



INTRODUCTION TO MANTRAILING

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WHAT IS MANTRAILING?

TRACK 'EM DOWN

Mantrailing is the fastest growing dog sport in the UK, and it is one of very few sports where the dog holds all the cards! Mantrailing is used by search and rescue teams, police and the military, whether to find a particular person or to find or eliminate a particular direction of travel. It is also becoming hugely popular for pet and sport dog owners

In mantrailing, we teach dogs to follow a particular person's scent and track them down for a reward. The association between finding that person and having their reward is very enticing to the dog - I would certainly want to find someone as quickly as I could if they had my favourite chocolate!

Dogs don't need to learn to follow a scent - they have been doing it all their lives! All we have to do is teach them to work with us and find the scent of a particular person. It is very addictive for both the handler and dog!

When following a scent, the dog is actually following a unique-to-us concoction of debris that falls off of our body when we move around; this is made of skin cells, sweat, hormones and bacteria. There is certainly no need to coat yourself in perfume for a dog to find you!

This unique debris falls off of us readily, so simply touching an item is enough to "contaminate" it with your specific scent!

CAN MY DOG TAKE PART?

In short - yes!

Mantrailing is very accessible, for both handlers and dogs alike. There is no need to use longer trails, or navigate factors such as steps or steep inclines! Dogs who can't take part in other sports due to existing health concerns or injuries may still be fine to take part, though we would advise to chat with us about any concerns before booking, as we may need confirmation from your vet that trailing will be safe for your dog.

There is no minimum or maximum age - as long as puppies are fully vaccinated.

As only one dog works at a time, reactive dogs are more than welcome to take part, and we have found ourselves that mantrailing can really help dogs who struggle with their feelings around other dogs and people, as the game itself is so rewarding to them!

Mantrailing is open to dogs of any age and training level, the only prerequisite is that they are comfortable waiting their turn in a vehicle - and even that can be mitigated with sessions made up of just 2 participants!

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BUILT TO SNIFF

SO WHY DO DOGS LOVE IT?

Despite what you may think, when you look at your furry best friend, dogs still have a lot of predatory instincts. *Lots* of dogs feel the need to hunt, and mantrailing gives them a strong outlet for those needs. Dogs with a strong sense of smell - hounds, spaniels, labradors, etc - especially love the game, once they realise that it is an opportunity to "hunt." The only difference for the dog is that they aren't really supposed to eat this "rabbit" at the end!

As mantrailing is dog-led, it is one of few sports where punitive training methods simply don't fly, meaning it fits very well with the Nutter Dogs ethos. Simply put: you can't bully or punish a dog into using their sense of smell!

Dogs are *literally* built to sniff. Their nose structure, breathing in through nostrils and out through flaps at the side of their nose, allows them to take in additional scent without discarding what they're already scenting. They have a 3D scent comprehension, and can even tell the time by scent, or figure out by scent deterioration how old a trail is!

A dog's sense of smell is estimated between 100,000 and 100,000,000 times more sensitive than ours. Sniffing is just so important to them, and mantrailing really "scratches that itch."



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TERMINOLOGY

Fires up - the way that a trail layer motivates a dog, typically with teasing the dog with their food (not the scent article) before moving away. This must be appropriate to the trailing team, and it requires communication between handler and trail layer as to what is needed.

Handler - the human part of the team!

Hunting trail - a type of *intensity trail* broken into lots of little wins, helping the dog to really understand and enjoy the game.

Kitted up - dog put into harness and line. Also known as *dressing the dog*.

Indication - the way that a dog tells you that it is **this** person who is their trail layer.

Intensity start - the trail layer fires up the dog (as appropriate to that particular dog) before moving away to hide, dropping their scent article as they go.

Intensity trail - done after every trail, a "short and sweet" mini trail where the trail layer fires up the dog then quickly moves away. This keeps the dog enthusiastic for the game.

Negative - dog indicates that they aren't on the trail.

Passive help - handler helps the dog with the game or with getting back on trail by slowly moving backwards along the line of the trail until the dog overtakes them.

Proximity alert - dog shows that the trail layer is close by, usually they will move more quickly or enthusiastically along the trail.

Scent article - something that the trail layer has touched. For beginner dogs we try to use a soft fabric item as these hold the scents best.

Scent pool - scent particles linger heavily around where people are stopped for a period of time, this can be hard for the dogs to work through so we try to start outside of scent pools.

Starting ritual - something we do at the start of every main trail! The dog loops loosely around the trail layer and/or scent article (*scent inventory*), taking in any scent in the area and having the opportunity to toilet etc. The dog is then kitted up and ready to go!

Trail layer - the person your dog is hunting for. Also known as missing person or misper.

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INTRODUCTION DAY

WHAT TO EXPECT

1. **The "what, why and how" of mantrailing.** You will be given a hi-vis vest to wear in public spaces throughout the session. Dogs must all be in vehicles for the theory.
2. **Line handling exercise.** You will be shown how to handle a long line, including a practical demo using each other! Dogs will be in vehicle for this.
3. **Target sniffing exercise.** Working one dog at a time or multiple dogs at a distance (as appropriate), you will be shown how to build your dog's value in taking scent from a scent article.
4. **Trail time!** Working strictly one dog at a time, you will undergo your first trails!

WHAT TO BRING

1. Long line, 5-10m in length.
2. Gloves - you may want to wear gloves when handling a long line if your dog is likely to pull strongly.
3. Harness - well fitting, non-restrictive, no anti-pull harnesses.
4. Treats (dry, good value, non-crumbly) for the scent article exercise.
5. Treats (wet, high value) - cat food pouches and tinned fish are a big hit!
6. 2 SMALL tubs for the "wet" treats, to fit into a standard coat pocket.
7. 2 scent articles, ideally made from a soft fabric, which you have touched.
8. Comfortable clothes, waterproofs, and safe shoes for outdoor conditions.
9. Poo bags and ID tag for your dog.

TRAIL LAYING

When you take part in one of our mantrailing introductions or progression sessions, you are expected to take part in all aspects - including trail laying for other people's dogs!

Trail laying can be a lot of fun, and you get to see first-hand the dog just light up when they find you!

To ensure everyone's safety and enjoyment of the session, as a trail layer you must:

- Follow directions on where & how to hide
- Follow all safety guidelines, including wearing hi-vis
- Be respectful to members of the public and give way to others
- Listen to the handler in how to fire up their dog, and how and when to reward their dog



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WHAT NEXT?

PROGRESSION SESSIONS

One big bonus of mantrailing is that, unlike a lot of dog sports, you don't have to do it every week!

We do recommend taking progression sessions every month or two where possible. However if you go longer between sessions your dog will still be absolutely fine - it is usually us as handlers who get rusty!

SPICING IT UP

There are a number of ways that we can make mantrailing more challenging:

- Type of starts- intensity, delayed and even scent article, where the dog doesn't see the trail layer at all!
- Type and location of scent article, and how affected it is by the trail layers scent; going from a soft fabric item at one extreme and taking scent from a car door at the other!
- Types and locations of finds, such as the trail layer being up in a tree or hidden under a tarp. We can even send out decoy people or make use of members of the public to test the dogs!
- Location of trails (including environmental distractions), urban vs rural considerations, and length and even age of the trail!
- Handler knowing where trail layer is vs only instructor knowing vs nobody knows but the trail layer!

THINK ABOUT THIS!

One thing to consider is how weather and environment affect the trail. Scent particles like soft and damp environments, so light rain in a rural setting can be helpful for inexperienced dogs especially!

Urban environments can be trickier for the dogs as there is less for the scent to "catch" on, and movement from vehicles and pedestrians can make the scent move off trail. We may also have to stop the dog on the trail to make way for pedestrians or to avoid traffic hazards.

As mentioned, light rain can help hold scent in place, making it easier for the dogs, whereas heavy rain can literally wash away scent particles!

Light wind coming from the direction the trail layer travelled in can help an inexperienced dog have confidence in their choices, whilst strong winds can blow the scent off the trail or make it pool and harder for the dog to work through.

Last but not least, as much as we humans like heat, high temps can burn away scent particles, leaving patchy trails or even no trails for the dog to follow - which is tricky!



WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ON A
MANTRAILING INTRODUCTION
SESSION VERY SOON!

Feel free to get in touch with us via:

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