



You can purchase the same leather pinch collar I use for steadiness training at <http://www.gundogsupply.com/-113m-.html> (\$27.95) or <http://www.lcsupply.com/LCS-Leather-Pinch-Collar/productinfo/LPC/> (\$27.95).

When you put it on the dog, have the leashed end come across the top, so that it easily goes slack when you're not pulling on it.

The short leash I use is called a traffic lead and you can get one of those at <http://amzn.to/1eEpTtW> or <http://www.gundogsupply.com/k-9-komfort-tufflex-1--x-12--traffic-lead.html>. This works great when you get to the point where the dog is fully steady on point. You leave it on the dog while she searches, when she goes on point you give her a "wait" command, then go up to her and hold her by the lead while someone else flushes/shoots the bird. This way you have control over the dog when it's needed, but she is not restricted in her search by dragging along a check cord, and you can simply let go and have her make a retrieve.

Below are photos of all the pieces to make a bird tether. I add a fishing weight or two when I don't have someone around to help me with training. You attach the tether to the bird's leg, just above the foot. The bird can walk around on the ground and can even flutter up a little, but can't walk/fly away. I leave the bird on the ground around the corner of the house, walk the dog to the corner, and as soon as she sees the bird I tell her to "whoa" and then I can correct her if she breaks while the bird teases her by walking around.

I actually have two separate commands for steadiness - "wait" and "whoa." To "whoa" means to stop and stay where you are until given another command or released with a tap on the head. The dog must be in motion to give this command, so it doesn't work if the dog is on point. With the "wait" command, the dog is already stopped, such as on point. To "wait" means to stay where you are until given another command or released with a tap on the head. I actually use "wait" more often than "whoa," as it comes in handy when I need to clean off dirty feet, go get something from another room, etc.

If you do a good job with teaching "whoa" in the yard on birds, you probably won't need to use it in the field. She should've learned that she's absolutely not allowed to move in on or try to grab a bird, so when she smells or sees one, she'll stop. Then you can command her to "wait." If she starts to move after being on point or stopping, then you command "whoa." One thing that doesn't make sense is to try to warn a dog not to move by telling a stopped dog to "whoa." Dogs don't understand warnings. They are time and place oriented. In other words, they live in the moment.

Before you start teasing your whoa'd dog with a bird, make sure she is steady on lesser distractions. You can throw food or a favorite toy, have friends/family walk by, or have your neighbor walk his dog past your house. The objective is to make the distractions so compelling that your dog will break and you can correct her. If she never gets corrected, she will not

progress in her learning, so you need to look at her mistakes as learning opportunities rather than failures. When there's nothing you can do without using a bird that will get her to break, then move on to using a bird. Put the bird down at a distance at first and work toward the goal of being able to put the bird down right in front of her, where she could just reach down and grab it, and she still stays steady. Use the pinch collar for corrections during yard training until she is very steady, then switch to the e-collar.

Decide in advance how steady you want her to be. Most hunters are happy with steady to flush, while others prefer steady to shot. To be fully steady, is to remain on point/standing until released by the handler after the shot bird has dropped to the ground. Train in the yard with your tethered bird and pinch collar/e-collar to the level of steadiness you want. If you want steady to shot, practice having her remain while the bird is tossed in the air or allowed to fly away after being released from a trap. Don't move out to the field until she is steady in the yard without failure using maximum distractions.

Next, put the bird in a launcher in the field. There's no reason to have her search long and hard for the bird. You are working on steadiness, so save yourself the walking. You control her on a check cord (using e-collar for corrections) and have someone else control the launcher. You will pretend to flush the bird. Work up to being able to put on the traffic lead (with e-collar for corrections) rather than the check cord.

Next, plant your training bird (marking its location) and take her out, first on a check cord, then on the traffic lead. Use your e-collar for corrections. Finally, you'll be able to take her out with only the e-collar for corrections, as she'll be steady enough that you won't need to physically control her with the check cord or traffic lead.

At first, she will probably just stop and stand the bird in the field when you are training. That's OK. Once you are hunting vs. training, her point will return. So don't let this concern you.

Take gradual steps, in 10-minute training sessions, and soon she'll be very steady. Be sure to end every session by doing something you know she will do perfectly, so you are ending on a high note with a reward. You never want to end a training session with a correction. If you move too quickly with the training and she obviously isn't understanding what is expected of her, back up a step or two to where she is doing things correctly. Often training is a "two steps forward, one step back" type of progression.

We also talked about clicker training a little bit. The philosophy behind clicker training is that it is just as important for the dog to know when it is performing correctly, as it is to know when it's making a mistake. The "click" is used to mark desired behavior. With hunting dogs, we don't want to have to carry a clicker around with us. So, you can instead use your voice to mark the desired behavior. Start this training in the house with commands like sit. Command "sit," dog sits, say "nice" and give a treat. The "nice" is marking the desired behavior and the treat is reinforcing it. Command "wait," take a step away, dog remains, say "nice" and treat. Command "wait," take a step away, dog remains, say "nice," take another step away, dog remains, say "nice" and treat. Walk dog on a leash, command "whoa," you both stop, say "nice" and treat. Walk dog on a leash, command "whoa," dog stops, say "nice," you take another step, say "nice"

and treat. The idea is to say "nice" every time the dog does (or is doing) something correctly - marking the desired behavior. So, while your dog is remaining steady, mark with "nice" and reinforce with petting/praise. Eventually eliminate the treat and only praise. Your praise should be lavish. Remove sunglasses so she can see your eyes.

