

# Northern Newfoundland Club



# Water Training Manual

## **Contents:**

<a href="#">Preface</a>	3
1.0 <a href="#">Introduction</a>	4
2.0 <a href="#">The Newfoundland Dog</a>	5
3.0 <a href="#">Preparation and Environment</a>	6
4.0 <a href="#">Training</a>	10
5.0 <a href="#">Technical Stages of Training</a>	13
6.0 <a href="#">Core Techniques</a>	13
7.0 <a href="#">The Water Tests</a>	20
8.0 <a href="#">Summary</a>	21
9.0 <a href="#">Safety Guidelines</a>	22
10.0 <a href="#">Conclusion</a>	23
11.0 <a href="#">Training Methods For Specific Exercises</a>	24
<a href="#">Appendix 1</a>	37
<a href="#">Appendix 2</a>	40

## **Preface:**

This is the third edition of a manual that was based on material developed by Alain Nouvion, Chief Trainer of the Club Terre-Neuve Sportif (TNS) of Paris, France, our notes and experiences from our visits to Torcy, near Paris, as guests of the TNS, plus subsequent training sessions in Great Britain.

Our hope then and now is that this manual would be used to open up further areas of enjoyment for Newfoundlands and their owners. To detail some of the training necessary to enhance our Newfoundlands' natural abilities leading to more enjoyment for dogs and owners and perhaps qualification in the Water Tests. After 7 years the manual has been revised by the Working Sub-committee to bring it into line with the current training requirements

Our thanks must go to the T.N.S. for their hospitality and expertise and particularly to M & Mme Nouvion, Mrs Wilson, Mrs Pound and Mrs Liddell for allowing us to use the manual originally produced by Alain Nouvion and translated by Peter Oriani as a basis for the first edition; to Sandee and Mike Lovett for their helpful comments; to Chris Tedder for the artwork in the original and second editions; to Ladey & Denis Adey for proof reading the first edition and Martin Thomas and Pat Delaney for the second.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The object of this manual is to detail the techniques and training methods recommended to train Newfoundlands towards the levels necessary to pass the Water Tests, as accepted by the Northern Newfoundland Club and the Newfoundland Club.

The manual is aimed at owners, handlers, trainers, and assistants. It forms a supporting document for training the Newfoundland and educating its owner, but is no replacement for personal instruction and experience.

These methods are not to be considered as definitive as there are almost as many training methods as there are dogs in training. These methods are based on those used by the Terre-Neuve Sportif Club of France plus our own experience. They try to utilise techniques which work by directing and refining our Newfoundland's natural abilities and instincts. All methods attempt to train both owner and dog with positive encouragement and gentleness. As the saying goes, "A happy Newfoundland is generally a willing Newfoundland".

*Section 1* covers the exercises which a working dog should be able to perform and indicates various training techniques.

*Section 2* outlines the exercises which form the test exercises. These are basic exercises and are a steady progression. The tests are designed to indicate the level of proficiency which a dog has reached, and are split into five levels, A to E, each of which has to be completed before attempting the next level. In this way the dog is trained and then tested before progressing to the higher levels.

The exercises included in the appendix are more specialised, since they call for the co-operation of a training group with proper equipment. These exercises concentrate on teaching techniques with the eventual aim of being able to perform complicated exercises.

To do any work in the water, a dog must be able to respond to its owner's commands thus there must be some basic obedience; the dog must be responsive to commands such as Sit, Come, Stay and Wait. As the dog and owner progress through the training this level of obedience will be built on, but it is important that some basic obedience work is also carried out away from the training site on a regular basis.

The only definite rule is:

**OBEDIENCE IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR WATER WORK OF A HIGH STANDARD**

Basic Obedience is not covered in the manual; there are several excellent books and videos available on this subject. Once the owner has received initial training at an organised dog training club, basic obedience can be practised as often as desired. There will be various clubs in your area. Try a few and find the one whose training methods feel the most comfortable to you and your dog.

## **2.0 The Newfoundland Dog**

The Newfoundland is classified as a working dog. In the past one of its roles was lifesaving. Its general make up, instinct and character all form a particularly good basis for this task. However, it would be ridiculous to believe that the Newfoundland can make an effective lifesaver on its own. This can only be achieved by channelling the dog's capabilities and instincts into specific areas through commands given by his owner or others that may work with the dog.

The age of the Newfoundland is an important factor. Progress for a dog will be directly linked to its physical potential. A young Newfoundland will initially be gently introduced to a working environment and swimming, rather than complicated exercises. It is very important with a young Newfoundland that swimming be as natural as walking. Once any problems with swimming and entering the water are overcome, the dog will be more receptive to commands. A dog starting to swim will for the first few times be totally obsessed with the simple act of swimming and will not be receptive to commands. Once the dog is happy then it is capable of being taught.

Experience shows that early familiarisation with water helps with later water-work. The French feel that two years of age is a good starting time for consistent working ability, younger than this, the Newfoundland's work varies in quality and his concentration can alter rapidly. However, a Newfoundland is never too young to start swimming (for very short periods) under close experienced supervision.

Over 6 months of age the puppy can enter the A test and at 9 months the B tests. The main aim at this age is to teach the puppy to 'pay attention'. Once this is learned then all the other exercises become that much easier. Don't forget that a puppy cannot concentrate for as long as a mature dog, for consistent work maturity is necessary.

When training a puppy or young dog expect that at times the dog will not seem to understand what you want it to do, yet at the last training session it carried out the exercise perfectly. As with people, dogs reach various learning plateaux at different stages where for a short while they appear to have forgotten what they have learnt or seem unable to progress to the next element. If such a stage is reached don't despair, revert back to an exercise the dog enjoys and then try again at the next training session. These periods seldom last for more than a few days, and will probably happen in all types of training, not just water-work.

The maximum age for a working Newfoundland is linked to his physical ability; 9 to 10 years old would seem to be a maximum for advanced work, subject to physical condition. Here the role of the handler and the trainer is essential. They are constantly next to the dog in the water, aware of the dog and constantly checking to see that the dog is comfortable when working or if it is straining. In the latter case the trainer will inform the owner and re-schedule the work in accordance with the dog's physical ability. If the dog is being pushed too hard then its training needs to be reduced to an acceptable level.

A dog needs speed rather than just power for water-work; it is speed which governs the pulling ability of the dog in the water. However, the dog must also be fit and have the endurance to carry out the exercises. If a dog is powerful, but has a slow 'stroke', the dog will still only move slowly through the water. Even if the 'stroke' is fairly fast but weak the dog will still move forward quite quickly.

Statistically there is no difference in the working ability of the two sexes. Generally bitches are more motivated than dogs but there are a few dogs which are the exception to this. The only real difference is in the speed of swimming. Bitches being lighter in build tend to be faster. Experience shows that some males of equal build to bitches can equal their speed.

Many publications emphasize the Newfoundland's ability for water-work, yet its swimming ability and technique is generally similar to that of other dogs. Its swimming rhythm is relatively slow, as is common with other large breeds. The general make up (coat, webbing etc.) would suggest that the Newfoundland can swim strongly for long periods of time but this varies depending on prevailing conditions. In calm waters experience shows the Newfoundland capable of swimming at speeds of up to 2 or 3 knots.

The Newfoundland's style of swimming is inherited and even if not 100% efficient it is impossible to correct. In no way does this prevent the dog achieving a very good standard of work. Loads able to be pulled in the water are not related to the dog's actual body weight. Up to a point the weight of the dog has no effect upon speed and it is speed which governs the pulling ability of the dog in water.

To work well a Newfoundland's body weight should be about 65Kg (1401bs), for a dog and 55Kg (1201bs), for a bitch. Beyond this, additional weight (subject to some exceptions), is due to fat which has an adverse effect on the performance of the dog. In fact the dog's muscular mass would be the same as a lighter dog but it would have an additional weight to carry causing a negative effect upon its performance. The dog's swimming speed will be slower and it will tend to swim upright, the additional effort could cause problems, even drowning.

Towing a boat, even a very heavy one, is much easier for the Newfoundland than retrieving a person in distress, who by panicking can interfere with the dog's swimming ability. A struggling victim can cause the dog to drown!

### **3.0 PREPARATION AND ENVIRONMENT.**

A basic training structure is necessary before an owner can start serious water-work. This structure involves the following 3 parts:

- words of command;
- the trainer;
- the record card.

#### **3.1 Verbal Commands**

This short resume aims to list commands that each owner must give to their dog on land and in the water. The minimum commands required to train the dog are given in the following table. These are general and specific commands and most should be used for all training not just water-work. However, it is important to only use one command for one action, as the use of multiple commands for the same action can cause confusion.

It is VERY IMPORTANT that any ACTION command given by the owner must generally be preceded by the dog's name in order to gain its attention e.g. "Bear... Heel". However, it should not be used if it would be counter-productive i.e. being instructed from a boat, "Shore", the dog may well turn back towards the boat first if it hears its name before the command.

HEEL	Walk at, set off or return to the heel position, i.e., where the dog's head, neck or shoulder is alongside the handler's left leg.
WALK ON	Move forward, not necessarily at heel, e.g. if pulling a cart;
LEFT	Turn left, either at heel, when pulling draft apparatus or when swimming;
RIGHT	As above, but to the right;
ROUND	An about-turn, either to the left or the right, usually around a person or an object;
SIT	If at heel, sit close and straight. If free, stop and sit;
STAND	If at heel, stand close and straight. If free, stop and stand still;
DOWN	If at heel, lie down close to the handler. If free, stop and lie down;
STAY	Stay as directed; sit, down or stand, until I return;
WAIT	Stay as directed; sit, down, stand or swim around in that general area until further instructions are given;
COME	Come to me, on land or in water;
HERE	Less precise alternative to the above, i.e. don't 'present' just come close; [present means the dog sits directly in front of the handler, within arms reach, ideally looking up at the handler's face.]
FORWARD	Go away from me in a straight line, run, jump, or swim;
JUMP	Get into or out of the car/boat; similar to FORWARD but used where there is some movement, up or down, needed first
SHORE	Go straight to the shore;
FETCH	Go and find, pick up and bring back an object and present it;
SEEK	Similar to FETCH but used where the object is not immediately apparent.
TAKE	Hold this object in your mouth;
HOLD	Don't let it go;
LEAVE	Let go, drop it;
GIVE	Give it to my hand;
OFF	Do not jump up, either at a person or onto furniture etc;
NO	Don't do that, [naughty dog];
BACK	Walk (or push) backwards;
STEADY	Change to a slow pace, calm down;
FREE	End of exercise;

## **3.2 The Trainer**

The trainer is there to help the owner to train the dog. They should have a good general knowledge of many training techniques, not only those applying to water-work.

The trainer ensures the dog's progression in the water and on land and contributes towards the ambitions of the owner. Whether the trainer works on land, works the boat or assists in the water, their task is to help the owner to train their dogs to their highest capability. They should arrange the programme of training for the session and ensure that each individual dog is not pushed beyond its limits, taking into account the ability and physical fitness of the dog, but not forgetting the elementary rules of safety.

The trainer's assessment of the ability of both the handler and the dog is important because this will determine the actual training programme necessary for each owner and dog to achieve a satisfactory standard of progression.

## **3.3 The Record Card**

One of the main tools for the trainer is the Record Card. It should be given to each new participant, to register the progress achieved by the dog. Regular consultation of the Record Card will show the standard achieved by the dog and avoid repeating exercises which are already over familiar to the dog.

If we are not careful, the training of our dogs can easily fall into a routine without progression and so become boring for both dog and owner. However, progression should not be attempted until the earlier exercises are completely mastered and performed consistently.

The Newfoundland has an excellent memory and will remember how to do an exercise with ease. Once learned correctly, even if performed occasionally, the dog should remember the exercise without difficulty. It is therefore not necessary to practice the exercises again and again. Too frequent practice could lead the dog to become inventive, which is not wanted, i.e., a dog often learns to anticipate the next command which is usually given. An example from obedience would be the practice of not always getting the dog to "Finish" from a recall.

Generally three correct completions of an exercise are the maximum which should be aimed at, before passing onto the next exercise. If a dog is allowed to complete an exercise incorrectly three times in a row it is probable that the dog will have learnt to do it that way. Consequently re-training will be necessary. It is usually better to return to a previous stage which can be performed correctly, before a third incorrect attempt occurs.

## **3.4 Water Training Area**

Areas for water training should be sufficient to permit easy progression of exercises performed by the Newfoundland, i.e. a small area of water will only allow exercises over a short distance. The day the dog is required to work over a longer distance it is highly likely that it will be nervous of the distance that it is required to swim. However, given the limited availability of water for practice in the U.K., any safe area may be used and trips to other venues should be made to avoid over- familiarisation with one site.



The dog should be trained to work over long distances as it must be able to work anywhere. It is important to get the dog used to different environments such as lake water, sea water, wind, currents and areas where activities are taking place, (swimming, sailing etc.). The dog may one day be tested in an area with many distractions or in different conditions to which it has been trained.

Many believe that some dogs who have always worked in the same environment can be disturbed by a change i.e. a dog which is used to a lake, could refuse to go in the sea due to waves and unfamiliar sounds.

**A WELL TRAINED DOG SHOULD ADAPT EASILY TO A NEW WORKING ENVIRONMENT.**

### **3.5 The Boat**

It is recommended to work from small boats (3 to 4 metres long), which are manageable, but ensure there are no obstacles on the boat sides. These could catch the dog when it is required to jump overboard or when lifted back into the boat. For learners a rigid inflatable boat (RIB) is recommended. Its flat base offers stability and the sides do not hamper the dog when it jumps. The dog can easily get over the side without injury.

When the dog is familiar with jumping into the water from a given boat, the type of boat should be varied in order to get the dog used to working with different types. During certain exercises it is necessary to pull the dog into the boat; this is best achieved with smooth rounded sides as with a RIB.

### **3.6 Other Equipment**

Training will also require the use of other equipment such as ropes, oars, lifebelts etc. All these items may be adapted if necessary. Preferably choose ropes which float, especially for training beginners. A suitable size of rope would be 1 to 2 inch rope. To help in training beginner dogs it is best to use 'soft handle' polypropylene rope. However, care should be taken with this type of rope as it will need replacing on a regular basis. Oars should be made of wood, as they generally float, although plastic and aluminium are equally good. Lifebelts should be of a standard type, i.e., as found in a marine or river environment, on river/lake banks or on boats, etc.

It is of course possible to use something temporarily to achieve a certain result, but revert to the proper article as soon as possible to avoid forming permanent bad habits, e.g. a dog will 'only' rescue its favourite toy.

Often dogs are trained to carry out exercises whilst wearing a safety harness. This has a dual role; to allow the victim to hold onto it and to help to pull the dog back into the boat. However, it is also important that the harness is not considered as an essential accessory for water-work, as it may be forgotten on the day of a test and the dog should still be expected to perform as if it was wearing its harness.

On command the dog should follow orders given by its owner or the trainer whether or not it is wearing the harness.

## **4.0 TRAINING.**

### **4.1 The Owner**

The future behaviour of the dog is very much related to that of the owner. This is the reason why the education of the owner is a fundamental principal for water-work.

**THE OBJECT OF ANY INSTRUCTION IS BOTH THE EDUCATION OF THE OWNER AND TRAINING OF THE DOG.**

The elementary rule for water training is:

**IT IS THE OWNER WHO COMMANDS HIS DOG.**

When organising training for a particular dog/owner partnership, the trainer should take into account the goal the owner has set himself by joining a water-working group. Everyone is motivated by something to bring their dog to training sessions. It is no good expecting a dog to achieve a high standard if the owner is not expecting the same.

### **4.2 Factors Affecting Training Motivation**

In all aspects of training the Newfoundland it is important to determine the most motivating element for encouraging the dog to go into the water.

This element can comprise the following:-

- A loved toy or object.
- Titbits.
- The wish to join the owner/handler.
- The desire to swim.
- Natural instinct.
- The will to work.
- The desire to please.

On the other hand there may be some negative elements which could discourage the dog from entering the water, e.g.

- Not being used to swimming.
- Being afraid of water (perhaps following a bad experience).
- Refusal to obey commands.
- Frightened to leave its owner.
- A physical problem which may require a visit to a vet or bitches in season.

Whether the element is positive or negative the trainer must design the training to overcome the situation in order to achieve the following rule:

**THE DOG MUST OBEY AND EXECUTE THE ORDERS GIVEN.**

When working, the Newfoundland must be allowed some flexibility or it becomes a robot. However, this flexibility must not be allowed to let the Newfoundland ignore commands given by its owner. Each dog is an individual case by virtue of several factors including:-

#### **1. The Dog's Age**

As previously explained, age is important. A dog can start working at a late age providing its physical condition is suitable. It is possible to obtain excellent results with a dog that starts training at 5 or 6 years old. On the other hand it is recommended that with a young dog, sessions are kept short but frequent since the dog may have only a limited attention span.

## **2. Environment**

Kennelling conditions, that it's with other dogs, is taken for walks often or rarely, are all important factors that can influence the dog's behaviour. For example, a dog which is only taken out rarely and doesn't meet many other dogs may think only of running about and/or wanting to play with them upon arrival at the training area. This dog will not be motivated by work, i.e., not having been used to the presence of other dogs, they will be a disturbing influence until they settle down and ignore the other dogs.

## **3. The Dog's Behaviour towards Water**

If the dog has already been in the water it is important to know under what conditions. If its experiences have been fun, work in the water will not disturb it. However, if its previous experience was bad, the dog may refuse to work in the water, it will be difficult to motivate the dog. If so, it will be necessary to progress in very small steps. After each step, a check should be made to see if the dog has accepted the progression without worry. If it shows signs of nervousness, go back and repeat the last step where the dog was happy.

## **4. Behaviour of the Owner/Handler**

This is certainly one of the most important aspects, as it is the owner who will generally command the dog. The owner/handler's role is fundamental. An owner/handler who is nervous, confuses commands, forgets to praise the dog or who tells the dog off, for no good reason, will obtain poor results even if working with a good dog.

A handler, who is calm, gives firm commands, who praises the dog and reprimands only as and when necessary will usually obtain good results even with an average dog.

## **5. The Dog's Physical Fitness**

To work, a dog must be physically and mentally fit. A disturbed dog or one with a medical problem may prove to be reticent or simply refuse to enter the water. If there is any possibility of a problem then the dog should be checked over by a Vet. If the work of the owner and dog is based upon mutual trust, understanding and compatibility their water-work should be good. If the work is based on fear, harsh handling and unreasonable authority, results in the water will be variable, often poor or none at all.

**OBEDIENCE (ON LAND) IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR. IT WILL ALLOW THE OWNER TO WORK WITH THEIR DOG AND CORRECT ERRORS IN BOTH RESPONSE TO COMMANDS AND IN GENERAL BEHAVIOUR.**

## **4.3 Classification of Dogs**

It is possible to class dogs into four general categories in direct relation to their characters; however, it must be pointed out that some dogs will react differently in different circumstances, so it would be possible for that dog to be classified in different categories dependant on circumstances. A note should be made on the Record Card by the trainer in conjunction with the owner of which category the dog generally falls into and if there are any situations when the dog would be categorised in another category, e.g. generally Dynamic and Outgoing but Frightened when in a new situation.

### *Frightened or Cowardly;*

This is the dog that fears anything unknown or new. Work in the water will initially be an additional fear and so will be difficult to overcome. It will be necessary to proceed slowly, by training in a calm and steady manner away from any distractions and by praising the dog often. Results will be slow to come. However, maturity and getting used to a new environment will prove to be re-assuring elements for the dog, permitting greater concentration on the work.

#### *Indifferent, Nonchalant or Independent;*

This is without doubt the most difficult type of dog to train and handle. Nothing interests the dog. It neither needs nor wants guidance from others. Often it is not affectionate and needs no affection from others. It will do things once and then be totally disinterested. Neither reprimands nor praise can motivate it.

As long as its character remains unchanged, very little can be achieved. It is essential to find motivating factors, "A dog needs to know where its advantage lies." (Jack/Wendy Volhard). Without finding its motivating factors it will be useless to continue. A normal obedience class will probably not be able to solve any problems. It would usually be necessary to visit a dog behaviourist/psychiatrist to learn how to implement behaviour modification programmes.

#### *Dynamic and Outgoing.*

Always full of beans. The dog will often do as it pleases. It will go in the water but will often disregard its objective if its interest is captured by something else. The dog will swim alone but will often obstinately refuse to perform a given exercise. For this type of dog only a thorough obedience training course will bring it to a point where, under strict control, it will work to a high standard. The handler will have to dominate (kindly) the dog and be authoritarian. Whilst working, any relaxation must be excluded. The dog will take some time to calm down, but if its behaviour is modified high standards can be achieved.

#### *Well Behaved and Calm.*

This type is the easiest to train. Always receptive and paying attention it will progress quickly and will perform the exercises well. It will be very precise in the work and its attention will rarely fail. It is likely that if well handled by its owner this type of dog will be able to achieve the highest standard of work.

During initial training sessions it is important that the dog should be observed and classified into one of the above classes. Training will have to be scheduled accordingly, e.g., the approach will be different whether dealing with a 'frightened' dog or a 'dynamic' one.

## **4.4 Organisation of the Training**

The correct environment for training is very important but any chance for safe training should not be missed, i.e., where neither the dog nor people are at risk. Training should be organised in such a way, that any problems with the environment should be minimised e.g. if a site is tidal - only train when there is sufficient water to work. At other times do land obedience training or another form of work such as draft work.

### **TRAINING SHOULD TAKE PLACE AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE.**

Weather permitting, a weekly training session is recommended for as much of the year as possible. When it is too cold to work in the water, obedience on land or draft work should be practised. Training must follow a proper structured scheme to achieve and maintain good progress.

Experience shows that one training group including a boat, boat-handler(s), swimmers and a trainer cannot train more than 8 or 10 dogs during an all day session. Therefore there should be enough training groups for the number of dogs to be trained, failing this each dog will not have sufficient training time to progress. During each session a dog must work in the water for at least half an hour. On that basis a beginner should, over a year, achieve a good technical level. Training only 3 or 4 times a year will not lead to a good rate of progression. As in any sport, progression can only be achieved with well organised, rigorous and frequent training sessions.

## **5.0 TECHNICAL STAGES OF TRAINING**

The training of the Newfoundland generally goes through the following stages:

### **5.1 Basic Stage.**

- Study of the behaviour of the owner and dog.
- Receptiveness of both to basic commands.
- Basic obedience.
- Familiarisation with the training environment.
- Feeling comfortable in that environment.
- Simple exercises such as the retrieve - using a bumper or rope.

### **5.2 Intermediate Stage** (in this case specifically for water-work).

- Entering the water either from the shore or by jumping from a boat.
- Understanding of standard commands.
- Extended swims with the handler to build up the dog's confidence.
- Rescuing a 'drowning' person.
- Towing a boat.

### **5.3 Advanced Stage.**

- Rescuing a hidden 'drowning' person.
- Directed rescue from within a group.
- Understanding of complex work and commands.
- Entering water under any conditions.
- Disregarding any distraction.

## **6.0 CORE TECHNIQUES.**

This manual does not pretend to be a complete resume of training methods. Techniques which can be used successfully with one dog will not necessarily work for another. However, there are general principles and techniques which will work for most dogs and some of these are detailed in the following pages.

In all training it is necessary to start from a known level, (hence the use of Record Cards), and to build up slowly in small steps. When introducing a new element, e.g. taking the rope to tow a boat back to the shore, the owner/handler should be instructed to swim out alongside the dog, to put the rope in the dog's mouth and to hold it there (even if on land the dog would be happy to take the rope and carry it all day). It is easier to teach a dog how to do an exercise correctly than to try and re-train a dog which has been allowed to learn bad habits. Whilst it may take 5 or 10 repetitions for a dog to learn an exercise correctly, it is a recognised fact that a dog can often learn the wrong way to complete an exercise after only 3 incorrect repetitions. For reliability, some dog psychologists maintain that 50 correct repetitions are necessary. Experience has shown that initial sessions are most important.

### **6.1 Entry into the Water from the Shore**

This technique, leaving from the shore, will be used for all types of retrieving, e.g. boat, swimmer, article or 'victim'. Initially it does not matter what the dog retrieves. What is important is that the dog enters the water without any hesitation and swims towards the object or person to be retrieved. Frequently dogs become frightened when out of their depth. There are a number of techniques to overcome this fear.

Initially it is probably best for the owner to be in the water leading the dog, coaxing the dog if necessary, and then both swim out to a boat no more than 15 metres. If the dog will not enter the water, if conditions permit, the dog could be left alone on an island or on the opposite bank of a river (if the owner is convinced that the dog will not run away). Isolated and keen to return to its owner it may enter the water alone.

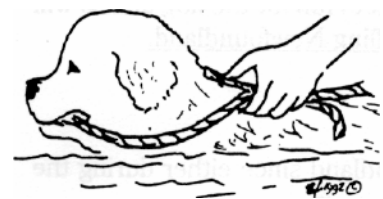
Once in the water it is important to encourage the dog and keep a close watch on its swimming particularly if the dog is young and inexperienced. Having overcome its fear the dog should come to the water, next time, without too much hesitation.

The next stage is to try to get the dog to swim to its owner in the boat. The dog is held on shore by a trainer. Once the boat is in position (approx. 5 metres out from the bank directly in front of the dog), the owner should call the dog while the trainer gives the chosen command to the dog, e.g. "Forward". At first the dog will not understand what is wanted but may wish to join its owner and so enter the water. If this happens the trainer should swim alongside the dog, praising it gently, while the owner gives plenty of encouragement. At this stage those on the bank should remain silent as they may distract the dog.

If, when the command is given to the dog, the dog does nothing, or tries to remain on the bank, it should be gently coaxed into the water, and the trainer should swim alongside as above. The dog, wanting to join its owner, may overcome its fear and swim towards the boat. Alternatively, a long-line (a thin rope with a dog clip at one end) can be attached to the dog's collar. The owner should entice the dog into the water with gentle pressure on the line (with the trainer swimming alongside to ensure the dog doesn't get caught up in the line and/or try to return to the shore). The owner should gently guide the dog towards him or herself.

The dog should be discouraged by the trainer from climbing into the boat and should be presented with a rope and commanded to "Take" the rope and return to the shore, pulling the boat if it wants to. If the dog does not take the rope, it should then be commanded to turn alongside the boat, in reach of its owner. A titbit may be given here to help encourage the dog to swim out to the boat next time. Then the owner or the trainer should, if necessary, hold the dog's rump hair with one hand to lift the dogs back so that it is swimming level. This helps to reduce the level of panic some young and/or inexperienced dogs feel. With their other hand keep the rope in the dog's mouth and it should be commanded to return to the shore.

If the dog spits out the rope, the trainer should attempt to put the rope back. If the dog takes the rope the trainer should move the ends of the rope so that the rope is held snugly behind the dog's head so it cannot spit the rope out again. If the dog will not take the rope, the trainer should place the rope around the dog's neck and hold it there so the dog



gets used to the idea that it has to tow the boat back.

The boat, if not being towed, should proceed behind the dog as closely as possible to get the dog used to being followed. However, the boat-handler must be very careful not to collide with the dog. Once the dog is returning to shore assistants on the bank should then call the dog's name and encourage it to return, while the owner remains silent so as not to distract the dog.

The trainer should swim alongside the dog, or if the dog shows no signs of distress, be towed back as well as the boat with the trainer directing the dog to take the shortest route.

Once ashore the dog should be given a great deal of praise by its owner regardless of how well or badly the dog has done. Realising that the owner is there, the dog should soon associate entry into the water with saving its owner.

If the dog did not take the rope the owner should be instructed to take the dog away from the water and to teach the dog to take an object on command, and to hold the object until given the command to release it. Various techniques are available generally using rewards, e.g. titbits. Advice should be sought from experienced trainers, to get the dog to "Take" and "Hold" anything, anywhere and for any length of time (see section 6.2).

A further technique, to try and get the dog used to entering the water on command, is to play with an object that will float. This article should be thrown into the water and the dog ordered to "Fetch". It may help to get the dog to play with the object as a game prior to this. At the end of the session the owner must take the article away from the dog as the final step of the game and put it somewhere the dog cannot get it. This will enforce the 'Pack Leadership' of the owner, by teaching the dog that the article is not the dog's and that the dog can only 'play' with the article when the owner allows.

In order to aid sending the dog to the boat, it is a good idea to teach the 'send-away' exercise, on land first. This exercise involves teaching the dog to leave the owner and 'go out' in a direct line as indicated by the owner towards a target. One method generally takes the form of 'sending' the dog to a titbit placed on a highly visible target initially only a few metres away. Slowly the distance is built up. Once taught, the dog should leave the owner on command and go to whatever target is indicated. A further refinement is to teach the dog to alter direction during the 'send-away' which will be very helpful for some of the advanced exercises.

## **6.2 The Retrieve**

Retrieving should be second nature to the Newfoundland since the breed is classed as a retriever. It is in its nature to fetch and carry. Retrieving techniques can be taught in the rare case that the dog shows no innate desire to retrieve.

To be a reliable retriever (any object, any circumstance - upon command) all dogs, including the 'natural' retrievers, must be trained using a tried and tested training method, and not just a 'play' retrieve method. If only a 'play' retrieve method is used many dogs will suffer from unreliability. One of the most effective methods in general use is using food as a reward.

Assuming that any problems of entering the water either from the bank or from a boat have been resolved, the dog must willingly go into the water, fetch an object and bring it back to the shore or boat. Often as in the above situation with the rope and boat, a problem is that once in the water the dog must open its mouth to grab an object, but by doing so it may swallow some water. It is now that early 'good training' of the retrieve will pay off, as the dog can be re-commanded to 'Take' the object and it should do so.

In early training sessions many dogs will get into the water but will refuse to grab an object. Therefore to encourage the dog, training should start with objects that are familiar to it.

Once happily trained to retrieve familiar objects the dog will soon accept a strange one in its place. Training should then continue with unfamiliar objects, for most of the time. Occasionally, e.g. at the end of each training session for the retrieve, use a familiar object as a play retrieve. This will be fun for the dog and will help the dog to continue to enjoy this exercise;

**A happy Newfoundland is a Willing Newfoundland.**

## **6.3 Jumping from a Boat**

Jumping from a boat is an important aspect in the work of the Newfoundland since either during the tests or a demonstration an exercise is often carried out from a boat or similar craft.

A boat is not very stable and movements aboard can make it difficult for the dog. If frightened, the dog may refuse to jump on command. It may bark, it may sit or take refuge in the corner of the boat. At this point it is not advisable to force the dog to jump by pushing or throwing the dog in as this will be remembered by the dog as a bad experience.

Initially train the dog to respond to the command "Jump". Every time you take the dog out in the car, get the dog used to jumping in and out with this command. This makes learning easy for most dogs as they generally enjoy trips out in the car. This command can be used even after the dog has 'learnt' it and will be continually reinforced.

Next leave the boat offshore with the dog aboard and a trainer in the water to 'catch' the dog to prevent it going too far under and then panicking. The owner (on shore), commands the dog. The dog should want to join its owner and should have sufficient motivation to jump. If this is the case, on the dog's arrival on shore, the owner should praise the dog enthusiastically. In the event of success repeat the exercise several times to reassure the dog.

If this doesn't work start work on shore by allowing the dog to enter and leave the boat with the owner several times. Once this has been learned, put the boat in the water at a depth where the dog is only wading in a few inches/centimetres of water. Allow the dog to climb in and then jump out of the boat (giving the command each time and praising on completion), gradually push the boat further from the shore.

A major element of motivation is that the owner should be in the water. It is rare that the dog will not want to join its owner and not jump out of the boat willingly to be with the owner. It is important that after this initial exercise is learned, the dog then rapidly disassociates the act of jumping into the water from the boat with the owner in the water. If not, the dog will develop the habit of jumping out only to fetch its owner.

The above methods are suitable for use with inflatable boats. However, they would not be suitable for use with a hard sided boat as the dog must be taught to spring/push off to clear the side of the boat safely. This can be taught by starting on land using a broom handle.

The trainer should kneel/crouch down holding the handle about 10 cm (4 inches) off the ground. The owner should trot the dog forward on the lead and as they reach the obstacle give the command "Jump". As the dog will be used to this command it should jump over the handle easily. The handle can then be raised slightly, e.g. to 15 cm and again the dog is brought to it and commanded to jump. Once the dog is happy doing this then a board can be substituted for the broom handle and again the dog trotted up to the obstacle, commanded and taken on. Once the dog is clearing the board whilst trotting up, slow the pace down to a walk.

When the dog is happily clearing the board from a walk, then walk the dog up to the board, halt and after 5 seconds command it to jump and run on with the dog, praising it as you go. Then walk the dog up to the board, stop it, remove the lead and, leaving the dog with a "Wait" command, walk to the other side of the board. Stop, turn around, wait say 5 seconds then command the dog to "Jump", immediately turn and run away. The dog should jump and run after the owner, who should then praise it, if the dog doesn't follow its owner, then it can be enticed by the use of a titbit or its favourite toy. Once the dog is happily jumping over the board from a standing start to chase its owner, then replace the owner with a stranger and have the owner alongside the dog commanding it to "Jump" and "Go". Titbits will probably be helpful here.

## **6.4 Getting a swimming dog safely into a boat**

The technique described below, which is only one way of performing the task, assumes ideal conditions but it is acknowledged that these will not always exist and thus experienced handlers will have to make adaptations to deal with different circumstances.

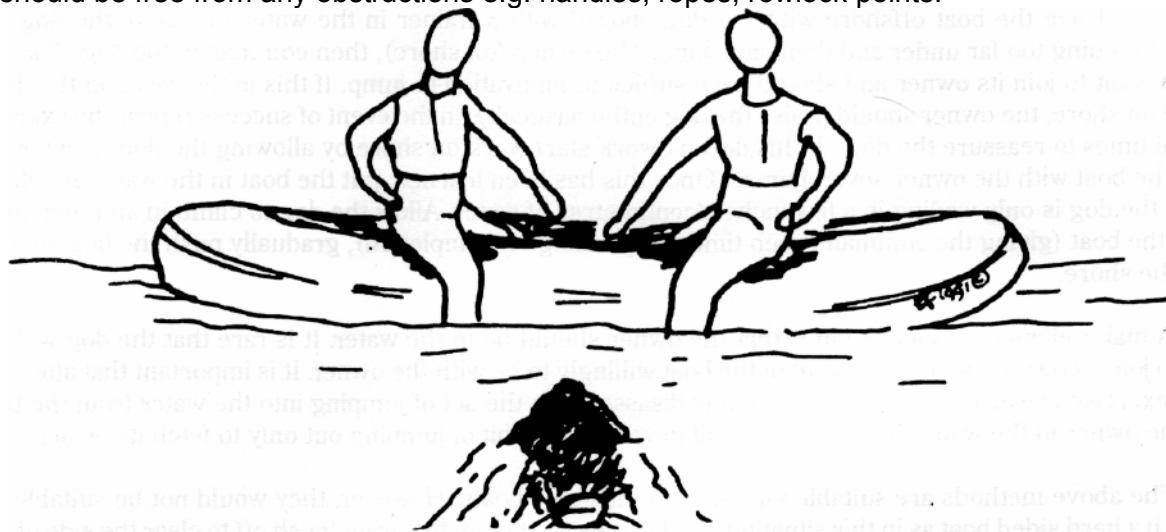
### **6.4.1 Conditions**

There should be two handlers in the boat free to deal with the dog. These could well be in addition to the 'owner'. The boat should be an inflatable which has not been inflated to its maximum pressure i.e. the boat will 'give' considerably if something soft is pushed or pushes into it. The dog should be wearing a French-style rescue harness or at least a webbing harness. If not, then the handlers will be required to grab the loose skin of the dog above its shoulders. Even with a harness, of whatever type, they will need to grab the loose skin above its hips. With practice, handlers will get used to using one hand at the dog's front and the other at its back so that it comes aboard almost in one movement rather than two.



## 6.4.2 Technique

The boat should be stationary in the water i.e. not being propelled in any way. The two handlers should be sitting astride the same side-tube of the boat facing each other with their knees about 1 foot (30cm) apart i.e. one with their left foot and the other with their right foot dangling over the side of the boat. The side tube between them and down into the water should be free from any obstructions e.g. handles, ropes, rowlock points.



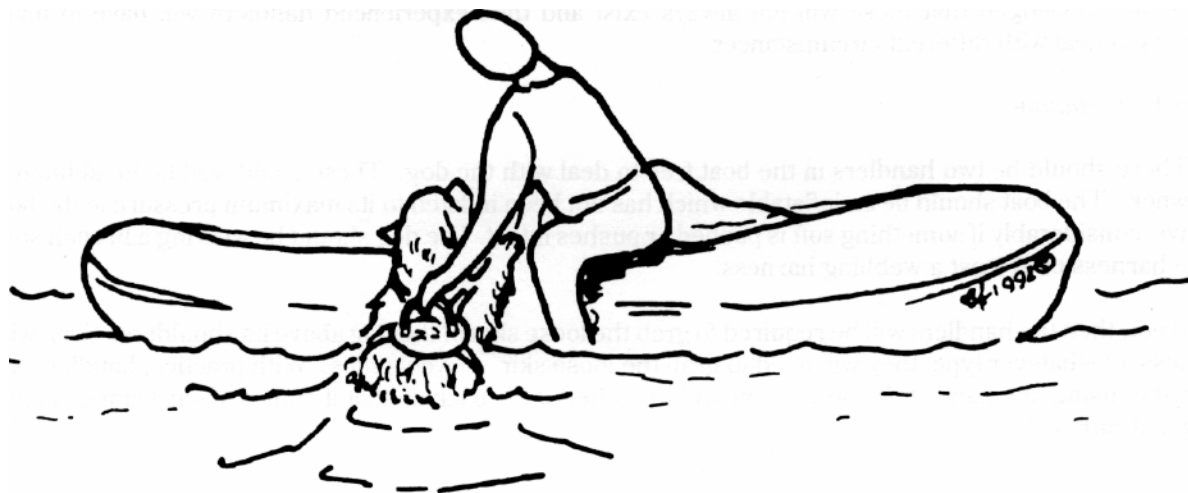
The dog should be instructed to swim straight at the boat i.e. at 90° to the boat, and just before it reaches 'scrabbling' distance the handlers should, in unison, reach down and grab the harness or shoulder fur and, with the front legs being folded up under the dog, pull its front out of the water until the front legs unfold and the belly of the dog is astride the side tube of the boat. The handlers should then move in unison to the rump fur and pull the dog the rest of the way safely into the boat, (see diagram overleaf)

It is likely that the dog will want to shake at this point and thus the handlers should brace themselves until the dog settles down.

## 6.4.3 Anticipated adaptations

If the re-boarding is taking place in a swell then the two pulls must take place when that side of the boat is coming up i.e. with momentum from the waves, not against it.

If there is only one handler to bring the dog into the boat then it should be done in a similar manner but ensuring that the handler's strongest side is closest to the dog. They may also need to brace themselves with their inboard hand if necessary. The use of a safety line is recommended if there is only one person in the boat so that if they fall overboard then they will be able to get back to the boat using the line.



## **6.5 Actions of Humans**

So far we have been looking at the techniques of working with the Newfoundland but the role of humans working with the dogs is also important as bad handling may hinder the dogs' progress. There must be a two way flow of communication between the dog and the owner, to ensure work of a high standard. As a general rule 2 people must co-ordinate training, i.e. one trainer in the water and one in the boat, plus the owner and their dog.

### **6.5.1 The Boat-handler**

The first rule for anyone is that before using a boat they must wear a lifejacket/ buoyancy aid. Those in charge must not allow a person to be in the boat without one of these. This is an elementary safety precaution and should never be overlooked.

The person handling the boat must be experienced in using the boat alongside a dog. This is to avoid making mistakes which may upset or confuse a dog, e.g. a dog which has been hit on the head with an oar, may be wary of approaching a boat whose oars are in use or even visible. The boat-handler must know how to control the boat with or without a motor, in a skilled manner, for a dog is frequently in the water around the boat and it is imperative that the dog is not injured by careless handling. The person involved must also have a good appreciation of the dog's capabilities. The boat-handler must keep checking that the dog is comfortable while it pulls the boat and does not strain unnecessarily. Both the boat-handler and owner should be aware of the dog. If a dog is in distress, help must be given to the dog by rowing gently or by helping the dog along by holding the dog by its rump hair, to lift the dog's back until it is horizontal.

### **6.5.2 The Person in the Water**

Anyone who wishes to train their dog safely will want to wear a wet or dry suit in addition to a life jacket. It is readily acknowledged by those involved in regular water training that an untrained dog may swim directly towards the 'drowning' person's face and may attempt to climb on top of them and so out of the water. If the 'drowning' person and the trainer are both protected with wet or dry suits then they can deal with the situation better in two ways.

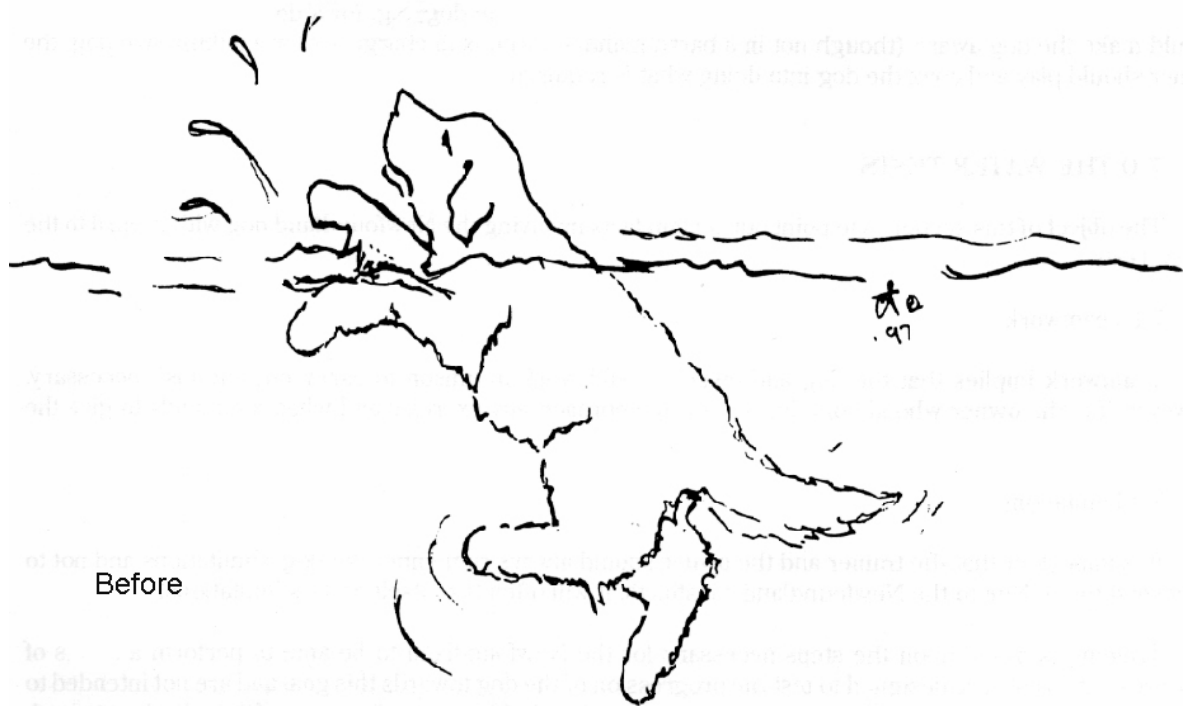
Firstly, due to the extra buoyancy they have (which may be even more if they are wearing a buoyancy aid as well) then they can concentrate on correcting the dog and not with just keeping their heads above water.

Secondly, there is the protection afforded by the suit from scratching claws. A serious scratch with associated shock could cause them to lose consciousness and thus be liable to drown. It makes sense for a 'victim' to have protection from dog that may scabble at them, climb on top of them or even force them under.

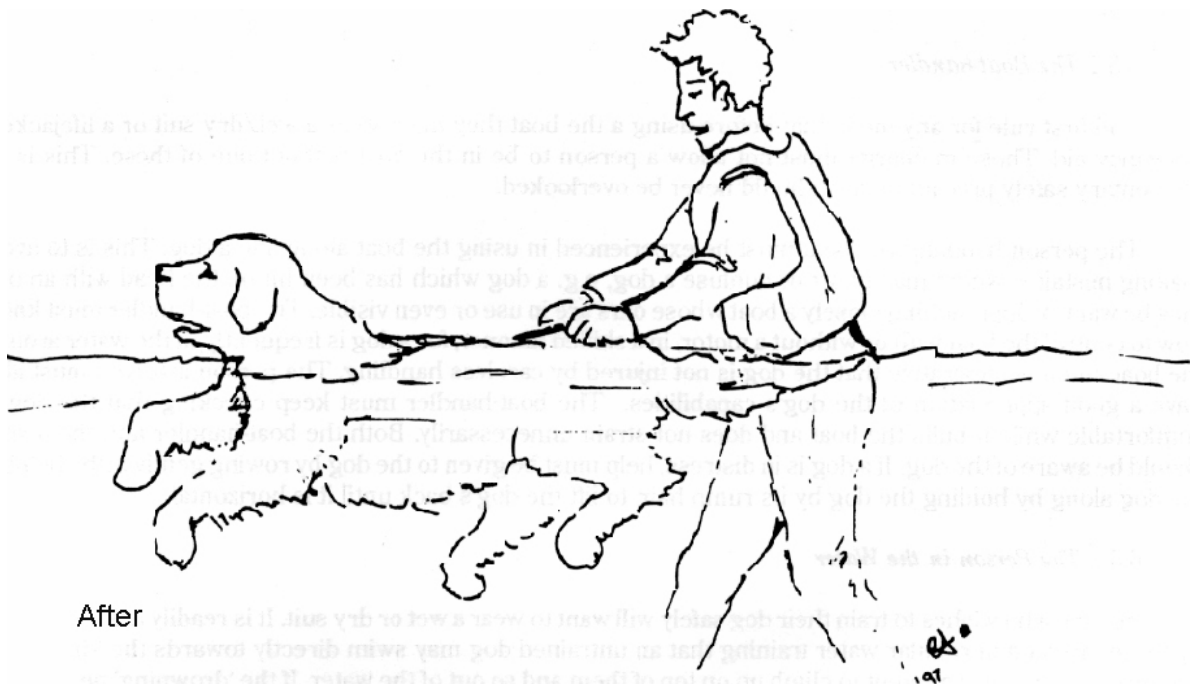
### 6.5.3 The Trainer

The trainer's role makes it essential that they should stay close to the dog. They are then in a position to observe closely what is happening at any stage of the exercise. The trainer in the water can easily analyse the behaviour of each dog, observe its swimming and prevent or rectify any problems.

The trainer could, for instance, help a young dog in distress, by lifting the dog's rump hair to lift its backside so it can swim in a normal manner, and not with its back vertical which often leads to panic.



Before



After

It is the trainer or owner, acting as the 'victim', who should teach a dog to circle the 'victim', by first making certain the dog reaches the 'victim' and then guiding the dog around the back of 'victim' as they turn in the water.

During the exercises the trainer is in charge, even though it is the handler who commands the dog, and the trainer's behaviour must be adapted to the temperament of the dog, e.g. for a dominant dog the trainer should make the dog aware (though not in a harsh manner), who is in charge, or for a submissive dog, the trainer should play and coax the dog into doing what is required.

## **7.0 The Water Tests**

The object of this section is to point out certain facts involving the Newfoundland dog with regard to the Water Tests.

### **7.1 Teamwork**

Teamwork implies that the dog and owner should work in unison to carry out any task necessary. However, it is the owner who should decide how to approach any exercise and what commands to give the dog.

### **7.2 Limitations**

It is important that the trainer and the owner should always remember the dog's limitations and not to go beyond them. Due to the Newfoundland's instincts, it will often take itself past its limitations!

Training is based upon the steps necessary for the Newfoundland to be able to perform a series of exercises. The Tests are designed to test the progression of the dog towards this goal and are not intended to suggest that a dog has reached this target. An owner entering the Tests must be aware of the criteria required.

For example a dog which can perform most of the exercises but who is incapable of jumping from a boat will not perform up to the required standard in the higher levels. No one facet of the initial training can be missed as all parts go together to make the desired all round dog.

In the Tests, as in everyday life, the dog must obey the handler and do what is required.

In a Test the dog will rarely encounter a situation with which it is wholly familiar. For example the boat may be strange, the water rough or the 'victim' acting in a manner different to those in training situations. All these factors may effect the dog, but experience shows that the well trained dog will ignore its surroundings and concentrate on the work and orders given. It is important to get the dog used to working with someone other than its owner all the time. Experience shows that the dog will obey a stranger provided that the stranger uses commands with which the dog is familiar.

### **7.3 The Water Tests**

The Newfoundland has a well deserved reputation, established over many years, as a saviour of man from the sea. Without wanting to put anyone in danger, the modern day owner increasingly wants to see whether their dog is equally capable in the water.

A set of exercises, which will test the dog at 5 levels, have been devised in order to provide a safe and consistent method of proving the dog's capabilities. The more advanced tests were the first of their kind whilst others will be recognized as similar to those seen at water trials but with more discriminating marking and judging.

The tests themselves, like the training, are based on the building block principle. Skills learnt by owner and their dog for the lower levels are repeated and refined or modified in higher level tests. Two examples of this building block approach are:

- Approaching a boat correctly is necessary for Section A, Exercise 1, but is also used in all subsequent levels;
- The complexities of retrieving are gradually built over different distances and a variety of objects so the dog will carry out a directed rescue (essentially retrieving a person) in Section E, Exercise 2.

It must be understood that it is necessary to master the lower levels first in order to progress to the more difficult tests. If a problem arises with a certain exercise, or part of it, then there will be a firm foundation to fall back on; if training is carried out inconsistently then a problem cannot be dealt with systematically. It must be borne in mind that the exercises actually test the partnership, not just the capabilities of the dog.

On a test day, there will be two judges and it is their desire for all the dogs to pass. During their test, entrants may ask the judges if they are unsure whether they are permitted to do something or not. Judges may even volunteer some helpful advice, at the lower levels, to assist entrants and their dogs to pass the test.

The judges will be using a scoring system for marking each performance but, unless the test is also a trial, these marks are purely for their use and will not be shown to anyone. The published results will only show whether the dog passed or failed to meet the required standard. At the conclusion of each test the judges will inform entrants whether they and their dog have passed or failed and probably make some verbal comments. Later there should also be written comments for them to collect from the score steward; a certificate of competence for a pass is also issued.

A test day is for entrants to have FUN with their dog and delight in their joint achievements and those of fellow Newfoundland owners. Even on a test day, *remember*; never become so serious that the fun goes out of working for you and your Newfoundland.

## **8.0 SUMMARY.**

Learning and progression vary considerably from dog to dog. It is common to see a dog progress in stages, either at a fast or slow rate. A slow learner is potentially just as good as a fast learner. It is equally important to encourage the dog(s) by introducing new exercises or by other means where the dog can express its own ability. If the dog has worked well it should be given masses of praise. Most dogs will respond well to large volumes of praise.

### **Both praise and titbits are very motivational to most Newfoundlands.**

Repetition and stagnation in training is boring to most Newfoundlands and their owners so try to make training as much fun as possible for you and your dog. Do not continue to practice an exercise which the dog is doing incorrectly, your dog probably hasn't understood what you want it to do. Go back to a level of that exercise that the dog does understand and start again but going slowly and checking at each stage to see that the dog has understood what is required.

Once an exercise has been correctly learnt, move on and try another. Then use the first exercise as a bit of 'light relief' for the dog when you both reach a stage in the second or subsequent exercises that the dog is having difficulty with. This has two advantages in that it will break the dog's concentration on the difficulty and by performing the correctly learnt exercise well it will;

- a) reinforce that exercise,
- b) encourage both dog and owner.

The level of achievement is usually linked to the frequency of the training. A dog who is trained often will generally achieve faster results than one trained only a few times per year. To train a Newfoundland to a high standard requires a great deal of effort from the owner, and the owner should be aware of this from the start.

Where dogs and owners are working together, it is primarily the attitude and behaviour of the HUMAN which is of MAJOR IMPORTANCE. The dog must be considered as an assistant and the final decision as to how to carry out the exercise rests with the owner. It is important that the owner has absolute confidence in the dog. A lack of confidence will be sensed by the dog and will effect its work. Where technical achievements are difficult, mutual knowledge and confidence between the dog and its owner are of prime importance.

## **9.0 SAFETY GUIDELINES**

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Kennel Club Guide to Health and Safety.

Safety is important at all times. However, it must have even greater importance when the Club is on display, either at a public demonstration, a club event or just an organised training session. When members of the Press/Television are in attendance it must be the ultimate consideration.

### **9.1 Site conditions and layout**

The site being used must be checked by the first members to arrive or a designated official to ensure that the environs are safe e.g., no glass or fishing line has been left that could cause injury to dogs or persons. (It would also benefit the good name of the club if any litter was collected at this time, so that the site can be left tidy and there can be no grounds for litter complaints against the Club; (this assumes that no further litter or waste material will be left by members).

### **9.2 Safety of children**

It should be made clear to all persons attending club activities that the responsibilities for the actions of children are their parents/guardians alone.

### **9.3 First aid arrangements**

The provision of First Aid facilities should be commensurate with the likely attendance. One of the Club's First Aid kits should always be available. Directions to the nearest doctor/hospital, and their telephone number should be readily available and publicised where appropriate. Similar arrangements should be made in respect of the local veterinarian or the veterinarian providing facilities for the event.

Depending on numbers attending and the location, consideration should be given to have a trained life saver/first-aider on patrol. In any event the location of a first-aider should be known to the person in charge/test manager. Certain members should be supplied with whistles which should be used to halt activities and draw attention to an emergency or potential emergency.

### **9.4 Water safety**

Life jackets/buoyancy aids to be worn by everyone in or on the water

No one should enter the water/boat unless there are at least three persons present; do not train alone. Handlers, who are poor swimmers, even though they will be wearing a buoyancy aid, should be encouraged to make full use of the close assistance of a steward.

## **9.5 Training safety**

All training is to be carried out by competent persons using approved training methods; no dog will be made to do what it is not capable of performing.

## **9.6 Boat safety**

Boats must be handled by competent persons so that no injury, which includes shock, is caused to any person or dog. Only engines with an emergency cut out facility shall be used so that the engine can be immediately de-activated if a person or dog gets too close.

## **9.7 Dealing with the media**

When dealing with the media (Press/Television/Local Radio) insist on presenting a safe picture not necessarily a spectacular one or one that they want; they are our dogs and the breed does not need the publicity!

**THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF OUR DOGS AND MEMBERS IS THE OVER-RIDING CONSIDERATION IN ALL MATTERS.**

## **10.0 CONCLUSION.**

This is a working manual which will be reviewed in the light of experience.

Additional training courses e.g. draft-work or obedience, should be attended to help the all round training which is necessary in a competent Working Newfoundland. Our great breed is not just a water-dog, or just a draft-dog or just a show-dog, or only a pet. It is a working-dog par excellence.

The owner and dog should form an effective working team.

Other training courses are also useful even if they only serve to indicate methods not to be used in training. Generally any training course will help to cement the bond between handler and dog. If the dog and handler are not enjoying an exercise then they should, with the aid of a competent trainer, find an alternative way of teaching that exercise. There is no 'ONE METHOD' for training as each handler and dog make up a unique partnership. There are often many methods of training for any one task, and it is up to the trainer, with help from the owner, to choose the most appropriate one for that partnership.

In Europe, there are various competitions for Newfoundlands, involving life-saving. The French Club Terre Neuve Sportif use exercises similar to those detailed above plus the extra exercises included in Appendix 1 to train for competitions and demonstrations. For Newfoundland owners elsewhere dogs trained to pass these tests or further, as in these extra exercises, could be used to form the basis of an exciting demonstration showing this part of our special breed's great versatility and usefulness.

## 11.0 TRAINING METHODS FOR SPECIFIC EXERCISES

### 11.1 Tow boat.

#### **Purpose:**

To train the dog to swim out to a drifting boat and to tow it back to shore:-

**Aim:** to train the dog to:-

- Leave shore on owner's command.
- Swim to boat, as directly as possible.
- Take tow rope in mouth,
- turn,
- return directly to shore, towing the boat
- exit the water.

The training for this exercise has already been detailed in Section 6.1

Initially have the boat stationed reasonably close to the shore, but making sure that the dog still has to swim to reach it even if it is only a short swim. Once the dog is used to swimming out to the boat and towing it back from this distance gradually increase the distance.

### 11.2 Tow a Stranger.

#### **Purpose**

To bring a 'drowning' person back to the shore.

**Aim:** to train the dog to:-

- Leave the shore on the handler's command.
- Swim to 'victim', as directly as possible.
- Preferably turn around the 'victim', or to turn close enough to the 'victim' for them to take hold of the dog either by its harness or its rump.
- Return directly to shore, towing the 'victim', until the 'victim' is beached or is close enough to be pulled from the water by those on shore.

#### **Step 1**

Initially concentrate on getting the dog to enter the water happily, on command and preferably with its owner. If a dog is uncertain or will not enter the water, refer back to Section 6.1.

#### **Step 2**

Have the 'victim' positioned reasonably close to the shore, but making sure that the dog still has to swim to reach them even if it is only a short swim. Once the dog is used to swimming out to the 'victim' and towing them back from this distance gradually increase the distance.

Everyone on the bank should remain quiet as the dog goes out so as not to distract it. The owner should point out the 'victim' to the dog and the 'victim' should splash and shout both the dog's name (to get its attention) and 'Save Me' or 'Here Dog'; remember though at a later stage (i.e. tests above C) the 'victim' will not be able to use the dog's name to get its attention, therefore the use of its name before shouting 'Here Dog' etc. should only be used if really necessary and even so should be discontinued as soon as possible. The owner should start the exercise kneeling alongside the dog and with a hand alongside the dog's head pointing at the 'victim', giving the command "Forward".

The owner should then run into the water slightly in front of the dog. The trainer, who has been standing behind the dog and owner, should go forward with the dog to ensure it enters



the water immediately. Once in the water the owner should slow up slightly to let the dog catch up. Then when the dog is swimming alongside, the owner should keep giving the command and pointing in the direction of the 'victim'.

When the dog gets close to the 'victim' that person should reduce the splashing (especially with a nervous or excitable dog) but keep calling the dog. On reaching the 'victim' the dog should be praised verbally and a titbit may be given to the dog by the 'victim' (not the owner as this would start to teach the dog to turn in front of the 'victim' which is not desirable). The dog should not be allowed to climb on the 'victim' as this is dangerous even though the 'victim' will be wearing a wet or dry suit. As the dog reaches the 'victim' they should turn slowly away from the dog, still calling the dog to get it to learn to circle closely round a 'victim'. It is often helpful to use a titbit, toy or piece of rope to coax the dog around.

Once the dog has circled the 'victim', he or she should take hold of the dog ideally by the harness or if the dog is not wearing one, by its rump. The 'victim' must not be allowed to hold on to the dog by the shoulders or flanks as this can interfere with the dog's swimming action. The owner should then command the dog to return to shore and swim closely alongside or slightly in front of the dog encouraging it, ensuring that the dog's back is horizontal as it is swimming. If it is not, the owner should raise the dog's backside by taking hold of the rump hair and lifting.

Should the dog require the added encouragement then the trainer on the bank should call the dog as soon as it starts to tow the 'victim' and as long as the dog is swimming directly to shore. If the dog deviates, the owner should re-command it and firmly re-direct it to shore by pointing the dog's head to the required landing spot. Usually this is best done by putting the flat of a hand alongside the dogs' eye and cheek and pushing the hand in the right direction. Once the dog's paws touch the ground the owner should run up away from the shore to get the dog to follow and so tow the 'victim' all the way to the shore.

### **Step 3**

The owner lags behind after commanding the dog "Forward" but should be near enough to be able to direct the dog both verbally and physically should the dog deviate from the direct route to the 'victim'.

On the return journey the owner can hitch a ride as long as the dog is not in difficulty. Initially, to get the dog interested in swimming out to the 'victim', the owner may have been used as the 'victim', then at this point the 'victim' should be switched for a 'stranger' although this person should also ideally be a trainer. At the first practice after this swap the owner should swim alongside the dog to reassure it.

### **Step 4**

The owner drops further back but the trainer should be close enough to be able to move in to re-direct the dog if necessary or to help the dog if it gets into difficulties. The 'victim' should now only shout 'Here Dog, whilst splashing, and not the dog's name.

### **Step 5**

Once the dog is reliable at this distance, the 'victim' should be moved out to 15 metres.

### **Step 6**

The owner should remain on the bank and command the dog by voice alone.

### **Step 7**

The owner should be back in the water alongside the dog initially when the 'victim' is moved to at least 25m away from the shore. The second time this is practised the owner should drop back slightly as before and once perfected the owner remains on shore.

### 11.3 Retrieve object:

#### **Purpose:**

To demonstrate a dog's ability to respond to the owner's commands and to bring an object to its owner.

#### **Aim:** to train the dog to:-

- Leave the shore on command.
- Proceed directly to the object.
- Take hold of object, turn immediately and return carrying the object, directly to shore.
- Bring the object back to the owner who is standing on shore.

#### **Step 1**

The owner should play with the dog on land using the article for this exercise, including play retrieves. This should continue until the dog is happy retrieving the article. Once this point has been reached the dog should then be taught to take the article, whatever the article is, whenever commanded to take it. Once reliability is proven move on to Step 2.

#### **Step 2**

As stage 1, but in shallow water, where the dog only has to wade. If the dog will not pick the article up then the owner should put the dog on the lead and take it to the floating article. The dog should be re-commanded once only, to "Take" the article. If the dog will still not take it, then the owner should take the article and offer it to the dog commanding the dog to "Take" it. If the dog will take it, then make a game of it by telling the dog to "Give" and re-offer it a few times till the dog is used to taking it whilst in the water. Then the owner should slowly lower his hands whilst offering the dog the article until it is almost in the water. The next progression is to 'accidentally' drop the article as the dog goes to take it. The dog should then be so interested in the article that it will almost automatically pick it up out of the water. Continue to play, by handing it to the dog, but increase the frequency of the 'drops' into the water.

If the dog won't take the article when it is offered then open the dog's mouth and put the article in, at the same time commanding the dog to "Take" the article. Command the dog to "Hold" and support the dog's lower jaw. After 10 seconds, command the dog to "Give", and take the article. Continue for 10 repetitions or until the dog is clearly switching off, then let the dog have a game or play, before re-trying the 'Take" command while offering the article by hand. If the dog will now take it then proceed as above. If the dog will still not take the article, check that it will take it on land. If it does on land then re-enter the water and try again putting the article in the dog's mouth but this time for 10 seconds then 20, then 30, then 50, increasing the time only after the dog is reliable.

#### **Step 3**

As Stage 2 but in water deep enough so the dog has to swim.

#### **Step 4**

The owner, standing on the bank, throws the article into shallow water, where the dog only has to wade out to retrieve the article. The trainer should be in the water to enforce the owner's commands. As the dog returns to the shore the owner should back away from the water whilst always facing the dog with a happy expression on their face, to encourage the dog to bring the article out of the water. Plenty of verbal praise should be given once the dog has picked up the article and turned back to shore.

The owner should train with a happy face as dogs can often be intimidated by 'harsh' expressions. If the dog thinks the owner is happy with its performance then it is more likely to do what is wanted and not get confused.

**Step 5**

The owner throws the article into water where the dog has to swim. The trainer should follow the dog into the water to enforce any commands.

**Step 6**

As for Step 1, but using a strange article, then as for Step 4 and if the dog is happy try Step 5.

If the dog picks the article up but will not return to the shore, first check if it will carry out a recall and retrieve on land. If the dog will work on land then attach a long-line to its collar and as the dog enters the water feed out the line. The trainer should follow closely to make sure the dog does not get tangled in the line. As the dog picks up the article the owner should give the command "Shore" to get it to return to shore. If there is no immediate response then a short but firm tug should be given on the long-line. If the dog still shows no sign of returning then give a slightly harder pull (but no extra voice command!). If still no response, the trainer should without speaking, turn the dog, the owner should make eye contact and re-command the dog, once only. If the dog still does not want to return then the owner should gently but firmly and evenly pull the dog back by the long-line with the trainer swimming alongside the dog to ensure it does not get into difficulties, deviate or drop the article.

Dogs have a tendency to drop the article as their feet touch the bottom i.e. in wading depth. To correct this tendency a dog must be taught to "Hold" on command. During the exercise as the dog is getting near to the point where it will start to wade rather than swim the handler should command the dog to "Hold". If the dog does 'drop' the article it should be trained to pick it up on command.

**Step 7**

Having introduced various articles, slowly increase the distance from the shore. At each increase, the first time this exercise is attempted, the owner should go with the dog and enforce commands as necessary. For the second attempt, the owner should stay on shore, with the trainer following the dog.

**Step 8**

Introduce the article to be retrieved being dropped from a passing boat. Initially have it dropped quite close to the shore, and gradually increase the distance first using the dogs 'favourite' retrieve item for each increase in distance. As the dog progresses to greater distances move on to practising with as many retrieve articles as possible, starting close in and gradually moving out with all of them. This will establish that the dog will eagerly retrieve any article that it is instructed to collect for its owner whatever the distance or conditions.

## 11.4 Retrieve object from underwater.

### **Purpose:**

To demonstrate a dog's ability to respond to the owner's commands and retrieve an object from underwater.

**Aim:** to train the dog to:-

- proceed directly to where the article was placed when commanded.
- retrieve the article by preferably
  - a. submerging its muzzle and as much of the rest of its head as is necessary to pick the article up,
  - b. to use its paws to scrabble the article into shallower water where the dog can pick it up.
- Return it directly to owner, giving it up on command.
- Return with the owner to the shore.

### **Step 1**

Use a toy which will sink and the dog really likes, perhaps even a 'squeaky'. Find some shallow water (or a child's paddling pool but this is likely to get punctured unless it is lined with a stronger material) where there is easy access for the dog and where there is room to play with the dog and the toy. Expect water to get splashed around. If using a paddling pool it will need replenishing regularly. Get the dog really interested in the toy, by playing with the toy and the dog, using play retrieves and tug-of-war etc. Then start throwing the toy near the water's edge preferably so the dog has to paddle to retrieve it. Once the dog is happy with this pass onto Step 2.

### **Step 2**

Again play with the dog and interest it with the toy. Keep on throwing the toy along the bank, or near to the paddling pool, then 'accidentally' throw it into the water where the water is deep enough to almost cover the toy. If using a paddling pool add enough water prior to starting this stage.

Watch the dog carefully, if it goes boldly into the water and retrieves the toy using its mouth then give the dog plenty of praise immediately. Keep on playing on land with ever more frequent 'accidental' throws into the water. Pass to Step 3.

If, however, the dog is reluctant to open its mouth in the water then the handler should retrieve the toy and continue playing with it on land. After 5 more retrieves on land the toy can again be thrown into the water but at a slightly shallower point. Continue trying this approach until the dog is happy to take the toy from the shallow water. Then very slowly, start throwing the toy into slightly deeper areas until the water is lapping over the toy.

### **Step 3**

Once the dog is happy to retrieve the toy that is just covered with water, then have a helper hold the dog on shore (NOT in a "Stay", command the dog to "Wait"), whilst the handler places the toy deep enough so that it is completely underwater. While the handler taunts the dog with the toy and places it under the water, the helper should be pulling the dog away from the toy and water, immediately the toy disappears the dog should be released and commanded to retrieve. At this stage of training it is best if the water is as clear as possible.

Once the dog is happy retrieving the toy from this depth gradually increase the depth whilst still playing on land in between attempts in the water to keep the dog interested in the toy.

#### **Step 4**

Once the dog will happily retrieve from more than 20 centimetres depth, then the handler should hold the dog on the bank whilst the helper places the toy initially just below the water level in full view of the dog. The dog should be sent immediately the toy is placed. Again build up the depth at which it is placed gradually.

#### **Step 5**

As in 'real' situations and usually at test sites, the water may be murky or even 'opaque' it is necessary to teach the dog to watch where the article is placed and to go to that point and then to search either with its head or paws (trawling) to find the object.

### **11.5 Swim with owner**

#### **Purpose:**

To demonstrate a dog's ability to swim safely with humans without attempting to interfere with them.

**Aim:** to train the dog to:-

- To enter the water alongside the owner.
- Swim at the side of the owner until the owner is at swimming depth.
- Stay at a safe distance from the owner as they swim.
- Turn to left or right and swim together parallel to the shore, on command.
- Remain in position as the owner comes out from the water.

This exercise is very much like teaching the dog to walk to heel whilst on land, similar methods can be used.

As the dog gets used to swimming alongside a person vary the distances and introduce some turning points, so the dog will stay with the owner whether they are swimming away from shore, parallel or returning to shore.

### **11.6 Jump from boat and tow to shore.**

#### **Purpose:**

To train the dog to jump out of a boat which is adrift and to return it to the shore.

**Aim:** to train the dog to:-

- Enter the boat safely at the shore.
- Sit quietly whilst the boat is manoeuvred.
- On command, jump cleanly from the boat.
- Take the rope and hold it in its mouth whilst it jumps or return immediately to the boat after exiting and take the rope firmly in its mouth.
- Use the rope to pull the boat.
- Come safely to the shore area

#### **Step 1**

Train the dog to jump from the boat on command (see Section 6.3).

## **Step 2**

Once the dog is happy to jump from the boat on command then try again with the owner remaining in the boat and offering the rope to the dog as it turns back to the boat on command. If it just heads to the shore then it should be let go without any further commands.

For the next attempt leave the dog in the boat while the owner enters the water and then commands the dog to jump. When the dog is in the water it should be called to the owner who should be positioned by the boat and commanded to "Wait" as the owner climbs back into the boat. Once the owner is back in the boat, the owner should call the dog and offer the rope. As the dog has already learnt to take the rope on command, it should then take it and tow the boat to shore. After a few repetitions try again with the owner in the boat just commanding the dog to jump, turn and return to the boat-side. If the dog tries to swim for the shore, turn the dog gently but firmly and ensure that the dog does as commanded. It is therefore helpful if the boat is close enough to the shore to enable the trainer to stand, even though the dog has to swim. It is at this stage when repetitions of unsuccessful completions of the exercise can have a most damaging effect on progress.

## **Step 3**

Once the dog has become used to the command "Wait", slowly build up the distance from shore until it is further than the test distance.

Often a dog will automatically turn back to the boat once it has jumped and been called, so as long as the earlier building blocks of taking a rope on command and towing the boat to the shore have been thoroughly learnt, this exercise should be an easy progression step.

## **11.7 Take an object to a boat/person and tow back.**

### **Purpose:**

Carrying a coil of rope or life saving items to a boat that is apparently adrift or to a 'drowning' person and bring them back to the shore.

**Aim:** to train the dog to:-

- Leave the shore on the handler's command, either carrying the rope/object or picking it up as it is thrown just in front of them.
- Holding the rope/object firmly, swim to the boat or the 'victim', as directly as possible.
- On reaching the boat, on command from the person in the boat, give the rope up and take the tow rope, or
- On reaching the person, the dog should continue to hold the object firmly and circle the person so they can get hold of the object,
- Return directly to shore, towing the boat or the 'victim', using the tow rope or the original object, until they are at the shore.

### **Step 1**

Initially, training should be done with the boat positioned less than 10 metres from shore leaving the owner and the dog on shore. The trainer should also be on shore rather than in the water and should be out of sight of the dog so as not to disturb the dog's concentration. The owner, dog and trainer should enter the water with the dog being given the command "Forward" and shown which direction by the owner. Once the dog is swimming, but the owner is still wading, the owner should toss the rope in front of the dog. As the dog reaches the rope, the owner should command the dog to "Take" the rope (checking that the dog is not in distress and swimming level), and re-command the dog towards the boat indicating the direction. The owner should stay alongside the dog to ensure the dog does not deviate. If it does, it should be re-commanded to go to the boat, then if still deviating should be turned and re-commanded again.

On arrival at the boat the dog should be taught to circle the boat within arms reach of the person in the boat. When the boat-handler has the rope the owner should command the dog to return to the shore.

Once the dog is reliable over this distance then increase distances to 15 then 20 metres.

### **Step 2**

The owner should slow up on entering the water with the dog and when it has taken the rope, let the dog swim on alone.

### **Step 3**

With the owner and dog on shore as before, the owner should command the dog to enter the water, towards the boat and as the dog enters the water the owner should throw the rope in front of the dog. Then the owner should follow to ensure the dog takes the rope and does not deviate but should now stay slightly behind the dog.

### **Step 4**

The owner should lag further behind.

### **Step 5**

The owner should remain on shore and either throw the rope into the water or give the rope directly to the dog with the commands "Take" and "Hold", then command the dog to carry the rope to the boat.

### **Step 6**

Increase the distance gradually so that the dog will willingly take the coil more than 25 metres.

### **Step 7**

Once the dog is reliable in carrying the rope, the release at the boat can be introduced. The boat steward should know the release word from the owner and once the dog gives up the rope coil it should be given an end of rope to pull the boat back to the shore, similar to Exercise 6.

The exercise can be extended at a later date in order to get the dog to take the boat out to a person stranded or in distress as a demonstration piece. The article (a rope coil) which has to be carried out to the boat can also be changed to a seat cushion or life-buoy to add some variety to the exercise.

Once the take out to the boat has been learnt, then the similar exercise of taking the object - a life buoy or jacket - to a person can be introduced. The main difference is that the dog must hold the article throughout the exercise i.e., not give it up to the person but keep hold of it so that the person can also hold on to it for the tow back to shore.

## 11.8 Tow stranger to a boat.

### Purpose:

For the dog to be in a boat, recover a 'victim' and to retrieve that person back to the boat rather than the shore.

**Aim:** to teach the dog to:-

- Leave the boat on command.
- Swim directly to the 'victim', circle that person and effect a safe tow.
- Return to the boat with the recovered stranger.
- Wait while the 'victim' is pulled into the boat.
- be pulled back into the boat.

This exercise is a continuation of exercises from previous levels.

### Step 1

If the dog is happy to jump out of the boat on command then start directly at Step 2.

The owner, dog and boat-handlers should be in the boat, far enough out so when the dog jumps out it will not hit the bottom. The trainer should be in the water, and the owner should 'fall' out. As this happens, the dog should be held by the boat-handler momentarily and then commanded to jump. Once the dog is in the water, it should be sent to recover the owner. The trainer should ensure that the dog does not immediately swim to shore, try to climb back into the boat or circle the boat looking for a rope to tow with but swim directly to the owner.

Once the dog is towing the owner, then the dog should be commanded and directed, if necessary, to return to the boat. The boat-handlers should call and encourage the dog to return to the boat. Once back at the boat, the owner should command the dog to "Wait" while they climb back into the boat. The trainer should make certain that the dog does wait. The dog should then be called closer to the boat and be pulled in. Lots of praise should then be given to the dog.

### Step 2

The owner, dog and boat-handlers should be in the boat plus the trainer along with the 'victim'. The 'victim' should fall overboard once the boat is at the required distance. The owner should take hold of the dog by its harness, indicate the 'victim' and jump in commanding the dog to jump. As the owner exits the boat they should pull the dog slightly to encourage it but they must LET GO before entering the water or they might pull the dog down too far and frighten it. The trainer and the boat-handler should ensure the dog follows its owner.

Once in the water the owner should call the dog and direct it towards the 'victim' commanding it to recover the 'victim'. The owner should swim with the dog, directly to the 'victim', and as the dog gets near, the owner should lag slightly. Once the dog has circled the 'victim', it should be commanded to return to the owner who should be about 5 metres away. The dog should tow the 'victim' back to its owner and the owner should re-direct the dog to the boat and swim with the dog but slightly in front of it. The trainer should ensure that the dog with the 'victim' swims to the boat and not the shore.

At the boat the owner should command the dog to "Wait" as first the 'victim' and then the owner are helped into the boat. The trainer should make sure that the dog waits. The dog should then be commanded to swim closer to the boat to be pulled in.

Once the trainer does not have to 'help' the dog to "Wait" or obey other commands then move to Step 3.



### **Step 3**

As Step 2 but once in the water, the owner should remain by the boat. The trainer should be close enough to ensure the dog goes 'directly' to the 'victim', but should not 'help' the dog or break the dog's concentration while it obeys the commands.

### **Step 4**

As 3, but the owner should only pretend to jump and then command the dog from the boat.

### **Step 5**

The owner should show the dog the 'victim' whilst they are in the boat and then send the dog directly from the boat.

## **11.9 Directed retrieve of one of two objects/persons.**

### **Purpose:**

To retrieve objects/persons from the water selectively.

### **Aim:** to train the dog to:-

- Leave the shore on command and swim out.
- On command turn to left or right.
- Keep going in the desired direction.
- Respond to further directional commands, as necessary, ignoring distractions.
- Retrieve the object or person then in its path, on command
- Return with object or person direct to the shore.

### **Step 1**

On LAND. Pick two dissimilar objects and place them about 10 - 15 metres apart. The owner and dog (initially on lead) should be positioned 10 - 15 metres away from them. The owner should command the dog to fetch one of the objects and then the owner should walk forwards to Point A with the dog, at which point the owner should command the dog to turn left or right towards the required object and carry out a play retrieve giving the dog plenty of praise.

After 5 repetitions, to the same side, carry out another training exercise e.g. a play retrieve for fun, then return and do 5 more repetitions, but to the alternate side.

### **Step 2**

The owner should start to lag as the dog is sent and directed to the required object. Eventually the owner should remain at the starting point and only command by voice.

### **Step 3**

Once the dog has learnt to change direction on command start in the water as on land and with the owner again alongside the dog in exactly the same manner as Step 1.

### **Step 4**

The owner should slowly lag behind, but still close enough to enforce direction commands.

### **Step 5**

The owner should remain on shore. The objects should be changed so the dog does not only associate a particular object with one command e.g. a coil of rope with the "Left" command.

At all times the dog must never get bored with the retrieves. Try to make it as much of a game as possible but the dog must not be allowed to 'get away' with mistakes or to become inventive.

## **Step 6**

Slowly increase the distance the objects are from the shore and reduce the distance between the objects. Also change the pairs of objects to be retrieved.

Once the dog is reliably going to the correct item every time then repeat the learning process using people. The dog will have to get used to going to noisy swimmers or quiet swimmers so regularly change which one they should fetch.

## **11.10 Tow hidden stranger/find hidden rope.**

### **Purpose:**

Bring back a 'victim', who is out of sight behind the boat, in the water or to retrieve a boat which is adrift where the 'painter' i.e. the rope used for mooring the boat, has apparently broken and is lying over the side.

**Aim:** to train the dog to:-

- enter the water on command
- Swim directly to the boat
- Circle the boat, searching for the 'victim' or rope
- Recover the 'victim' or get hold of the rope
- Bring the 'victim' or the boat directly to shore.

### **Step 1**

Start by training the dog to retrieve a distressed person. The boat should be less than 10 metres off shore with the splashing and noisy 'victim' partially visible at the boat's end with the boat lying parallel to the shore. The owner and the dog enter the water with the owner giving commands to go "Forward" to the boat and "Seek". Both should swim out and if the dog deviates the owner should re-command the dog and, if necessary, physically turn the dog and again re-command the dog.

On arrival at the boat the dog is sent towards and re-commanded to find the 'victim'. The dog should circle the boat and find the 'victim', who should hold either the harness, if the dog is wearing one, or the rump. The owner, having followed the dog round the boat, should then lead the dog back to the shoreward side of the boat and then command the dog to return to shore. Gradually increase the distance to at least 25 metres, but decrease again at the beginning of each new step.

### **Step 2**

As above but with the owner lagging behind the dog, and swimming around the boat in the opposite direction to the dog so they are still there to command the dog once it has found the 'victim'.

### **Step 3**

As step 1, with the 'victim' now not visible from the shore but still splashing as the dog gets to the boat, the owner directs the dog around the boat, and re-commands the dog to "Seek" the 'victim'.

### **Step 4**

As step 1, but with the owner lagging.

### **Step 5**

As step 1, but with the owner on shore.

### **Step 6**

The owner is now back in the water alongside the dog, the 'victim' splashes until they can see the dog then lies motionless except for the right hand which splashes quickly but with small movements. The dog is encouraged to swim to the 'victim' who can then take hold of the harness. The dog can then tow the 'victim' back to the shore.

### **Step 7**

As step 6, but with the owner lagging.

### **Step 8**

As step 6, but with the owner on shore.

### **Step 9**

Once the dog is happy to go out to the boat when the 'victim' is silent, then the variation of getting the dog to take the 'hidden' rope can be introduced. The boat is positioned offshore with an assistant in lying down out of sight. The assistant has hold of one end of the rope; the other end is hanging over the side of the boat.

The owner then brings the dog to the edge of the shore indicates the boat and commands the dog to go to the boat and to search for a rope. The owner sets off swimming, and the dog should follow.

As they get near to the boat the owner should allow the dog to catch up. As they reach the boat the assistant in the boat should move the rope rapidly to attract the dog's attention. Once the dog sees the 'moving' rope, the owner should re-command the dog to search for the rope. As the dog grabs the rope it should be praised and commanded to return to shore.

### **Step 10**

As Step 9, but the assistant does not move the rope as much and after successful repetitions, the rope is moved less and less.

### **Step 11**

The owner lags and the trainer is close enough to enforce the commands if necessary.

### **Step 12**

The rope is now positioned just on the other side of the boat and out of sight of the dog until it reaches the boat and starts to swim around the boat. The owner should again be alongside the dog. As the dog gets to the boat, the rope should be moved rapidly and made to splash the water to attract the dog's attention. As the dog starts to swim around the boat the rope should be moved violently but not so it splashes. Once the dog has found and taken the rope, it should be given lots of praise and commanded to swim to the shore towing the boat.

### **Step 13**

As Step 12, but once the dog starts to swim around the boat, the rope is left to dangle and eventually left motionless.

### **Step 14**

As Step 13, but with the rope further around the boat, from this point on the rope should be in slightly different positions every time this exercise is practised.

### **Step 15**

The owner should lag, but the trainer is close enough to enforce commands.

### **Step 16**

The owner should remain on shore and just command the dog by voice and hand signals if necessary.

## 11.11 Jump and take a line from one boat to another and get pulled in.

### **Purpose:**

As one boat is adrift another is sent to retrieve it but cannot get close enough. The dog is sent with a length of rope to be attached to the adrift boat to allow it to be pulled back to safety.

### **Aim:** to train the dog to:

- Exit the boat.
- Return for the rope.
- Swim directly to the second boat.
- Give up the rope to a person in that boat.
- Wait while the rope is secured
- Then be pulled into the second boat.

### **Step 1**

The boats should be about 10 metres apart. The owner and dog should exit boat N° 1 and the dog should be commanded to return to the boat for the rope. Once the dog has the rope it should be commanded to go to boat N° 2 as the owner sets off swimming to that boat. The trainer, also in the water, should follow the dog to ensure the dog follows the owner and does not drop the rope.

Once at boat N° 2 the owner should swim to the side of the boat and call the dog. As the dog gets to this boat's side, one of the boat-handlers in the boat should take the rope as the owner commands the dog to give it to him. The owner should then command the dog to "Wait" while the rope is attached and then the owner should get into boat N° 2. The dog is then called back to that boat, pulled in (see Section 6.4) and enthusiastically praised.

### **Step 2**

As Step 1, but the owner lags behind the dog as the dog swims to boat N° 2. However, they should be close enough to enforce any commands.

### **Step 3**

The owner remains in the boat, but the trainer follows closely, to ensure commands are carried out.

### **Step 4**

The trainer lags.

If the dog carries out the exercise correctly then slowly extend the distance between the boats. At each extension, initially the trainer should swim closely behind the dog then at the next attempt should drop back.

## APPENDIX 1

The following exercises will be used to illustrate various cases encountered through specific life-saving events which the T.N.S. of France use as their training stages. There are many other exercises which the French use but as it is from these other exercises that our own test exercises have been developed they have been omitted.

VARIOUS EXERCISES CAN BE MIXED AS LONG AS BASIC OBJECTIVES ARE MET;  
BUT DON'T TRY TO DO EVERYTHING AT ONCE.

### EXERCISE 1

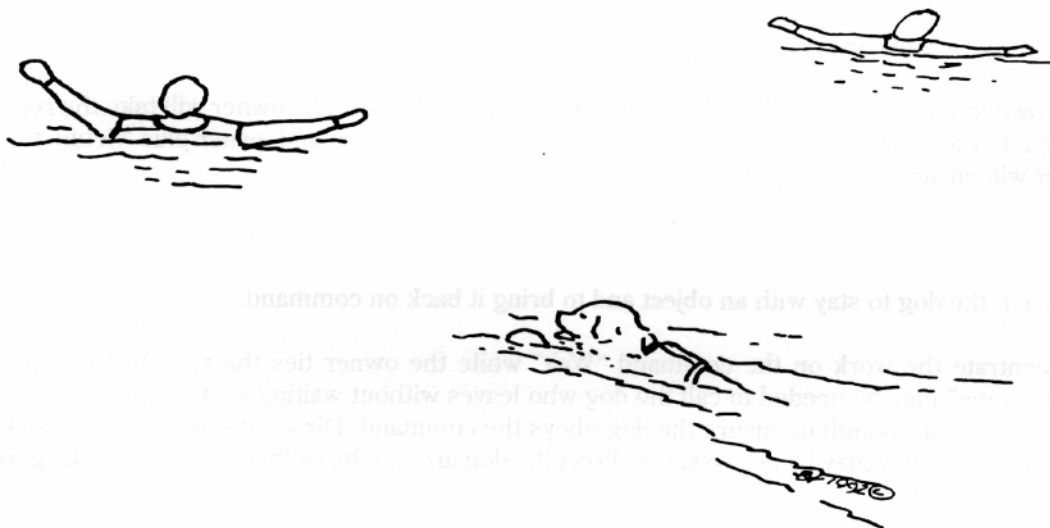
#### Purpose:

The owner and the dog fetch two 'victims'.

Either 'victim' is pointed out to the dog, the other being the responsibility of the handler. The dog should 'rescue' the designated 'victim' to the shore or to the handler as directed by the trainer.

#### Aim:

To teach the dog to work alone whilst his owner or another person works alongside him. Initially set the 'victim' for the dog further away than the 'victim' for the swimmer.



As the dog and owner swim out, the owner must be with the dog to ensure it goes in a straight line and does not deviate or turn back. Once they reach the 'victim' that 'victim' should stop splashing while the other 'victim' should make him/herself more of a target. Alternatively use the owner of the dog initially as the 'victim' for the dog with the aim of making the dog want to go to that target rather than the nearest one.

The owner then commands the dog to go forward and in the direction of the 'victim' for the dog. The owner can then 'save', his/her 'victim', but must watch the dog, to ensure the dog goes straight to the other 'victim'. If the dog starts to turn too early, the dog must be commanded to "Round" and "Forward" in the direction of the 'victim'. Alternatively the trainer could have been swimming alongside the dog, (but on the other side to the owner), and so be in position to enforce the owner's commands.

If the dog will still not go to the 'victim', either the owner or the trainer should physically turn the dog whilst giving the commands and send it to the 'victim'. The trainer should then remain near the dog as the dog swims on. As the dog reaches the correct 'victim', that 'victim' should turn clockwise and encourage the dog to go "Round" them, then as the dog circles them the 'victim' should take hold of the dog's harness (if the dog is wearing one) or the rump. Remember not to hold either the flanks or the shoulders as this interferes with the dog's swimming action.

Once the dog has 'saved' its 'victim' the owner with his/her 'victim' (i.e. the first 'victim'), must make eye-contact with the dog (it is easier to enforce commands at a distance if eye-contact is made) and then should call the dog to them. If the dog does not come, the trainer should direct the dog to the owner and ensure the dog goes directly to the owner. Once there, the owner should also take hold of the harness (if the dog is wearing one), or the top of the withers (with their free hand). The owner should check if the dog's back is horizontal and if it isn't the owner should direct the dog's 'victim' to lift the backside until the back is horizontal. The dog should be commanded to return to the shore or to the boat.

**Progression:**

Slowly separate the Victims' parallel to the shore.

Reduce the time spent by the owner alongside the dog before splitting off to rescue the 'victim'.

If it is necessary to send the dog to the right-hand 'victim', as seen from the shore, the owner should stand and swim on the dog's left-hand side and vice-versa if the dog is to be sent to the right-hand side. During training the side to which the dog is sent should also be varied.

## **EXERCISE 2**

**Purpose:**

To retrieve a sailboard.

The owner and dog find a 'victim' unconscious upon a sailboard. The owner will take the rope with him and attach it to the sailboard; the dog will use this to pull the sailboard and owner plus 'victim' to the shore. The owner will ensure that the 'victim' does not fall off.

**Aim:**

To teach the dog to stay with an object and to bring it back on command.

Concentrate the work on the command "Wait" while the owner ties the rope to the sailboard. The command "Come" may be needed to call the dog who leaves without waiting for the swimmer therefore the trainer must be near enough to ensure the dog obeys the command. Directions and commands at this level are important since they may be necessary to direct the dog around the sailboard without endangering either the dog or the sailboard.

## **EXERCISE 3**

**Purpose:**

To bring back two Victims', one of whom is out of sight.

The owner and the dog proceed towards an overturned boat where one 'victim' clings to the boat. On arrival the owner must find another 'victim' under the boat. The dog waits for the owner before returning to the shore with both 'victims'.

Again the use of the command "Wait" is necessary. The trainer should be in the water to ensure the dog does wait.

This exercise is in reality a continuation of the directed retrieve of one of two objects/persons. It should be taught only after that exercise has been mastered, up to and including Step 8.

## **EXERCISE 4**

### **Purpose:**

For the owner and dog to fetch a 'victim' hidden by a boat and bring him to the shore. The dog returns alone to fetch the empty boat or a boat with an unconscious person in it. This is a further progression of Section D Exercise 4.

### **Aim:**

For the dog to perform multiple duties within an exercise as well as improving its stamina and fitness.

For the second part of this exercise initially accompany the dog back to the boat, having brought the 'victim' ashore, then gradually let him perform it alone.

## **EXERCISE 5**

### **Purpose:**

For dog and owner to go to a different target from a boat.

This exercise is a further progression from Exercise 1 in this appendix.

The owner and the dog jump from the boat each to get a 'victim'. The two 'victims' are separated. The dog is commanded to go for the first 'victim'.

The boat continues and the owner goes for the second 'victim'. The dog should return towards the owner and second 'victim' towing with it the first 'victim', whilst the boat is circling the owner and the second 'victim' at a safe distance. Everyone is then brought aboard for the return to the shore.

Separate the work. Initially work on the jump from the boat, then returning to the boat with a 'victim', whilst the owner rescues another 'victim' and being hauled aboard.

## **APPENDIX 2**

Lifesaving implies basic knowledge of how to handle a panicking person i.e. the owner approaches the 'victim' from behind, reaches under the victim's left arm with his/her left arm, reaching across the victim's chest to catch the victim's right arm. The owner pulls this arm tight against the victim's chest at the junction of the chest and neck to immobilise the victim. The owner leaves the victim's left arm free, as this is usually unable to cause much of a problem to the owner or the dog.

The swimmer's right arm is free to:-

1. Hold under the victim's chin, to keep their mouth out of the water until the dog arrives, then the left hand can be moved up to this position (whilst still holding the victim's arm) to continue keeping the victim's mouth out of the water.
2. Grab the dog for a tow back to safety.

Obviously the owner could use his/her right arm and hold the victim's left arm, with the same result

