

## Teaching Hold By David Keehn

There are several ways to teach hold this is one of the easiest and have found it works with most dogs regardless of age. Prerequisites: Your pup should have his adult teeth in so usually around 6 months, Solid sit and heal. (If you are using an e-collar, collar conditioning would be done before hold.) Important part of hold is what you do with your pup when he is young. Praise is very important and should be used whenever you are playing retrieve with your pup. Whenever your pup has anything in his mouth praise them while the item is in their mouth.

Equipment needed:  
Paint Roller or Dowell  
Flat buckle collar  
Leash.

This is the beginning step of the Trained Retrieve although you do not have to go into the trained retrieve unless you want. This is a teaching step with little or no corrections involved in this process. Although obedience should be enforced. Keep in mind that every dog is an individual.

Step 1 Have your dog sit beside you

Step 2 Take the roller or dowel in your hand and say fetch and place item in the dog's mouth. You may have to open the dog's mouth gently to get the dog to open his mouth.

Step 3 Once the object is in the dogs mouth say hold. You may have to gently hold the dogs mouth closed around the object.

Step 4 With the item in the dogs mouth praise him.

Step 5 Start with 5-10 seconds with your dog holding the object. Increase time gradually

Step 6 Give your dog a command to release the object. Examples - Give, Leave, drop and so on. And take from dog's mouth. I prefer leave as the command.

Repeat steps 1-6 until dog shows progress holding without assistance. Each session should be about 10 minutes a day and try to end on a positive note. As dog progresses increase time the dog is holding object in his mouth continue to praise as the dog is holding the object. When dog is holding without assistance for about 1 minute start to have the dog heel with you at a slow walk on lead. At this time the dog may spit out the object when he starts to move stop and replace in the dogs mouth and start heeling again. Continue this till you can get a simple heeling pattern complete with the dog holding object. Example- heel a few paces, sit, heel a few paces, and turn and so on. Somewhere along this process your dog may give you trouble with wanting to spit out the object at this time lightly tap the dog under the chin when he is attempting to spit and say "Hold" This process should take about a week. The indications that you are done with hold is either your dog is doing well with the heeling pattern and holding the object or forcefully spitting the object and not responding to the light tap under chin. If hold was your goal and he is doing well you are done. Otherwise in either case it is time to move onto the trained retrieve.