



Urban adventure

Begin by tracking your dog onto new surfaces from grass to give it a firm scent.

TSDX tracks introduce your dog to a whole new range of obstacles, including a variety of hard surfaces and night tracking. **Margaret Keast** writes

Cement, asphalt and paving are just some of the new surfaces your dog will have to get used to when training for TSDX tracks. Introduce each one separately, and initially track onto them from grass to give your dog a firm scent. Some shreds of vegetation will adhere to the shoes of the tracklayer and ease the transition of surfaces.

Buildings are a significant challenge in urban tracks. Sometimes scent will move away from buildings, especially if air-conditioning units are

installed. Other times scents will adhere closely to the building. Breezes, time of day, humidity, building materials and a variety of other factors can influence this.

Traffic can also blow the scent a long way, including across the road, so don't demand footstep tracking in an urban environment.

Start your dog walking past a building at some distance, and then gradually reduce the distance over time.



* TIP

Stay safe: be sure you know where the track goes and use reflective clothing and lights for safety.



Give your dog time to work out the scent problem; be patient and encouraging. Make notes of your practices, including time of day, weather conditions, building materials and surrounds as well as dog response, so that you can draw conclusions about your dog's methods of handling different conditions.

Urban tracks also have a range of distractions including children, traffic, birds, cats and areas where dogs have scent-marked. Expect distraction and encourage your dog to work through it.

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Into the night

Urban tracks also introduce danger to you and your dog. A safety steward will work closely with you and may tell you to stop at times, depending upon safety issues. By now, your dog should be able to stop tracking when requested, and resume on command, so continue that process.

Night tracks are a totally new experience for you and your dog. Many dogs will be incredulous the first time you ask them to track at night. Like anything else, start small and offer lots of encouragement, and be sure you know where the first track goes.

Don't forget safety – yours and your dog's. Use reflective clothing, lights, and have a friend acting as safety steward.

TSDX is an extension of the fine tracking work you and your dog are already doing. Introduce the new elements slowly and carefully and remember if you have problems, go back to easier tracks while your dog gains confidence. 🐾