



Relaxation Protocol - Dr Karen Overall

15 days - 10 minutes/day

The relaxation protocol acts as a foundation for teaching your dog appropriate behaviour. It teaches dogs (and humans) how to find stillness in both their bodies and minds. It's an extremely effective tool that can be used in many ways and is an essential foundation for achieving behaviour change. The focus is to teach your dog to rely on you for all cues and not react inappropriately to different sounds and stimuli.

The relaxation protocol helps to facilitate the calming of the body and relieve the heightened emotional state that prevents dogs from learning the skills or techniques we want to work on. If your dog is dealing with any kind of anxiety, or you want to create a moment of calm behaviour, this protocol is extremely efficient.

Every dog will benefit from this protocol but it's especially helpful for fearful or anxious dogs, hyper-aroused dogs (dogs who seem to get "too excited"), dogs who struggle to focus, and puppies (to set you both up for success and potentially prevent behavioural problems down the road). One other benefit is it helps owners improve or form a bond with their dog.

The purpose of this program is not to teach your dog to just sit, if your dog prefers to lie down because it's more comfortable, that's fine. The goal of this program is to teach your dog to relax, to defer to you, to enjoy earning a salary for appropriate, desirable behaviour, and to develop as a foundation, a pattern of behaviours that allow your dog to cooperate with future behaviour modification.

The exercises seem a bit tedious, but it is very simple and the value in them is that they force you to take things slow and day by day more distractions are introduced. In the case that your dog is very successful with these exercises, don't add any 'flare' to it until you have done the whole protocol successfully all the way through, then you can go back and increase difficulty.

Oftentimes during training behaviour gets worse before it gets better. Just remember they are learning something new and it can be frustrating to figure out. Their behaviour will improve as you continue training.

Tips

1. Reward your pet after each completed task
2. Stop when either one of you is tired or concerned
3. Pay attention to the parenthetical note that suggests potentially worrisome tasks.



Task Set 1

Sit for 2 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit while you take 1 step back and then return
Sit while you take 2 steps back and then return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit while you take 1 step to the right and then return
Sit while you take 1 step to the left and then return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit while you take 2 steps back and return
Sit while you take 2 steps to the right and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 15 seconds
Sit while you take 2 steps to the left and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 15 seconds
Sit while you clap your hands softly once
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 15 seconds
Sit while you take 3 steps back and return
Sit while you count out loud to 3
Sit while you count out loud to 5
Sit while you count out loud to 10

Sit while you clap your hands softly once
Sit while you count out loud to 5
Sit while you count out loud to 10
Sit while you count out loud to 5
Sit while you count out loud to 10
Sit while you count out loud to 20
Sit while you take 3 steps to the right and return
Sit while you clap your hands softly twice
Sit for 3 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit while you take 1 step back and return
Sit for 3 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 3 seconds



Task Set 2

Sit for 5 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you take 1 step back and return

Sit while you take 3 steps back and return

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you take 3 steps to the right and return

Sit while you take 3 steps to the left and return

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you take 3 steps to the right and clap your hands

Sit while you take 3 steps to the left and clap your hands

Sit for 5 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you walk one-quarter of the way around the dog to the right

Sit while you take 4 steps back

Sit while you walk one-quarter the way around the dog to the left

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you take 5 steps back from the dog, clapping your hands, and return

Sit while you walk halfway around the dog to the right and return

Sit while you walk halfway around the dog to the left and return

Sit for 5 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you jog quietly in place for 3 seconds

Sit while you jog quietly in place for 5 seconds

Sit while you jog quietly in place for 10 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you jog one-quarter of the way around dog to right and return

Sit while you jog one-quarter of the way around dog to left and return

Sit for 5 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds



Task Set 3

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit for 15 seconds

Sit while you take 2 steps backwards and return

Sit while you jog 5 steps backwards from dog and return

Sit while you walk halfway around the dog to the right and return

Sit while you walk halfway around the dog to the left and return

Sit while you take 10 steps backwards and return

Sit for 5 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit for 15 seconds

Sit while you take 10 steps to the left and return

Sit while you take 10 steps to the right and return

Sit for 5 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit for 15 seconds

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit while you walk halfway around the dog to the right, clap your hands, and return

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit while you walk halfway around the dog to the left, clap your hands, and return

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you jog 10 steps to the right and return

Sit while you jog 10 steps to the left and return

Sit while you jog in place for 10 seconds

Sit for 5 second

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit for 15 seconds

Sit while you jog in place for 20 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you jog backwards 5 steps and return

Sit while you jog to the right 5 steps and return

Sit while you jog to the left 5 steps and return

Sit for 5 seconds while you clap your hands

Sit for 10 seconds while you clap your hands

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit for 5 seconds



Task Set 4

Sit for 5 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you jog backwards 5 steps and return

Sit for 5 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit while you jog halfway around the dog to the right and return

Sit while you jog halfway around the dog to left and return

Sit while you move three-quarters of the way around the dog to the right and return

Sit while you move three-quarters of the way around the dog to the left and return

Sit while you jog backwards 5 steps, clapping your hands and return

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit for 15 seconds

Sit while you clap your hands for 20 seconds

Sit while you quickly move backwards 10 steps and return

Sit while you quickly move 15 steps backwards and return

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit while you jog halfway around the dog to the right and return

Sit while you jog halfway around the dog to the left and return

Sit while you quickly walk 15 steps to the left and return

Sit while you quickly walk 15 steps to the right and return

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit while you move three-quarters of the way around the dog to the right and return

Sit while you move three-quarters of the way around the dog to the left and return

Sit while you walk all the way around the dog

Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance and return

Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance, clapping your hands, and return

Sit while you walk around the dog, quietly clapping your hands and then return

Sit for 20 seconds Sit while you quickly jog around the dog

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds while you clap your hands



Task Set 5

Sit for 5 seconds

Sit for 15 seconds

Sit while you walk quickly 15 steps to the right and return

Sit while you walk quickly 15 steps to the left and return

Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance and return

Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance, clapping your hands, and return

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit while you walk around the dog, clapping your hands

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you walk quickly backwards, clapping your hands, and return

Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance and return

Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance, clapping your hands, and return

Sit while you go to an entrance and just touch the doorknob or wall and return

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you walk quickly backwards, clapping your hands, and return

Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance and return

Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance, clapping your hands, and return

Sit while you go to an entrance and just touch the doorknob or wall and return

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance, clapping your hands, and return

Sit while you go to an entrance and just touch the doorknob or wall and return

Sit for 10 seconds Sit while the doorknob is touched or you move into entryway and return

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit for 15 seconds while you clap your hands

Sit for 10 seconds while you jog in place

Sit for 5 seconds



Task Set 6

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit for 20 seconds while you jog back and forth in front of the dog

Sit for 15 seconds

Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance and return

Sit while you walk quickly backwards, clapping your hands, and return

Sit while you go to an entrance and just touch the doorknob or wall and return

Sit for 20 seconds while jogging

Sit while you walk around the dog

Sit while you walk around the dog clapping your hands

Sit for 15 seconds

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit for 30 seconds

Sit while you walk quickly backwards, clapping your hands, and return

Sit while you go to an entrance and just touch the doorknob or wall and return

Sit while you open the door or go into the entrance for 5 seconds and then return

Sit while you open the door or go into the entrance for 10 seconds and then return

Sit for 30 seconds

Sit while you walk quickly backwards, clapping your hands, and return

Sit while you go to an entrance and just touch the doorknob or wall and return

Sit for 10 seconds

Sit while you go through the door or the entranceway and then return

Sit while you go through the door or the entranceway, clapping your hands and then return

Sit while you open the door or go into the entrance for 10 seconds and then return

Sit for 30 seconds

Sit while you disappear from view for 5 seconds and then return

Sit for 20 seconds

Sit for 10 seconds while you clap your hands

Sit for 5 seconds



Task Set 7

Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 20 seconds while you clap your hands
Sit while you take 10 steps backwards and return
Sit while you walk around the dog
Sit while you go through the door or the entranceway and then return
Sit while you go through the door or the entranceway, clapping your hands and then return
Sit while you open the door or go into the entrance for 10 seconds and then return
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you disappear from view for 5 seconds and then return
Sit while you go through the door or the entranceway and then return
Sit while you go through the door or the entranceway, clapping your hands and then return
Sit while you open the door or go into the entrance for 10 seconds and then return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 20 seconds
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you disappear from view for 10 seconds and then return
Sit while you disappear from view for 15 seconds and then return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 15 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds while you clap your hands
Sit while you jog in place for 10 seconds

Sit while you jog three-quarters of the way to the right and return
Sit while you jog three-quarters of the way to the left and return
Sit while you go through the door or the entranceway, clapping your hands and then return
Sit while you open the door or go into the entrance for 10 seconds and then return
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you disappear from view for 15 seconds and then return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds

Task Set 8



Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 15 seconds while you jog and clap your hands
Sit while you back up 15 steps and return
Sit while you circle the dog and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 20 seconds and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 25 seconds and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds while you sit in a chair (placed 5 feet from the dog)
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 15 seconds while you jog and clap your hands
Sit while you back up 15 steps and return
Sit while you circle the dog and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 20 seconds and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 30 seconds and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit while you circle the dog and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 20 seconds and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 25 seconds and return
Sit for 5 seconds while you sit in a chair near the dog
Sit while you disappear from view for 10 seconds, sit in the chair for 5 seconds, and return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 20 seconds while you jog and clap

Sit for 15 seconds while you run around
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds while you turn around
Sit for 5 seconds while you sit in a chair near the dog
Sit while you disappear from view for 10 seconds, sit in the chair for 5 seconds, and return
Sit for 10 seconds

Task Set 9



Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds while you turn around
Sit for 5 seconds while you jog
Sit while you walk around the dog
Sit while you jog around the dog
Sit while you jog around the dog, clapping your hands
Sit while you jog twice around the dog
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 15 seconds while you clap your hands
Sit for 20 seconds
Sit while you move three-quarters of the way around the dog to the right and return
Sit while you move three-quarters of the way around the dog to the left and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 10 seconds and then return
Sit while you circle the dog and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 20 seconds and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 25 seconds and return
Sit for 5 seconds while you sit in a chair near the dog
Sit while you disappear from view for 10 seconds, sit in the chair for 5 seconds, and return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit while you bend down and touch your toes
Sit while you stretch your arms
Sit while you stretch your arms and jump once

Sit while you touch your toes 5 times
Sit while you stretch your arms and jump 3 times
Sit for 15 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds

Task Set 10



Sit for 5 seconds and clap
Sit for 10 seconds while you touch your toes
Sit for 15 seconds while you sit in a chair
Sit while you walk quickly 15 steps to the right and return
Sit while you walk quickly 15 steps to the left and return
Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 5 seconds and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 10 seconds and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 15 seconds and return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit while you walk quickly 15 steps to the right and return
Sit while you walk quickly 15 steps to the left and return
Sit while you walk approximately 20 steps to an entrance and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 5 seconds and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 10 seconds and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 15 seconds and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 5 seconds, knock softly on the wall and return
Sit for 5 seconds

Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 5 seconds and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 10 seconds and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 15 seconds and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 5 seconds, knock softly on the wall and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, quickly knock softly on the wall and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 10 seconds, knock softly on the wall and return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds

Task Set 11



Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, quickly knock softly on the wall and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 10 seconds, knock softly on the wall and return
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the doorbell, and immediately return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the doorbell, wait 2 seconds, and return
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the doorbell, and immediately return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the doorbell, wait 5 seconds, and return
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the doorbell, and immediately return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the doorbell, wait 10 seconds, and return
Sit for 5 seconds while you jog
Sit while you walk around the dog
Sit while you jog around the dog
Sit while you jog around the dog, clapping your hands
Sit while you jog twice around the dog
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 15 seconds while you clap your hands
Sit for 20 seconds
Sit while you move three-quarters of the way around the dog to the right and return

Sit while you move three-quarters of the way around the dog to the left and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 10 seconds and then return
Sit while you circle the dog and return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds

Task Set 12



Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds while you clap your hands
Sit for 15 seconds Sit for 20 seconds while you hum
Sit while you disappear from view for 20 seconds and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 25 seconds and return
Sit for 5 seconds while you sit in a chair near the dog
Sit while you disappear from view for 10 seconds, sit in the chair for 5 seconds, and return
Sit for 15 seconds
Sit for 20 seconds while you hum
Sit while you disappear from view for 20 seconds and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 25 seconds and return
Sit while you move three-quarters of the way around the dog to the right and return
Sit while you move three-quarters of the way around the dog to the left and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 10 seconds and then return
Sit while you circle the dog and return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, quickly knock softly on the wall and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 10 seconds, knock softly on the wall and return
Sit for 30 seconds

Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the doorbell, and immediately return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the doorbell, wait 2 seconds, and return
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, say "hello," and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, say "hello," wait 3 seconds, and return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds

Task Set 13



Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 15 seconds while you hum
Sit for 15 seconds while you hum and clap
Sit while you disappear from view for 20 seconds and return
Sit while you disappear from view for 25 seconds and return
Sit for 5 seconds while you sit in a chair near the dog
Sit while you disappear from view for 10 seconds, sit in the chair for 5 seconds, and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, quickly knock softly on the wall and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 10 seconds, knock softly on the wall and return
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the doorbell, and immediately return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the doorbell, wait 2 seconds, and return
Sit for 30 seconds Sit while you leave the dog 's view, say "hello," wait 5 seconds, and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, knock or ring the bell, say "hello," wait 5 seconds, and return Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, say "hello," wait 5 seconds, and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, knock or ring the bell, say "hello," wait 5 seconds, and return

Sit for 20 seconds while you hum
Sit for 15 seconds while you clap
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit while you jog around the dog
Sit for 10 seconds while you clap and hum
Sit for 5 seconds while you jog in place
Sit while you jog around dog, humming



Task Set 14

Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds while you hum and clap
Sit while you run around dog
Sit while you walk back and forth to door
Sit while you leave room and quickly knock
or ring bell and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds while you hum and clap
Sit while you run around dog
Sit while you walk back and forth to door
Sit while you leave room and quickly knock
or ring bell and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view for 10
seconds, knock softly on the wall and return
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the
doorbell, and immediately return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, ring the
doorbell, wait 2 seconds, and return
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, say
"hello," wait 5 seconds, and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, knock
or ring the bell, say "hello," wait 10
seconds, and return
Sit for 30 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, say
"hello," wait 10 seconds, and return

Sit while you leave the dog 's view, knock
or ring the bell, say "hello," wait 10
seconds, and return
Sit for 20 seconds while you hum
Sit for 20 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds

Task Set 15



Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit for 15 seconds while you clap and hum
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, knock or ring the bell, say "hello," talk for 10 seconds, and return
Sit for 20 seconds while you hum
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, say "hello," invite the invisible person in, wait 5 seconds, and return
Sit for 10 seconds
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, say "hello," invite the invisible person in, wait 10 seconds, and return
Sit while you leave the dog 's view, say "hello," talk as if to someone for 5 seconds, and return
Sit for 5 seconds while you hum and clap
Sit while you run around dog

Sit while you walk back and forth to door
Sit while you leave room and quickly knock or ring bell and return
Sit for 5 seconds
Sit while you leave the room and knock or ring the bell for 3 seconds and return
Sit while you leave the room and knock or ring the bell for 5 seconds
Sit while you leave the room and talk to people who aren't there for 3 seconds
Sit while you leave the room and talk to people who aren't there for 5 seconds
Sit while you leave the room and talk to people who aren't there for 10 seconds
Sit while you run around the dog
Sit for 10 seconds while you sit in a chair
Sit for 30 seconds while you sit in a chair
Sit for 15 seconds while you jog and clap
Sit for 5 seconds

Future Repetitions



- Repeat all tasks in different locations.
 - Repeat all tasks with all family members.
 - Repeat all tasks with only every second or third being rewarded with a treat. (Remember praise!)
 - Repeat with only intermittent treat reinforcement. (Remember praise!)
- Congratulations: You and your pet are now ready for Tier 2!

Resources

Relaxation Protocol - Karen Overall

https://www.karenoverall.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Protocol-for-relaxation_Overall.pdf

MP3 files <https://championofmyheart.com/relaxation-protocol-mp3-files/>

Door Specific <https://positive.dog/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Relaxation-Protocol.pdf>