



## HUMANE SOCIETY OF BROWARD COUNTY

### Basic Obedience for Dogs

#### Tricks and Other Fun Things for Your Dog

There are many reasons to play games with your dog. It will strengthen your relationship; it will keep your dog from getting bored and help keep him out of trouble; it will enhance the training experience for both of you. And finally, most people get a dog for companionship...isn't playing with your dog the whole point? Have fun and your dog will have fun too!

You can use games as rewards. Remember that any activity that your dog likes, but which you control, can be used as a reward for good behavior. Use a favorite game of tug or fetch to reward recalls or long stays.

#### Give Paw

- If your dog is already offering you his paw, deliver food treat and offer verbal praise; "Good Dog".
- A dog will often lift his paw as a submissive gesture. If you are planning on teaching this trick, use his natural behavior and reward when it happens. Remember free shaping.
- Use only one specific cue. Pick one and stick with it. "Shake", "Give paw", "Give me five".
- Place dog in a sit position.
- Hold treat above dog's nose and to the side. This will cause him to lean a little off balance and lift up a paw.
- Once he lifts his paw, deliver food treat and verbal praise.
- Once paw raise is consistent, add the verbal cue "Buster, Shake" and take paw in your hand. Take his paw even if it is just a half inch off the floor.
- After your dog has learned this trick, reward the behavior ONLY if you ask for it.

#### Roll Over

- Place dog in a down position.
- Your dog will likely naturally lean to one side. This would be his preferred side.
- Lure dog towards his preferred side—on one hip, nose to back end.
- Then move the treat up over the back, slightly beyond the dog's balance, into a roll over.
- Encourage each step with small treats. Or use a large piece of food reward (held concealed in the palm of your hand) and let the dog nibble a bit off each time he completes part of the behavior.
- Once your dog completes the roll reliably, add the cue; "Buster, Roll over".
- Deliver food reward and verbal praise; "Good Dog".
- If dog gets up during the behavior without completing the roll, begin again from the down position.

### **Play Dead**

- Place your dog in a down position.
- Your dog will likely naturally lean to one side. This would be his preferred side.
- Lure dog with a treat onto his preferred side by moving treat in a slow arch around his head and over his back.
- Encourage each step with small treats. Or use a large piece of food reward (held concealed in the palm of your hand) and let the dog nibble a bit off each time he completes part of the behavior.
- Deliver food reward and verbal praise; “Good Dog”, once your dog completes the behavior.
- Once your dog is offering the behavior reliably, add the cue; “Buster, Play Dead” or you could use “Bang” and use a hand signal by forming your fingers into a gun shape. NOTE: Dogs communicate with body language and this makes hand signals naturally easy for them to learn. The hand signal may be used from the beginning, before the verbal cue is added.

### **Go Through**

- Stand facing your dog with your feet apart.
- Hold a treat behind your leg (at knee height) and out so the dog can see it.
- Lure the dog to go through your legs.
- Walk forward to complete the “go through” until he gets the concept of going through on his own.
- Each time he goes through your legs, give him a food reward and verbal praise; “Good dog”.
- Once he is comfortable and begins to offer the behavior reliably, add the verbal cue; “Buster, Go through”.
- After awhile, start to close your stance so your legs are closer together. This will give him the effect of being petted as he passes through. Dogs love this!

### **Drop It**

As an owner, you should be able to take anything from your dog’s mouth without playing tug of war and without any growling or guarding. This cue teaches your dog to release whatever is in his mouth.

- Start training with objects of lower value to the dog (don’t start training with a pork chop bone!)
- Give your dog a toy, wait until he gets involved playing with it and chewing on it. Hold out your left hand palm up and in your right hand hold a food reward. When your dog opens his mouth to take the treat, catch the toy or gently take it from him. Deliver food reward and verbal praise; “Good dog”.
- Once your dog is offering the behavior reliably add the verbal cue; “Buster, Drop it.” You can also use “Give” or “Release” as a cue.
- Return the toy for additional reward points. You don’t want your dog to think every time you take a toy away you never give it back.
- Gradually phase out the food reward.

### **Leave It**

This cue teaches the dog to ignore an object such as food or another animal. This cue also gives the owner a small window of time to either pick up the object (food dropped on the floor) or remove the dog from the object.

- Use something your dog wants but is not willing to die to get (medium value item), such as food. Place the food on the floor, making sure your dog sees you do this.
- With your dog on leash, walk him up to the object. As he goes for the food, put your foot over it. Remove your foot from the item and as he goes for it again put your foot over it. Repeat this process until your dog pauses and looks at you. Wait for it, it will happen! When he looks at you, deliver a treat from your hand and offer verbal praise; “Good dog.”
- Once your dog is offering the behavior reliably (looking at you for guidance), add the verbal cue; “Buster, Leave it.”
- To practice this exercise after the dog learns the cue, you can set up a little food, dirty Kleenex, sock and underwear obstacle course. As you walk him past these prized possessions use your cue; “Buster, Leave it” and treat and reward any pauses and checking-in behavior.
- Gradually work up to high-value items. Remember, you want to make it easy for your dog to get it right at first.

### **Hide and Go Seek**

When you are out of sight of your dog, call her to you. You can use your normal “recall” cue. Be very excited and offer lots of verbal praise when he arrives. Start making it more difficult by hiding behind doors, couches, etc. If he does not find you at first, call his name again. If your dog is good at “stay” you can use this cue to keep him in place while you hide. Some dogs will use their nose for this task, others will just look around. Most dogs will learn a faster recall while playing this game. Remember, don’t make it too hard for your dog to find you. Set your dog up for success.

### **Fetch**

Some dogs are natural born fetchers, others are not. Everyone can learn to enjoy this game. Be sure to teach and practice “drop it” first. If your dog refuses to return the ball or toy during fetch, fake loss of interest in the game and walk away. You don’t want a game of fetch to turn into a game of keep away. Fetch can be shaped by rewarding interest in a toy, then approaching a toy, then touching it, and then mouthing it, then picking it up. Use food rewards and verbal praise to positively reinforce each step.

### **Tug of War**

The secret to playing this game successfully is for you to control the game from start to finish. Choose only one particular toy for this game. When you are not playing with it the toy should be put up out of sight. Only use this designated toy for tug play. Choose an appropriate toy—never use the leash or an old sock or anything that may confuse your dog about appropriate chew or toy objects. You should also have a reliable “drop it” cue in place before beginning.

You start the game (never let the dog initiate) by picking up the toy and encouraging your dog to play. You can use a particular cue such as “Let’s tug”. Tugging is instinctive for most dogs; it is a cooperative act in feeding behaviors so your dog should catch on quickly. After a few tugs, cue your dog to “drop it” with the same upbeat tone you would use for other cues such as “sit” or “down”. Reward a successful “drop it” and continue the game.

Take breaks often to allow your dog’s arousal level to decrease. Tug games are very exciting for your dog and giving him time to calm down a little will ensure you maintain control over the game. Setting boundaries for this game is also very important. Never let your dog’s teeth touch skin. This is an automatic game-stopping offense! No shouting or reprimanding is needed—simply end the game. If you have the toy you can say “too bad” and put the toy away for a few minutes. If your dog has the toy, use “drop it.” If your dog is not responding to “drop it,” just walk away and ignore your dog. His goal is getting and having your attention and taking that away is a powerful punisher.

Remember you start the game (“Let’s tug”) and you end the game (“All done”) every time. When you are done playing tug, use a cue such as “All done” to communicate to the dog that the game is over. You control the arousal levels (by taking breaks) and you set up boundaries or rules of the game.

### **Finders Keepers**

Put your dog in a down stay and place a treat (food or toy) within sight. Return to your dog and release him, encouraging him to go to the treat. He can eat it or play with it. Repeat this, varying where you put the treat. Eventually you can even hide the treat (under a table or in a closet) while allowing your dog to see you hiding it. Encourage him to find it. You can increase the distance, difficulty and even number of treats as your dog gets better at it. This game is especially good for dogs that have just learned stay but are nervous having their people go out of sight.

### **Simon Says**

If you have the right attitude you can even make obedience training a game! Let your dog prove how clever he is by sitting when you say sit, lying down when you say down, etc. Try it with your eyes closed or your back turned to your dog or when you are in a different position like lying on the sofa or even standing on your head. Varying your position and placement when giving cues will also help “proof” your dog to individual cues.