

RETRIEVER TRAINING RESOURCES

This list includes material that various members of the field committee have found useful, in part or entirety, and provides a wide range of methods and approaches. Novice trainers with questions about choosing among the approaches are urged to consult with an experienced member of their training group, or any of the field committee members or regional mentors (contact information at fersafield.com). All trainers are also urged to review the material, keeping in mind their own comfort zones and the best interests of their dogs. Training theory and methods are always evolving, and some of the older titles contain both time-tested methods and others no longer in widespread use. Sources for all material can be found through online searches.

*Items marked (*LL) are available for loan, free of charge, from the Field Committee's Lending Library. Contact Ruth Sumner, at rsumner@snet.net. Happy training, and enjoy the journey!*

Puppy Training & Getting Started

Sound Beginnings – DVD

Jackie Mertens – Younglove Publications

A comprehensive training program for retriever puppies from 7 weeks to 8 months of age; also useful for inexperienced older dogs.

Retriever Puppy Training: Training Puppies for Hunting Tests or Hunting Companion

Clarice Rutherford and Cheryl Loveland – Alpine Publications, c. 1988

Provides a step-by-step teaching schedule to help retriever puppies get started in retriever training.

Complete Training Programs, Emphasizing Preparation for Advanced Work

Total Retriever Training (5 DVD & manual set) (*LL – in VHS format)

Mike Lardy – YBS Media

Recently revised and expanded – Comprehensive step by step training methods, from basic through advanced training.

Total Retriever Marking (3 DVD & manual set) (*LL)

Mike Lardy – YBS Media

Training methods for teaching marking skills, from puppies through advanced, using field demonstrations and discussions to describe a complete sequential marking program and to explore a wide variety of marking topics.

Total E-Collar Conditioning (DVD) (*LL—VHS format)

Mike Lardy – YBS Media

Method for teaching electronic collar conditioning and use with an emphasis on retaining a dog's positive attitude.

Training with Mike Lardy, Bound Articles, Volumes I, II, & III (* LL – Vols. I & II)

Mike Lardy – YBS Media

*Sequence of articles reprinted from the **Retriever Journal**. Vol. I covers-training a retriever from puppy through transition work with a step by step program for force fetch, electronic collar conditioning, and teaching handling & advanced work for field trials or hunt tests. Vol II focuses on solving common problems for competition. Vol. III covers marking and handling topics, and diverse areas such as training pond design.*

Retriever Training

Jim and Phyllis Dobbs, Alice Woodyard – Tri-Tronics Inc., c. 1993

A training method from puppy through transition, using the electronic collar. Includes diagrams of drills and concepts useful even if you choose to not use an electronic collar.

TriTronics DVD Series (1 DVD) The Trained Retrieve Part 1 “hold” & Part II “fetch”

Jim and Phyllis Dobbs, Alice Woodyard – Tri-Tronics Inc.

A step-by step demonstration of teaching “hold” and “fetch” using the electronic-collar. Demonstrates reactions to collar corrections.

Retriever Training Basics (2 DVDs)

Danny Farmer and Judy Aycok

Step-by-step comprehensive basics program, with drills demonstrated.

Smartwork for Retrievers, Volume I: Basic and Transition (*LL)

Evan Graham – Rush Creek Press

Fundamentals from puppy training through basics and early-to-mid transition training.

Smartwork, Volume II: Secrets of the Pro

Evan Graham – Rush Creek Press

Late transition through advanced training, and tips on maintaining your dog's performance over his lifetime.

Smart Fetch: The Complete Guide to All Phases of Force Fetching for Retrievers

Evan Graham – Rush Creek Press

Includes obedience, force fetch, and electronic collar conditioning use through water force.

SmartWorks Basics Video (6 DVD set):

Evan Graham – Rush Creek Press

Includes puppy program, obedience, basic handling, water force, the Smart Work Transition Vols. I-III, and SmartFetch method.

Training and Campaigning Retrievers: The Principles and Practice

Jack M Gwaltney, Jr, MD, c.1999

Includes many aspects of training methods & learning theory to understanding how a dog thinks and reacts to elements of training, tests & trials.

The 10 Minute Retriever

John and Amy Dahl – Willow Creek Press, c. 2001

Comprehensive program starting with puppy training through blind retrieves, reflecting the authors' belief that daily 10-minute training sessions best suit a retriever's attention span and lead to rapid learning.

Finished Dog: A Complete Training Manual for the Finished Hunting Retriever

Charlie Journey – Sport Dog, c. 2001

Training methods for electronic and non-electronic trainers, designed to produce a “finished” dog for hunting, trials or tests.

Written by Fellow Flat Coat Enthusiasts

Fetch It Up

Doris Ehret – FCRSAfield.com – “Getting Started”

A series of articles on how to get started with a Flat Coat puppy. Available free, on the field website (www.fcrsafield.com).

Gaining Momentum

Kass Goulding -- pacesettertrainingkennel.com

Training program suitable for beginners or those new to teaching handling skills. Based on experience in working with Flat Coated Retrievers and all retriever breeds, including soft and over-pressured dogs, resulting in positive, confidence-building training techniques and drills.

Basic and Transition Field Manuals

Mitch White - mitch@gamekprs.com

Basic and Transition Training and Designing Retriever Training Set-Ups manuals: the basic manual covers puppy selection through honor/steadiness and includes a section on test setups and tests; the transition manual focuses on a clear understanding of transition and advanced training, including drills for teaching advanced concepts; the designing set-ups manual focuses on bird placement and training on factors.

Drills & Training Tips

Building A Retriever: Drills & More

Carol Cassity – Hunt ‘Em Up

Forty drills and a section on training practices and principles. Each drill includes step-by-step directions, a diagram, problem/solution chart, materials list. Particular attention is paid to selecting drills that are within the means of most amateur trainers.

Training Retrievers Alone (2 DVD & manual set)

Dennis Voigt, YBS Media

Emphasis on training techniques useful for training alone, with or without remote devices; also includes training fundamentals, set-ups & problem solving.

Train with Attar: Training Group (DVD & Audio CD)

Andy Attar, Autumn Run Retrievers

Training philosophy, methods, & problem solving in the transition stage. Handlers receiving one-on-one feedback & assessment.

The Koehler Method of Open Obedience for Ring, Home, and Field

William R Koehler, Howell Books, c. 1971

Useful for force fetch training.

Retriever Trouble Shooting: Strategies & Solutions to Retriever Training Problems

John & Amy Dahl – Willow Creek Press, 2006

Solutions to common training problems, in the context of how retrievers learn, and maintaining motivation.

Retriever Training Drills for Marks

James B. Spencer – Alpine Publications

A collection of drills and exercises for marking geared toward training for hunting and hunt tests. Each drill is diagramed, with explanation of purpose, prerequisites, necessary equipment, and pitfalls to avoid.

Training Geared Toward Hunting

Training Retrievers for Marshes and Meadows

James B. Spencer – Alpine Publications

Includes puppy training, basic obedience training, play retrieving, simple marked retrieves, gun proofing, introducing birds and decoys, force-breaking, marks, blinds, and more.

Retriever Training for the Duck Hunter

Robert Milner – Safari Press (Out of Print)

Comprehensive method for training from puppy to advanced levels for hunting or testing. Step by step instruction focuses on the special relationship that develops between a hunter and his dog.

Test Preparation

American Kennel Club Rules and Regulations for Retriever Hunt Tests, and for Retriever Field Trials

Available at www.akc.org.

FCRSA WC/WCX Guidelines

Available on the FCRSA field website: fcrsafield.com

WC/WCX Tests – DVD,

GRCA Education Committee, available for a nominal fee from the GRCA website, GRCA.org
Shows the running of tests & a handlers' briefing, with commonly asked questions. Discussion of rules for judges, workers & handlers.

Retriever Working Certificate Training (*LL)

Clarice Rutherford, Branstad and Whicker – Alpine Publications, c. 1986

(Out of print, but used copies may be located)

A primer that defines basic terminology and outlines a basic program to train for the WC and WCX tests.

The Big Jump

Julie Cairns – Hunt Test Know How

Based on articles originally published in the Golden Retriever News. Covers what is needed to make the Big Jump from the junior level in hunt tests to the senior level.

The Art and Science of Handling Retrievers (2 DVD & manual set)

Dave Rorem – YBS Media

Focuses on handler responsibilities, communication with the dog, analyzing the elements of tests. Useful for both field trials and hunt tests.

Retriever Training Tests

James B. Spencer – Alpine Publications, 2nd ed., c. 1997

Explains different types of tests, and illustrates environmental factors affecting performance. Enables novices to understand the subtleties of the tests they encounter at field trials, hunting tests, working certificate tests, and in hunting.

Positive Reinforcement Training Methods

Motivational Training for the Field

Lori Jolly – Rosehillretrievers.com

Positive methods for puppy training through advanced work.

Positive Gun Dogs: Clicker Training for Sporting Breeds

Jim Barry, Mary Emmen, Susan Smith – Sunshine Books, c. 2007

Focuses on training in a systematic manner, with force-free methods and exercises for all stages.

Retriever Training: A Back-to-Basics Approach

Robert Milner – Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Back-to-basics approach, teaching how to pick a pup that will likely be calm and obedient, and then training for the hunting and at-home companion. Combines theory about how dogs learn with commonsense, persistent training methods.

Classics

The Working Retrievers

Thomas Quinn – Lyons Press, c. 1983

Training and drills, developed before e-collar use. Dog stories, and histories of retriever breeds, as well. Beautifully illustrated.

Training Retrievers to Handle

D.L. & A. Walters – c. 1979

Influential book in developing training methods used today, stressing the creation of good habits and the prevention of bad habits. (Some of the “force methods” described are no longer in widespread use.)

Periodicals

Retriever Journal, Village Press. retrieverjournal.com

Retrievers OnLine, Dennis Voigt & Fiona McKay, retrieveronline.com

Gun Dog Magazine, Intermedia Outdoors, Inc. gundogmag.com

Retriever News, Working Retriever Central, theretrievenews.com

Hunt Test Know How. hunttestknowhow.com –bimonthly publication.

Gray's Sporting Journal grayssportingjournal.com

Websites

FCRSA Field Website, fcrsafield.com – *Training articles, rules, news, lending library information.*

Pat Nolan's Website, ponderosakennels.com – *Pat is a long-time professional field trainer, who offers training articles and a number of training and demo videos, as well as a downloadable obedience manual.*

Dobbs Training Center, dobbsdogs.com — *A number of training articles available from Jim and Phyllis Dobbs.*

retrievertraining.net – *Retriever training discussion site.*