

TEACHING THE YOUNG PUPPY TO RETRIEVE

As a source of exercise for your puppy and fun for both of you, the retrieve cannot be outdone. It plays on one of your pet's natural instincts, and as such, is easily taught at a very young age for most breeds. Be patient when teaching this game. Once learned, this game is not only a valuable way for you to provide your puppy with the exercise he needs to grow strong, but can remain a source of fun for you both for the rest of his life.

METHOD ONE

Rules of the game:

A hall with the doors closed is an ideal place to begin this training. (Remember young puppies have very short attention spans and tire easily, so do not over do it).

- Select a tennis type ball of appropriate size for your puppy.
- Do not throw or bounce the ball but roll the ball across the floor and encourage your puppy to chase it.
- If he doesn't chase and pounce on it do not be discouraged just repeat this process and encourage your puppy with lots of praise.
- Never take the ball from your puppy. The goal is to teach your puppy to give it to you.
- Sit on the floor. This puts you more on his level and you can fuss over him easier.
- Never scold. All negative actions on your part are counterproductive and will cause your puppy to be much slower to learn the game.
- Never chase. If you allow yourself to chase, your puppy is teaching you instead of you teaching him. He will be teaching you to play the terrible game of "Keep-Away" and chasing him will actually discourage him from coming toward you with the ball.
- If he comes toward you, clap your hands and use your voice to encourage him to bring it closer to you.
- Move nonchalantly forward and trade him a high-value treat for the ball. Make over him and praise him for trading.
- Move back to your original position, sit back on the floor, and make a big fuss over the ball to get his attention before you roll it down the hall again.
- Always stop the game while he is still successful.

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METHOD TWO

Rules of the game:

The rules are almost identical as those in Method One. The major difference is we will be using two identical or very similar soft toys instead of a tennis ball. This method is easily played in an open room or in the back yard.

- Have one of the toys in your back pocket or out of sight.
- While sitting on the ground or on your knees, play and make over the other toy to get your puppy's attention.
- When he comes running to join the play, toss the toy about six feet away from you in a direction you puppy can easily see.
- As he chases the toy, verbally praise him.
- As he reaches the toy, clap your hands and encourage him to bring it to you.

All else is the same as Method One except:

- You do not go toward him or entice him to give the toy up for a treat.
- You stay where you are, produce the second toy, make a big fuss over it as you play with it yourself until she loses interest in the one he has
- When he comes after your toy toss it as before and encourage him to get it.
- As he races after the second toy, nonchalantly pick up the first toy where he left it.

As play continues he will naturally bring his toy closer and closer to you as he comes after the toy you are making such a fuss over. When he brings his toy all the way to you, don't throw yours until you have enticed him to drop his.

Now the fun really begins. Remember, he is young and tires easily.

NOTE:

Method two can also be used to teach adult dogs that show no interest in playing fetch. Just be extra patient during your training. Once your adult dog starts to get the idea, you can slowly substitute a tennis ball and high value treats for the two stuffed toys.