

Dog Training by PJ

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Good Games to Play with Your Dog! What are the less unacceptable games?

TUG OF WAR! A good game of tug of war with rules is perfect! A dog should release object from his mouth when asked, because it is a mark of a well-behaved, mannerly dog. Further, releasing things when asked allows you to play fun games with dog such as tug.

Owners have been admonished for decades to never play tug of war with their dogs because of the risk of it increasing aggression and/or dominance in the dog. Even many dog resource people such as breeders, trainers, and veterinarians caution against this game. Partly this caution is because of a lack to discriminate between agonistic behavior (conflict resolution and defensive aggression) and predatory behavior. People also have issues with witnessing intensity.

Intensity is not aggression. Tug played with rules is a tremendous predatory energy burner and good exercise for both dog and owner. The game does not make the dog a predator - he already is one! The big payoff is in lowered incidence of behavior problems due to under stimulation and a potent motivator for happy training. The game is a way to vent and burn off energy.

AN UNACCEPTABLE GAME OF TUG is playing the game without Rules! Don't allow the dog to grab at the toy or grab at your hands, clothing, legs, or other body parts! If the dog gets the toy, wins - that's okay - allow him to run around with the toy, but don't chase him around. This game becomes a catch me if you can game.

HIDE AND SEEK! You hide and your dog searches until he finds you. This teaches your dog to come even when they can't see you...try hiding a toy or biscuit and encourage him to go find it. Excellent "scenting" game.

AN UNACCEPTABLE GAME OF "CATCH ME IF YOU CAN!" Dog grabs something and you try to catch him. He keeps out-running and out-maneuvering you. Playing

this game could make it impossible to catch him if he was ever to get out! This game also can undermine your "recall" cue.

FETCH! You bring out the ball and invite a controlled game of fetch. This game can become a training session. (Sit - Wait - Release - Get It - Bring It - Give It!) You put the ball away after play and exercise helps if you have taught a great "settle" cue.

AN UNDESIREABLE GAME OF DOG TELLS YOU TO "THROW THE BALL!" Dog pushes the ball in your lap, stares at you intently and snatches it just before you reach for it. This "game" can be very annoying for guests or other family members. Teach toys have a value - don't allow the dog to insist you play with them. You set the rules of engagement. Be consistent.

FIRST CLASS - GAMES: "Tricks!" Exercise your dog's mind will continue to teach your dog the English language; teach them English as their second language; however, remember they do not understand our language until we teach them. Take the time, since amazingly your dog can learn approximately 200 words in association with the cue, object or behavior. Besides tricks will thrill your friends and family and exercise your dog's brainpower!

AWESOME GAMES! "BRAINPOWER GAMES!" Build brainpower - teach your dog to become a thinker. Allow for mistakes and don't reinforce (reward them) --- remember what is reinforcement to your dog? Is it simply paying attention to that unwanted behavior if the desire was to obtain your attention? Think about it...better yet, attend a class and learn how your dog learns. Then, let's have some real fun and games - teach him the names of your family members, his toys and any other words, that can be fun! **200 Words is a large vocabulary for a non-English speaking being!**