

Would You Like to Trade?



Is your dog picking up inappropriate items and playing keep-away with them? Is your dog getting over-aroused when you are playing keep-away or tug-of-war, so you need to stop the game intermittently?

All puppies and dogs need to learn to WANT TO TRADE!

We will teach the dog that our approaching the dog in this situation is a GOOD THING. In addition to the examples above, there may be situations when your dog needs to be willing to give something up. For example, the rawhide chew may have become too small to be safe, or a cooked turkey bone has fallen on the floor, or Uncle Jim may have dropped his heart medication on the floor. Once the dog has learned not to guard or play keep-away with these items, we can progress to the "Leave It/Take It" exercise.



Our approach to the problem is NOT "give it up or else". Instead, we will create a dog that WANTS TO give up what he has, because he has learned that he will get something even better from you AND then he will also get the valued possession back again (so long as it's not an inappropriate item, like Uncle Jim's pills). We teach the dog to "trade up".

IMPORTANT!!!

- **ALWAYS supervise the interaction of children and dogs. NEVER let children go near a dog that is in possession of a toy, food, treat, bone, or other item and NEVER let a child do any of the exercises described herein.**
- **BE AWARE that the exercises described herein may cause the dog to bite. If you choose to perform these exercises, you will do so at your own risk. Be very careful.**

Training Plan

1. Take a low-value toy (or other suitable item) that you dog cares only a little about. Play with it with your dog. When he has hold of it, offer him a high-value treat, but do not take the toy away. Repeat "play-then-treat" until your dog no longer wants to play with the toy, but just waits for you to give him a treat.
2. Repeat per #1, but touch the toy (only touch, do not pick it up) before you give him the treat. Repeat "play-then-touch-then-treat".
3. Repeat per #2, but pick up the toy before you give him the treat, then return the toy to your dog. Repeat "play-then-touch-then-treat-then-give toy back".
4. Repeat per ##1-3 with increasingly higher-value items. Immediately stop the exercise if your dog ever shows stress signals, including whale eye (dog turns head in one direction and eyes in another, so you can see the white of the eye), freeze (stiffening and not moving) or growling, immediately stop the exercise and contact your behaviour consultant.
5. When your dog is trading reliably, you can teach him a verbal cue, such as "tradeya" or "Thank you". Say the word as you offer the treat.
6. For the rest of your dog's life: always trade, never "steal" from your dog!