

DTE E-collar Basic Concepts

This short guide is intended to help you with working consistently with the e-collar. The e-collar is an excellent tool, however, like any other tool, it needs to be used properly in order to achieve the desired results. These concepts might not come naturally, primarily due to our perception of the purpose of the e-collar. This is a learning tool and that is precisely how we intend on using it. We do not find it effective to use this tool as a disciplinary device, although it certainly can be used as such. The intention is to use this as a tool to overcome any competing desires the dog has to following a verbal command given by their handler (us).

Terms:

The following terms are simplified to relate to how we use the e-collar in context to our training style.

Stimulation = button taps

Stimulation Level = the number on the e-collar dial

Momentary Button = (aka "Nick" button) gives only one brief 1/10th of a second burst to the e-collar. Usually the top black button on the Educator and the top gray button on the Dogtra.

Continuous Button = delivers a continuous pulse to the e-collar as long as you keep the button pressed. Usually the red button on the Educator and the bottom button on the Dogtra.

Conditioning = pairing consistent actions with a response to achieve a predictable behavior (e.g. Every time you **say** a command, you **will double tap** the button, and your dog **will sit**. You are getting the dog's attention with the stimulation, pairing that with your verbal command, and expecting the dog to perform the "sit" response.)

Punishment = Only pressing the button if the dog does not perform an action. This **does not** work well and usually hinders progress.

Pressure = Any action used to compel the dog to comply to a command (e.g. Using a leash to encourage a dog to come to you, continuously tapping the button, increasing the stimulation level on the e-collar).

E-collar Use:

- Start with the lowest stimulation setting that gets a response from your dog.
 - This WILL change depending on the distraction level (being outside, seeing their favorite person, other dogs, squirrels, etc).
 - Generally, being outside will require at least a little more stimulation level on the e-collar dial.
 - WATCH your dog. It is your job to find a stimulation level they care about. Until your dog has been conditioned to performing an action every time the button is pressed, the stimulation level can change quite a bit.

- When you are consistent with administering stimulation every time you say a command, your dog will become more reliable in performing the desired behavior.
- **Double tap** the momentary button on the e-collar every time you **say** a command
 - This is key to the conditioning process. This is NOT punishment. It can, however, be irritating to the dog, particularly if the command and stimulation needs to be repeated multiple times.
 - If the dog does not respond, wait several seconds to let the dog make the decision on whether to comply or not, and then repeat the command and the taps if necessary.
 - If the dog still does not comply, then increase the “pressure.” This usually means that you need to start slowly increasing the stimulation level. Each subsequent tap will result in a higher stimulation level. There will be times when your dog will test you. You must follow through and ensure compliance! Don’t give up by allowing the dog to win. The dog will remember this and take things a little further next time. Whatever you need to do in order to get compliance, do it (get closer to the dog, grab a leash, grab the collar, etc). This does take patience but it does pay off if you do not take “no” for an answer.
- Use rhythmic tapping if needed for failure to comply (this becomes increasingly irritating for the dog and they usually will try to avoid whatever you are asking them to do at first and then comply). Rhythmic tapping is a slow, steady tap of the button until the dog performs the desired action. Contact your trainer to help you if you have not been shown this technique.
 - This can be useful for resistance to the Place command, but you can also use it for other commands.
- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE
 - Practice your commands daily. Practice doesn’t make perfect - it makes whatever you are doing more consistent and predictable.

Walking on a Leash:

- Walking nicely on the leash starts with a **loose leash**
 - In the beginning, pay close attention to your leash arm. If you have it in a position different from how you normally would when walking without a dog, then you are probably too tense. Relax your arm. Keep the dog relatively close, but not so close that any deviant motion from the dog will cause the leash to tighten.
 - Pop the leash to try to get the dog back into position.

- If popping the leash has limited or no success, try quickly (very quickly) changing direction to keep the dog off guard for a while. When switching direction, pop the leash and tap the button if the dog isn't paying attention. Reward the dog with praise if there is no resistance when turning and no tension on the leash.
- Make sure to tap the button any time the dog causes tension on the leash and guide the dog back to the proper position (right beside your leg). You can use the continuous button for more effect if needed.

Eventually the need for the e-collar in everyday practice should diminish over time, however, it does take a significant amount of time and practice before that can be achieved. Also, some dogs might require it much longer than others. Do not rush the conditioning process. It will ultimately slow down your progress.

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