

Try These Games To Improve Your Dog's Manners!

"COME AWAY/ GO PLAY"

This is a cooperation game that will improve your dog's habit of coming when called, even when playing with doggie pals:

- 1) Have plenty of yummy treats.
- 2) Tell your dog "go play".
- 3) Let him enjoy playing with his friend for a short while.
- 4) Go over to your dog, put a yummy treat right in front of his nose, then wiggle that treat back and forth while moving it away from him, sort of like a fish swimming away.
- 5) Tell your dog, "Come Away", enticing him to follow the treat.
- 6) When he starts to move toward you, click (or say "YES") and give him the treat.
- 7) Progress to backing away and having him take a step or two toward you before you click and reward. Gradually increase your distance from him when you call. Eventually wait until he comes all the way to you before you click/reward.
- 8) Give your dog the treat while holding his collar gently with your other hand. Praise with the informational phrase "Good come away!" to help him learn what the cue "Come away" means while he's getting a reward for doing it.
- 9) Then tell your dog "Go Play" and release his collar, gently touching his shoulder with a very, VERY slight fingertips-like-feathers push ("like launching a paper boat," is how I can best describe it).
- 10) Let him socialize for a while with the other pup and then call him "Come Away" again. Click and reward!

Interrupting your dog's play every so often with this game will teach him to quickly come to you whenever you call, regardless of what he's doing at the time.

Tips: Use the cookie-right-on-the-nose technique only until your dog figures out how the game works and starts moving toward you on his own when he hears "Come away." After that, use the treat as a reward but not to lure him to you.

Play this game when your dog is playing with other dogs, socializing with human friends, or sniffing the trail ahead of you on walks.

Note: ALWAYS reward for "Come Away" so your dog enjoys forming this positive habit.

The main point of this game is to teach your dog that when he leaves his fun to come to you, he gets multiple rewards:

- 1) the treat and praise,
PLUS
- 2) He gets released to go play again.

This way he doesn't lose ANYTHING by coming away from his fun... in fact, he gets good stuff and then gets to go back to his fun afterwards.



"GO WILD & FREEZE"

This is a GREAT game for energetic dogs that jump on people when overexcited. This game teaches dogs to sit politely when asked to, even when very wound-up. Go Wild & Freeze becomes even more fun when children are included as players in the game because it teaches the kids a positive way to play with their puppy and manage his behaviour.

What to do: First teach Fido to sit for a treat by holding one just above his nose then raising it slightly and moving it toward the back of his head. As the dog reaches upward for the treat, his rear will go to the floor in a sit. Click and give the treat. Next, teach the kids and other players how to get the dog to sit for treats. Now you're ready to start the game!

Call "Go Wild!" and have everyone jump around, wiggle, wave arms, and make happy sounds. After a few seconds, call "Freeze!" or "Wait!" and have everyone stop and stand tall. When the action stops, the player closest to the dog asks him to sit and rewards with a treat when he does.

Then start another round. Each time wait a little longer before calling "Freeze"... after a few rounds, Fido will automatically be sitting when the players stop and stand tall.

"THANK YOU/TAKE IT"

This game teaches your dog to take an object gently and then release it when asked. The cue words for this game were selected for their polite sound. If you prefer a different cue than "Thank you" (such as "give" or "drop") this game will still work, it just won't sound quite as polite.

What to do: To teach Thank You/Take It, use a toy the pup can hold one end of while you hold the other. A plush toy or knotted rope works well.

First liven up the toy by shaking it to entice your dog to go after it. Then say "Take It" and let your dog grab on. Continue holding the toy while he mouths and plays with it.

To teach your dog to release the toy, say "Thank you" and offer a treat in trade for the toy. Hold one end of the toy and show your pup a treat held in your other hand about six inches away from the side of his mouth. Most pups and dogs will opt for the treat and let go of the toy. Don't move the toy away when your dog lets go, just hold it right where it was so he doesn't think he's lost his toy by giving it up to you.

If your pup is more toy-oriented than treat-oriented, then offer to trade another favourite toy instead of food.

With either method, when your pup lets go, praise "Good Thank You" and give the reward. Then immediately offer the original toy back, saying "Take It!" Praise "Good Take it!" and let your dog play with the toy while you keep a hold of it too.

Repeat this several times, ending with "Take it" and allowing your dog to keep the toy. Everyone wins in this game!



"TUG OF PEACE"

Once your dog knows Thank you/Take it, you can increase the excitement level and add exercise with this tug game.

NOTE: This is NOT the competitive tug-o-war that some behaviour experts warn owners not to play. Tug of Peace is energetic, but not competitive and it builds an "off-switch" for doggie excitement.

What to do: Start the game by offering your pup a toy that you'll both be able to hang onto at the same time. Tell the pup "Take it" and encourage him to do so. Then begin tugging gently. Note: Do not shake the toy hard or pull upwards as these movements could hurt a puppy. Tug with a slight give-and-take motion straight ahead, in line with your dog's neck. Pull only as hard as the dog himself pulls. DO NOT try to yank the toy away, and DO resist the temptation to use your true strength. Tugging too roughly can injure a puppy's mouth or neck.

The act of pulling on the toy will encourage the dog to tug. Play this way for a few moments, then stop pulling, but continue holding the toy. Wait a moment for your pup to realize you're not actively tugging, then say "Thank you," and receive the toy from him. Praise and give a treat.

Pause momentarily, then offer the toy back in an exciting way and begin another round of Tug of Peace.

Reprinted with permission:

September Morn
Dogs Love School
Shelton, WA
<http://hometown.aol.com/morndogs/myhomepage/>

Visit her website for great doggy treat recipes and clicker explanation.

