

## **Exercise 2.3**

### **Score Basic Obedience**

#### **Introduction**

In a previous lesson in this Module, you used a modified score sheet to chart your dog's improvement with obedience to a specific command over a period of time. Obedience scoring is important because it gives you a place to start with training. Scoring your dog on basic obedience helps you to understand what his strengths and weaknesses are, and where you can help him improve. It also gives you an objective way to assess progress. If you plan to train dogs or conduct puppy classes, your score sheet will become an invaluable tool, but it is also useful just for helping you train your own dog.

The Basic Dog Obedience Score Sheet you received with Lesson 3 scores your dog on the four commands every dog should know (Sit, Down, Stay, and Come). For each command, you test your dog in a variety of different situations with different levels of distractions. This is important because obeying commands in a crowded, distracting area requires a different concentration level from your dog, and it is important for him to learn to obey at all times. The situations where a basic obedience command will save your dog from harm tend to be high distraction situations like a busy street or a crowded dog park. Your dog must be properly habituated to practicing obedience commands in these types of situations if you are to rely on his obedience under less than ideal conditions. Don't be disheartened if your dog doesn't score perfectly on everything right away. Dog training is about constant and consistent improvement, not perfection. The point of the Obedience Score Sheet is not to judge you or your dog; it's to help you move forward and improve together.

#### **Purpose**

This exercise is intended to help you to identify your dog's level of obedience in different situations, and assess possible areas of improvement.

#### **Exercise**

In order to complete this exercise, print out the Basic Dog Obedience Score Sheet. You'll notice that it includes three sections: one each for testing your dog in an area with low-level distractions, medium-level distractions, and high-level distractions. Start by finding an area with very few distractions, like a living room or hallway. An indoor setting is usually best, but a fenced backyard can also work, provided that your backyard isn't full of squirrels, dog toys, or places your dog loves to dig. Ensure that you have your dog's attention, and then tell her to sit. How did she do? Did she obey instantly and then look at you to see what you wanted her to do next? If so, congratulations, you can give her a ten! Did she ignore you completely? Sorry, that's a one, and you definitely know where to start improving. A three might be sitting briefly and then running off, while a five might be a solid "sit," but only when motivated by a treat. Repeat this exercise for each of the other three commands, noting your dog's level of obedience for each one. Remember, like any other training session, this one should be fun for your dog. Don't stress out or scold, and be sure to give your dog plenty of positive reinforcement.

