



## Platform Drill for Scent Work

In the video I am using a very young (7 months) spaniel who has severe separation anxiety. She requires a lot of close contact and direction and does not like to be too far outside my bubble.

She will forgo food to be next to a human.

This drill is designed to get your dog out working away from you with a game that does not put too much pressure on them. This is a nice drill for dogs of all skill levels, and it is a nice one to pull out on rainy days just to maintain skills.

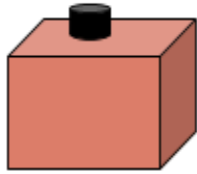
To set up the drill, you'll need your target odor, tin to contain it, tape, treats, and a bucket or stool to put the tin on. I like to tape the tin to the platform object so the dog does not knock it off or try to pick it up. If you have someone who can help you by placing food on the tin for you that really streamlines the exercise, however if you don't you can use a leash, crate, or baby gate to reset.

The dog will likely not know exactly what to do with this game, but food is a good motivator and should lead them to the tin. If your dog looks around or to you for help, have your helper go and tap the top of the tin to get the dog's attention. If you are working alone, taking a step toward the platform while you cue your search word will help the dog move towards the tin.

I've found that dogs that struggle with confidence, are clingy, or very suspicious of new items are likely to need help getting them familiar with the game. If the platform itself is scary to the dog you can change it out to something like a bucket or overturned box/basket, and simply sit next to it and drop treats on it for the dog to eat, no tin is used at this point. Then when they are comfortable with the platform you can add the tin back in.

Gradually you can increase the distance between you and the platform so the dog is traveling farther and coming back to you. Bonus- this is also a great recall building exercise to play with your dog!

Give your dog time to problem solve in the early stages, wait them out rather than jump in and help them right away. Dogs with strong obedience and focus backgrounds will focus more on the handler initially than the platform. Let them work it out if they can, and once they see you placing the treat on the tin they will be more apt to go to it quicker with each repetition.



Helper stations here  
and will place the treats  
on the top of the tin



Handler stays with dog and cues the  
search cue when the dog is focused on  
the platform.

Handler can increase the distance  
between the start point and the platform  
as the dog gets more comfortable with  
the drill