

Samantha's Tracking Tips

1. How do you apply the tracking line? An empty plastic water bottle works great. Drill a small hole in the lid, put the amount of blood you wish to use in the bottle and you are ready to go. You may use an extra lid with no hole to place on the bottle until you are ready to set your line. A good starting point with blood is about 1 ounce per 75-100 yards. So about every yard you will place several drops of blood. You may change the blood patterns and amounts to increase difficulty of the line.

2. What's a good reward at the end of the tracking line? Small pieces of liver work well. If your dog has a favorite treat of his/her own you may place that with the deer hide. If a dog is not food driven, try maybe a favorite toy to play with when they find the end. In warm weather be sure to cover any food reward with a bowl to prevent bee stings. The bee's and other critters love the food also!

3. What is a good starting distance for a puppy and how do you progress? The best way to start a pup is a liver drag. Tie a string to a liver and drag it about 75 yards. Age the line about 30 minutes to one hour and then start the puppy. Don't stay on liver drags too long. Say maybe 2-3 sessions with the liver and then start with blood. You can progress the pup based on his/her ability to track. Don't make the line too easy or too hard. You want the pup to succeed but also to increase difficulty in your lines. You may add turns, creek crossings etc. as the pup shows progress.

4. What is a good frequency in a training schedule? Three times a week is a good start for a pup. As the dog ages once weekly is great if you can do it but every other week will be fine. Again you will need to base this on your individual dog. Some dogs get bored by repetition such as Dachshunds and others handle it well like Labradors.

Send Samantha any tracking questions at timberridgetracker@gmail.com and we will publish the questions and answers in the upcoming magazines.