

## Whoa Barrel

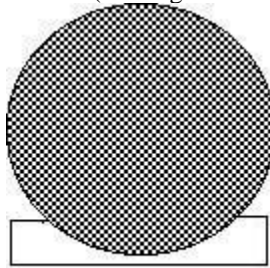
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The reason why I feel the "whoa barrel" should be a part of every versatile dogs training is that it helps the dog feel comfortable standing still with and/or without distractions on their own. The barrel also gives the dog an instant self-correction if they move and fall off. It is very black and white. Dogs work and learn very quickly when there is a clear structure and it is consistent throughout their life. After attending many "pointing dog" obedience classes, most of the class time was spent on having the dog stand still on command. Most of the time it took a tremendous amount of effort and time to get the dogs just to stand still. When they did, many of the dogs felt pressure and would tuck their tails, drop their heads, sit down and even urinate on the floor. They were not having fun.

If you look at most high drive hunting dogs, the stationary position is very difficult for them handle. Without training they will never master this position. They want to be on the move searching, tracking in and out of the water and locating game. The internal instincts in these dogs do not lend themselves well to standing and watching things happen. They are usually directly involved in creating the action.

Very similar to the Training Table, the Whoa Barrel lifts the dog off of the ground. In this position the dog is much more attentive because the dog does not feel secure and pays attention to the trainer and what is going on around them. This is very important in all training techniques. Without the complete attention of the dog, parts of the lesson will be missed and training time wasted.

Typical Whoa Barrel  
Barrel (30-55 gallon size)



Cradle for  
Support

The barrel should be a fun place to be placed on. The dog should not feel threatened while standing on it. You shall always lift the dog onto and off of the barrel. Do not lift the dog by its collar; lift by placing your arms under the dogs belly. By lifting with the collar the dog might feel additional pressure. When using the barrel the dog should not be restrained in any way. No leashes allowed. We want NO MENTAL or PHYSICAL PRESSURE involved.

1. Place the dog on the barrel. Stand next to the dog and praise the dog for standing still. Stroke the dog and "style" or "bold" him/her up. Lift its tail and stroke the underside. Always use a calm tone of voice. You want the dog to feel comfortable while standing in a calm manner. Repeat this daily, several times each day. You cannot over do this if no pressure or harsh corrections are involved.
- 2.
3. Start moving away from the dog. Circle the dog and increase the time the dog is on the barrel. Leave the room for short periods of time.
4. Introduce human distractions. Involve the family members. You want the dog to feel very comfortable while everyone is going about his or her daily activities. Start moving the barrel to different locations of your home (kitchen, living room, bedroom, where ever your spouse will allow)
5. Introduce object distractions. Throw/roll balls in front of the dog. Drag fur toys on the floor. Always praise the

dog and keep the dogs' "dauber" up.

**6.** Bring the barrel outside and start at Step #1 and work your way to #4. Always move the barrel to different locations. Field Steadiness Work - this is the procedure I use to steady my dogs

- Come to call and sit in front of me

- Force Break the dog

- Steady to the sight of flushing and falling objects Throw birds and dummies

- Steady to sound of gun shot with and without birds

- Steady during and after the point

**7.** Bird launchers can be introduced. Some dogs are startled at the sound of a trap. The dog is in a comfortable position (on the barrel) and should feel comfortable when the trap goes off. Start ejecting a dummy at a greater distance and then work to bird's closer to the dog.

**8.** Gunfire can be brought in. Start with a starting pistol in a carpetbag gradually increasing the sound level without any falling or flying objects.

**9.** Introduce the sight of flying birds (with and without gunfire).

**10.** Introduce birds falling from the sky with and without gunshots.

**11.** Flush and shoot birds while the dog is on the barrel.

**12.** Use the barrel anywhere where you need the dog to stand (field/water).

**NEVER ALLOW THE DOG TO JUMP ON OR OFF THE BARREL.**