

THE STUBBORN STREAK RESET

Work with the hound nose,
not against it



Topics Included

1 Why Your Dachshund "Ignores" You (It Isn't Stubbornness)

2 Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse

3 The Five Routines

4 Set Up Two Stations

5 The One-Page Checklist

6 Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

7 When It Didn't Work

Why Your Dachshund



The recall that stops working the second there's a scent to follow

In the kitchen, on the living room rug, in the quiet of a hallway, she comes when called almost every time. Say the same word the moment her nose drops into the grass at the edge of the yard, or the second she catches a trail along the fence line, and it's like the word was

Why Your Dachshund

never spoken. Head down, tail working, feet moving – and you might as well not exist.

The usual verdict is that Dachshunds are just stubborn – small dogs with an outsized opinion of themselves, too pig-headed to bother obeying once they've decided not to. That verdict feels accurate because it matches what you're watching happen in front of you, but it points toward the wrong fix: a firmer voice, more repetition of the same cue, occasionally a correction for "ignoring" you. None of that addresses what's actually happening in your dog's head at that moment, and most of it makes the underlying problem worse.

The actual mechanism

Here's the whole thing in one sentence: **a Dachshund's nose runs its own priority system, and once it locks onto a scent, everything else – including a cue she**

Why Your Dachshund

knows perfectly well – gets treated as background noise.

This breed wasn't developed to keep one eye on a handler the way a retriever or a sheepdog was. A Dachshund was bred to go underground after badgers, alone, working entirely out of sight and earshot of the person who sent her in. Nobody could hand-signal a dog inside a badger sett. The whole job depended on a dog that could pick up a scent and follow it through to a decision, on her own, without checking back for instructions. That's not a flaw in the breed – it's the exact trait she was selected for, generation after generation, long before anyone expected her to also sit calmly in a kitchen.

Lay a strong, functioning nose on top of that built-in independence, and you get a dog that can be brilliant in a quiet room and functionally deaf the moment real scent is on offer. What looks like defiance is usually a

Why Your Dachshund

sensory system doing exactly what it was bred to do: prioritizing a trail over a spoken word, because for most of this breed's history, that was the correct thing to prioritize.



Why Your Dachshund

Three ways it shows up as “stubbornness”

Nose-override is the most dramatic version. A scent strong enough to register doesn't compete politely with a cue – it tends to win outright, at least for the first several seconds, because the drive to follow a trail sits closer to reflex than to choice for this breed. A dog mid-override isn't weighing your recall word against the smell and picking the smell; for a moment, the recall word barely registers at all.

Self-rewarding instinct covers digging and a fair amount of barking. Neither behavior needs a payoff from you to keep happening – the digging itself is satisfying, and so is announcing something at the window. Punishing or ignoring a behavior that already pays for itself, without giving it anywhere else to go, tends to just push it toward a moment when you're not watching.

Motivation-mismatch is quieter and easier to miss. Owners often train as if a Dachshund is primarily driven

Why Your Dachshund

to please them, the way a more classically obedient breed might be. She isn't uninterested in you – but the currency that reliably beats a competing scent or a competing instinct is a genuine scent- or food-based payoff, not praise and eye contact on their own. Training that assumes the relationship alone will carry the day tends to work fine in the kitchen and fall apart everywhere real competition shows up.

What actually breaks the cycle

If the real driver is a bred-in sensory priority system rather than defiance, the fix isn't to demand more obedience in the abstract – it's to make the payoff for checking in with you genuinely beat what her nose is already offering her, and to give the instincts that don't need any payoff at all a legal place to go instead of fighting them head-on. Chapter 3's five routines are

Why Your Dachshund

five different practical ways of doing exactly that.

This takes deliberate setup, not more pressure. A nose that's been the most reliable source of information in this dog's world for her entire life doesn't get overridden by a sharper tone – it gets outcompeted by something that consistently works better, which is what the rest of this book builds toward.

What to take from this chapter

1. What reads as stubbornness is usually a scent hound's sensory priorities doing exactly what they were bred to do, not defiance.
2. Nose-override is closer to a reflex than a choice – for a few seconds, a strong scent can genuinely outrank a cue she knows well.

Why Your Dachshund

3. Digging and barking are self-rewarding and don't need any payoff from you to keep happening, which is why ignoring them alone rarely stops them.
4. Motivation-mismatch happens when training assumes she's driven mainly by pleasing you, rather than by a real scent- or food-based payoff.

Chapter 2 covers why louder corrections, "alpha" framing, and retriever-style training expectations all fail against this particular mechanism, before Chapter 3 gets into the five routines that actually work.

This guide is educational and is not a substitute for veterinary or professional behavioural advice. A sudden change in a previously cooperative dog, or reluctance to jump, climb stairs, be picked up, or move normally, needs a veterinary check before more training – pain is a common and easily missed cause of sudden "stubbornness," and this breed's long back makes it

Why Your Dachshund

worth ruling out first. Watch too for the subtler, often-earlier signs: standing with the back legs held wider apart than usual, toenails on the back feet wearing down faster than the front ones, a sudden drop in playfulness or energy with no clear cause, or a tensed, guarded belly – these can show up before the more obvious stair or jump refusal above, and deserve the same vet check.

Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse



One complication worth admitting up front

The Dachshund Club of America's own judges' education materials list "stubbornness" as one of nine character traits a correctly-typed Dachshund should show – right alongside boldness, independence, and perseverance. Unlike some breed clubs, which explicitly disclaim the "stubborn" label for their own

Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse

dogs, the DCA treats the word as a point of pride, not a myth that needs correcting. That's worth saying plainly, because Chapter 1's reframe isn't a denial that the trait is real or bred-in – it agrees with the breed club on that part completely. What it argues with is the word as an explanation you can actually act on. "She's stubborn" tells you nothing about what to change; a nose that runs its own priority system tells you exactly what you're competing against, and how to out-earn it. The trait and the mechanism aren't in conflict. The mechanism is just the only one of the two you can train around.

Four fixes everyone tries first

Fix one: a firmer voice or a repeated

correction. Calling her name a second and third time, louder each time, or snapping a sharp "no" when the

Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse

first recall doesn't land, feels like reasonable escalation in the moment. But Chapter 1 already showed that mid-scent, the cue isn't losing a fair fight – for a few seconds it barely registers at all. A louder voice doesn't reach a nose that's mid-override any faster than a quiet one does. What it does teach, over repeated instances, is that the first call and often the second can be safely worked through before anything happens.

Fix two: the “alpha” talk. Treating a dog that blows off a recall mid-trail as a small dog testing for pack leadership leads owners toward posturing – looming over her, forcing eye contact, insisting on walking through doorways first. None of that touches a sensory system doing its bred-in job, or a digging habit that's rewarding on its own. Dominance framing answers a leadership question this breed was never actually asking, and it tends to turn an ordinary training gap into a standoff nobody needed to have.

Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse

The idea that dogs organize around a fixed dominance hierarchy, and need a human “alpha” to keep them in line, traces back to 1970s research on wolves living in captivity – unrelated animals forced together as strangers, not real family groups. The researcher most associated with popularizing that idea, L. David Mech, formally retracted it himself in a 1999 paper, once decades of studying actual wild wolf packs showed they’re family units – a breeding pair and their own offspring – not a hierarchy anyone had to fight to climb. The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior’s own position statement is direct on the training side of the same question: reward-based methods are supported for all dog training, and there is no evidence that aversive methods are ever necessary. Even so, “establish yourself as pack leader” still shows up inside otherwise solid, current, breed-specific training advice – a sign this idea is worth actively correcting, not something safe to assume has already died out on its own.

Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse

Fix three: retriever-style training expectations. A lot of mainstream obedience advice is written with a handler-focused, eager-to-please breed in mind – heavy on eye contact, praise, and the assumption that pleasing the owner is its own reward. Applied to a scent hound, that approach tends to produce a dog that's flawless in a quiet room and unreachable the moment a real trail, a squirrel, or an interesting hole in the fence line shows up, because the training never built a payoff strong enough to compete with what her nose already does for free.

Fix four: trying to suppress digging or barking through correction alone. Both behaviors pay for themselves – the dig feels good, the bark scratches a watchdog itch – so punishing them without giving the underlying drive anywhere else to go rarely stops the behavior. More often it teaches her to dig or bark only when you're not around to react, or to shift the digging

Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse

to a corner of the yard you check less often, which looks like progress right up until you find the new hole.



Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse

Why fighting instinct outright is the real enemy

Here's the pattern behind most stalled progress: recall works fine in the yard when nothing's going on, and falls apart the moment a genuine scent shows up. The digging stops for a week under close supervision and reappears the first weekend nobody's watching. The barking gets scolded into silence in the room you're in and continues unbothered in every room you're not.

None of that is the dog "knowing better and doing it anyway." It's an unmet, bred-in drive finding the path of least resistance around whatever's currently blocking it, and a recall word that's never actually had to out-earn a real scent before being asked to do exactly that.

The two things that actually move the needle

First: make the payoff for checking in with you genuinely beat what her nose is already offering, using an actual scent- or food-based reward

Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse

system rather than praise and relationship alone. A recall in a quiet kitchen and a recall next to a fresh scent trail aren't the same request, and rewarding them identically is where most nose-override failures come from.

Second: give digging and barking a legal place to go instead of trying to suppress the instinct itself. A dog that has an approved outlet for a drive that doesn't need your permission to be rewarding stops needing to find an unapproved one. Chapter 3 turns both of these into five specific routines instead of leaving them as principles to remember under pressure.

Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse

What to take from this chapter

1. Louder recalls and repeated corrections teach her that the first one or two calls are optional, not that checking in matters more.
2. “Alpha” framing answers a leadership question this breed isn’t asking, and tends to escalate an ordinary training gap into an unnecessary standoff.
3. Retriever-style training that leans on praise and relationship alone rarely beats a real scent trail on its own.
4. Suppressing digging or barking without an outlet usually just relocates the behavior to whenever and wherever you’re not watching.
5. The breed club calling this trait “stubbornness” doesn’t contradict the reframe in this book – it just names the trait without explaining the mechanism behind it, which is the part that actually changes what you do differently.

Why the Usual Advice Makes It Worse

Chapter 3 turns all of this into five specific, repeatable routines.

This guide is educational and is not a substitute for veterinary or professional behavioural advice. A sudden change in a previously cooperative dog, or reluctance to jump, climb stairs, be picked up, or move normally, needs a veterinary check before more training – pain is a common and easily missed cause of sudden “stubbornness,” and this breed’s long back makes it worth ruling out first. Watch too for the subtler, often-earlier signs: standing with the back legs held wider apart than usual, toenails on the back feet wearing down faster than the front ones, a sudden drop in playfulness or energy with no clear cause, or a tensed, guarded belly – these can show up before the more obvious stair or jump refusal above, and deserve the same vet check.

The Five Routines



How to use this chapter

These five routines assume your Dachshund already knows the basic foundation cues – sit, hand target, down, a release word, and a dedicated recall word – from the main guide. This bonus doesn't reteach any of those. It fixes the much more common problem of a dog that clearly knows a cue and still doesn't reliably

The Five Routines

act on it, by changing what actually competes for her attention: the strength of the payoff, and whether her strongest instincts have a legal outlet or none at all. Run all five as an ordinary part of daily life rather than as a separate training program – most of them take under two minutes and fit into moments you're already having with your dog.



The Five Routines

Routine 1 – The Sniff-Powered Reward System

Goal: your dog's motivation stops depending on whether she feels like pleasing you, and starts running on a genuine scent- or food-based payoff strong enough to compete with what her nose already offers her for free.

This is the fix for motivation-mismatch: training that assumes she wants to please you the way a more classically obedient breed does tends to work in a quiet room and collapse everywhere else.

What you need: three tiers of reward sorted by real value to your dog – a low-value option for easy, low-distraction asks, a mid-value option for asks with mild competition, and a genuinely high-value option, ideally something with a strong smell, reserved for the hardest asks.

How to run it:

The Five Routines

1. Before asking for anything, judge honestly how much competition the request is up against – a quiet kitchen is easy, a yard with a fresh scent trail nearby is hard.
2. Match the tier to that judgment, and reserve the top tier exclusively for genuinely hard asks so it keeps its pulling power.
3. Say the cue once, deliver the reward the instant she responds, and treat a response to a cue – not affection alone – as what earns it, so the payoff stays tied to the behavior you actually want.
4. Reassess occasionally. A reward that reliably won a month ago can quietly stop working as she gets used to it, and the tiers need to keep moving to stay effective.

A note on method: luring – showing her the reward so she follows it into position – works fine inside this

The Five Routines

routine, but real, repeated forum consensus among Dachshund owners favors the other main approach: shaping with a clicker, where you mark and reward pieces of a behavior as she offers them on her own instead of showing her the answer upfront. Owners who've tried both describe the appeal in almost identical words – it “makes them think it's their idea.” For a breed whose entire selection history rewarded making her own decisions underground, that's not a minor preference; a behavior she arrives at herself tends to stick harder than one she was walked through. Either approach works here – if straight luring stalls, a shaping-based approach is worth trying before assuming the reward tier itself is the problem.

The Five Routines

Routine 2 – The Legal Dig Zone

Goal: digging still happens, but it happens in one approved spot instead of the flowerbed, the couch cushions, or the corner of the yard you check least often.

This is the fix for self-rewarding digging: since the behavior pays for itself, suppressing it without an outlet usually just relocates it rather than stopping it.

What you need: one small, clearly bounded area – a sandbox, a loose-soil patch, or a raised bed section – plus a handful of toys or treats you can bury there.

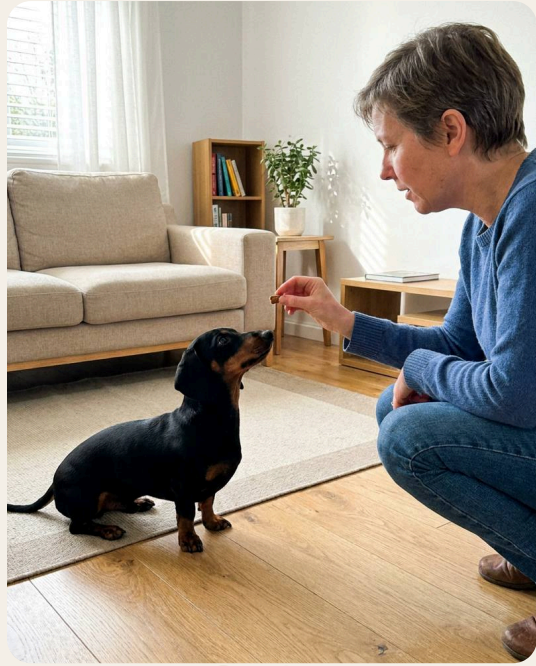
How to run it:

1. Set up the zone somewhere it can stay messy without causing a problem, and make the boundary obvious with a low edge, a different surface, or a visual marker.

The Five Routines

2. Bury a toy or a few treats shallowly and lead her to the spot, encouraging the first few digs there so she connects the location itself with the reward.
3. The moment she digs anywhere else, calmly redirect her to the zone rather than only correcting the unwanted spot – a redirection teaches her where the behavior belongs; a correction alone only tells her where it doesn't.
4. Refresh the buried rewards every so often so the zone stays more interesting than anywhere else she might consider digging instead.

The Five Routines



Routine 3 – The Alert-and-Release

Goal: your dog gets to do her job as a watchdog – announce something once or twice – and then reliably goes quiet on cue, instead of either being scolded for every bark or left to escalate indefinitely.

The Five Routines

This is the fix for self-rewarding barking: reacting to every single bark, whether with a treat or a scolding, is still a reaction, and a reaction is often reward enough on its own.

What you need: a specific quiet cue – a single consistent word – and a reward ready for the moment she stops.

How to run it:

1. Let the first one or two barks at something genuinely new happen without correction – this is the instinct doing its job, not a behavior to suppress outright.
2. After that, say your quiet cue once in a calm, ordinary tone, not a raised one.
3. The instant she pauses, even briefly, reward that pause immediately, before she has the chance to bark again.

The Five Routines

4. If the barking continues past the cue, avoid repeating it more than once – instead, calmly remove the trigger from view or move her away from the window, and reward the first real quiet moment that follows.

Why the barking sometimes gets louder before it stops: if it's been rewarded unevenly up to now – the quiet cue works some nights, a sofa-side scolding overrides it on others – expect a real, well-documented pattern called an extinction burst: a behavior that's about to stop working escalates first, louder and longer, before it drops off. Owners often give up right at that peak, cave in, and end up rewarding the loudest version she's ever tried, which teaches her that more intensity is what finally gets a reaction. Riding out one full escalation without caving in is usually what breaks the pattern for good.

The Five Routines



Routine 4 – The Nose-Proof Recall

Goal: your recall word keeps working even with a real scent trail on offer, because it's been specifically practiced against exactly that kind of competition, not just in a quiet yard with nothing else going on.

The Five Routines

This is the fix for nose-override: a recall that's only ever been practiced without real competition hasn't actually been tested against the thing most likely to beat it.

What you need: a long training line, your highest-value reward from Routine 1, and access to an area with mild, then moderate, scent distraction.

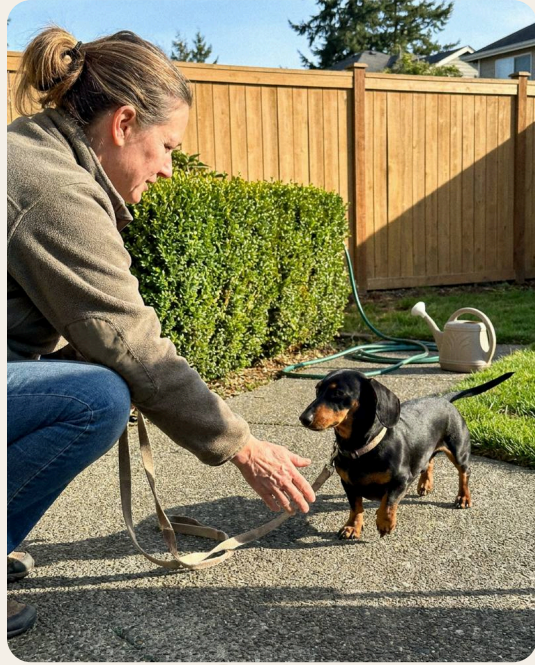
How to run it:

1. Start on the long line somewhere with only light distraction, and call her once using your dedicated recall word, rewarding generously the instant she turns toward you.
2. Gradually practice in areas with slightly more scent interest – the edge of a trail, near a hedge line – always with the line attached, so a missed recall never turns into a lost dog.

The Five Routines

3. If she doesn't respond within a couple of seconds, don't repeat the word – use the line to guide her gently toward you instead, then reward calmly once she arrives, so the word never gets diluted by being said three times in a row.
4. Only drop the line in a securely fenced area, and only once recalls are reliable through real scent distraction on the line, not before.

The Five Routines



Routine 5 – The Two-Minute Sniff Break

Goal: your dog gets a legal, cued outlet for scent-driven exploration, so the rest of a walk or training session isn't spent fighting a nose that never gets to just be a nose.

Short, structured sniffing satisfies a genuine need this breed has, and a dog whose nose gets a scheduled

The Five Routines

turn is measurably easier to get a recall or a sit from the rest of the time.

What you need: a specific release cue that means “go sniff,” and a patch of ground with something to investigate.

How to run it:

1. Partway through a walk or a training session, say your sniff-break cue and let the leash out or step back, giving her a genuine minute or two to sniff freely with no other request attached.
2. Let her choose the direction and pace during the break – this is her time, not a heeling exercise with slack added.
3. End the break by calling her back to you using the same recall practiced in Routine 4, rewarding well so leaving the sniff break is worth just as much as being in it.

The Five Routines

4. Offer this break proactively, several times during a longer walk, rather than only as a reward for good behavior – it works better as a scheduled outlet than as a bargaining chip.

What to take from this chapter

1. The Sniff-Powered Reward System closes the motivation-mismatch gap by paying with something that actually beats a competing scent.
2. The Legal Dig Zone gives a self-rewarding instinct somewhere approved to go instead of trying to suppress it outright.
3. The Alert-and-Release lets the watchdog instinct do its job briefly, then rewards the quiet that follows.

The Five Routines

4. The Nose-Proof Recall practices the recall word specifically against real scent competition, not just in a distraction-free yard.
5. The Two-Minute Sniff Break gives the nose a scheduled outlet so it isn't constantly competing for control the rest of the time.

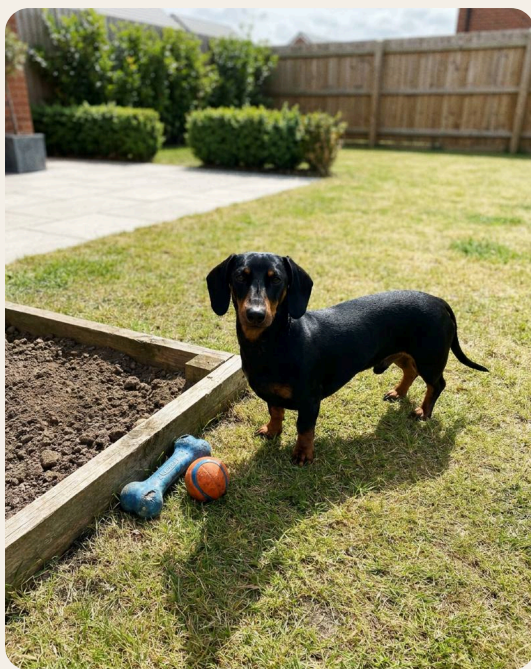
Chapter 4 covers the two physical setups that make these five routines easy to run without having to think through the details every time.

This guide is educational and is not a substitute for veterinary or professional behavioural advice. A sudden change in a previously cooperative dog, or reluctance to jump, climb stairs, be picked up, or move normally, needs a veterinary check before more training – pain is a common and easily missed cause of sudden “stubbornness,” and this breed's long back makes it worth ruling out first. Watch too for the subtler,

The Five Routines

often-earlier signs: standing with the back legs held wider apart than usual, toenails on the back feet wearing down faster than the front ones, a sudden drop in playfulness or energy with no clear cause, or a tensed, guarded belly – these can show up before the more obvious stair or jump refusal above, and deserve the same vet check.

Set Up Two Stations



Station one: the sniff-reward shelf

The Sniff-Powered Reward System from Chapter 3 only works if the right tier of reward is actually within reach the moment you need it, not two rooms away in a bag you haven't restocked since last week. Pick one low shelf or a spot near the back door and keep three small containers there permanently – one for everyday

Set Up Two Stations

low-value treats, one for mid-value, and one for the genuinely high-value, strong-smelling option reserved for the hardest asks, especially recalls near real scent competition.

Label the three containers plainly, even if it feels unnecessary at first. A tired evening version of yourself, or anyone else in the house who trains her, benefits from not having to remember which tin is which, and a consistent setup means the right tier is never more than a few seconds away.

Station two: the legal dig zone

The Legal Dig Zone from Routine 2 works best when it's genuinely set up before the first redirection happens, not improvised the moment you catch her digging somewhere you'd rather she didn't. Choose one small, clearly bounded spot – a sandbox, a loose-soil patch,

Set Up Two Stations

or a section of raised bed – and keep a few burying toys nearby specifically for that zone, not mixed in with her everyday toy basket.

Mark the boundary clearly enough that it's obvious even to a visitor or a tired version of yourself supervising at dusk. A low edge of bricks or timber, or simply a different surface texture than the rest of the yard, is usually enough for her to learn where the zone starts and stops.

The one-page recall sheet

Between the two stations, put a short written note listing your household's exact recall word, quiet cue, and sniff-break cue somewhere everyone walks past daily – near the back door or beside the sniff-reward shelf works well, since it's already the spot people go to before heading outside. Update it the same day

Set Up Two Stations

anyone in the house wants to change a word, rather than letting an informal change spread by word of mouth and quietly become a second version nobody wrote down.

Putting both to work together

Once the shelf, the dig zone, and the cue sheet are all in place, most of what Chapter 3 asks for stops requiring a decision in the moment. You already know which reward matches which situation, she already has a legal spot to dig the second the urge shows up, and everyone in the house is using the same words – which is exactly the kind of consistency an independent, nose-driven dog responds to fastest.

This guide is educational and is not a substitute for veterinary or professional behavioural advice. A sudden change in a previously cooperative dog, or reluctance

Set Up Two Stations

to jump, climb stairs, be picked up, or move normally, needs a veterinary check before more training – pain is a common and easily missed cause of sudden “stubbornness,” and this breed’s long back makes it worth ruling out first. Watch too for the subtler, often-earlier signs: standing with the back legs held wider apart than usual, toenails on the back feet wearing down faster than the front ones, a sudden drop in playfulness or energy with no clear cause, or a tensed, guarded belly – these can show up before the more obvious stair or jump refusal above, and deserve the same vet check.

The One-Page Checklist



Print this page

Tape this near the back door beside the sniff-reward shelf. Most stalled progress comes from one skipped step during a busy day, not from the routines failing.

The One-Page Checklist

Before every walk or training round

- ☐ You know which tier of reward this ask calls for – easy, mid, or the highest tier for real scent competition.
- ☐ The long line is attached before you practice any recall near a real trail or fresh scent – never drop it “just this once.”
- ☐ You’re using the exact recall word, quiet cue, and sniff-break cue from the household sheet, not a variation that feels natural in the moment.

During every session

- ☐ A missed recall gets a gentle guide on the line, not a repeated word said louder.
- ☐ The first one or two alert barks get to happen before the quiet cue comes in.
- ☐ A sniff break is offered proactively partway through the walk, not only as a reward for good behavior.

The One-Page Checklist

Once a week

- ☐ Check in with everyone in the house: has anyone used a different word for the recall or the quiet cue, or let the dig-zone boundary slide?
- ☐ Reassess your top-tier reward – if she seems less motivated by it than a month ago, it's time to rotate in something new.
- ☐ Refresh whatever's buried in the dig zone so it stays more interesting than anywhere else she might consider digging instead.

One flag that means stop and get help

- ☐ Stiffening, growling, or snapping directed at a specific person, object, or situation. This is a different problem from ordinary scent-driven independence and needs an in-person assessment from a certified trainer

The One-Page Checklist

before continuing with this book's routines around that trigger.

This guide is educational and is not a substitute for veterinary or professional behavioural advice. A sudden change in a previously cooperative dog, or reluctance to jump, climb stairs, be picked up, or move normally, needs a veterinary check before more training – pain is a common and easily missed cause of sudden “stubbornness,” and this breed's long back makes it worth ruling out first. Watch too for the subtler, often-earlier signs: standing with the back legs held wider apart than usual, toenails on the back feet wearing down faster than the front ones, a sudden drop in playfulness or energy with no clear cause, or a tensed, guarded belly – these can show up before the more obvious stair or jump refusal above, and deserve the same vet check.

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask



"She comes instantly in the yard but completely ignores me the second we're near a real trail – what's going on?"

That's nose-override in its purest form, and it's not a sign the recall word has failed – it's a sign it's never actually been tested against real competition before.

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

Run Routine 4 specifically in areas with mild, then moderate, scent interest, always on the long line so a missed recall never turns into a lost dog. Recall reliability has to be built in the exact conditions it needs to hold up in, not assumed to transfer automatically from a distraction-free yard.

“He digs up the same corner of the yard no matter how many times we fill it in – why won’t he stop?”

Because filling in the hole removes the evidence, not the drive behind it. Digging is self-rewarding on its own, so suppressing one spot without offering another usually just relocates the behavior. Set up the Legal Dig Zone from Routine 2 with buried toys specifically there, and redirect him to it the moment he starts digging

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

elsewhere, rather than only correcting the unwanted spot.

“Is my Dachshund actually more stubborn than other breeds, or is that just a stereotype?”

Both things are true at once. This breed genuinely wasn't developed for handler-focused, eager-to-please obedience the way a retriever or a sheepdog was – she was bred to make independent decisions underground, out of sight and earshot of a person. That's a real, bred-in trait, not a myth. What's a stereotype is the idea that this makes her untrainable – it just means training has to earn her attention through a genuinely competitive payoff, not assume automatic compliance.

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

“She barks at every single sound outside – is that just her being difficult?”

No, that’s a watchdog instinct doing exactly what it was bred to notice and announce. Trying to eliminate it entirely usually backfires, because the barking pays for itself regardless of your reaction. Run the Alert-and-Release from Routine 3 instead – let the first bark or two happen, then cue quiet and reward the pause, so the instinct still gets to do its job before settling.

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask



"We've had him two years and he still won't come back once he's caught a scent – will this ever change?"

It can, but a long-standing pattern takes longer to unwind than a new one, and nose-override doesn't disappear on its own – it gets specifically outcompeted

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

through repeated practice on the line in real scent conditions. Don't expect off-leash reliability around strong scent until recall has been deliberately built there, not just assumed to carry over from calmer settings.

“Does praise on its own ever actually work, or does it always have to be food or scent-based?”

Praise alone rarely beats real scent competition, but it isn't worthless – it works fine for maintaining behavior she already reliably performs in low-distraction moments, like settling on her bed while you cook. Save a genuine food or scent reward for anything involving real competition or anything new you're still building. Expecting praise alone to beat a fresh trail is asking it to do a job it was never going to win.

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

“He listens perfectly indoors but is a completely different dog the second we’re outside – why the difference?”

Indoors offers almost nothing to compete with a cue; outdoors offers a constant stream of scent information a hound’s nose is specifically built to prioritize. That gap is expected, not a sign training has failed. Practice the same cues outdoors, starting in low-distraction spots and working up, rather than assuming indoor reliability will transfer automatically.

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask



“Is it okay to let her dig in the yard sometimes and not other times?”

Not if the boundary itself shifts depending on who’s watching – that teaches her to test the rule with everyone, the same way any inconsistent household rule does. It’s fine for the dig zone to be the only

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

approved spot every single time; it's not fine for "sometimes anywhere is okay" to be part of the actual rule.

"My dog barks and won't settle when I ask her to lie down – is that defiance?"

More often it's frustration barking, not deliberate refusal – usually a sign she's had too few outlets for scent exploration or alerting lately, not that the down cue itself has failed. Make sure Routine 5's sniff breaks are happening regularly through the day, and treat the barking itself with the Alert-and-Release from Routine 3 rather than repeating the down cue louder.

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

“We tried being firmer and using a sterner voice for recall, and it got worse, not better – why?”

Because volume doesn't reach a nose that's mid-override any faster than a normal voice does, and repeating the word louder teaches her that the first call, and often the second, can be worked through before anything happens. Drop back to saying the recall word once, guiding her in on the line if she doesn't respond, rather than a rising sequence of repeats.

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask



“How long before a ‘stubborn’ Dachshund actually starts reliably listening, especially around scent?”

How long this takes varies more than anyone selling a training program will admit, and nobody has measured it properly for this breed. What is consistent in the

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

reports is the pattern: everyday cues in familiar rooms move first, and recall against strong scent competition moves last. Recall specifically around strong scent competition tends to take longer, since it's being built against one of the strongest instincts this breed has – expect steady improvement over several weeks of on-line practice rather than a sudden switch flipping.

“Is there such a thing as a Dachshund that’s just never going to reliably recall around scent?”

Genuinely, no – not from temperament alone. What looks like a permanently unreachable dog is almost always a recall that’s never been specifically practiced against real scent competition, which takes longer to build but isn’t a different category of dog. If you’ve run the routines consistently for a month with no

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

improvement at all, that's worth a session with a certified trainer to identify what's specifically not landing.

“Housetraining is taking so much longer than it did with other dogs we’ve had – is that normal for this breed, or did we do something wrong?”

Normal for this breed, and it's a documented pattern, not a training failure on your part. A UK breed-health charity's ongoing survey of around 750 Dachshunds found persistent housetraining trouble – rated “always” or “often” difficult – in about 9% of dogs, with Mini Smooths the hardest coat variety to housetrain and Longs and Wires the easiest. A separate peer-reviewed comparison across dog sizes found only about two-thirds of small dogs (66.8%) were ever fully

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

housetrained, against 95% of large dogs – a real, statistically significant gap, not just an impression owners share. The likely reasons aren't about willfulness: a smaller bladder relative to how much water she drinks, a vantage point low enough that an indoor accident may not register the same way it does for a dog standing taller, and – specific to this breed – a genuine dislike of going out in cold, wet weather that makes outdoor breaks less appealing exactly when accidents are most likely.

Real owner accounts on Dachshund forums consistently describe a longer timeline than general puppy advice assumes – up to a year, sometimes closer to a year and a half, before it fully “clicks,” even with consistent effort the whole way through. One owner who nearly gave up on a difficult puppy described it this way: “It took him getting to about 8 months that we really could see

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

ourselves with him in the future.” Treat a slow timeline the same way this book treats every other instinct working against you: not a character flaw to fix through more pressure, but a genuinely harder version of an ordinary task. Reward the moment she gets it right outside, go out on a schedule and supervise closely rather than giving free run of the house too early, and treat a setback as a reason to tighten supervision again – not as proof that nothing is working.

One separate thing worth knowing if you have an intact (unneutered) male: leg-lifting to mark small amounts of urine on vertical surfaces is scent communication, not a housetraining lapse, and it doesn't respond to the same fix – managing specific triggers works better than more scheduled trips outside. Neutering often reduces marking, but for this breed specifically, timing that decision around marking alone isn't the full picture,

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

since early neutering carries its own documented trade-offs. That's worth a direct conversation with your vet, not a decision made to solve a housetraining problem on its own.

"I saw Dachshunds ranked near the bottom of a dog-intelligence list – is that legit, or should I take it with a grain of salt?"

Take it with a grain of salt – not because the ranking is fake, but because of what it actually measures. That ranking comes from a well-known dog-intelligence book that placed Dachshunds 92nd out of 138 breeds, based on surveying obedience-trial judges about how fast dogs learn a brand-new formal command and how reliably they obey it on the first try. That's one narrow slice of intelligence – what the book's own author called "obedience intelligence" – sitting next to two

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

others the ranking never measured at all: instinctive intelligence (what a breed was actually bred to do) and adaptive intelligence (independent problem-solving). A Dachshund built to make her own calls underground, out of sight and earshot of a handler, isn't going to score well on "waits for and instantly obeys a new command from a stranger standing in front of her" – that's close to a description of the opposite of what she was selected for. The ranking isn't measuring how smart she is; it's measuring how eager-to-please she is on a stranger's first ask, which is a different question with a less flattering answer for this specific breed.

This guide is educational and is not a substitute for veterinary or professional behavioural advice. A sudden change in a previously cooperative dog, or reluctance to jump, climb stairs, be picked up, or move normally, needs a veterinary check before more training – pain is

Fourteen Questions Dachshund Owners Actually Ask

a common and easily missed cause of sudden “stubbornness,” and this breed’s long back makes it worth ruling out first. Watch too for the subtler, often-earlier signs: standing with the back legs held wider apart than usual, toenails on the back feet wearing down faster than the front ones, a sudden drop in playfulness or energy with no clear cause, or a tensed, guarded belly – these can show up before the more obvious stair or jump refusal above, and deserve the same vet check.

When It Didn't Work



Start with an audit, not more pressure

Before any checklist, it's worth naming the place this chapter is often opened from. One first-week owner put it this way: "I'm constantly stressed, exhausted, and anxious about leaving her alone. I honestly feel like I've made a huge mistake." Reaching that point doesn't mean the dog was a mistake or that the routines in this

When It Didn't Work

book don't work – it usually means it's time to check the setup, not give up on the dog.

If two or three weeks of consistent daily practice haven't produced a noticeable change, resist the urge to reach for a firmer tone or more repetition. Check these first.

Check for a hidden reward mismatch. Ask yourself honestly whether the reward you're using for hard asks – a recall near real scent, a redirect away from an interesting hole – is actually strong enough to compete, or whether it's the same low-value treat you'd use for an easy sit in the kitchen. If progress has stalled specifically around scent, the payoff there is likely losing the calculation before it even starts.

Check whether the recall has actually been practiced against real competition. A recall word that's only ever been tested in a quiet yard hasn't really been tested at

When It Didn't Work

all. Go back to the long line and build reliability specifically in the conditions it needs to hold up in, rather than assuming it will transfer on its own.

Check whether the dig zone or the alert-and-release are being used consistently by everyone in the house. One person redirecting to the dig zone while another scolds digging anywhere in the yard, or one person letting the first two barks happen while another shuts down every single one immediately, is enough to keep either pattern unresolved indefinitely.

Check the dose. A few sessions squeezed into one weekend isn't enough repetition to outweigh months or years of a different pattern being reinforced. Give the routines genuine daily practice, from everyone in the house, long enough that the new pattern has been repeated more often than the old one.

When It Didn't Work

The flag that changes everything: a specific trigger, not general independence

If your dog's non-compliance comes with stiffening, growling, snapping, or a hard freeze directed at a specific person, object, or situation – rather than the ordinary, scent-driven independence this book addresses – stop treating it as a stubbornness problem. That combination points toward fear, discomfort, or a learned defensive response around that particular trigger, and the routines in this book aren't built to resolve it safely on their own. Get an in-person assessment from a certified trainer, ideally one experienced with this specific pattern, before continuing to put her in situations involving that trigger.

When It Didn't Work

When it's sudden, or centered on movement

A dog that's always been somewhat independent is a different situation from a previously cooperative dog that suddenly starts ignoring cues she's reliably known for months, or that specifically balks around being picked up, jumping onto furniture, or climbing stairs. That specific pattern – reluctance clustered around particular movements rather than spread evenly across every kind of request – deserves a veterinary visit before any more training. Pain is a common and easily missed cause of sudden “stubbornness,” and this breed's long back makes it a genuinely common cause worth ruling out first. No amount of consistent cueing or reward-value adjustment fixes a cause that isn't behavioral in the first place.

When It Didn't Work

One more honest complication: pain isn't the only explanation, either

The rule above – assume pain first, get it checked – is the right default, and nothing here walks that back. But a real, peer-reviewed case worth knowing about cuts the other way. A Dachshund recovering from spinal disc surgery developed a new problem behavior about a week after the operation – barking, biting at his own side, licking his flank. Vets initially suspected ongoing nerve pain from the surgery itself, the obvious and responsible first guess. But the behavior only ever happened at home, never once during several clinic visits or an overnight hospital stay, and pain medication made no difference to it at all. It stopped, and stayed stopped, after a few calm, ordinary behavioral corrections from the dog's own owners – not more medication.

The honest version of “don't assume it's stubbornness” cuts both ways: don't assume every post-injury or post-surgical behavior change is automatically pain, either,

When It Didn't Work

especially once a vet has ruled out a physical cause and the behavior only shows up in one specific context – only at home, only around one person, only in one room. Context that doesn't follow the dog everywhere is one of the clues vets themselves use to tell the difference. Getting the medical check first is still the right call; it's exactly what tells you which side of that line you're actually on.

When It Didn't Work



If none of that applies and it's simply slow

A dog with years of successful nose-override behind her typically takes longer to shift than a pattern that's only a few weeks old, and that's expected rather than a sign of failure. Keep the household cue sheet airtight, keep the reward system honestly matched to real competition, and keep the dig zone and sniff breaks

When It Didn't Work

genuinely available. The dogs that seem most stuck usually just have the longest history of an unmet instinct finding its own way around whatever's currently blocking it.

What to take from this chapter

1. Before escalating, check for a reward that's too weak for real scent competition, a recall never actually tested against it, inconsistent household follow-through, or simply not enough practice yet.
2. Stiffening, growling, snapping, or freezing around a specific trigger is a different problem from ordinary scent-driven independence and needs a certified trainer's in-person help.

When It Didn't Work

3. A sudden change in a previously cooperative dog, or reluctance clustered specifically around jumping, stairs, or being picked up, belongs at the vet first.
4. A longer history of an instinct finding its own outlet means a longer timeline to redirect it – not a method or a dog that's failed.
5. A new behavior after an injury or surgery isn't automatically pain either – once a vet has ruled out a physical cause, a behavior that only shows up in one specific context can be learned rather than medical.

This guide is educational and is not a substitute for veterinary or professional behavioural advice. A sudden change in a previously cooperative dog, or reluctance to jump, climb stairs, be picked up, or move normally, needs a veterinary check before more training – pain is a common and easily missed cause of sudden “stubbornness,” and this breed's long back makes it

When It Didn't Work

worth ruling out first. Watch too for the subtler, often-earlier signs: standing with the back legs held wider apart than usual, toenails on the back feet wearing down faster than the front ones, a sudden drop in playfulness or energy with no clear cause, or a tensed, guarded belly – these can show up before the more obvious stair or jump refusal above, and deserve the same vet check.