

## Teaching Manners through Games

### Why games?

Dogs learn best through play. Play keeps them engaged and encourages them to think about the “rules” and how they can “win”. Games are great for any dog, but especially high energy dogs or dogs who are not very food motivated.

Some easy games you can play with your dog that will teach them great manners are listed below!

### The Stop/Sit Game

The principle of this game is that “when you are not moving, your dog is not moving.”

1. Teach your dog “sit” using a food lure –do not push their rear down, as you should be standing upright during this game.
2. Walk with your dog on leash, randomly stop, and ask your dog to sit.
  - a. Reward them for sitting, then repeat.
  - b. If they get jumpy, stand on the leash to prevent this.
3. Repeat this in locations where your dog tends to jump or get excited the most.
4. Eventually they should sit as soon as you stop moving, without you asking them to.
5. Now start to move around in a more animated way with your dog still on leash –stop and wait for them to sit, reward them, then repeat several times.
6. Practice this in more exciting settings, gradually building up to working in the scenarios where your dog usually becomes overly-aroused, such as when visitors are at the door.



**This game teaches your dog to sit as soon as you stop moving, no matter how excited they are!**

### Tug

1. Have your dog sit, then show them a tug toy (really long rope toys are best for dogs who have not learned manners yet, as you do not want your hands near their mouths).
2. Tell them “take it” as you hand them the toy.
3. Play tug for just a second or two, then say “Drop it” and hold a treat up to your dog’s nose.
  - a. If the treat is interesting enough, they should release the toy to take the treat
4. Gently grab the toy and repeat!
5. Start this game in a calm manner, and only amp it up after your dog is able to release the toy every time you ask them to drop it. This may take several sessions.



**This game teaches your dog to only take items when you tell them to, and to drop them when asked.**

### Fetch

1. Grab a ball and hide it behind your back.
2. Wait for your dog to do something you like, such as sitting or lying down.
  - a. Then throw the ball for them!
3. Do NOT throw the ball if your dog is jumping up or barking, or you will be rewarding those behaviors.
4. If your dog has not learned to release the ball once they fetch it, simply use a second ball, wait for them to drop the first one, then throw the second one as a reward for dropping the original.

**This game teaches your dog to not be demanding, and can improve their “drop it” skills.**

### The Flirt Pole

A flirt pole is like a giant cat toy –for dogs! It’s a pole with a bungee rope attached at one end, with a toy tied to the rope. You use the pole to drag the toy around, allowing dogs to chase after it. This is a great way to tire a dog out in a small space, without you having to use much energy! This is also a fantastic game to improve your dogs’ manners. Here’s how:

1. Have your dog sit and wait as you start slowly dragging the toy.
2. Release your dog and let them try to catch the toy – don’t make it too difficult for them at first, or they may get frustrated and give up.
3. Once they catch the toy, praise them!
4. Then ask them to drop the toy –hold a high value treat up to their nose if they aren’t good at “drop it” yet.
5. Have them sit back and wait while you reset, and repeat!

**A game like this teaches your dog self-control in a fun, more realistic manner.**

