

## GAMES AND TRICKS

Training and playing with your dog is one of the best ways to strengthen the human-canine bond. Humans and dog play with their own species to build relationships; play can also cement the human-canine bond. When playing, participants drop their inhibitions and have a chance to interact in spontaneous, nonthreatening ways. Because play reduces stress and restores energy, it is probably the best way to spend time with your dog. Dogs like to show off and teaching Fido to do something cute gives him an opportunity to receive positive attention when you have guests.

**HIDE AND SEEK:** Have a family member cover the dog's eyes while another family member runs into another room and hides. Using an exciting tone of voice say, "Where's Susie, go find Susie!" The first time you play the game, Susie could make a sound to help Fido locate her. When the dog finds her, act excited and pet and praise, even give him a treat. As the dog gets the idea, the game can be made more difficult and you may even have to cover Fido's ears as well.

**CRAWL:** Teaching Fido to crawl strengthens spine and rear leg muscles. Have several treats available. Lure Fido into a down position. With the treat about 2 or 3 inches in front of his nose, pull the treat across the floor. Say, "Crawl, good crawl." After 2 or 3 crawling steps, praise then reward. If the dog stands up, try luring him under a coffee table or under your leg. Gradually get the dog to crawl a foot or two with the handler standing up. Increase the distance over a period of weeks.

**ROLL OVER:** Rolling over improves coordination and strengthens Fido's trust in his owner. Lure your dog into a down position. Put a treat in front of his nose, bring it from the front around to just past the dog's shoulder. As his head follows the lure across his back say "Roll over" (he may be slightly off balance). A gentle push on the shoulder as you bring the treat across and to the floor should cause him to roll all the way over and end up in a down position again. Be sure to say "Good roll over," then give the treat. If necessary, get another person to help Fido roll over until he catches on. Once you can stand up and get him to perform, use a rolling motion with your hand.

**SHAKE:** Place your dog in a sitting position. Take his right paw in your right hand. Command, "Shake" and shake the paw. Praise, reward and repeat. After practicing several days, go to the next step. This time hold out your right hand and command, "Shake." Tap the back of his right paw with your left hand until he raises it off the floor. Then grab it with your right hand and shake the paw. Say, "Good shake." Reward with treat. Later, give treats at random.

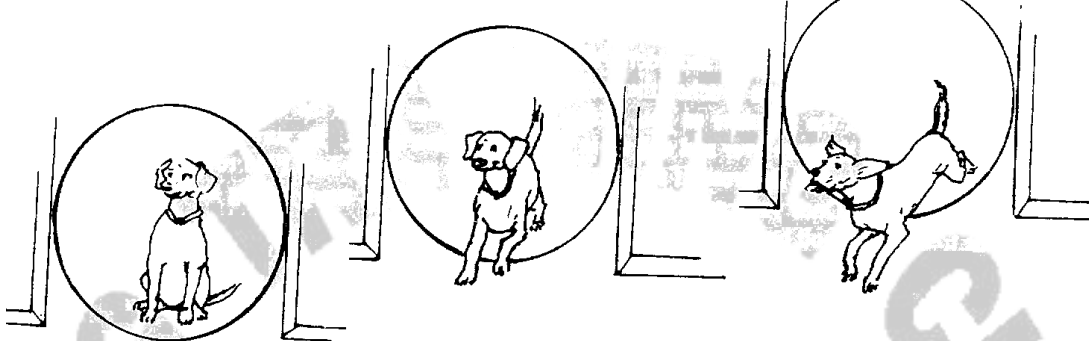
**WAVE:** Ask your dog to sit. Lift your "paw" near his, but when his paw comes up as if to shake, don't take it. Instead, tell him "Wave." Hold your hand up higher than you would to accept his paw to shake, then, "wave" at your dog. Quickly praise, "Good wave." The position of your hand and the command to wave will tell him the difference between shake and wave.

**SMELL IT – FIND IT:** Sit the dog and have a partner hold the dog in place. Wiggle the treat in front of the dog's nose and command him, "Smell it." Next, place the treat about 6 feet away in sight. Return to the dog. Wait a second and then with enthusiasm say "Okay, find it!" as you release the dog. Continue to place the treat farther away. Later, have a partner cover the dog's eyes. Hide the treat so the dog will have to use his nose to find it.

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**HULA HOOP:** Wedge the hoop into a doorway. The bottom of the hoop should touch the floor. Decide on a command such as “jump,” “hula hoop,” or “hup.” Lure him through the hoop and as he goes through it, name the behavior – “jump, etc.” Quickly praise, and treat. As soon as he is comfortable going through the hoop, raise it off the floor an inch at a time. Do not jump your pup more than elbow height. Do not repeat the jump more than 5 times in a session.



**BACK UP:** One way to teach your dog to back up is to begin from heel position, sandwiched between the handler and the wall. Command, “Back up,” and move the treat under the pup’s chin and into his chest. When he takes one step back, praise and reward. Continue until the dog can take 10 steps backward.

Another way to teach your pup to back up is to position yourself so you and your dog are facing each other in a narrow hall. Flick the back of your hands in your pup’s direction as you move toward him, saying, “Back, back.” If he sits or turns around, you must back up and call him to you. This time, give the flicking signal with one hand while you gently cup your other hand under his muzzle as you back him up a step or two. Quickly praise and reward. Work back and forth no more than a couple of minutes at a time.

**SOLITARY PUPPY GAMES:** Playing with inanimate objects provides intellectual stimulation and develops problem-solving skills:

- **Buster Cube** – Kibble comes out on a variable schedule – sometimes a little and sometimes a lot.
- **Kong** toys come in various sizes and can be filled with treats rolled in peanut butter. Can also be filled with a liquid and frozen. Give to the dog to provide entertainment while being left outside.
- **A sterilized bone** purchased from a pet supply store can be filled with cheese, jerky or freeze-dried liver. Be sure the bone is of appropriate size for your dog. He can entertain himself while resting on his mat by your chair as you watch TV.
- **Rawhides** should be given only under supervision. There is danger of choking or of swallowing too large a piece. It can scrape the back of the esophagus or cause an intestinal obstruction before it has a chance to digest.
- **A large solid or hollow thick rubber ball** for the puppy to roll around the yard and play “doggie” soccer can provide exercise and relief from boredom for some dogs.
- **Soft toys** – Under supervision- Toys made of fleece or plush fabrics can retain the dog’s scent for extended entertainment. Inspect these toys frequently for tears. Loose squeakers might be swallowed.