

Creating Nose Control When Starting Pups
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I keep getting asked how I manage to start beagles that want to use their nose rather than mostly their eyes to run rabbits. It doesn't matter if the hound is a gun dog or a field trial dog, patience and what I like to call "nose control" are the most successful abilities a hound has to produce a rabbit.

Nose control means that the hound won't just hit a line, get excited, and then run all over the countryside using looking around trying to jump the rabbit. Many times I get a hound in to start that has been first subjected to sight chase after sight chase by their owner trying to get them started. As a last resort the owner brings them down to me and says "I've worked this one a few times but it isn't started yet." I take the dog into the pen, let it loose, and then watch it circle the pen barking constantly. At that point I tell the owner that it's already started and I can only do so much more with it.

So how can you develop nose control? To start with, try to avoid a sight chase at all costs when the pup is young and un-started. This can be accomplished three ways:

- 1 Run the pup with an old started walki-talki female that doesn't move the line too fast, and never gets close enough to jump a rabbit. This works to get the pup interested and using its nose, but it takes more to actually get most pups started.
- 2 Take the pup out on a leash, or better yet, a line on a fishing pole, jump a rabbit, and then keep working the pup over the fresh line until it uses its nose to smell the scent. It usually takes a number of lines to do this.
- 3 Finally, let the pup run loose at night when the scenting is high, either with or without another slow dog. When you finally hear a squeal, your pup will be ready.

Now that your pup is using its nose, you can continue with the previous approaches, or you can move to the next level if you have a good hound with a high pitched squealing voice of its own when it runs. The pup already knows that there is a rabbit in the area, and the squealing hound will get the pup excited and smelling immediately.

As a caveat to the above recommendation, if all you have is a hard driving hound, be careful about running a pup with it before the pup is ready. What can happen is the pup will follow but not have time to use its nose. You run the risk of developing a hound that will be smelling the line hit and miss, but will also immediately go with anything that barks regardless of if it has the line or not. By the time it gets back to putting its nose down the original line is well away from where the hound is.

I believe that once a hound starts to rely on its nose, the hound will continue to develop nose control on its own.