

Glen Golden's Boundary Training Suggestion:

Though the City Park's boundaries are artificial, there are many ways to help your dogs to recognize and respect them. I've described the simplest way in the outline below. I use this to keep my own dogs in my own small yard around the house without the aid of a fence.

1. Start practicing now with few distractions.
2. Practice the "Look" command. Pair the dog's **Name** with the word "look" as you bring a small, soft food reward from the dog's nose to the corner of your eye. The instant the dog makes eye contact, give them the reward. Do this ten times a day, ten times in a session. Eventually, the dog will avert their attention to you when you call their name, even under large distractions. [Personal Note: This is Key, this is Huge! Once you can convey this to your dog you can get him/her to do anything - BZ].
3. Choose your boundary markers - even a single metal sign on a pole will be sufficient for most dogs to recognize as a stopping line for most dogs in an area of the size you will be using. However, it would be easier for all if something like the small plastic flags used by electric fence and pest control companies were placed around the space in the beginning to make the boundaries obvious.
4. While on lead, hold the lead loosely and have your dog walk up to each boundary line and "Sit" in consecutive spots along the line. Do not to use your lead to control the dog. Use your voice (low excited whisper) or the promise of reward.
5. Each time the dog is successful at the boundary line, praise them and reward them with their favorite food treat or toy (for those not motivated by food), then walk quickly back toward the field's center. Then move on to the next spot on the same boundary line.
6. Always have the dog sit at the boundary line on the way in or out of the field. Be consistent.

7. When attempting to allow the dog to go off lead, position yourself close to a boundary line so you can control the environment with your voice and body posture. As the dog approaches the line (within 2-3 feet) give the "sit" command. If the dog respects the boundary line, give him praise and reward. If (s)he doesn't, use a short, sharp sound and the "Look" command to interrupt the unsought behavior, get the dog to return (you should be close enough to collar them if you have to), and try again. You can also do this with the dog dragging a long line (20' - available at Ithaca Feed) so you can step on it.

8. When you have the dog responding correctly 100% of the time, you can add small distractions and increase the distance between you and the boundary.

There are many variations on this to help fit it for individual problems in individual dogs. Remember to start small and work your way to greater distances. You would never ask your dog to sit and stay in one end zone of a football field while you walked to the opposite end zone. You would start off from the one yard line and gradually work your way across the field as the dog became successful. Good luck and good training!