

# Bendigo Obedience Dog Club

## Training Tip 7: Distraction



One of the most common sentences we hear from dog owners is “my dog does it perfectly at home”. It is often said with a bit of frustration as their dog hasn’t sat/dropped/stayed etc in class. It is not your dogs fault (or yours) that the dog hasn’t performed the exercise in class. Your dog will learn and master training at home before anywhere else for a couple of reasons:

1. It is where you practice most
2. The level of distraction is very low as training is in a familiar environment.



Backyard: Spends lots of time here—smells, sights and sounds are all familiar and “normal”, so the dog can relax and concentrate during a training session.

Lake Weroona: Occasional visit—smells, sights and sounds change depending on who is there, time of day, day of the week you go. This is a very high distraction environment.

- Bike riders
- Children running/playing
- Joggers
- Dogs (present and smells)
- Birds
- Lots of people moving and activity



So how to we help our dogs learn to still listen to us even with the distractions?

1. Teach new things at home first & master them
2. Increase the distraction factor little by little—in the house, the back yard, front yard, 2 doors down the street etc.
3. This is also doing what is termed “generalising the behaviour”. The dog learns that sit mean sit (or come means come etc) everywhere you are.
4. Find quieter public places to practice initially and gradually build up the level of distraction around you once your dog is reliably completing the training at that place.
5. Take your training “on the road” - mix it into your walks, day trips to new places, holidays at the beach etc.
6. Go back to basics in any new environment/place you visit and build from there.

**Remember: Any new environment/place you take your dog is automatically full of distraction. Everything is new, exciting and needs investigating. Take the time to allow your dog to do so and settle in to the new place before trying to do any training.**