



SCENT DETECTION DISCRIMINATION Level 2

Goal: The dog has associated the scent to pleasant consequences and has learned to go to the scent, no matter what is going on, and hold their nose right over it. In this stage, we'll teach the dog to discriminate the scent amongst other smells.

Material: clicker, treats, scent, vials and/or tins with holes, can

TRAINING PLAN		
1.	Establishing the Indication behavior	Place the tin in the can. Make sure you use the same can throughout all the training (make a small mark on it). Ask the dog for a "Down" or a "sit" and place the can on the floor, about 5 feet away. Release the dog to go to it with a "Check". Click the dog for placing their nose in the can and maintaining it there for 4-6 seconds. At the click, the dog should come running back towards you, treat. Put the dog back in a "Sit" or "Down" and repeat the sequence a few times.
2.	Adding a can	With the dog in a "Sit" or "Down", in the same training session, add a second can 1-2 feet away from the first one. This can should contain a tin with no scent (Blank). Getting the help from another handler can help at this stage so that you can focus on the dog and let the other handler manage the cans. Send the dog to the cans with a "Check". The dog should run and investigate the cans. If they indicate to the "Blank" can, just wait. Let the dog change position and go to the other can. At this step, you'll want to reduce your criteria and might even move closer to the cans and click after just 2-3 seconds of the Indication behavior. Repeat the sequence 6-10 times over 2-3 sessions.
3.	Adding more cans	Place 2-4 cans in front of the dog, with one can containing the scent. Add or remove cans depending on the dog's level of comfort and motivation. Some dogs can only handle 2-3 cans at first and get discouraged, while others understand the game better when they have more cans to explore. Gradually add cans until you can present 5-7 cans in front of the dog.
4.	Changing your position	Start changing your position to the cans. Move around the cans, changing the angle to the cans. You can also start varying your position and sit on a chair or on the floor. Keep walking even when the dog has stopped to indicate, etc. The goal here is to make sure your dog isn't using information from you to find the right can, but is instead using scent only.
5.	Adding other smells	With the dog in a "Sit" or "Down", place three cans on the floor, the "Hot" can, a "Blank" can and a can containing the scent from a "Normal" episode. Repeat until the dog ignores the "Normal" scent and indicates only to the "Hot" can, then gradually add more cans. Once you can present 5 cans or more to the dog, add a second "Normal" scent in one of the cans. Here you can add other smells like essential oils, treats, etc. in the other cans (this is optional). Remember that scent will contaminate the cans, so you'll need to be very careful to always use the same cans for the same type of smells.



6.	Building distance	Move further away from the can. Let the dog work completely on their own and minimize how much you might influence their behavior (moving around at random will make your body movements irrelevant).
7.	Building distractions	Gradually increase the level of distractions. Tap on a table or a wall as the dog runs to the cans and keep tapping until the dog indicates the right can. In other words, if the dog comes running to you instead of the cans, ignore the dog, keep tapping and give him/her time to decide to go back to the cans. Walk in place, raise your arms up in the air, etc. Make sure to keep moving your position around the cans. Slowly build up the level of distractions by including another person or another dog in the training room.
8.	Generalization	Repeat the steps in different areas. Make it easy at first and make sure the level of distractions is very low. Ask a different person to work with the dog.
9.	Fluency	Gradually build up the level of difficulty until you can successfully get your dog to go indicate the “Hot” can, in different places and with different levels of distractions at least 80% of the time.

CONGRATULATIONS! If you’ve come this far, you have developed a solid foundation to scent discrimination and have successfully prepared the dog for the next step: Alerting to the smell on the person.