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**CHECKING IN LEVEL 2**

Your dog should be in the habit of voluntarily looking at you and have been rewarded for doing so before beginning Level 2.

Move onto the next step once you have practiced and been successful at the previous step.

**Step 1: Inside your home**

* Prepare some small yummy treats in advance and put your dog on-leash. Simply attaching the leash is often enough to excite some dogs, and he might start pulling towards the door, anticipating a walk. Stand still, remain calm and wait him out.
* Watch your dog carefully and **mark the slightest glance in your direction** with a clicker or with a word (Yes!), and give your dog a treat.
* **Deliver the treat close to your own body** rather than reaching forward towards your dog. This will encourage him to stay close to you.
* **Keep marking and treating** for every glance until your dog is focused solidly on you. For most dogs, this won’t take long! The realization that there is a steady source of treats available is often a very powerful motivator for dogs to focus happily on their human.

**Step 2: Outside in lower distraction area**

* **Go outside**, in an area with low distractions. This area will have more distractions than indoors, but not as many as on a street or in a park. A back yard, back porch, balcony, or deck is ideal. Let your dog listen to the sounds around him, let him look around, let him sniff the air.
* Just as you did indoors, stand still and quiet, keep your eye on him, and mark and treat every glance he throws your way. Let him return to listening, seeing, and sniffing the air around him (while staying in one place as much as possible).
* Keep practicing this exercise until he’s offering you attention on a regular basis (not necessarily staring at you, but checking in with you frequently).

**Step 3:  Going out the door**

* Go back inside and if during the earlier exercise you used a door that only took you out to the back yard, **this time, take your dog out through the door you would normally use to go for a walk** (if that’s a different door), and close the door behind you.
* **Once you step outside, stay put, next to the door.** Chances are, your dog will already have begun pulling towards the street. If not, at the very least his attention will be focused in that direction. Hang on, remain calm, and wait him out. Immediately mark and treat the slightest glance your way and continue marking and treating any attention your dog offers you.
* If you find it’s taking rather long for your dog to glance your way, encourage him by making a sound (like a kissy sound) the first couple of times just to get the ball rolling. After that, see if you can wait him out again.
* Remember to mark and treat any effort to pay even the slightest attention to you. **You want your dog to have as many opportunities for reinforcement as possible.**
* When your dog appears to be calmer and better able to offer you some attention just outside the door, *go back inside*. Keep your dog on-leash and **play the attention game just inside the door for a few seconds, then go back outside** and repeat exercise #6.
* Play this in-and-out game a few times. Your goal is to be able to step outside and have your dog looking to you in anticipation of a treat, rather than bolting for the street or towards the car or towards the person jogging past on the street.

**Optional Step 4: The car**

* If your dog tends to pull strongly towards something as soon as you take him out of the car, also play this check-in game while getting out of the car. Take him out of the car, stand quietly and let him sniff the air or the ground in the immediate area. You stay in one place, feet planted on the ground, with your hands close to your belly for better control if he’s a strong puller.
* Wait him out until he checks in with you, and then mark and reward.
* Repeat this process until he’s focused on you. When you get that steady auto-focus, proceed to wherever you were going.

**Level 3 will involve practising checking in in high distraction areas out and about.**