

How To - The "Back Around"

Kristen Ficke suggests breaking the move into two halves, and with each half, keeping the leash tight to keep the dog's head close to your body and to ensure the dog's rear has to do the work of moving around.

"The first half circle started from a stand in a left heel. I held the leash in my right hand, and let it fall across the front of my body. I used food in my left hand to lure her through a half circle around me, so that she ended up on my right side with her head facing backward. The second half circle started with the dog standing on my right side facing backward. I held the leash in my right hand and let it wrap around behind me. I used food in my right hand to lure her so that she did a half circle across the front of my body, ending up in a heel position on the left facing forward.

Once she had the understanding and muscle memory to do both of those moves separately, I combined them into a full circle-back. The technique worked quite well because once Kai got halfway through the circle, she seemed to easily understand that she was now in the start position for the second half of the circle. It eliminated a lot of fumbling at the half-point of the circle on both our parts."

Lyd F. writes: To teach Ali how to circle back starting on the left, I had her pivot with me then spun myself in the opposite direction to meet up with her again on the left. Somehow, she figured it out and has quite a tight circle back. However, when I tried this from the right, she just looked at me as though I were crazy. **Ray** suggested the following which worked much better.

Make sure the dog knows the "right heel" position. From that position, handler tells dog to stay, pivots a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to the right, then tells the dog to find the right-heel position. Repeat till the dog can find the position consistently. Next, do the same thing but handler makes $\frac{1}{2}$ a turn and asks dog to find the position. Gradually keep turning more up to about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a circle-back. To initiate the move from the starting position, you will have to give a different cue to get dog started, then as soon as the dog has started, ask it to find the right heel position.

First Half



Left Start



Left Behind



Left End

Second Half



Right Start



Right Behind



Right End

Lin MacDonald writes: "As I was teaching Corabel to do a circle back, she started to go wide as she learned. So, I took a small-size hula-hoop and put it up on 2" x 4" blocks. Then we both stood inside and I sent her around. As she bumped the hoop, she pulled herself closer to me. I have since gotten rid of the wooden blocks and just use the hoop on the floor to remind her to get in closer.

However, my technique may need to be modified for most dogs!" (With larger dogs, try using an X-pen enclosure – from workshop with Michele Pouliot)

