Karen Overall’s Protocol for Relaxation

- This protocol is a set of biofeedback exercises designed to teach dogs to relax while stuff happens around them.
- The protocol is designed to go at the dog’s pace.
- Dogs should be able to hold a relaxed sit or down stay for 15 seconds prior to starting the protocol.
- It’s important to realize that this is not an obedience exercise.
- The goal is relaxation, not merely compliance with the stay.
- This means that owners should not progress to the next task set until the dog is able to be relaxed through the current task set, regardless of the dog’s ability to hold his position.
- If the dog chooses to slide into a down from his sit position, it should not be corrected for doing so.
- It can be helpful to start this exercise with the dog lying on a mat.
- You may choose to speak softly to your dog through the whole protocol or to remain quiet: it depends on which is most helpful to your dog’s relaxation.
- Experiment with your dog and see what works best.
- Move slowly and smoothly while doing the various tasks, and reward your dog after each individual task.
- Over time, the Protocol for Relaxation can bring about a powerful change in dogs who could not previously relax.
- As your dog learns to relax in the context of the protocol, you can help him generalize this behavior to new environments by taking your dog’s mat on the road and going through the protocol in new locations.
- Remember to decrease your expectations when you go anywhere new, and always be ready to leave if you determine that you’ve pushed your dog too far.

A Good Video Explanation of how the PROTOCOL FOR RELAXATION works is in this video: [https://vimeo.com/19875523](https://vimeo.com/19875523)

At first this protocol may seem tedious and time consuming but it can work if you are willing to follow it.

Using the recorded MP3 Files of the protocol versus trying to read the protocol and work it at the same time make this MUCH EASIER to follow.

Below are links to Karen Overall’s PROTOCOL FOR RELAXATION:

- [The Full Written Protocol from Dr. Overall’s textbook](#)
- [The Relaxation Protocol Audio Files](#)