



Atlas Assistance Dogs®

Atlas Trainer Academy Course Syllabus

S6 – Scent Detection for Diabetes and Medical Alert Dogs

Last updated May 24, 2022

Course Description

Atlas is pleased to partner with Debby Kay to offer her Sweet Snoopers course. This course is designed to teach the world-renowned training methodology of Debby Kay's Sweet Snoopers Program. Debby's program is recognized as one of the most reliable scent detection programs available for teaching diabetes alerts. These methodologies are applicable to many scent-based medical alerts.

This course is text and video based. It presents a step-by-step approach to applying conditioning principles to train a dog to consistently and reliably detect a specific scent and alert their handler to the presence of the target scent.

Course Objectives

- Teach trainers how to use classical conditioning to train dogs to consistently and reliably alert to the presence of a particular scent
- Teach trainers how to train dogs to develop the alert method best for the dog and the handler
- Teach how to expand the dog's ability to alert in any location; any time of day; on buses, trains, planes, or in cars; inside and outside
- Teach how to train the dog to:
 - Wake the client at night when the target scent is present
 - Wake from a sleep to alert the handler when the target scent is detected
- Teach how to train the dog to alert while walking
- Teach other skills essential for scent detection and service work in general
 - Patience
 - Impulse control
 - Working with distractions
 - Keeping the dog engaged
- Teach how to obtain and store scent samples



- Teach how to build and use a scent wheel for training

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Know how to train a dog to check for and alert on the presence of a target scent at any time of day or night and in any location
- Know how to train the dog to alert when the target scent is detected
- Know how to train the dog to have the patience and alertness for scent work

Outline

- Sniff the Tin – Foundation – Introduction to the tins used in training
- How to train the dog to find and alert on the tin in random locations
- Simplicity of Patterns – simple, methodical patterns to search for tins
- Training in a variety of locations throughout the house
- Finding non-visual/hidden scent sources
- Crate training for impulse control
- Teaching the dog patience
- Searching when the person is lying down
- Training the dog to think about what they're doing
- Reinforcing the dog staying in place
- Developing a distinctive alert
- Scent wheel
- Challenging the thinking dog
- Alerting:
 - At any time of day
 - While walking
 - When the dog is asleep
 - When the person is asleep
 - In public, including all the places the person regularly goes
 - On a train, bus, car, or plane



- In the presence of another dog
- Changing the levels of alert (e.g., a different blood glucose level)

Course Expectations

Please allow multiple sessions of a couple of hours at a time to go through the course and review the references that will be provided. There are many details in the course materials and the accompanying manual, so please take time to digest them. If the topic is less familiar to you, you may need more time to view references or research the area in further depth.

You will be asked to complete a very brief survey after you complete the course to give us your feedback.

This course includes two assignments; each requires you to submit a video showing you working with a dog while training one of the behaviors covered in the course. The first video is required after you've learned the foundations of the material and have you working with your dog introducing scent samples in tins. The second video is required later in the course and has you demonstrate you have trained a dog to the point they can alert someone with a hidden sample. Videos are typically 5 minutes long for these assignments. It will likely take you several sessions with your dog to achieve the desired results in the video. More details are provided later in the course.

During the course, there will be quizzes as you complete submodules. A grade of 80% or above is required to pass each quiz. Students have the opportunity to discuss their answers with Atlas faculty as well as retake tests as needed.