to get involved with. If people want to get involved at this level they should get into police work, go through the police academy, get state certified and learn how to do the work.

Now, to answer your question. If you have 50 or 60 tracks into your dog you can start a few night tracks. Humans make much more of this than dogs do. Tracking at night is not a big deal for them. While I have never read any research on a dog's night vision, I believe they have much better eyes than we do at night. I have used \$6,000.00 military night vision goggles to track suspects with my police dog. I have been out a number of times when it's clouding and zero light. It's so dark that you could not see someone that is 5 or 10 feet from you in the woods. The dogs can run around and they never run into a tree.

So my point is that if you are doing unknown tracks with confidence, then you are ready to throw in a few night tracks.

I think the issue here is that if you do decide to do this work, as a civilian, you need to make sure that the officers that come with you on a track are very physically fit. Most cops are not in good enough shape to keep up to a K9 handler running a dog. People underestimate how much a dog pulling a handler down a track helps the handler run. It's like being attached to a sled dog, they pull you along. The back up officers do not have this advantage and usually can not keep up.

If you run away from your protection (backup), things can go bad real quick if you run up on a desperate armed suspect. Especially when you do not have a dog that will protect you and you do not have the training and equipment to handle the situation.

Stick with your S&R work for lost people. That's where your services are best used.

If you need additional advice on this - read the following email I got from one of my puppy customers (Doug Hunter) who is a Deputy Sheriff:

Last spring I had what I call a "wake up track." A highway patrol trooper was arresting a DUI driver and the guy ran from the trooper on foot. I was called to track the guy and did so. We tracked at night in the rain for about 3/4 mile in a semi residential area.

I tracked right up to an old barn with a crawl space under it. The guy was hiding under the barn. During the track my back up officers had fell behind (the dog pulling me helps) so I was alone when I found the guy. At the time my mind set was "this guys is just a drunk who wants to get away" I gave my commands to the guy to come out from under the barn--then BANG!

The guy had taken a pistol out and shot himself in the head. It turned out that he was driving someone else's car and had given the trooper a phony name. There were two B&E warrants for the guy I was chasing.

So it turned out that the drunk who was just avoiding a DUI arrest was actually an armed felon who could have chosen to shoot it out with me or other officers who were involved. Exactly why he decided to kill himself I have no idea.

I do not think some people know how close you can be to a suspect and the dog not know he is there. In this case the dog let me know where the guy was but I have had case's (like you) with guys in trees or just hiding in a spot were the wind is not in the dogs favor and your right on top of them before you know it.

While the night time tracking of suspects is exciting & rewarding--it is also very dangerous. You never know what is on the end of the track.

Doug Hunter

Here is a second email I received concerning this issue of civilians doing felony tracks for police departments:

Ed,

I read your response to the S&R handler whose local Police Dept. wanted him to run a track for them on a felon. That to me seems very questionable at best. I will relate something along the lines of Deputy Hunter's story.

Last May I had a track of a party who was driving through yards in a new subdivision in our city. While doing this a neighbor called and an off duty officer just coming home from a part time job (We have take home cars) was basically on top of the call and got into a short pursuit with the vehicle. The driver and passenger drove into a construction sight and got stuck in the mud. Upon getting stuck the 2 suspects bailed from the vehicle and ran. The off duty officer pursued the driver but lost him in a wood line between the subdivision he was in and a more established (built up) subdivision. Once loosing the suspect he stopped and called for a K9 as it was determined the car was stolen.

At the time I was approximately 15 miles away on the opposite side of the city. I was able to jump onto the 4 lane limited access highway and make it their in approx. 12 minutes. A good perimeter and been set up by our patrol officers and the dog tracked the suspect into the older adjoining subdivision and indicated that the suspect had jumped a privacy

fence and by his indication I felt he was in this yard. Myself and the original pursuing officer (he went as my back up) went to the yard and gave a verbal warning. We received no response so I cut the dog off leash (Still in his harness) and let him do an area search of the yard. Within 30 seconds he indicated on a shed. I called the dog from the shed and gave a verbal warning for anyone in the shed to come out. I got no response. I along with the dog approached the only doors to the shed, which were opposite opening doors that came together in the middle. As I slowly opened the door the suspect was just inside the door and slammed the other door into me and knocked me off balance. A struggle then ensued for my gun. Fortunately I was able to keep it down as it was fired. It struck the dog who at this point had engaged the suspect. Fortunately the dog kept in the fight and he and I along with the back up were able to subdue the suspect. One other fortunate aspect is that the bullet struck the dog at a downward angle in the harness causing him only a minor wound. He was able to come back to work in 13 days.

My point in telling this story is not to tell a war story, but just to reiterate your point that you NEVER know what is going to happen. Fortunately for me I had a dog that stayed in the fight despite being shot. Also you can't always control the situation. As a Police Officer there are certain risks that have to be taken. You try to minimize them through training and tactics, but there is an element of risk there.

The other point is if the unfortunate happened my family would receive Federal, state and pension money if I were killed. As a civilian in an S&R club I am not sure what benefits there would be.

My last point on this is that most times that a Police K9 is used it is for a suspect who is desperate to get away. If they weren't they would have surrendered in the 1st place. Ed, these are just some thoughts of mine that I wanted to convey as I think you were right on the money with that advice.

Thanks,

Steve Noonan

Ed's Response:

So with all of this said, I would strongly suggest S&R people who are considering doing police tracks think long and hard before they jump into the woods without proper training. Things can go from fun and exciting to drop dead dangerous and dirty in about 2 seconds.

Regards,
ED Frawley

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5. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I have a dog that has no interest in tracking. What can I do to train him? Even when he is not fed and we use hot dogs and food it is put in plain sight but he does not leave the pad. What can be done to get him started?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Dogs are going to track for food or for the love or drive of following scent. Obviously food is “out” with this dog. You can check his scenting ability with handler tracks - where a stranger holds the dog and you run off in the woods. From the sound of your e-mail, this is not going to make much of a difference with this dog.

To be brutally honest, my advice is to sell the dog or just keep it as a pet. If the dog has no drive to track why try and train it to track. It’s going to be

a hassle from day one. You can't make a working dog out of something that does not want to work.

Sometimes we need to be honest with ourselves about the abilities of our dogs. We Americans have a problem with this. I like the Dutch KNPV approach. If a dog will not work - he is out the door and a new one is there to take his place.



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6. QUESTION ON TRACKING VIDEO:

Is the video you did on Competition Tracking filmed in America?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING VIDEO:

The video footage in this tape was filmed throughout the United States and in Europe over

a 3 year period of time. I went to several tracking seminars and filmed them. I went to Europe and trained with friends and filmed their dogs during training and I set up certain training sessions here at my kennel in Wisconsin to show how to do things that I did not have video footage of from my travels.

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7. QUESTION ON TRACKING VIDEO:

Who is the instructor on the video [Training a Competition Tracking Dog](#)?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING VIDEO:

I (Ed Frawley) am the person that filmed this video, wrote the outline and script for the video and then narrated it. When I produced this tape I had been involved with Schutzhund for almost 16 years. The ideas and concepts in the video are a combination of ideas I learned from many, many people in Germany and the States over the years. No one invents the wheel in dog training. Professional trainers are like sponges. They absorb information from many different people and then use it according to their style. The ideas I put in this tape are all solid training concepts.

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8. QUESTION ON TRACKING VIDEO:

Is this video much different than the Dildei tracking video?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING VIDEO:

The Godfried Dildhei tape on tracking is quite different than this video. The difference is that Dildhie does the majority of his tracking in plowed fields. These are very common in Germany. He uses a great deal of food (in almost every footstep).

The video I produced deals with tracking in different types of fields. In fact I show you how to rate a field according to the level of training of your dog. In other words the terrain, ground cover and wind conditions will dictate if a field is considered a beginner, intermediate or advanced training field. In addition I show how to train a dog in a grass field. Not everyone has access to plowed fields all the time.

I don't believe that a tracking dog needs to use as much food in training as is used in the Dildhie tape. It's OK during the initial stages of the work but the dog should be tested and when you see that he is skipping over a large number of food drops then it's time to start to eliminate food.

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9. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

How do you eliminate food used in training a competition tracking dog?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

New trainers often think that it is very important to eliminate food on tracking. While this is important for obedience training it is less important in tracking.

Many top trainers will never eliminate food from the dogs track until the day of the track. Others will use food throughout the life of the dog at different stages of training or on different parts of the dogs track. Some trainer will only feed their dogs at the end of the track. The dog learns, "this is where I eat my food on the days that I must track." This does not have to be an everyday thing, just on the days that the dog goes out for tracking training.

If you are lucky enough to have a dog who is easily motivated by food you should use food as a training tool as long as possible. Initially the food will be eliminated on the straight legs of the track (once they are doing a good job here). Food will always be used after corners on the tracks, after articles and after cover changes (all depending on wind conditions).

A great many dogs (after a year of age) are not that motivated by food. This is something else

that needs to be addressed in training. What is a trainer to do when his only style of training is a food drop in every foot step and the dog doesn't like food that much? I have addressed this question above. You can find the answer to this question on the list.

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10. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

My dog is not a great food hound. What kind of food do you recommend using on the track for sport when he only shows marginal drive to track?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

This is not an uncommon problem. Use canned cat food. Dogs seem to like these small cans of

cat food. They are easy to carry around and can be placed at the end of the track. They work especially well in the dryer climates where there are real problems with ants and bugs getting on the food that's left while the track ages. The can be set down at the end and not opened until the dog gets to the end of the track.

If a dog does not show a lot of interest in tracking or needs to be coaxed down the track. Then stop the track. Call the dog to heel, and heel him to the end of the track. Sit the dog a few feet from the cat food - go over pick it up and put it away. Then take the dog back to the house and put him in the kennel all day. No more work and no more food for the day. Let him think about this.

Do not feed him the next day, take him out and put the cat food (or his normal bowl of food) at the end of the track. The dog will track when he is good and hungry. If he does not track that day, put him up again with no food. These dogs will remember this for the rest of their lives. This is a way of motivating the dog to track without using FORCE.

I am not talking about a dog that gets lost on the track and has difficulties. I am talking about a dog who does not want to put his nose down and hunt for the track.

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11. QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

Mr. Frawley,

I wanted the opportunity to express to you how impressed I was when I viewed your video regarding tracking, RCMP style. First, I should introduce myself, my name is Don McLeod and I am a member of the Canadian Military Police. At present I'm training a Malinois/shepherd cross in tracking and drug detection with a local police detachment who possess a Malinois and shepherd. Your video was very informative and I have gained a large amount of my knowledge from your video. I would like to ask you a question in regards to two items. First, the dog that I'm working has a tendency to fly on the track, in other words, if I had wings, I would look like a glider on ascent, whoom... There is no problem with his tracking, he holds well to the ground, over shoots his corners, circles well, gets the scent and whoom... should I start using slow and easy commands to slow him down?? Also, the weather here in Shilo Manitoba is snow covered ground, and the dog is still working level one field tracks. Should I continue field tracks in the snow, or move to a different type of location??

Anyhow, thanks in advance and keep up the excellent production of videos

Don McLeod

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

It sounds as if you have a very nice dog. When you see dogs that are tracking fast like yours there are a couple of things you can do to slow it down other than trying to enforce a command and do it through force. The concept is simple; just make the track a little more difficult but ageing the track longer and putting more corners in the track. This is going to naturally slow the dog because the track will be more difficult. That way you don't have to manually slow the dog.

In regard to tracking in snow, one of the RCMP instructors told me that he likes winter because he can take his level one dogs and move them on to ice tracks. This is where a track is laid on ice and aged for up to 10 minutes (initially the track is not aged at all). He claims that all of the dogs can learn this and it then makes hard surface tracking that much easier in the summer. Tracking on ice is one place where the reward can be a ball or a toy. It can be difficult to hide a man out on a lake.

Hope this helps, ED FRAWLEY

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12. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

When can I start my puppy on tracking?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Pups can start at 8 weeks in tracking but the tracks need to be done with food and there cannot be any force or correction. In addition, you cannot do any articles on the track until the dog is about 1 year old. The articles cannot be started until the dog is 110% solid in the DOWN. This means that it is doing random downs and never has to be corrected for not doing them. When a young adult can do that he can be started on the serious tracking for sport work (Schutzhund). When that time comes it is a good idea to track the dog every day until it is finished.

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13. COMMENT ON POLICE TRACKING:

A friend of mine (Gary Murray) is a retired RCMP dog handler. He travels the country and gives police (and S&R) seminars on tracking. He recently contacted me about an idea he just heard from a student during one of his seminars.

One of the biggest problems that new handlers have is praising their dogs at the proper time during a track. This situation can be helped by conditioning the dog to a clicker. The dog learns during normal obedience training that the sound of the clicker means "Good Dog". Then during tracking the instructor (who always runs with the dog team) uses the clicker to signal praise at the

appropriate time during the running of a track. We all know that timing is everything during dog training. This includes the timing for praise. By the instructor using a clicker the dog is praised at the right time and it does not know that the praise is not coming from the handler. In addition the handler can hear and see when the instructor is praising his dog.

Some models of the Tri Tronic electric collars have a "Good Dog" button. The clicker is a better idea because the dog handler can never know when the instructor is praising the dog with a collar where as the handler can hear the clicker.

I am not a fan of the clicker for any other part of dog training. I think it is a fad that will disappear in a few years. From what I understand of its use in obedience training, it is a crutch. If handlers would learn the basics of proper dog training they would not need these kinds of toys, but in this one instance it works great.



**CPL Curtis Horton (RCMP Yukon) after a 5 km track
with Gary McCormick (instructor)**

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14. QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

I have just finished viewing your video tape police tracking level 1. It definitely left me enlightened. Now I will try to apply it. I am a fairly new handler April 94 and have much to learn about k-9 tracking. My dog is Keri a 2 and half year old Czech Shepherd who came to me green from Global k-9 in N.Y. He is in my humble opinion an excellent drug and protection dog but lacks in the tracking department and to not fault of his I might add. I see that in your tape. I don't know if you answer questions on the E-mail

but I'll ask. How far back do I go in his tracking now that he has been on the road for some time? How do I evaluate where we are in your tape.

Signed k-9 kid looking for answers

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

The answer to this question is going to take a little experimenting. My feeling is that you need to go out and run some 15 minute old 1000 yard unknown tracks. If the dog can run these, or if you are adept enough to read him as he tracks and you find the track layer on "ALL" of the tracks then you are good to go at lengthening the distance first and then the time. You are going to have to build the dog (and your) endurance). The only way that is possible is to run tracks.

If you have a problem on these short unknown tracks, then you need to go back and start to dog known tracks. When satisfied with the known track, then have 2 people lay an unknown track, and then have one of them stay at the end and the second one runs the track with you to help you when you screw up.

The biggest thing with this system is to learn to read your dog. This is not learned on known tracks it is almost exclusively learned on unknown tracks. That's where the confidence comes from.

I tell the guys I train with that if they can't consistently find me when I drive out in the

country and leave my car on a county road and run a mile, and then they have no business accepting call outs on tracking.

You will find that the answer to your question is mostly common sense when you start to test the dog and look at the training steps that I have laid out in the video on [Level One Country Tracking](#).

You also must be prepared for the fact that your dog may not be able to do this. If he has been forced tracked in Europe this can be a problem. Also if you have done too much area search and building search work with the dog he has learned to locate people with his head held high. It is very difficult to get these dogs to learn to put their noses back down on the ground after they learn to area search, but if they learn to track first then that's what they always resort back to.

Good luck, it is a lot of fun.

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15. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Dear Ed,

Does the Level 2 and 3 video teach the method of getting the dog to circle at the end of a dead track and then backtrack to locate the turn? I was impressed with the dogs on the Level 1 video. My dog gets to the end of a track or a turn, and may overshoot it but then I have to more or less bring

him back a way and slow him down to catch the turn. Sometimes he catches it on his own. Is there a method that I can use to teach him?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

You need to watch the [Level 1 video](#) a few more times and take notes. This circling is sometimes done naturally by the dog but most often it is leash handling by the handler. The dog needs to give a negative by the length of a leash past a turn or a dead end. This is accomplished in training on KNOWN tracks.

If the dog does not give a good negative, the handler will never know he is past a corner or a dead end. This training for clear negatives has to be done before you move to unknown tracks. A firm (not mad or over powering) voice command of PHOOIE (never a leash correction) is given when he goes further than the leash length past a corner. If this is repeated enough on known tracks the dog will learn that even though it can smell a track that is wind born past a corner, it must stop and relocate the corner or work his way back on a dead end.

The [Level 2 and 3](#) tape teaches a lot of tactics in handling a dog and dealing with the distractions of the city. There is a lot to learn in this second tape - maybe more than in the first.

Best Regards,
ED

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1 Hour 5 Minutes Long

16. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Ed,

My dog has worked for some time on the street. I bought your Level One tape and the last two days I had someone lay short known tracks. I just wanted to view the dog after having the knowledge of your tape already in my head. I believe my dog is trying to do the right things and I wasn't paying attention. I am going to try a few short unknown tracks (as you suggested) to see how much work I need to do to bring him up to speed on Level One.

P.S. Would you suggest the level two tape anytime soon, since I will come in contact with

a lot of streets, cars, sidewalks etc. in my normal police tracks?

John Lippincott

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

John,

At this time the only reason to get the level 2 tape is for yourself and the tactics you will need to know on how to solve city tracking problems. If your dog can not consistently find a 45 minute old unknown county track he is not going to track well in the city. You will then be way ahead of your dog's ability.

City officers always make the mistake of thinking like this. "All of my tracks are in the city so that's where I have to train." The difficulty with city tracking is distractions (other dogs, cats, garbage and normal citizens cross tracks). Tracking in the country is sterile tracking. It's in the country that a dog really learns how to track. In the city he learns to deal with distraction. So if a dog has problems in the country there is no way he can do city tracking.

What the level 2 video has to offer is a lot of information on handling a dog when the dog loses the track (i.e. street crossings etc.) The handler needs to start to think about how to acquire a lost track and how to put your dog back on track after he loses it. Many new trainers

don't understand that this is the handler's responsibility not the dogs. So that's why you will need this tape. There is a ton of information here on reacquiring lost tracks. There is an art form to it.

Regards,
Ed

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17. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I have just recently purchased your RCMP Tracking Video. I have been with other officers who have tracking dogs, and have worked one myself.

My questions are, while I looked at your video, for the first week of tracking, you showed what I believed to be your child or a child giving the dog hot dogs, but yet one of your helpers was using a bite rag or burlap sack on another occasion. Which should you start with? I believe we are trying to get the dog to track during prey drive, which you TOTALLY clarified during your Bite Training Tape. To have a dog so relaxed and calm like you showed was amazing compared to the police K-9's I've seen out here. Your tape showed so much control for the prey drive, I couldn't believe the difference. I'm very impressed.

Second question. When initially training the dog to track, I noticed you use the wind at your back, so the wind is blowing at the back of the handler and the dog. Why do some people train to initially train their dogs on a straight track with the scent blowing AT the dog, as you do and I have learned especially when training corners?

I'd appreciate some help.

Thank you,

Tim Murdock

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

In regard to the dog finding a child or getting a bite on a sack, in reality both are prey situations. The bite work that we do at the end of tracks in the beginning of training is always prey bites. If the dog has a temperament to be around children, I like to use them for the dogs to track. I don't do it all the time, but I like to vary it so the dog sees that he does not always have to bite after he finds someone. I let my kids or their friends give the dog a piece of meat when he finds them.

When dogs are tracked into the wind they have a tendency to pick up their nose and wind scent. They also learn to cut corners because they can smell the turn way before they get to it. So it is always better to track with the wind at your back. The only time there is an exception to this is during the first 3 or 4 training tracks where the dog is tracking the handler, and then we

do it into the wind. The only purpose for this is to quickly teach the dog to use the nose. Once we switch to the handler working the leash, we always track with the wind to the back.

People often call this form of tracking “TRAILING,” I do not agree with them. If the trainer approached his work properly, the training steps are set up and controlled so the dog must keep his nose close to the ground to follow the track. This is accomplished through track placement (i.e. wind at your back), aging the track to reduce scent and bring the nose down, and finally placement of corners and articles.

If a trainer constantly trains on 15 minute old tracks an experienced dog does not need to get his nose to the ground, he can run with a high head. If that same track is 1 hour or 1 1/2 hours old, there is a lot less scent and the same dog must get his nose right down on the ground to follow the track. So people that call this method of tracking trailing really don't understand the training steps very well.

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18. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I have a 1 year old dog that is being trained in TTD. We are following the advice you give in your Level 1 video. My dog runs the entire track as fast as she can. Do I need to slow her down using force?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

It sounds like you have a very nice dog. If you remember anything from my videos on tracking thru drive or my articles on the subject, you need to remember this: NEVER USE FORCE IN TRACKING THRU DRIVE - FOR ANYTHING.

The concept of this work is to find people. If you are following someone that is moving out ahead of you the only way you will ever catch up to them is to move faster than they are. This means running.

If you physically can not keep up with your dog because of your conditioning you can slow a dog in three ways (other than force). You can age the track more, you can put more turns in the track and you can place more articles on the track. All three of these will slow a dog.

Anyone that is advising the use of force in S&R tracking does not understand the task. I advise you to really consider everything else this person tells you. They are way off base. I would be willing to bet that this person never finds anyone with their dog unless it is with an area search (never with a track).

Force kills tracking drive. Always remember this.

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19. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I am currently working with a three year old Rott in obedience. He has earned his UCD, CD, UCDX, and CGC. Like any Rott he's hard headed, but a real pleasure to work with.

My question is, I have not done any tracking training, but would like to, however I've been told that it's better to start tracking training with a younger dog. What's your opinion?

Rod Krassow

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I do not agree with what you have been told. My guess is that you have been told that Rotts are stubborn and look what you have done.

My advice is to see if the dog and you enjoy tracking. If it turns out to be a fun thing to do then go for it. But if the dog does not have the drive for the work, then I would discourage force tracking. The only place I see a need for force tracking is in Schutzhund. When you are in the sport you absolutely need to have a dog that is going to track. It must track to get a title.

In your case that does not seem to be the issue. So make a test and see. You have to decide which type of tracking you want to do. Foot step competition tracking or S&R (tracking thru drive) style tracking. I think you can get by with S&R style tracking for AKC - that's usually more fun for the dog.

I have tapes on both styles.

- [Training A Competition Tracking Dog in foot step tracking](#)
- [Training Police Tracking Dogs is the S&R style tracking](#)

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20. QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

My name is Mark Mauldin. I am a new K-9 handler with the Barstow Police Dept. in Barstow Calif. We are looking for a K-9 German Shepherd approximately 15-24 months of age with Schutzhund 3 title.

Thanks,
Mark Mauldin

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

This is not my business - I have forwarded this to Kevin Sheldahl. Kevin is a K9 handler and instructor in New Mexico. He is also a police dog judge in DPO, WPO and PSP. In my opinion there is no one in this country who is better qualified to instruct and train canine handler - he does sell a few dogs.

One last thing - in my opinion you are making a mistake to ask for a Sch 3 dog - someone is giving you or your department bad advice. Schutzhund is not the requirement for selection testing patrol dogs. The fact is that most of the Sch dogs do not make the best police dogs - the training they get screws them up. You would be better advised to get a 15 to 24 month old green dog that can pass the selection tests.

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21. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I am interested in tracking and my question is that is it your opinion that you cannot teach a dog to track for ACK titles and then move on to search and rescue work? Meaning that in teaching footstep tracking the dog is unable to or confused to be taught tracking thru drive? I haven't started any type of tracking yet. I am trying to gather as much info as possible. I would like to compete in AKC tracking and then move

on to S&R but from reading your articles this sounds like it isn't the way to do it. Basically I have to choose which I want more???

Second question, I am also researching Schutzhund for possible involvement in the future. For a beginner do you recommend your video 1st steps of bite training to help with my research and further understanding and learning on the subject? I am very interested in dog behavior and understanding the best way to motivationally train them. I was really interested in the mention of your describing drives and drive thresholds in the video.

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

You can do foot step tracking for food and then move on to tracking though drive as long as you do not apply any force in the foot step tracking. The goal of AKC tracking is just to get to the end of the track. It's not as precise as Schutzhund so the need for force is not there.

So the answer is yes you can do this. My recommendation is to look at both styles and then use what works for you. Frankly I like Foot step tracking for your dogs under a year. The motivation from the food works well and young dogs require way more repetition than older dogs.

If you want to learn and see the drives of work for Schutzhund get [The First Steps of Bite Training](#)

and [The First Steps of Defense](#). These are not all that is needed for Schutzhund, but they are the foundation work, (which in my opinion is the most important.)

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22. QUESTION ON S & R DOG:

I have a 6 month old German shepherd. I've got your puppy tape 8 weeks to 8 months. It's great. I have a couple questions. Can I train him to be a personal protection dog and a search and rescue dog? If so, or, if not, what is the next video I should get?

Darren,
Hilliard, OH

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON S & R DOG:

If your dog has the temperament and drive he can be trained.

You would begin with [The First Steps of Bite Training](#).

Your dog can begin tracking right now. When I have young dogs I start them on foot step tracking for food and make it a big game. Then at a year I switch them over to tracking through drive. You can read about these different kinds of tracking from my web site [articles](#).

This would begin with [Training a Competition Tracking Dog](#) and then [Training a Police - S&R Tracking Dog](#) plus [Track Laying for a Police Tracking Dog](#).

The problem with young dogs is that they can not deal with a lot of stress and they do not retain the work well enough to actually be deployed to work in S&R until they are 12 to 14 months old. But you can do the foundation work at a young age it kind of imprints the nose work on them.

The important thing (very important thing) is not to do area searches where you run off and let the dog run around and find you - this teaches the dog to search the wind current with a high nose - once they learn that they will never put their nose on the ground to track. So area search is taught after a dog certifies on level one tracking at 12 to 14 months.

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23. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Hello Ed,

My name is Robert Harris, I have been reading your training articles and have really enjoyed some of them, and also the questions that you answer are interesting too. I know you're big on food reward and ball reward so here is a question I wonder if you could answer. If a dog is trained to

track by food reward, not the dog that needs his daily food to track but the dog that just needs a little help with food treats, to track and the dog is a service dog , how do you stop the dog from picking up garbage(food) on a city track. Also in one of your answers to a question you say you use other people with food at the end of a track, will this put the dog in danger for taking food from a stranger in a non training situation, like at home or in the car etc...

I ask these 2 important questions because I'm thinking about training my dog in tracking and don't want to teach him it is ok to take food from strangers. Can this be done? I just would not want my dog to take food from a stranger who really wants to poison him (everyday life situations.)

Thanks in advance, Robert Harris

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Robert,

If you are going to train a service dog you don't really use food on the track. You should be doing the tracking through drive like the RCMP does in the videos that I have produced with them. Food is only used in sport tracking not in police tracking.

I will counter this by saying that the RCMP will cull a dog out of the program in a hurry. They

only keep the best of the best in tracking. If a dog doesn't make it - it's gone. Local officers in the States do not have that luxury. They simply can not throw in the towel on a dog they have and go out and get a new dog (only Federal Police with deep pockets can do this). So when your dog develops a problem you need to work through it - it may require you doing things that the RCMP would never do - i.e. use a little food at corners or something.

Usually the sport people will get to the point in about 30 or 40 training tracks - where there is only food at the end of the track and not along the track. Then when your dog has gained some experience and realizes that he is actually hunting people - the food along the way does not mean anything.

If your dog is a service dog he is going to know who the bad guy is at the end of the track - it doesn't take a lot for these dogs to learn what "fear scent is" and food is not an issue.

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24. QUESTION ON S & R DOG:

I have a pure bred German Shepard. His name is Strauss. He is one year and six months old. He is an extraordinary dog when with other dogs or alone, but when strangers are around, all of his training goes out the window. Everything distracts him, ex. bikes, children, etc. He becomes nervous, and extremely anxious, and completely out of control. I want to train him for search and rescue, but am un-able to pass the "good canine citizen" course because of his fears. What would you suggest I do to get him over these fears? I look forward to your answer, as I am deeply perplexed with the situation!

Lisa Scappa

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON S & R DOG:

Your dog will never be an S&R dog. These dogs must be environmentally sound and your dog is

not. This is a genetic issue that you can not train out of the dog.

With this said, you can train the dog to mind. At this point he is not obedience trained. If he were he would mind in these situations. I would recommend that you read the [Steps of Training](#) on my web site.

Your dog has weak nerves. Dogs with weak nerves can be obedience trained in fact they do well at this because they are nervous in their normal world and training brings structure to their lives. So they feel comfortable when they know they are doing what they are told.

This all assumes that you are a capable trainer and can learn the principles of correction and praise.

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25. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Hi Ed. My name is Bob DeMaio. I bought a pup from you and many tapes. I need some help with the down on the article. My dog knows sook, but when I do it while training the down on the article he is always looking for the ball in my pocket that I free him with after I do the sook platz. He platz near the article, but he wont sook when I do this training any ideas and do I have to use food after he downs on the article?

Bob DeMaio

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Set up your training with this in mind:

Lay straight leg tracks (long ones) with a number of articles (10). Tracking is like everything else in dog training, only focus on one problem at a time. That's why we keep straight tracks without complications.

Initially do one or two tracks into the wind (to make it easier for the dog). When you lay your articles, lay food 4 or 5 feet past the article. Put a couple of food drops between articles.

By having the dog track into the wind he should be able to smell the food drop.

If these first tracks go well then switch to have the wind at your back. Now the dog will have to restart a track to find the food. If he does not re-start you can try a food drag away from the article (with the wind at your back).

Get away from the ball for the down use food. In fact I would try random downs, when the dog is down I would let him see me place a piece of food down on the ground about 10 feet from him. I would force him to down if he tried to get up. When I saw the drive build because of the frustration from being forced to lie down while he knows there is food over there I would give the "souk" command and let him go find it. This can all be done off the track.

26. QUESTION ON S & R DOG:

Ed what do you think of the tie out test for temperament testing older dogs. More and more SAR teams are searching for ways to test for temperament in older dogs. This test is similar to the one used in Sch. but does include and aggressive individual who is to represent an Alzheimer victim who is lost. I believe it is an unfair test in as much as you may not have an individual who knows dogs well enough and forces a dog into avoidance or fight drive because he is tied up. Pacer would not have a problem with an individual like this if he were not tied unless the person was a physical threat to me. I feel we have too many dog handler wanna be's out there who think that they know it all and don't understand basic foundational truths of pack behavior or K9 characteristics.

I would really like your take on this. This is really becoming prevalent in SAR and every body is an expert.

Tom Brown
Wichita, Kansas

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON S & R DOG:

It's a valid test for a service dog, but it also needs to be done properly and interpreted properly.

There is the rub, not many people have the experience to properly administer and interpret this test. Many people push too hard while others don't understand the aggression (or avoidance) that the dogs show.

If a dog is tied out and someone acts aggressively towards them a normal dog with good balanced drives and nerves will act appropriately (aggressively). If under these circumstances a dog acts aggressively, it's not fair to say this dog would not work for S&R. If an S&R dog comes on an Alzheimer's patient. The dog will not be tied out and will not have the same reaction. These people are 100% wrong. Dogs with weak nerves may have negative aggression in this case, but a dog with good nerves will not. Their tests should focus on prey drive, good nerves, and environmental soundness (this goes with good nerves).

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27. QUESTION ON S & R DOG:

The Metro fire dept. in Nash, TN has recently bought a high dollar pup for my neighbor, whom is a fireman, to perform search and rescue and I assume accelerant detection. I am no expert, but I have been burned by a “master military dog trainer.” The pup came from a breeder someplace in TN, and it is a decent looking all black male named Smokey. I don’t think the dog will be successful. At two months old, it doesn’t like people. It barks at everything and will not approach a non-threatening passerby, or allow me to touch him during a one hour visit. It seems fearful of anyone outside of its family.

I know you don’t care, but I don’t know what I can do to help them other than refer them to your website for advice. Or maybe I’m wrong, and the pup’s confidence will grow as he matures. At this

time, in my opinion, his best chance for success is as a watch dog. He is so jumpy that I think he would alert to any intruders. Whether he has the courage to face a man is another story.

No need to reply unless you think I am way off base. If I am wrong in my assessment, I would like to know.

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON S & R DOG:

Unfortunately departments (whether it's police or fire) have little experience in selection testing dogs. They know what they want in terms of an end product but most have no idea how to go about picking an animal that can do the work.

If what you describe is accurate, this dog will never become a very effective service dog. He does not have good nerves (which is the reason for the dog barking at strangers and being fearful). This is a genetic issue and no amount of socializing is going to bring a puppy around enough to make it an effective service dog.

An S&R dog needs to be environmentally secure, with good drives and nerves. If one part is missing the equation does not work.

Now the department needs to figure out if they are more interested in making the program work or if the people who made the decision are more interested in covering their butts and not admitting that they made a mistake.

I have been collecting video footage for about a year to edit a tape on selection testing police service dogs. There is a very definite need for this tape; this situation is a perfect example. There will be a lot of importers who will not like what I have to say. They are going to have to step to the line and raise their standards.

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28. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I have just bought and looked at your Level I and II&III RCMP tracking videos, and found them very well made and interesting. A few questions, if you have the time and possibility to answer them:

1. You work with very high motivation, and the dogs are selected for very high drives. Are there generally any stress-

related problems on the track due to this? Like dogs not being able to concentrate enough at track losses, difficult conditions, etc.? Do you think stress management is an issue in this style of tracking, or do the dogs get this by themselves by self-discovery as to how to solve the track?

2. Does the RCMP have problems determining the direction of the track when they dog finds the track, do they train this separately? This would be a very interesting topic. Is stress an issue here? What do you do if the dog chooses the wrong direction and commits to it (in training / real tracks)?

Best regards,
Jorgen

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

There is ZERO stress on the track. You have missed the biggest factor in this style of tracking. There is "no force," therefore there is no stress. There can only be stress if there is a threat of force. Sport dogs that are trained with force have stress; police dogs trained with "Tracking through drive" have no stress. If the dog is properly selection tested it has fun on the track.

The RCMP does not train scent identification, they train the dog to follow a "hot track." If the dog picks up a track of someone other than the

suspect at the beginning, this is the track the dog will follow.

Tracking is a team effort. Police tracking is the most difficult exercise that human's train dogs to do. It is far more difficult than obedience, protection, agility or any other dog sport. Those that do not agree with this lack experiences and have never trained a good police service tracking dog.

Tracking through drive is stressful on the handlers, but it's not stressful on the dog.

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29. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I read all your articles. They are very informative and have helped me a lot. I have a problem (I think) with my two dogs in tracking. When they start tracking the pull as if they were on the protection field trying to get the helper. It is a constant battle to hold them back. I give tugs to slow them down and in a calm voice say such? They have their nose to the ground but want to run the track? They miss the corners and the longer the track then the female will start to go from side to side more. Both dogs are very hyper (active) when out of the kennel it's non-stop, they are ready to go. They will work all day long. They are both two years old now. The bitch I bought from Germany at 14 month old and tracked like

that when I got her. The male I have had since 13 weeks old and he started tracking like that the first day I started tracking him with hot dogs. I did not try to slow him down because I did not want to diminish his drive or desire to track.

Thank you Bob Dees

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I assume you are talking about sport tracking. Sport tracking is more of an obedience exercise than tracking. Many people new to the sport do not understand this very important issue. Yes - you have to train your dog to follow a track. But all dogs (with any drive at all) will want to run the track at a high speed. Your job as a trainer is to guide your dog through the process of learning to follow the track. Once the dog understands this process, then it's your job to slow the dog down in training. You can start the process by tracking in a prong collar, then the dog self corrects when he tracks and will slow a little on his own.

If you want to learn to do this properly, get my training video [Training a Competition Tracking Dog](#).

You are not facing anything any differently than any other new handlers.

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30. TESTIMONIAL ON TRACKING VIDEOS:

Ed,

This is Mike Whitaker of the Gaffney Police Dept. in SC. Several weeks ago, I ordered the Tracking videos from you, and I'm pleased to say that the videos were all that I expected (and then some...) and I've applied the principles in the video to the weekly maintenance training of my police dog, Kantor, and the results have been astounding, to say the least. Medium to long distance tracks aren't a problem for him, except that he chooses to stop every fifty yards or so to mark his territory. I figure as long as he leads me the right way (most of our training tracks have been unknown tracks...) and finds the guy at the end, he can mark his territory wherever he wants.

The ultimate test came a couple of weeks ago. There was a little bit of snow and ice on the ground, and there was a moderate breeze (15 M.P.H. according to the NWS). To make a long story short, we had a felony assault call, with the suspect fleeing the scene right as units arrived. The responding units called for us to track the suspect. Regardless of the cold wind, after our pre track ritual (where the dog marks his territory and craps) we began the unknown track in the direction of the suspect. I was unsure about the direction the dog was leading me until we got to a construction site where I found fresh tracks. The dog continued to pull harder and harder

until approx. 200 yards later, when the suspect came out of some woods with his hands in the air, begging me to not let the dog go. I just wanted to let you know that the tapes that you produced have been a huge help to me and my partner, and I would recommend these tapes to any police dog handler whose partner is having trouble with unknown tracks (or as I call them, real-life tracks) when your K-9 tracks perfectly in training, but not-so-good when the real call comes in. Thanks a million...

In any case, thanks for the videos and the help...
Lt. Mike Whitaker / K-9 Kantor
Gaffney Police Department K-9 Unit

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Ed Frawley's Philosophy of Dog Training



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31. QUESTION:

Do you have any ideas on training tapes, books or articles that I could use for evidence search?
Thanks.

Mark Campbell

ANSWER:

The only thing I have seen is the information in my RCMP tracking videos. You teach evidence search in the form of an alley search. A scented article is hidden in an alley and the dog must find them to play with them. They use HOT articles (they carry a lot of fresh odor from the decoy). The dog is teased with the toy (an old shirt) by the 2nd handler who then runs up the alley and hides it. After the person returns to the dog team (he does not run away because the dog would think he is doing a human search) the dog is allowed going on line to the area and encouraged to find the article. Use any command you wish. Just stay consistent.

This is started in plain view of the dog. It's then moved so the dog does not see where the decoy runs to and hides the item (the handler and dog wait around the corner).

Then the final step is no teasing before the search. The dog can be worked up by the handler to "FIND YOUR TOY or SEARCH - or whatever you want to call it" there are then several finds in one

alley. Initially the finds are scented cloth. But as the dog gains experience the items can be guns, knives etc. etc. There is always a big enthusiastic reward after the find. This is not how you train a dog to find small articles, i.e. gun shell casings. That is a topic of a different article. I have an article on my web site about [how the Dutch teach the small article search for the KNPV](#). It was written by one of my good friends in Holland (Bob Neijts). There is also an article on teaching the large article search. I am inclined to like the RCMP method a little more. But one can always get new ideas by approaching dog training with an open mind. This is done in places where there are garbage cans, dogs behind fences in yards etc. etc.

You will not have a good evidence search dog until your dog can do these searches under extreme distraction. If your dog is distracted by animals it will not work well.

This is a subject I will be doing a training video on at some point in the future. I suggest that you spend some time reading some of the other articles on my website. Maybe you will get other ideas.

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32. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I've watched your three videos on tracking. I

don't think I am doing everything correct. What should a beginning track look like? Where to locate? How long? Various markings? Etc. Suzy wants to air sent and get to my son really quickly and not work her nose into the ground. She is interested in the prairie dog holes and coyote scat. At the end she is not interested in her rabbit fur toy but would rather go of and investigate the surrounding area. How do I find a prairie dog free or wildlife free area?

Your friend and follower in Colorado,
Mark

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

There are a couple of issues here:

1. The dog must be 10 to 12 months old to do TTD.
2. The dog must have the drive for this work, not all do.
3. His first tracks must be straight leg tracks, away from the dog, that the dog sees the helper as he runs away (500 to 600 yards).
4. It is not important that a dog track with his nose to the ground, it's only important that the dog find the person at the end of the track. This is not

sport tracking where the dog is graded on a nose to the ground. This is practical tracking where only one thing counts - find the person at the end of the track.

5. If specific items in the environment distract your dog, you need to find places to start the training that does not have this distraction. Not having access to an area is not a dog problem; it's a handler problem.

6. You need to find what motivates the dog at the end, maybe it has to be 1/2 a can of Alpo that the tracklayer takes with him. It just needs to be something that trips the dogs trigger. This is a handler's job to figure it out. Again, if nothing does then you may be trying to do this work with the wrong dog or it's too young. The RCMP flunk 50% of the dogs that start their program and these are dogs that they selection test before they start.

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33. QUESTION

I have read your article about introducing new dogs into the home but I wondered if you had any comments for my particular situation. My situation is this; I live with two Rottweilers (who are my children) and I have made the decision to join the Michigan Rottweiler Rescue Club and become a foster mom. My oldest dog is an intact bitch of 8 soon to be 9 years old. The other is her son, who is neutered, and is 5 soon to be 6 years old. I do intend to spay my bitch. I am expecting to receive 1 or 2 at the most rescue dogs in 1 to 2 weeks. Probably a male and a female, neither intact. My intention is to use my finished basement for the rescue dogs, unless my dogs are outside. The rescue dogs will be crated while I am at work but loose in the basement or wherever my dogs are not when I am home. I will introduce my dogs to the rescue dogs using the crates. I intend to introduce one dog at a time to the rescue. But I am not sure how much I should push the issue. There is no telling how long I will have the rescue dog, so I am not sure that I need to work on the introduction outside of the crate. Could you give me some guidance on this situation? I don't want this transition to be too stressful on my personal dogs nor the rescue dog.

Thank you,
Christina

ANSWER:

Neutering your dog will have NO EFFECT at this age.

You are going to have to be very, very careful or you will have a dogfight. At the least there is a possibility of causing your personal dogs a lot of stress.

When you allow these dogs to be free together you WILL HAVE problems. Get muzzles and use them. You should also do obedience with all the dogs (use prong collars) to re-establish your rank order in the pack. Its one thing to consider your dogs your children, I assure you they are pack-animals and you will find out quickly how deeply seated these instincts are.

Do everything I say in my article on [Introducing a New Dog into a Home with Other Dogs](#).

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All Natural Diet for Dogs



Article

34. QUESTION ON S & R TRACKING:

My name is Charles Krom I have been a NYS Correction Officer for 18 years, a Volunteer Firefighter for 23 years, a NYS Fire Warden under NYSDEC for 20 years and a Member of Search Team 5-1 of Fulton County NY currently certified as a Crew Boss for 3 years. I have recently acquired a female German Shepard pup which will be six months old on 06/08/00 I am interested in training this dog for S&R operations. I would like to know what course of action I must take at this time to accomplish this task.

Thank You for your assistance in this matter.
Charles Krom

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON S & R TRACKING:

I recommend you read the [articles](#) I have written on Tracking Thru Drive, (TTD).

I would also recommend that you get several of my training videos in the order listed:

- [Training the Competition Tracking Dog \(FST\)](#)
- [Training Police - S&R Dogs](#)
- [Track Laying for Police Service - S&R Dogs](#)

If you would like to learn something about the principles of obedience training a dog, read the description for my [Basic Dog Obedience](#) video. You will probably find that you have not had the full picture on the steps of training a dog must go through before it can be considered fully trained. You can also read why I am not a fan of taking an untrained dog to obedience classes.

I do not recommend TTD for dogs as young as yours. For the young dogs I use Foot Step Tracking (FST) with food. As long as there is not force and no corrections in FST - it does not hurt a young dog. It teaches it to use its nose. Then when it's about 12 to 13 months old I switch to TTD.

Be very careful about listening to local S&R dog trainers. My experience is that the vast majority of local S&R trainers are opinionated people who lack experience. They start area search work (off lead searches) way, way, way too early. Once a dog learns to run around with his head high searching the wind currents for scent - you

WILL NEVER get it to put its nose on the ground and dog good tracks. But once it has learned to track, it can then be taught area search. If you remember one thing I tell you - remember these words of advice.

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35. QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

I know that you are a busy man so I will keep this short.

I am a canine handler for the Lexington Kentucky Police Department. I have been a handler for about five years and have handled the same dog for four and a half years. My Canine "Wilchek" has far exceeded my expectations in many ways. I know that all animals, people included, develop undesirable traits. This particular trait may one day get me injured or killed if not addressed.

He will stop to urinate on tracks frequently. This would not normally concern me, but he has done this at the end of a track twenty feet from the quarry with the wind blowing directly into our faces. Initially I attempted to verbally correct him, but to no avail. I used physical correction, which only seemed to anger me and turn down his drive. I also attempted to ignore it until it began to happen at tactically poor situations. This canine has great ability and it is very frustrating

not knowing quite what to do. I would appreciate any advice that you might have on this problem.

I really appreciate your dedication to canines and those who work with them. I have read many of your articles and have had the opportunity to view many of your videos. I respect your work and your opinion.

Thanks,
John Burdette

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

John,

I hate to say this but what you are describing is avoidance. This is not a situation where the dog just needs to relieve himself; it's a situation where the dog is showing avoidance by relieving himself in the odor of the suspect. There is nothing that training is going to do to correct this; it's a genetic problem.

I would recommend additional testing done on the dog to confirm my thoughts, but more than likely you need a different dog.

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36. QUESTION ON SPORT TRACKING:

Ed,

I am interested in your video, "Training Competition Tracking," but I have a few questions for you. I've read most of your articles on tracking and find the Drive Tracking method quite interesting. I haven't begun training my puppy in tracking yet because I just am not comfortable with what I've been told to do.

My puppy is almost 6 months and is in Schutzhund training and I was told to lay a track using a piece of food on every single footstep. Later, corners are taught by putting a pile of food at the corners and food is tucked inside the articles to get the dog to "indicate" the articles. Finally, somehow, you have to wean the dog off of the food so he can be in a trial, which does not allow food.

My puppy (GSD) has a strong food drive and ball drive, but she also has a very strong prey drive. At 4 months, she barked and went nuts for the puppy tug during training and shook it wildly when she was allowed to catch it. Now, at almost 6 months, she's started biting the puppy sleeve with incredible drive for her age. For this reason, I would like to consider using her prey drive to my benefit for her tracking training. Or, if I can't get her trainer to agree to offer her a bite at the end of the track, I'd like to at least use a ball or toy at the end of the track. I really don't want to get

started with this food business---especially as I've been instructed, placing a piece of food on EVERY footstep. I can't imagine the resulting frustration (of both my dog and myself) when I'd have to wean her off the food!

What is your opinion on food training, specifically placing a piece of food on every footstep? Also, your articles speak of the Drive Tracking Training (using a bite or toy as reward) for POLICE DOGS -- what about for Schutzhund? What do you think about having my husband laying the track and then hiding at the end of the track to praise her for finding him as a method for track training?

Nancy

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON SPORT TRACKING:

If you are going to train your dog in sport tracking you need to use food for a period of time. Sport tracking is more of an obedience exercise than a tracking exercise. People new to the sport do not understand this.

When you have a dog that is a prey monster (like yours) you will cause nothing but problems by using prey drive in your sport track. The dog will become hectic and track too fast, when the exercise requires a dog that tracks methodically and slow.

Training a dog to track fast is easy; training a dog to track slowly requires a trainer who

understands the exercise and the training steps to get there.

I do not agree that a dog should have food in every step (at least not for very long), nor do I agree with your description on the articles and turns. I already have an [article on training turns](#).

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37. QUESTION PM SPORT TRACKING:

I have a very high drive dog in obedience, and super fighting drive in protection. My problem is he has the same kind of drive in tracking.

This is the 3rd time that I present him in a trial. He did very well in SchH I he placed 1st place with 96-90-90. In the SchH I regional of Canada with 1st place 91-95-97 & best in protection work.

I went for my SchH II. He didn't do so well 59-88-98. In my obedience I know the mistake I made, but here is my question. I guess when you have a dog with drive for sale in the three disciplines what can I do to slow him down in tracking. (By the way my SchH II judge was Jan Rhouda hard but fair judge so I don't blame him.) The judge told me that we were a very promising team for the future.

Now here's what I tried in tracking:

1. A lot of food
2. A lot of patches
3. A lot of corners
4. A lot of S figures
5. No food at all and round of corners and square corners

I own your tape on tracking also another tape from Belgium on tracking. I track with a lot of other people, but nobody seems to be able to help me.

His major problem is that he has a tendency to storm on the track and for that reason he overshoots some corners or circles in the corners.

PS I bought the dog at 2½ years old, but no work was done on him. Now my worry is I might have to resume to force tracking, or pay myself a personal seminar with somebody from Germany or elsewhere. So I hope you have suggestions for me.

Thank you,
Marc Levac

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON SPORT TRACKING:

You have done the right things to try and slow the dog. Now that you know they do not work you have to make the dog understand that tracking is an obedience exercise and the dog

must track slowly. So you still use food but you also use a prong collar and teach the dog the meaning of the word "SLOW." This does not have to be taking the dogs head off - it just means corrections for charging and praise when going slow with good rewards at the end (his food for the day).

Sport people seem to miss the point that tracking is an obedience exercise that just happens to include some minor very, very simple tracking. If you ever train a service dog to track you will know what real tracking is. But sport work is teaching a dog to track very slowly. On dogs like yours (and mine) this has to be done with force of some kind. The mistake most people make is to not understand the level of force to use. They use too much and take all the drive out of the dog. They also do not reward the dog enough when he has slowed down.

I have an article on my web site about [how to teach corners](#). Go to it and learn how this is done. It takes time but it works very well.

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38. QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

My department recently purchased a dual-purpose police dog. The dog is a 3-year-old IPO 1 Belgian Malinois and is a really nice narcotic detector and handler protector. I have been working on tracking with the dog for about 4 weeks now. Initially, I started laying 20-yard straight tracks with dog food on the scent pad and along the track with a pile at the end for the reward.

The dog would track to the end with his head down. He eats the food along the way along with the pile at the end. I also made sure that the wind was at my back. After a week or so, the dog began to literally run to the end of the short track with his head down and would skip the food along the way to get to the pile at the end. He also began to drift off of the track while running so I would have to stop and pull back on the

tracking lead to get him back on the track with his head down. This would cause him to start to bracket from side to side and he would come back to me. When I give the command (TRACK) his head automatically goes down and he starts smelling well.

I've tried using a ball and a tug toy instead of dog food and I have even tried using hotdogs. The dog wind scents very well and has even had a couple of bites at the end of some tracks in hopes that a light bulb would turn on.

I know it would be a lot simpler for you to view the dog, but my question is that in light of the information given is it possible to teach this dog to track? I work for a small agency (small budget included) and I would like to know if I'm wasting my time? I've also tried food deprivation and all he did was lose weight and showed no improvement. I'm saving my money for the tracking videos in hopes that I can maybe change up my training tactics.

Respectfully,
Kevin Cooke

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

The best advice I can give is to stop your tracking training until you can afford to buy the tracking tapes. You are screwing up big time and your e-mail confirms that you don't know anything about service dog tracking.

The training that you describe is sport tracking and not service dog tracking. Quit listening to the people you have been talking to. They don't know beans about police tracking.

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39. QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

Dear Mr. Frawley,

My name is Matt Fisher and I am a new K-9 handler for the Wooster Police Dept. in Wooster, Ohio. My department purchased my K-9 from a "dog trainer" in Ohio and needless to say I have been less than impressed. My dog Ringo is about two and he has needed some serious overhauls. We've had to overcome a serious sleeve fixation and I am currently working on changing his tracking from footstep to tracking through drive.

Luckily for me my friend Doug Hunter a K-9 for the Wayne County Sheriffs Dept. has turned me on to your website, videos, and way of thinking. Ringo seems to be responding well to the tracking through drive. His body posture is getting easy to recognize and he pulls well in his harness when he has scent. We have done approx 50 training tracks and the last 25 have been unknown. He seems to run these tracks well and always gets to the end. The problem I'm having is that he stops to pee at almost every tree he finds. I always get him out to go to the bathroom

before we start, but this constant peeing is slowing us down considerably. I've watched your videos on tracking and never give him a line correction, but I do give him a calm phooey which doesn't seem to deter him. I'm worried that if I over correct him he will lose his interest/drive in tracking and I'll regress in my progress. However, it seems that this constant peeing is really slowing us down. I would really appreciate your advice.

Thank You,
Matt Fisher

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

Go back and use a 10 to 15 foot leash in tracking. This keeps you closer to the dog while he works.

You need to experiment with stronger voice corrections - or you can go to your dog and correct him with a slap in the butt or grab him and shake him a little. This needs to be done very carefully. If you have a soft dog this could shut him down. So you must be careful.

If you do start doing this - then you also need to move up and down the line to praise the dog as he tracks. You do not want him to get defensive or shy away from you when you approach him on the track. For every time you correct him you need to move to him and praise him 3 times.

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The Theory of Corrections in Dog Training



Article

40. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

When should I start articles on my track and should I introduce the articles on the track or off the track?

ANSWER ON TRACKING:

I used to believe that articles can be trained off the track. I still think a lot of people do this and have success with it. This is their way and if it works for them then it is OK. I have a different idea of how to train articles and I believe that it should be done on the track during a training session.

The first thing that needs to be done is the dog must completely understand the "DOWN" command. This means that under ever circumstance when you give the DOWN command the dog will drop like a stone. This is

trained with motivation and then followed with conflict training (see my article on motivational approach to all dog training). None of this training is done on the track.

The second thing that a dog must understand is how to track. He must know and understand corners on the track and must be tracking at the required speed.

When these two things are trained the dog is ready for the article training. Remember, in every part of dog training it is only possible to train one thing at a time. This is why the dog must first learn the down and also learn to track before it learns to down on articles.

When the time comes for article training the track should be done in nice green grass (an easy track) with no turns. The idea is to make the track as simple as possible. We are not training tracking at this point; we are training article during tracking. So we make the track easy. So we have a straight leg track that is maybe 10 yards long with 10 to 15 articles on it. The handler holds his dog on a short leash (his hand is about 2 to 3 feet behind the head of the dog). The dog must be used to the handler being this close during tracking. This is something that should have been done during normal tracking training.

Then as the dog approaches an article the handler gives a DOWN command. If things are correct the dog will drop. The handler then calms

the dog with his voice and a calm stroke along the back. He may even give the dog a small treat (but this is a judgment call - if it distracts the dog then he should not do it) after the dog settles in the DOWN, it is given the command to track again and will not have to go far before it gets another article.

This kind of training is the best way for me to train articles. Longer tracks with turns can be used when the dog is going DOWN on articles without a voice command or a pop on the leash.

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41. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

What is your opinion of using a TOY at the end of a track to motivate a dog in tracking training?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Training with a toy can work for some dogs, but not all. The only dogs it will work for are dogs that are 100% ball crazy. To try and train a dog that is only has a level 3 or 4 (when level 10 is the most ball crazy dog that there is) is a mistake. It is also a mistake to try and train a level 7 dog using a toy if you are using the toy along with compulsion in obedience work. I will guarantee you that if you have an obedience training session in which you are using a lot of corrections (compulsion) in conjunction with a toy at the end of the training

- the dog will not have the drive to track the next day. This is especially true if this dog knows that the only reason for tracking is the toy.

With dogs like this it is always better to use food at the end of the track. The food does not need to be during the track, it only needs to be in a bowl at the end of the track. Dogs need to understand that if they track they get their food for the day. If they do not track, then the handler takes the dog off the track. Walks to the end of the track. Picks the bowl of food up and does not give it to the dog. He takes the dog back to the kennel. Puts the dog in his crate or kennel and sets the food bowl down outside the crate. The dog is not allowed to eat that day. He can sit and look at his dish of food all day. Even a better way is to take the bowl of food and give it to another dog and let the first dog watch the second dog eat his food. This really builds drive.

Then the next day the dog will track for sure. This is a very good way to teach tracking. There is no compulsion, there is no force and the dog learns that he must track if he wants to eat.

One other thing on the use of food in tracking. When a dog is a little hectic or a short nerved dog I will use food in every foot print. When I have a dog with calm nerves I will use a food drag with food at the end in the bowl.

When a dog is fully trained you can put a can of cat food at the end of the track. Cat food has

a very strong smell and dogs like it. It's easy to keep cans of cat food in the car and only open them when you get to the area that you will track. The advantage of the using cat food is that on the day of the trial you can open a can of cat food just before the track or on the way to the track (try it ahead of time so you know that he is not going to get over stimulated).

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42. QUESTION ON SPORT TRACKING:

I am a little confused on the method to use for my Schutzhund tracking dog.
Should I use only food drops in the footprint or a food drag?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON SPORT TRACKING:

There is not a right or wrong answer here. Both methods are legitimate forms of training a dog to track for sport. Each method has strong and weak points. For example, with a food drag (i.e. TRIPE) the dog learns that his food is always at the end of the track. So the longer the track (once this is understood) the higher in drive the dog becomes. Where as with food drops in the footprints, the longer the track the more the drive goes down.

Food on the track allows you to train in a track that is much older than the food drag method.

So one has to determine what is best for that particular dog. When a dog is getting food drops - the handler needs to determine how much food the dog is to get for a day. That amount of food is divided up and put on the track and at the end of the track. So the end may only have 4 or 5 pieces of food and the rest is on the track.

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43. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

My dog has some issues with articles on the track. There are times he will not indicate and then when he does indicate he wants to CHARGE out of the “down position” after the indication is made. What can I do?

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

It is critical that the dog know the DOWN exercise 110% before he is trained. If a new handler tries to train the down at the article on the track, the dog will develop avoidance to the articles. These dogs will intentionally walk over articles. So before you start tracking - go out and practice “random downs” while walking and playing with your dog. When the dog will do random downs under distraction (off the track) then it is ready to add the down on the articles on the track.

When dogs charge off an article it is important for the handler to remain calm at the article. He

needs to stand there like he is not concerned in the least with what is going on and he needs to act like there is not a hurry in the world. He should get a piece of food in his hand before he tells the dog to track again. When he gives the track command he should bend over the dog and toss a piece of food (something the dog really, really likes) about 12 inches in front of the dogs nose as he gives the track command.

It is OK for the dog to know that this food comes from you. In addition, you cannot place the food that close to the article because the dog will smell it when he is lying on the article.

Once the dog learns that he will always have a piece of meat tossed close to the article (after the down and when told to track again) he will stop forging down the track. You will find that he waits for the food and then goes. You can work food at the articles just like you work food on the track. In the beginning it should be at every article, but as time passes the food is on every other article and then every third article and then on every 6th article. Stagger when you give the dog food at article. This will increase focus and stop anticipation.

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The First Steps of Bite Training

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44. QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

I live in the UK. My 2 1/2 year old police dog was started on area search before his tracking was finished. Now I want to train him in “tracking through drive” and he is missing corners.

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON POLICE TRACKING:

There are a couple of mistakes.

1. It is always more difficult to correct problems than it is to do the training correctly in the first place. Training air scenting first created a problem - you have already found this out.
2. TTD for police is never done for toys - there ALWAYS has to be a person at the end of the track. This builds hunt drive. Tracking for toys does not do this - no matter how much the dog likes a toy.

I would back up your training. Do 30 easy tracks with people at the end – no corners for a while. Then add in the corners. Do corners up wind first – when they go OK then do downwind corners?

What you really need is the first two training videos to show you how to do this work and how to lay a training track.

[Training a Police \(S&R\) Tracking Dog - Level One](#). This video was filmed in Canada with the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). In my opinion they are some of the best tracking dog instructors in the world. S&R trainers in Canada cannot be called out until they have passed a level one certification by the RCMP. This training tape shows how dogs are trained to this level.

[Track Laying for a Police Tracking Dog](#). How to lay a good training track is critical in training tracking dogs. This tape goes into a great deal of detail on track laying. There is an art to laying a good training track. This tape shows how the experts do it. If you are new to S&R or police tracking, or if you constantly have to retrain track layers, this tape can save you a lot of time and energy.

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45. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Mr. Frawley,

I have a 1 1/2 year old female Malinois. She has her TDX. I am training her for TDX and VST. She is fine on aged tracks, but doesn't do very well on concrete or asphalt. She has no problem following dragged food items on concrete or asphalt. Do you think Level II-III will help me with this? Also do you think I need Level I since she has no problems with any surface other than concrete or asphalt? I don't have a lot of money to invest and if you think I don't need Level I, it would help me out financially. Thank you and have a nice day. I really love your website.

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I do believe that [Training Urban and Suburban Tracking Dogs -video 208](#) will help you. If the money is not an issue I would also say that you need [Training Police & S&R Dogs to Track - video 205](#). There are a lot of details that go into this training - skipping training steps causes problems.

With this said I will say that hard surface tracking is not easy. You need to start on pavement and stay on it in training - not progress from grass to cement. Start by laying your tracks without socks or shoes, then when he is good put the socks on, then sandals on, then leather shoes on. Do

not age the tracks too much in the beginning
- 10 minutes. I would also recommend the video
I filmed in Holland with the Dutch Police titled
[Hard Surface Tracking - It's Not Impossible Video
210](#) - 1 hr - \$39.00.

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46. QUESTION ON SPORT TRACKING:

Dear Mr. Frawley,

I have a 3 year old Shepherd that I am training for Schutzhund. She is an extremely confident animal with her obedience and protection, however, she cannot track. I spoke to the person that I bought her from who told me that she just never "got around" to tracking with her very much. Figuring that I would need to start back at square one, I laid out a VERY short, straight track for her, just to see what I would need to work on. She becomes really anxious before and while she is tracking (or trying to at least). She will lie down on the scent pad and then (for lack of a better word) belly crawls her way down the track. (Lack of confidence maybe?) I would like nothing more than for her to love this aspect of the sport as much as she loves the other two phases. Any suggestions? I would appreciate any input you may have. Thanks so much!

Sincerely.....Kristan Russell

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON SPORT TRACKING:

Here is my guess and it's really a guess but probably pretty accurate.

The person you bought the dog from "force tracked" the dog or kicked the dog's ass on the track. That's why you have the belly crawl. I am not a fan of forced tracking or unnecessary compulsion.

It's a long road to make a dog like this enjoy tracking. It involves using NO FORCE – NO COMPULSION and food. The only place the dog eats is on the track. I prefer a food drag. In the beginning keep the tracks short and straight – maybe 10 days of this. The dog's food bowl is at the end of the track. Make sure the food you are using is really something the dog likes, (put the dog on an [all-natural diet](#)).

Tie a string to a hunk of meat and drag it down the track. No food drops along the way.

If the dog does not track, let it see you pick up the bowl of food. Take it back to the kennel and let it see another dog eat its food for the day. NO CORRECTIONS. The next day it will track.

Gradually extend the tracks and make them more complicated. Be very careful here, there is no hurry when you consider the goal. If you are willing to put 100 to 150 tracks into the dog then it may work. It must become clear to the dog that there are no corrections and this is how it eats.

47. QUESTION:

Sir,

I was wondering what an officer should do when he is bitten by a police dog and he is not the dog handler. I am at the Indiana police academy and this question was asked to the recruits. Thank you for your time.

ANSWER:

Stand very, very still – do not bite the dog – do not fight with the dog and do not scream (easier said than done).

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Hard Surface Tracking It's Not Impossible!

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1 Hour Long

48. QUESTION ON TRACKING:

Dear Ed,

I recently read your [article on hard surface tracking](#) with the Dutch police dogs. Well I thought I would let you know that we at the RAAF security police military working dogs have been working with scent discrimination for quite a while and in the early nineties we decided to get the defense science and technology institute involved to find out exactly what the dogs were tracking and we found out that the dogs could pick up skin rafts (dead skin cells) and not only distinguish the difference between human and animal scent but also between humans and it was discovered that these skin rafts were as unique as DNA. We actually start to teach a dog to Man Trail on hard surface using a host article the trail layer stays in position for one timed minute and then continues in a straight line for 100m with the wind at his back and hides at the end. As the dog completes each stage numerous times successfully new things are added such as cross trails, turns, different surfaces and at stage five the dog sit at a pool scent no host article and the handler does not know where the trail has been laid also the distance is now approx. 5km- 10km long at the end off all this dog can trail over various surfaces and no matter what distractions will keep on the same scent. I have personally had to do a man trail with my black shepherd police dog and he traileed an intruder

from bitumen through a swamp onto sand, clay and back onto bitumen before we tracked him after five km in 35deg c. Also it is known that the rafts can last up to 36hrs dependant on weather. I hope this gives an incite into what we are able to do with German shepherds as well as Malinois and yes it does help for the dog to have a high prey drive but we have been able to utilize dogs with even a slight prey drive. If you would like some more information please feel free to contact me.

Your Australian Mate
Bart

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON TRACKING:

I hate to be the bearer of bad news but what you are doing is not scent discrimination on human skin rafts. Or maybe we just have different words for the same thing.

Your dog is tracking – it is not scent discriminating. Big difference.

Scent discrimination is collecting specific human scent (in many cases storing it). A dog that is scent discriminating can smell the collected scent and then discriminate that scent from other collected scent – often in the form of a line-up.

A dog that tracks is doing a form of scent discrimination in that it identified a track picture left by a quarry but it takes more than skin rafts into consideration.

If you ever go to Holland, I would recommend that you visit Nunspeet the Federal Police Dog School. They will allow law enforcement officers from other countries to visit (not civilians). You can see actual scent discrimination in action.

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49. Questions:

Ed!

In looking - mainly by fluke - in the 'questions/comments' in the sar section - just under Patti Thompson's pic of Deja working FreshKills.....a person talks about their 10 month old training in air scent. You replied that "10 months is way, way, way too young....." Uh - since when? I've been training air scent for almost 20 years now and

always start them off extremely young - including my dog from Leerburg lines - and all have been exceptional air scenting dogs. I'm talking 4 months give or take.

And as to your other advice regarding the tracking first - holy cow!! Then you slam whoever is "training them"? Ed!!! Where is this coming from?????

Honestly - if I knew this person name and Addy I'd be emailing them even though I'm sure it's too late by now - you've probably ruined whatever amount of motivation they've had. Just what is YOUR experience in air scenting sar? You know - I have recommended you for years to novice and experienced handlers alike, as well as those looking for quality pups but I'm seriously going to have to go through all your articles and responses and sadly, perhaps, rethink this. I hope that maybe you rethink some of this air scenting "advice" of yours as well.

Christine Buff

Ed's Answer

Christine

Maybe I need to rewrite some of the comments to be more specific.

There is nothing wrong with starting air scenting at a very young age if that's all you want in a dog. That is if you only want an air scent dog.

But if you want a search and rescue dog then the dog should be trained to track first.

You ask where this comes from. It comes from the RCMP in Canada. I dare say they have considerably more experience than you. They started in the business in 1935 and do it full time.

The fact is most dogs that are trained to air scent before they are trained to track they will always have problems tracking.

The fact that your dog can do the air scenting as a young dog does not make it right.

Chrisine's Response:

Ed,

Just off the top, my response would be as follows:

Maybe I need to rewrite some of the comments to be more specific.

There is nothing wrong with starting air scenting at a very young age if that's all you want in a dog. That is if you only want an air scent dog. All I want? My dogs, as are the other operational SAR dogs in NYS, are extremely good at what they do - finding people. We, unlike many LE "K9s" do not need scent articles nor do we need an accurate - or any - PLS. There are very few times, at least in our area, where a tracking dog is appropriate and the few times other agencies use them - they have been used inappropriately.

But if you want a search and rescue dog then the dog should be trained to track first. I already HAVE search and rescue dogs - who were trained to track second - that are, again, very good at what they do. :-)

You ask where this comes from. It comes from the RCMP in Canada. I dare say they have considerably more experience than you. They started in the business in 1935 and do it full time. Yes Ed, you can dare say that RCMP has more experience than I.....they also know how to field dogs appropriately - the correct dog for the correct situation.

The fact is most dogs that are trained to air scent before they are trained to track they will always have problems tracking. SAR dogs do NOT have to be tracking dogs!! I have no desire to train a dog that won't be used or used very infrequently.

The fact that your dog can do the air scenting as a young dog does not make it right. It doesn't?!!! My dogs air scent whether they are young, old or in-between. It IS right for what we do --- finding people. Time and again. Year after year. Seems you think it's going to be your way or no way..... too bad Ed because, as I said before, years ago I would recommend you - no longer.

Regards,

Christine Buff

Ed's response:

Let's begin with the fact that you recommending me has nothing to do with this.

The fact is you and most S&R people in this country don't and never have understood the correct concepts of training S&R dogs. You completely misunderstand the concept of deployment and training and it JUMPS OFF THE PAGE when I read this.

You're so bitter about this that you have a closed mind. You don't even know what you don't know. That's how pig headed stubborn you are.

I will guarantee you that you have not seen the 3 RCMP DVDs I did in Canada – which are now part of their training school. These people don't just deploy their dogs properly they train their dogs properly and their dogs find people – they are light years ahead of most American police service dog handlers and S&R people like yourself.

The fact is in Canada S&R like you cannot be called out to search unless you certify under a RCMP police dog handler. If your dog cannot do a level one certification it would never be used – and they don't train air scenting until level two tracking.

<http://leerburg.com/205.htm>

<http://leerburg.com/207.htm>

<http://leerburg.com/208.htm>

You completely missed the point on my young dogs air scenting. They can do it but that does not make it right. Just like many young high drive Mals can be put on a helper at 4 to 5 months – but that does not make it right. In fact it's stupid. Just like training young dogs to air scent before they learn to track is STUPID!!!

Once a dog has learned to air scent they almost never become strong tracking dogs. Is this always the case? No not always but most of the time.

When they lose the track the air scenting dogs learn to run around with their head high and air scent.

Once a tracking dog has done 60 tracks and passed level one ([read the specs on my web site](#)) and they have a problem they have learned to put their nose on the ground and search for the track. A dog that does this along with air scenting FINDS MORE PEOPLE than a strictly air scenting dog!!!

What do you do if you can't search into the wind with your air scenting dogs?

And this is not only an RCMP philosophy – some of the best tracking trainers in Europe are in the Netherlands Federal Police – I have been to both of their police dog schools and worked with a number of their instructors. We all agree on these

issues.

If you were not so pig headed you would be saying – hey what are these guys doing that we are not doing? Maybe – just maybe they know more that we do about training tracking dogs. Or you can keep you head stuck down a hole which is where it is right now.

Ed

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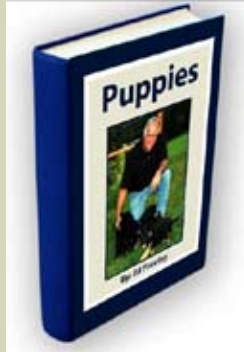
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