



Each dog is different in their approach to searching. Some dogs are very much nose to the ground, following a line of scent in a straight line while others air scent, quartering the scent – crisscrossing over the track to pick up the most dense scent. You'll also see some dogs gulping air, taking big mouthfuls in to use their Jacobson's organ mentioned earlier.

Some like Florence take it to extremes, she 'meerkats', standing on her hind legs biting and sucking in the air using her Jacobson's organ to help scent. It's truly amazing to be part of a scent hunt with them, watching them work.

Equipment-wise you need a y-shape harness similar to the cani-cross harness, a long line and a scent cloth with scent of the person you are trailing, and to start off, find an instructor to guide you.

*All dogs can scent trail*, it's in their DNA, trailing is simply fine-tuning their natural skills. Trailing is different to Tracking as a sport. With Tracking you are marked on accurately following a specific line of scent which has been laid, with turns and twists, exactly to the end of the track. Trailing is all about the hunt, finding the missing person; it doesn't matter how you go about it, be it air scenting or crossing the track.

Dillon on occasion has air scented the location of an individual in the air, and has said mum they're this way, completely cutting off a whole section of a trail. He wasn't wrong as he found the person. We've also been given a scent cloth of a person who wasn't physically at the location at all, so no scent trail had been laid. Dillon did a very quick search within 10m and then just stood there, so saying "no one there"; Flo amazingly had already got a scent picture of the world when she got out of the car, she smelt the cloth and just stood there saying "no scent trail here mum".

The great thing about main trailing is that any dog can do it, but if you have a reactive dog or a shy dog they can still do it. Poodles excel, utilising their heritage as field dogs, it builds their confidence, and strengthens our relationship with them.

*I would recommend giving it a go to anyone, and so would Dill and Flo*

