



## CONDITIONING EXERCISES FOR BREEDING STOCK DOGS

### 1. SIT UP

- a. Start with food just slightly over the nose with dog sitting. Keep the food magnetized (connected) to the dog's nose as you slowly raise it up over the dog's head. When you see the front feet just start to lift off the ground, say "yes" and reward the dog. They will put their feet back down. Start again and repeat. As they get better at this, raise the food more over their head until they get to the point of sitting up. The more strength and comfort they have, you will see their front legs start to relax. If their legs are still pointing straight out, they are still struggling with balance.
- b. **Tips**
  - i. Keep your arm/hand off to the side so the dog cannot wrap their paws around you.
  - ii. Hold food farther over the nose so spine is straight, not leaning forward
  - iii. Rear paws should be tucked underneath pet, not splayed outward
- c. **Goal** is 3 reps of 15 seconds with a 5-sec break in between each rep. This may take you several months to achieve. DO NOT train this exercise 2 days in a row due to over taxing the dog's body.

### 2. LEG LIFTS

- a. **DIAGONAL LEG LIFTS** – calmly lift one front leg and the opposing rear leg (folding up towards the body) off the ground about 3-4 inches. Hold for a few seconds. Over time and as your dog builds a stronger core, they will be able to hold this longer with better balance.
- b. **ONE SIDE LEG LIFTS** – same as above but lift a front and rear foot on the same side.
- c. **Tips**
  - i. DO NOT train both exercises on the same day
  - ii. Grasp by upper leg to pick up limb if the dog is sensitive about picking up paws
- d. **Goal** is 3 reps of 30 seconds each with a 5 second rest in between reps.

### 3. WAVE

- a. This is to teach your dog to do a high 5 or wave with one or both front feet. This helps with stretching the front legs. To teach, place a piece of tape on your dog's forehead above an eye. When your dog lifts its foot to get it off, quickly mark with the word "yes" and reward with a piece of kibble. Your dog will most likely repeat this behavior and each time mark "yes" and reward. You can practice this also on the other side so they lift their other front leg. Train one leg each day to help avoid a little confusion.
- b. **Goal** is to get your dog to perform this trick on cue with no tape needed. To do that, as your dog has the tape on and is in a sort of rhythm of reaching for the tape, try to give the cue "wave" or whatever you'd like to call it just before they lift their foot. Over time, you can remove the tape and give the cue to "wave". If the dog forgets, gently use your fingers and rub where you typically put the tape as a reminder of the trick. Do 3 to 5 repetitions

#### 4. SIT-STAND-SIT

- a. This is not as easy as it sounds. The purpose of this is to work the dog's core, increase rear leg strength and build awareness. This is particularly good for male breeding dogs. The goal is to get the dog from a sitting position to raise only his rear legs into a standing and then without moving the front legs, bring the rear back into a sit. To aid with teaching this trick, have your dog rest its front feet on a platform (books, etc., anything about 2-3 inches high). With one hand holding a treat in front of their nose, take your other hand and gently place it near their rear to guide it into a sit by helping tuck its rear. Reward your dog. Next, with a piece of kibble in front of their nose, take your other hand and tickle their belly to get them to stand.
- b. **Goal** – For the front feet to remain on the platform throughout the position change. Do 3 to 5 reps. Once the dog is comfortable on a short platform, you can raise their front feet with something as high as their elbow

#### 5. STAND-DOWN-STAND

- a. This is good for flexing their front and rear while building their core. It also helps with all over body awareness. To teach, use a piece of reinforcement at your dog's nose, with their head (muzzle) parallel to the ground, push back the food while saying down. The goal is that your dog lays down in a sphynx position not on their side. Reward your dog. Then with another piece of reinforcement, slowly bring the food forward and up while saying the word stand.
- b. **Goal** – None of the paws move while the dog changes positions. Do 3 to 5 reps

#### 6. STRETCHING ON A STAIR

- a. This is a great exercise for stretching and building the core. With food in front of your dog's nose, lure them to that their front feet are on a stair. Keep the food just out of your dog's reach so they are stretching for it. There should be a straight line between the head and spine to the rear. Start by stretching for just a few seconds.
- b. **Goal** – to be able to hold this stretch for 30 seconds with a rest for 5-10 seconds and then another 30 second stretch

#### 7. MALES

- a. These exercises can be done any time to help keep your male dog fit for breeding. This can lengthen his breeding career and help prevent injury.

#### 8. FEMALES

- a. These exercises can be done until confirmation of pregnancy at ultrasound. After that, consult with the breeding specialist on which exercises you can continue with until delivery. Once puppies arrive, the exercise program can begin again at 6 weeks post whelp. It will take approximately 8 weeks to work back up to where you were prior to puppies. By keeping her fit, it aids in the breeding process, delivery and her ability to have a better understanding of her body (proprioception).