



# Golden Rule Dog Training

Come. Learn. Play

## Surviving Adolescence

### Adolescent Dogs aka Juvenile Delinquents

Adolescent dogs can be just as frustrating as human teenagers! They are very busy looking, smelling, investigating, playing, barking, and trying to figure out how their world works. Rarely do they look where they are going; they have no attention span, and could be driven by hormones to do mindless things! So why do we still love them? They are so innocent, they need us to guide them, and they are cute, especially when sleeping.

Unfortunately, this is the age when many dogs are discarded by their owners at shelters. Owners get frustrated, expecting their young dog to know better, and just behave without any training or assistance. There's nothing wrong with these dogs, they just need time, patience and training, and with that, they will turn into a wonderful companion.

The adolescence stage materializes about the same time you see the ears that are too big for his head, the huge paws and he looks a little gangly! He has adult teeth and has the need to chew, all the time! That cute little puppy has almost stopped growing and looks like he has reached his adult height, but he still moves and acts like a puppy.

Dogs live in the moment, so if they need to be redirected to desirable behaviors, it has to be done right away: within three seconds. Like a toddler, you have to consistently monitor him and see what he is getting into. Crating all the time (more than 4 hours a day) is not an option, and throwing him outside will not magically turn him into a well-mannered adult dog. The answer is to spend time with your dog, training him and making sure he gets enough aerobic exercise! A 30 minute walk will not do it; for a young dog that is just a warm up exercise.

#### In short, adolescent dogs:

Become interested in their surroundings, then what about interest in you? Not so much. Their attention is that of a gnat, so they may not respond to your "come" or "sit" cues almost as if they have never been taught.

- Exude boundless energy and need daily exercise several times a day; they also need brain stimulation (a.k.a. hyperactivity).
- Develop sexually, with raging hormones resulting in other unpleasant behaviors.
- Possibly becoming shy or frightened as he/she experiences the new world.
- Digging and possibly escaping, usually out of boredom.
- May exhibit destructive chewing and excessive barking.
- Need to be socialized with other dogs, people and new places, to ensure they have no fear issues.
- Require your patience and understanding as if you were raising a toddler.
- Needs obedience training!

The joy of a puppy, coupled with the aggravation of the terrible teens, does pass!

## Survival Basics

**EXERCISE!** Make sure your dog gets adequate exercise, meaning aerobic exercise (running around, jumping, playing, fetching, etc.). A walk alone is not going to give him anything but a warm up! A tired dog is a good dog! Exercise is a commitment at this stage and you must have a plan to exercise your dog, in the morning, afternoon and evening. Avoid running with your dog until they are one year old; it impacts the growth plates and can have long term effects. See ideas below in the training section.

**Be sure to puppy-proof part of the house** when they are left alone, they can get into mischief. They love and need to chew, so be careful what you leave out! It's important the pup gets appropriate chew toys, plenty of attention and time to bond with you and the family.

**Make training fun!** Training does not have to be a chore, so make it fun for both you and your dog. Keep it short and productive; use treats and toys to keep this/her attention. The attention span is short, so once they have lost interest you stop the training session. See training games at the end of this article for ideas.

**Be calm and consistent about house rules.** Your dog is learning from you all the time, whether you want him/her to or not. Give a command only when you mean it, and (kindly, gently) insist that he/she obey.

**Enroll your pup in an obedience class.** Find a good trainer who can help you through adolescence stage. The support of other people who are having the same issues with their teenage dogs is also beneficial. It's more like a puppy support group!

**House Breaking.** At this young age potty training is usually successful as long as you are consistent. See potty training your puppy in the Golden Rule Library. As an adolescent, your dog may still have potty accidents once in awhile, and he may not pay always pay attention or listening to you; yep, he is a teenager!

**Chewing, everything all the time!** Chewing is a natural behavior for dogs, so we need to fill that need in a safe and healthy way. Puppies and adolescents have boundless energy, and they will chew on everything they can put into their mouths, including your socks, pieces of paper, shoes, rugs, towels or anything they see that may be fun to chew on at the time. See the training section for more information.

**Remember it may be difficult now, but it will pass.** This is the age when dogs are abandoned, left as strays or taken to shelters because the owners either don't know what to do or they are frustrated and get rid of the dog. However, if you understand the stage, commit to obedience training, and ensure the dog gets exercise. It will pay off! For all your efforts you will have a great adult dog that is well behaved!

Basically, his youth and boundless energy requires exercise several times a day. Lack of exercise results in boredom, anxiety and curiosity and can lead to major household damage due to chewing, digging, and finding inappropriate objects to play with (some dangerous, some expensive to replace). This damage to your home can be avoided if he is either crated (no more than 4 hours at a time), not left alone in a room, or his space has not been puppy-proofed (see below for more information).

## Understanding the Stages of Adolescent Behavior

Typically dogs reach sexual maturity around eight to twelve months: females will have their cycles and males start to urinate with their leg lifted and show off for the females. Because we are in rescue, we believe in spaying and neutering as early as eight weeks; with this comes some good news too, no

female heat cycles, males are less likely to mark and there is less dog to dog aggression. The attention span could also be better without pesky hormones running amuck.

The adolescence period starts about the age of 5 months and lasts until they are about two to three years old. The most difficult is usually between 8 and 18 months (which is when most dogs are surrendered to rescues and shelters). During this stage, it can be difficult for owners to be patient and consistent with training while waiting for this stage to pass.

Dogs always do what works, so behaviors such as bullying another dog, fearful snapping, escaping, nipping and mouthing, can become more severe and out of control if not dealt with early on in the dogs development.

Exercise for your adolescent dog is critical. Most behavior issues stem from a lack of exercise. Your dog needs to exercise his body and his mind every day.

Your dog must experience different people, places, noises and other dogs in his environment to stay balanced and unafraid of new things. Fear stems from a lack of confidence. Confidence is gained through obedience training and exposure to new experiences while he is young.

A puppy class is highly recommended to help you learn how to train your dog and socialize him with other dogs. Look for trainers that use only positive reinforcement techniques. You never want to use any methods that force or punish your puppy do something. Teaching your puppy to make good decisions in a positive way is much more productive and ensures he does not develop undesirable behaviors down the road.

## **Four to Five Months of Age**

When your puppy becomes four months old he starts to figure out where he stands with other dogs within a group. He starts playing (play fighting), which is normal behavior. If you can socialize your puppy with both other puppies and older, non-dominant dogs, it will help teach your puppy appropriate play, what the dog's signals are, and when to stop. The play may get vocal and sound scarier than it really is. You can interrupt the play to be on the safe side and to ensure your dog is safe.

When the puppy is playing with an adult dog, the adult may react differently; this is usually a good thing! The best way for puppies to learn appropriate play and greeting is to have a skilled adult dog teach him some manners and set boundaries. This is typically done with a little growl or a reserved nip to tell the puppy. Although this is a good thing for the puppy to learn, you have to watch the interaction because it is not okay for the adult to attack or scare the puppy. If this happens you must break it up. It is considered a good practice for puppies to spend time with both safe adult dogs and puppies. Puppies and adolescents need practice being social and making good choices.

In addition, an un-neutered male puppy's testosterone level increases at around 4 to 5 months of age. This change will play a big part in his interactions with other dogs. Again, we recommend spay and neuter at a younger age to help with many behavior issues that could appear later.

At this age, puppies may experience a fear phase; this is normal and it may be consistent with his natural development. During this time there may be unpredictable behavior, such as resource guarding (guards, food, toys, bed or territory). The best approach is to prevent this behavior before it starts (see preventing resource guarding in the Golden Rule Library).

If your pup is starting to become fearful of certain people, places, or noises, do not force the puppy into a situation or to greet someone. Take it slow and make sure people do not force a greeting; pick him up and hug him. You are there to protect him. At the same time don't coddle and reinforce the fear and do not reward it. Obedience training is the best way to prevent this behavior and continue to build his confidence; eventually your puppy should transition out of fears as his confidence grows (see the article on desensitization in the Golden Rule Library).

## **Six to Twelve Months of Age**

Although your puppy is getting bigger and may look like an adult as he continues to fill out and gain weight, he still acts like a puppy. For male puppies the testosterone gradually falls to a normal adult level by about 18 months of age. This helps signal the senior male dogs that the youngster must be put in his place, so you may notice more adult-pup disagreements during this stage. Female puppies may go into heat as early as five to six months; males begin to be interested in mating during this period.

At the five to six month stage, puppies are bursting with energy. This is a good time to start with more structured play and exercise to ensure rough or inappropriate play is tempered. This can be achieved through obedience training and supervised socialization with other dogs. Socialization is critical to dogs as it can prevent fear of other dogs, which in turn can create reactivity and other fear issues. Learning how to greet, play appropriately and read other dogs takes consistent practice.

Another adolescent activity is chewing; unfortunately this does not stop at the puppy stage. It changes from puppy teething to adolescent chewing around seven months. It happens after all the needle-like puppy teeth are gone and new teeth are coming in. Adolescent dogs often have an uncontrollable urge to chew that may be due to discomfort in their gums as their adult teeth are settling into the jawbone. This kind of chewing also takes place as the dog is attempting to find out about his environment and discover new things. Chewing can be a real issue. The best way to help your dog is to give him safe dog toys to chew on (see below for more information).

Social maturity starts between the first and second year, depending on the breed. Some dogs will become physically mature at this age; smaller dogs mature much earlier than larger dogs. The social maturity of your dog can depend upon his experience with other animals and people. The need for both training and socialization continues throughout your dog's life. There are always new things to learn, and some recalibration may be needed at times.

## **Sporadic Fear Phase – 6 to 14 Months**

For some adolescents between six to fourteen months, your dog may become fearful at things you think are ridiculous. Whatever your dog is afraid of is real to him, so don't force him into a fearful situation. For example, environmental changes in the house or backyard can spook your dog when he sees things that are new or something has moved. When things are not "normal" to your dog, he may find that disturbing and display fearful behaviors. Take it slow, and introduce these changes slowly (see the article on desensitizing in the Golden Rule Library).

Some breeds are predestined to a fearful response and are more nervous than others. As your dog notices more new things and people in his world, he may be afraid and react with high pitched barking in an attempt to scare the thing that frightens him away. If the scary thing leaves (it was leaving anyway, like a mailperson) the barking reinforces the behavior as the dog perceives this as "it worked, I scared it/them away!" You don't want them to become experts in scaring the neighborhood. Exposure to positive socialization to other dogs, people and places will help to lessen these reactions in the adolescent stage.

The more fear the dog feels, the stronger his reaction. Young adolescent dogs that are pushed beyond their safety threshold frequently lunge and bark with raised hackles (the fur on the back of their neck and possibly down the back is raised). The more hackles, the more fearful the dog actually feels. This behavior is designed to create distance between them and the scary thing. Small breeds often bark more than their larger ones. Confident dogs make very little noise because there is no need to. Socialization is the key to a well-balanced dog.

Be aware, frightened dogs may bite if cornered. If they find lunging and barking will make the scary thing go away, they will add it to their collection of behaviors that work. Do not corner, lean over, grab the dog or his collar. You may get bit! Instead coax the dog towards you with a clam voice, crouched down to his level and offer a treat. Your job is to control the environment so they don't feel they have to defend themselves. If the behavior continues, it becomes categorized as a reactive behavior. We see this in about 30% of dogs we rescue. It takes a lot of time, patience and work to rehabilitate these dogs. So, the bottom line is, do not encourage any "watch dog" behavior. It's better to instill confidence and not reward fear and distrust.

The good news is they do grow out of it. They just need your support and guidance. It is important to continue to expose them to lots of new things. It's critical to get your dog out in the world and continue their socialization (for fearful behavior see the article on Fearful Dogs, Desensitizing, and Extreme Fear in Dogs for help).

## **The “Zoomies”**

Frenetic Random Activity Periods (FRAP) are also commonly known as “zoomies”; this is a normal release of energy. It may look crazy, frantic and funny as your dog displays sporadic bursts of energy and starts running around as fast as he can. If there is another dog to play with, a play bow may start the onset of the “zoomies.” Expending their energy is always a good thing, and it's a display of a happy dog and so much fun to watch!

## **Puppy Proof your House**

The following items are things you need to consider when you bring a new puppy home to ensure his safety. This includes adopted or rescued adult dogs with unknown history.

### **House Plants**

Many houseplants can be poisonous or toxic to dogs. The best method of preventing your new pet from playing in the plants is to remove them from common areas all together, or move them to a safe height so the puppy cannot reach them.

### **Food**

Make sure any food is out of reach. You would be amazed how far they can reach to get food or things off the counter! If it's in their reach, they will get into it, so do not leave anything out. If you do, it is not the dogs fault if he chews it up! You can teach a “leave it” cue, but self-control is not a trustworthy skill for the adolescent dog. Dogs are scavengers by nature and anything is fair game!

### **Garbage**

Dogs are scavengers by nature, so the smells are tempting in kitchen garbage cans for most puppies and dogs. Keep your kitchen garbage in an inaccessible area or a container with a puppy-proof lid. Also keep bathroom garbage out of reach as well. If you prevent the puppy from experiencing or discovering the garbage it will not become an issue.

### Miscellaneous Objects

Puppies, like children, like to put things in their mouths. There is always a risk of your puppy swallowing non-food items, like paper clips, elastics, or dirty socks, to name a few. Always pick up items that may possibly get swallowed. Unless the item passes through puppy's digestive tract, it will mean an expensive trip to the veterinarian for emergency surgery. It is much easier, and less expensive, to take preventative measures.

### Toxic cleaning products

Many household cleaning products are toxic and not safe for kids or pets. If your pet walks over the floor that has been cleaned with a toxic cleaner, licking his paws afterwards he can be harmful. Consider using products that are safe for pets and kids.

### Electronic cables and wires

All electronic wires are attractive to dogs that are still looking for things to chew. Tape them behind the furniture where the dog can't find and chew them.

### Use a Gate or a Crate

These are good to have for potty training and you may need them for training or when he needs a time out. The crate has to be big enough for the dog to stand up and turn around; if any smaller it is cruel to expect your dog to stay in such a small space. A gate is typically a "kiddy-gate" you can get at to block off areas in your home.

### Remove valuable Items

Remember that puppy proofing your house means things may get broken, so if there is anything irreplaceable you should remove it until your puppy is more mature and leaves your things alone. If you leave it out, and the puppy can reach the item, it's your fault it's now ruined!

## Training Expectations

The key is to lower your expectations! This is how to survive training because all adolescent dogs will have intermittent lapses in their ability to pay attention; this is normal. When this happens and he seems to forget his training, manage this as you would with an untrained dog. Go back to the beginning steps and re-train. Remember to be patient and use the lure technique to put him back into position. Because he can't focus for too long, keep the training sessions short and end while you have his attention. Use training games so he thinks training is fun and not a chore (see below) and then end the session with playtime.

While your dog is so active, he may also demonstrate a drive for independence. Some dog owners think this is stubbornness, but it is a truly a natural instinct. The first order of business should be to focus on a solid recall, followed by basic obedience skills.

## Basic Training Tips

- **NEVER punish your dog** or yell at him to get him to come to you, even if he has ignored you! Remember, the dog will not respond to any negative voice or gestures; in fact you could scare him into never coming to you when called. This is an important time and all interactions must be positive. Would you come to someone who is yelling at you, or to someone who may punish you? Instead, calmly go get your dog if he does not come when called and bring him back to the place you wanted him to be. He will realize if you call I have to come either way!



- **Do not chase your dog;** if he runs from you and you in turn chase him, you could be encouraging a chase behavior. This can cause the dog to think it is a game! It's hard to break once you start! Instead, crouch down and lure him with a treat or a toy in a positive manner. Always use a happy voice, clap your hands, make kissy noises and make him want to come to you.
- **Do not grab things from his mouth!** When your dog comes to you and has something in his mouth, do not grab it! Instead trade for something else, a toy or a treat. If you grab it, he is less likely to come to you; trading is a better option. You can trade a toy that has the same value or a treat. If he thinks you are just taking from him, he is less likely to give the item up!
- **Practice obedience training daily!** Find daily opportunities daily and play games to build a bond, train your dog and have some fun! (See training games below).
- **Recall training** is one of the most important skills for all dogs and is needed to keep them safe. Enroll in obedience training as soon as possible.
- **Keep a daily routine.** Dogs are better behaved with a routine they can count on every day. Be consistent about the time of day you feed, go for walks, and play with him.
- **Patience, consistency and continued training** are what will help you and your dog survive this adolescent stage.

Always set your dog up to succeed, so don't ask for the impossible. For example, if you are in public and your dog is all excited and you're not sure he is going to listen to your commands, don't ask for them. Instead of asking for a sit, maybe just getting eye contact is what you can reward.

For younger dogs it's better to break the training down into small pieces so it's more manageable for your dog to learn. Teach one thing at a time, and don't try and go too fast.

Adolescent dogs will test boundaries to see what they can get away with, and are mischievous by nature. Lots of aerobic exercise is a huge help! Like human teenagers they're going to see if you really mean what you've taught them. During this phase, enroll in an obedience class, the earlier the better. It keeps your dog busy and his brain working. Training is a lifetime commitment, so don't expect one beginner class to be the solution to all your puppy issues.

## Adolescent Training

### Jumping up, nipping and Mouthing

Jumping on people, nipping, mouthing and chewing are the biggest issues for most new owners. Dogs greet each other nose-to-nose and want to do the same with humans. Since our noses are not at their level, they jump up to reach them. It's a natural behavior and we have to teach them what is appropriate. Adolescent jumping can hurt if it's a big dog, but even if you have a smaller dog, he should be taught an appropriate greeting.

The excitement of seeing you may cause jumping up and mouthing and nipping (the pup bites and grabs at your hands and arms, clothing, etc.) to get your attention. If you give any attention, this may become a fun game for the dog and he will continue the behavior unless you train them to control these impulses. *(For additional training information, please see the Golden Rule Training Library.)*

## Jumping Up on People

If possible, training your dog not to jump up should start when the puppy first comes home. It may be cute when he is little and they jump up all excited to see you, but when they get bigger and weigh more, he may knock everyone down greeting them!

How do you change this behavior? By being consistent and teaching your dog every day until he understands, and then recalibrating as needed.

### Jumping Up Tips:

**Keep homecomings and departures calm and low key.** It's hard not to greet your dog when you come home! If you are excited, you may be inadvertently encouraging the jumping-up because puppies want to greet or stop you from leaving. Try ignoring the jumping behavior and "ignore" the dog (no eye contact, say nothing without a reaction) for a minute or two. Then when he's clam, say hello and pet him in a clam manner.

**Teach your dog an alternate behavior.** For example, "sit" is a good cue to use. He can't jump up and sit at the same time! Just when he is about to jump up, ask for a "sit" instead and only give him attention when he is sitting. If done consistently, your dog will sit when he wants attention.

When he is offering a sit naturally, you can practice asking for a "sit" when you come home (this is very hard when he is so excited to see you!) Ask your family and guests to do the same; the consistency makes the process successful, if it's intermittent you will be frustrated and think he is not learning. Dogs need consistency to learn!

Remember, he only gets attention when he's calm. Once he is calm and sitting, then he gets attention through petting a treat playing a game, etc. If you are consistent it will pay off!

## Nipping and Mouthing

When puppies play with their littermates, they bite, wrestle, pounce, chase and roll each other; they play-fight and use their teeth. This is normal dog to dog, so when you play with them it's the only way they know how to play.

There is a big difference between nipping, mouthing and biting; a puppy nips as it plays and has to be taught nipping with other puppies is fine, but with humans is not appreciated. For adult dogs that nip or mouth, they were probably never trained as a puppy. Someone may have played rough with them in the past, or they just get over excited. Dogs will play with humans as they do other dogs; it's all they know. It's our job to train them not to nip or mouth on human skin.

### Nipping and Mouthing Tips:

**When the puppy/dog nips or mouths, say "OUCH" very loud** so it startles the puppy, and then ignore her. Do not jerk your hand away; she may think it is a game. If she gets no attention for that activity it will not be so much fun and she will stop. Be consistent. The puppy needs to learn early on that the human hands and skin are not chew toys. The goal is to teach the puppy that nipping hurts.

**Replace your hand with an appropriate chew/teething toy** for the puppy to chew on for starters. Use Bitter Apple on your hands as a deterrent. The taste is unpleasant and the puppy should stop.



**Negative attention is attention.** Pushing your dog away, or doing anything else that involves talking to, looking at or touching your dog, is actually giving him attention, which is what he wants! So, he got what he wanted, so this works for him. Often the things we think are negative really are not. Scolding, yelling, pushing away, etc. are often seen as an invitation to play. If you are upset with your dog, you could also get your dog overly excited because they are getting a reaction from you.

**Do not play any challenge games;** such as, wrestling, tug-of-war, chasing your dog around, and teasing. When you engage in this kind of play with your dog you're sending the wrong message. These games teach dogs to clamp down hard on any object, including your skin. You can play these games later when the dog has learned not to nip or mouth.



**Stay calm.** To prevent him from biting you make sure your dog has other toys to play with and bite/chew. Make his toys interesting by getting one and playing with it, then give it to him. Think about rotating his toys every few days. If he is biting your hand, and this is hard, do not pull it away! If you do, it becomes a game, so yell "OUCH!" He should stop, and when he does, give him something appropriate to chew. This has to be consistent too. Otherwise he will think it's okay to nip some people!

**Drag long toys around** so your dog has a moving target other than you. You can tie a toy to the end of a string and the other end of the string to a stick and drag the toy. As you redirect your dog toward biting at his toys, also make sure you are teaching appropriate ways to get your attention. Ensure the way you play with your dog does not encourage more biting behavior. Keep your hands out of his face and be sure you have toys in your hand when playing.

If the behavior persists, see a trainer right away for help.

## **My Dog Chews Everything!**

All dogs have a natural instinct to chew. Adolescent dogs chew everything and often! Give your dog appropriate things to chew such as a Kong® stuffed with peanut butter, plain canned pumpkin and sweet potatoes, then mix it with some kibble and stuff the Kong®. We like to freeze them so it takes dogs longer to chew and really satisfy that need. There are other teething toys in your local pet store as well that work great for puppies.

### **Chewing Tips**

**Put all things he should not get into away** until he can learn the rules. Clear the counter, tables and floor of all items you want to keep! For example, pick up and put away shoes on the floor, socks, underwear, important papers, food, etc.

**Only give your dog safe items to chew** on when you are not watching him! Kong's and Nylabones® are they only safe things to leave them with on his own. All other toys, such as stuffed toys, tennis balls, rawhides, rope toys, and even towels in the crate should not be given to your dog when left alone.

**Black Kong® is for extreme chewers!** If you have two, you can always have one ready in the freezer when you need it! This is great chew toy for crate training; give this to him only when being crated and he will love to go into his crate (crate for no more than 4 hours). You can also use this when you're eating dinner and you need him to be calm and to keep him busy.

**Other toys - Interactive Toys** Interactive toys are a great distraction; you can use them when you want some quiet time! You can fill these with some of their breakfast or dinner kibble and make them work for

part of their meal. It helps them use their brain as they try and get the food out. These can be found, or in pet supply stores.



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## **Training Games!**

Training should be fun for both you and your dog. In addition to taking an obedience class, you can play the games below with your dog to continue to teach them skills, bond with you and expend some energy!

### **GAME #1 – THE SHADOW GAME**

By Niki Perry, CPDT-KA, KPACTP, CEMT

For most dog owners the ultimate goal is achieving the ability to walk their dog at liberty without a leash in a dog park. This is a wonderful goal to work towards and in my opinion teaching a recall is the most important response to a cue your dog will learn. The key to establishing a reliable recall is in the foundation that you build and like any building, if there is a weakness in the foundation, the whole thing will fall down.

The Shadow Game is the foundation for both recall and polite walking exercises. Start at home in a quiet environment with your dog on a leash. Pack up some treats for rewards and start to walk around in any direction. Any time your dog catches up to you give him a cookie. If your pup gets ahead of you, simply turn gently 180 degrees and place a treat on the ground. As your dog munches the cookie, walk ahead a few paces but be ready for him to catch up to you again and give another treat when he does. Go forwards, backwards (your dog comes towards you), sideways, fast, slow, stop, run, walk, go around trees, over rocks and anything else you can come up with to get your dog to follow you like a shadow.

The idea of this game is to get your dog to follow you willingly, not to drag your beloved beast around by his neck. Take the time to show him what you are doing rather than surprising him with a quick turn. I play this game on all of my walks whether we are walking on leash or at liberty. My dogs love to follow my movement and match my speed. The more creative I am the more fun we have!

### **GAME #2 – THE NAME GAME**

By Niki Perry, CPDT-KA, KPACTP, CEMT

In all of my years of training dogs, I can say the name game is the one exercise that is not practiced enough. Many dogs have a hard time generalizing learned behaviors so just because you teach something one place, doesn't mean that your dog will carry that information to another. Remember that in the beginning we are first teaching our dogs to be open to receiving information and learning. Success in training your dog will depend on how well you prepare them for optimum learning opportunities.

I play The Name Game everywhere I go. This is my favorite warm up exercise, especially when I go to a new environment with unfamiliar smells or sounds. I simply say my dogs name and when she looks at me I give her a yummy cookie. I will repeat this at least 5 times but really until I have my dog's focus on me. Only once my dog has connected with me will I continue on with the planned activity.

## **GAME #3 – YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME**

By Niki Perry, CPDT-KA, KPACTP, CEMT

Trust exercises can be challenging at times when they don't go as planned but as long as you chunk them down into achievable increments, you can build a lasting bond with your dog with a strong root in trust. One game that I play often with my dogs is stepping over them while they are in a down position. To get started with this game you will need to teach a reliable down with duration and start to be able to walk around your dog while she holds the down.

1. Ask your dog to lie down and praise gently when she does walk around towards her tail and just step over her tail so you have one foot on either side.
2. Don't stay there long, instead return to her front and give her a cookie for trusting you.
3. Repeat that a few more times until she is comfortable with you back there. Taking your time and ensuring you only progress when your dog is comfortable, take another step forward from her tail so that you have one foot on either side of her body.
4. Keep going until you can essentially straddle your dog and walk from tail to head with her completely comfortable and enjoying herself.

The key to earning the respect and trust of your dog is to listen to their silent voice. If you push them into fear they cannot learn and will not feel comfortable with you performing that task. If you come upon a place where your dog is uncomfortable, that's okay, stay there a while and let them know it will be okay. They will thank you for it by giving you their entire heart and soul.

## **Game # 4 – The Shell Game**

By Niki Perry, CPDT-KA, KPACTP, CEMT

You will need: Three small, identical buckets approximately one gallon size, kibble or dog treats, a leash and training collar. Make sure your dog is not full, feed him part of his meal before training so he stays interested.

1. Place your dog in a down-stay, in the kitchen.
2. Next, walk into your living room and place the three buckets side-by-side, with the mouth on the ground (upside down). Leave about one foot of space between each bucket.
3. Put a dog treat under one of the buckets.
4. Now, return to your dog, give him your "release" command, and walk him over to the buckets.
5. Say, "Where's the cookie?"

6. Encourage your dog to smell the buckets. When he gets excited about the bucket with the cookie under it, praise him lavishly. Then, kick the bucket over and let him get the cookie.
7. Repeat this process by switching the bucket the cookie is hidden under.
8. Once your dog starts to get the hang of the game, you can add more complexity by spacing the buckets further apart. You may also add more buckets.

You can also teach your dog to “Sit” next to the bucket with the cookie.

Initially you’ll find that your dog will likely go back to the previous bucket that hid the cookie. Don’t lift the bucket up until he finds the one that actually contains the cookie.

## Game #5 – Teach your Dog to Find your Keys

By Niki Perry, CPDT-KA, KPACTP, CEMT

Prerequisite: The Shell Game

Attach a small piece of leather to your key chain. Spend two minutes pinching the leather between your thumb and index finger. This will transfer some of the oil in your skin to the leather and link your “scent” to it.

Next, repeat the “Shell Game” with your key chain, instead of the dog treat.

When your dog finds the bucket that hides your keys, lift the bucket to reveal your keys. At this point, you really need to lay it on thick (the praise, that is) and make a big deal about your dog finding the keys. You may also want to throw your dog a cookie as a reward.

Finally, you can start hiding your key in other places around the room (away from the buckets). Start out easy. Place them on the floor, next to the couch, where your dog can almost stumble upon them quite easily.

After a few days, you should be able to hide your keys in some really difficult places and your dog will be able to find them for you.

Imagine how handy this trick will become when you really lose your keys!

## Game #6 - Recall Race

By Brandon Ross

A great game for a family with multiple dogs or for play dates. It’s a race between dogs to see who has the fastest recall!

**What you’ll need:** cones are helpful, but not necessary. You can just draw lines, or set up boundaries. Your dogs will need to know sit/stay if no one is available to help keep them at the starting line.

1. **Each handler lines their dog up at the starting line.** Dogs can be lined up and compete in twos, or more. More than five dogs lined up to race is pushing it, but can be quite entertaining if accomplished.

2. Once the dogs are all lined up, the handlers tell their dogs to sit and stay. Then each handler backs away from their dog. Try 10 feet for beginners, 20 feet for advanced, and 30 feet (or more) for experts.
3. When all of the handlers have reached the finish line, they begin calling their dogs frantically.
4. **The winner** is the dog that reaches their handler and sits in front of them first.
5. To increase difficulty, you can add distractions like treats and toys between the starting and finish line. It also helps to appoint someone as a ref to manage fairness. The ref would tell the handlers when they can begin calling their dogs.

**Benefits:** This game teaches a reliable recall and sit/stay. Beginners may find it challenging to get their dogs to sit and stay while backing away simultaneously. The process of setting up the dogs can take some time for beginners. But once managed, people and dogs alike have a great time.

## Game # 7 – Reverse Recall Race

By Brandon Ross

This is the exact same game as the Recall Race, but backwards. Instead of the dogs coming to the handlers, the handlers race to their dogs.

What You'll Need: Same as Recall Race.

1. Owners place their dogs in a sit, or down stay at the FINISH LINE.
2. They then back up to the starting line.
3. When ready the designated ref begins the race by saying "Return to your dogs!"
4. The Owners race to their dogs. Handlers can run or simply walk fast (should be decided by group before race).
5. If the dog moves from his/her stay, the handler must get the dog to return to the sit or down stay before they can win.

**The winner** is the first dog/owner team to be in formation (handler standing up straight with leash in hand, dog sitting or laying at owners side). Distance remains the same as in the Recall Race.

**Benefits:** This game is great for reinforcing stay. Normally dogs learn to stay while we leave them. But this game teaches them to stay even as their handler is running towards them. Dogs tend to get really excited as they see their handlers running towards them, so this game can offer up some funny scenarios.

**Variation:** Instead of finishing the race once the handlers get to their dogs, the handlers must put a leash on their dogs while the dogs remain in the sit position. If the dog gets up, the handler must ask the dog to go back into the sit position before he or she can attach the leash. Once the leash is on, the handler/dog team race back to the starting line. The first handler/dog team to make it back wins. In this variation, the dog learns to stay while the handler leaves and approaches, sit while the leash is attached, and walk quickly with the handler.

## Game #8 - Fetch

### Basic Steps:

First, find your dog's favorite toy to start the Fetch game (condensed version).

1. Throw the first ball and let your dog go after it. When your dog starts to come towards you, ask your dog to "drop it."
2. If your dog does not drop the ball, stop paying any attention to your dog and take out the second ball.
3. Start to have fun with the second ball, toss it up in the air and continue to have a great time with the second ball. Keep doing this until your dog looks at you. Your dog should show interest and will drop the ball that he/she has and look up at the one you have.
4. As soon as your dog drops his/her ball, show the ball you are holding to your dog. As soon as your dog focuses on the ball that you are holding, throw it.
5. If your dog brings the toy back but will not let you have it, say, "Drop it," and then put a tasty treat right in front of his nose. Few dogs can resist that, so he will probably drop the toy.
6. Repeat the process when your dog comes back to you. Within a short period, you will have your dog retrieving for you.
7. At this point, add the cue "Fetch".

The key to success is patience, praise and consistency. Every time your dog makes a step in the right direction, (even if they do not complete the cue) they receive a reward. Make this time you spend teaching tricks fun for both you and your dog!

## Game #9 – The Find It Game

You really want your dog to be excited about this game. There is no sit-stay or any other obedience used, it's all about increasing the dog's drive to sniff and having fun!

### Set up:

- Bring your dog to the search area.
- Give him a sample of the same treat you are hiding.
- Turn your dog loose to sniff out the treat.
- Stay quiet and still. Don't talk to him, just let him sniff. If he looks to you for help, show him your empty, open hands and he will move on.
- If your dog moves away from the search area or gets distracted by something else, try to get him back on track in the gentlest way possible. You may want to try moving your body farther into the search area. Or try tossing one of the treats he's search for into the search area. If you work too hard to move him toward the treats, he may stop sniffing and just look to you for clues.
- When he finds the treat, don't get too excited when he gets near. You want him to make the find himself.
- Repeat the set up and find about 3 or 4 times. You want to be sure to end the game while your dog is still having fun. You can allow turns for other dogs in your house or pick up and put away the boxes until the next time.

## Game # 10 - Pass the Puppy

Pass the Puppy is a simple game we use to start recall training. It is also effective with untrained adult dogs.

1. Start with inside your house, you will need a second person and some treats.
2. Stand about 3 feet apart and call your dog to you with a recall cue, such as, "Fido (pause), "Come!" You may have to show him the treat in your hand a few times for him to get the idea.
3. The game is played with each person calling him so he is running back and forth. Once he eats the treat, the second person calls him.



4. Once he understands try stepping back a little at a time making it a little harder.
5. Next try it in the backyard, then you can take him out in the front yard with a long line to ensure you can reel him in if he gets away from you!

## **How to fit training into your day!**

*By Elia Enochian*

### Unloading the dishwasher:

1. Have your dog sit/down stay for top rack; release him
2. Then have your dog sit/down stay for bottom rack; release him

### Cleaning the bathroom:

1. Have your dog wait at the door till sinks & counter top is cleaned; then release him
2. While cleaning toilet sit/down stay
3. While cleaning shower sit/down stay

### While Vacuuming:

Have your dog on a leash tied at your waist while vacuuming, keeping dog tethered to you. This encourages a "heel" and the dog learns to follow you.

### Laundry:

Have your dog sit-stay while sorting clothes; release him. Have your dog down-stay while putting clothes and soap in washer; release him

### Sweeping / Mopping

Have your dog sit or down-stay while you start sweeping or mopping; as you walk away do not look at your dog. When you are halfway across room, release your dog and call him to you. You can continue with another repetition.

## **Equipment - User friendly and dog friendly**

Easy Walker Dog Harness by Premier – Make dog walking much easier

Martingale dog collars – gives control and collar will not slip off if dog tries to back out of it (very humane)

***We never recommend choke chains or pinch collars! They are inhumane and unnecessary!***

## **Toys Resources - Interactive, durable toys**

<http://www.dog.com/toys/interactive-toys/521/>

<http://www.drsfostersmith.com/dog-supplies/dog-toys/ps/c/3307/3>

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