



Fun with Your Dog



Can't or don't want to take your dog outside? Try these indoor games with your dog.

All dogs need exercise, even when there is inclement weather or you just don't feel like going outside. Try playing some of these indoor games with your dog to keep them healthy and happy. In addition, playing with your dog, like training them, enhances the bond you share and helps them keep their focus on you!

WHERE'S THE TREAT?

Put your dog in a SIT/STAY or DOWN/STAY about 3 metres away from 3 or 4 buckets or cups, then make sure they can see you place a treat or toy under one. Then say WHERE'S THE TREAT? Give them their reward, and lots of praise, when they find the correct bucket. You can up the difficulty level by changing the position of the buckets after you place the treat or pretending to put treats under multiple buckets.

NAME THAT TOY

Gather a group of toys that are noticeably different. Hold one up for your dog to sniff and see, get them excited, and toss it, saying WHERE'S YOUR [TOY NAME]? When they come back with it, give them lots of praise, then repeat with the other toys, staying consistent with your naming. Once they have mastered a few names, set out multiple toys and tell them which to get.

FIND IT!

Put your dog in a SIT/STAY. Show your dog a toy or treat and put it on the floor so the dog can see it. Say FIND IT! Continue and vary treat placement, or, for a real challenge, set up a roomful of hidden delights in advance. Watch your dog as they search, and tap your foot and give an OOH or gasp to get them excited about the ones they've missed.

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

Put your dog in a SIT/STAY next to you at the bottom of a staircase. Throw your dog's favourite toy to the top of the stairs. Say FETCH or GET IT. After they dash up the stairs and grab the toy, call them to COME, ask them to DROP or RELEASE, and repeat as above until your dog slumps to the floor in giddy exhaustion. (Note that this is not a good game for puppies, as their joints are still developing, or dogs prone to injury.)

RECALL REPRISE

This game requires two people, a couple of metres apart, each with a handful of treats or kibble. One person calls the dog to COME, giving praise and a treat when they do. Then the other person calls. Praise and treat. Both people take two steps backwards. Repeat. Every fourth or fifth time, use praise only. See how far apart you can venture.

CLEAN UP!

Have your dog pick up a toy while you hold the toy box up to them. Tell them to DROP IT. When they do, give them lots of praise. Repeat with the next toy. Once they get the idea, put the toy box on the floor and guide the dog over to it and say DROP IT.

COME WHEN CALLED

Call your dog to COME, put them in a SIT/STAY, and then move away from them. After a minute or so, call them to COME again, and repeat. Try to increase the distance you move away and the length of time before you call your dog. This game is great for dogs with attention-seeking behaviours, as it teaches them to wait for your commands.

CIRCUS CLOWN

Start with your dog on a lead. Place a pole or stick just barely off the ground, and have your dog walk over it. As you raise it each time, you will need to move them back and let them get a running start. Give them lots of praise every time they jump over. Once they've mastered the pole, try a Hula-Hoop!

HIDE&SEEK

Have your dog STAY in one room. Go into another room, hide, and call your dog. Try not to give away your location by laughing!

WORK FOR YOUR DINNER

Remember that dogs use about the same amount of energy when they are challenged mentally as physically! Treat-rewarding puzzles, such as the GameChanger® make your dog work for his treats-or you can use kibble with the toy to feed your dog his entire meal.

Remember that basic obedience is the foundation for having fun with your dog-games and tricks should be a fun and rewarding bonding experience, not a stressful time, for you and your dog.

