

Silver Fox Keepers Training Plan

www.blackfoxes.co.uk

Species:	Silver Fox (<i>Vulpes Fulva</i>)
Name:	<i>Insert Name</i>
Behaviour to train or modify:	<u>New Handling Skills</u>
Reinforcers:	High & Low Value Treats
Bridge:	Clicker
Safety concerns:	• <i>There is a low risk of being bitten</i> • <i>2 people are required</i>
Equipment:	• <i>A secure and distraction-free place to train</i> • <i>Stationing mat & target stick</i> • <i>X1 Pair of gauntlets (if necessary)</i> • <i>Treat Belt (optional, but comes in handy)</i>

Start date:	<i>Start Date</i>
Completion goal:	<i>Completion Goal</i>
Completion date:	<i>Completion Date</i>

Training Goals

Desired behaviour & criteria:	That the animal can be held calmly and voluntarily for 10-15 seconds. (Once completed, a shaping plan to increase the time can be implemented). Note: <i>To begin training, the animal must first be acclimatised to the handlers and see them as non-threatening.</i> This can be accomplished by spending time around them (min. 15 mins daily) without attempting to make any contact (throw treats to get the animal to move away from you to reward them, should they take any interest in you).
-------------------------------	---

	Acclimatisation can take anywhere between a few days (for animals 6-8 weeks and under) to a couple of weeks (for older animals); this is dependent on the age of the animal, its temperament, the consistency of daily training and the quality of that training.
--	---

Note: Complete each step until the animal is fully comfortable with the behaviour; do not move on to the next step until then. If they show signs of distress, move back a step and repeat the process until they are comfortable. Keep all training sessions to 5 minutes or less and perform daily, starting from step 1.

Shaping Plan

Notes:

- *Station training is beneficial in resetting the process from scratch, for all involved.*
- *Station training allows the animal to recognise something is expected of them and by stepping on the stationing mat, they are willingly choosing to participate in the following process.*
- *Training animals to station and target also allows the handler to easily train new behaviours in future, (such as muzzle and harness training).*

The animal must be trained to volunteer to come to you willingly in order to be held, this can be achieved with station training:

Station Training

1. Set a secure, distraction free location for training.
2. Place the stationing mat in its desired location and stand with it in front of you.
3. Drop a treat onto the mat to encourage the animal to step onto it.
4. To begin with, click and treat if the animal places any foot on the mat, until they realise that all 4 feet must be on the mat to be rewarded.
5. Then, only click and treat when all 4 feet are on the mat.
6. Continue to click and drop treats while the animal remains with all 4 feet on the mat.
7. If the animal leaves the mat, wait patiently until they return, (if the animal loses interest, start back from step 3).
8. Gradually lengthen the amount of time the animal is asked to wait on the mat before you click and treat, until they will stand patiently on the mat for a minimum of 2-3 minutes.
9. Once the animal is offering the behaviour willingly, you can begin to add the command "station" prior to clicking and treating the offered behaviour.
10. Repeat the process until the animal will present the behaviour when given the command to "station".

(A shaping plan can be implemented at a later date to increase this time and to add a "release", if necessary).

[Clicker Training – Karen Prior](#)

[Station Training – Barbara Heidenreich](#)

The animal must willingly accept being touched and handled, this can be achieved through distraction and target training.

Target Training

11. Stand with the stationing mat in front of you and ask the animal to "station" on the mat.

12. Hold out the target stick and wait patiently for the animal approach the target to investigate, click and drop a treat when they do.
13. Remove the target, hiding it behind your back for a few seconds.
14. Hold it out again, and when the animal moves closer or makes contact with the target, click and treat.
15. Once the animal understands touching the target earns reward, only click and treat when they touch the target with their nose, (without biting).
16. Repeat the process until the animal willingly moves to target the stick whenever it is presented.
17. You can now begin to add the command "target" prior to clicking and treating.
18. From now on, only reward the animal for targeting the stick on command, until the animal willingly presents the behaviour on command.

(A shaping plan can be implemented at a later date to increase the distance they move from their station to the target, or to target different things, such as a hand – see links below).

[Target Training – Positively Training](#)

[Animal Training – Animal Training Academy](#)

Touch Training

2 people – second person may require gauntlets, depending on the animal.

19. Stand with the stationing mat in front of you and ask the animal to "station", click and treat when they do.
20. Use distraction, and ask the animal to "target", clicking and treating every time, while the second person slowly moves to crouch close to the animal at a distance it is comfortable to continue targeting.
21. While the first person distracts the animal with target training, the second person moves closer to the animal, slowly reaching out (with no intent of touching the animal).
22. Repeat this process, with the second person gradually getting closer until they can move up to the animal, moving their

	hands around them (without touching), without the animal losing focus from the targeting game. 23. If the animal shows concern, move back a step, increasing the distance between the second person and the animal until the animal is comfortable, if necessary, reset the animal and repeat the process from step 19. 24. Once the animal is comfortable targeting while the second person moves around them, the second person can begin briefly touching the animal lightly with a (gloved) hand. 25. If the animal tolerates brief petting, remove your hand, and the target, and reward them highly for allowing contact. 26. Repeat the process, keeping the animal distracted through target training, gradually increasing the amount of contact, until the animal is comfortable being touched. 27. If the animal shows concern, move back a step, or if necessary, reset the process from step 19. 28. When the animal is willing to target whilst tolerating brief petting, begin gradually getting the animal used to being petted by both hands, until they are comfortable. The animal must be trained to willingly accept being physically restrained for 10-15 seconds Handling 2 people – second person wearing gauntlets, if necessary. 29. Ask the animal to “station” and click and reward them for doing so. 30. Ask the animal to “target” 2-3 times, clicking and rewarding each time. 31. The second person slowly approaches the animal and briefly pets them. 32. Reward the animal and repeat the process, this time gently grip the animal and briefly, lift it a few inches off the ground. 33. Immediately release the animal and reward it highly for being held.
--	---

	34. Repeat the process from step 29, gradually increasing how high, and how long, the animal is lifted and held. 35. Once the animal is comfortable being picked up briefly, you can begin to gradually increase the amount of time the animal is held.
--	---

Training Progress Chart 1

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Step Reached							
How well did animal do? (1 bad-5 good)							
Station Training							
Target Training							
Touch Training							
Handling							
Notes:							

Training Progress Chart 1

	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Step Reached							
How well did animal do? (1 bad-5 good)							
Station Training							
Target Training							
Touch Training							
Handling							
Notes:							

Operant Conditioning Quadrants

