



## All Dawgs Training Services

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### A Well Mannered Dog at Home Starts With Fun, Interactive Games

By Erin Healy

You have just arrived home to your faithful friend; Fido greets you by jumping, barking, and showing off his new chew toy- your shoes! You sigh and let the dog outside so it can relieve itself. You call him back inside and he just looks at you. You think to yourself "Man, I have to get this dog a job." Well guess what, you can.

**There are appropriate times for dogs to do dog things:** We have spent thousands of years breeding dogs for multiple purposes. Whether it is to bark a warning when our property is threatened; jump over obstacles during the hunt; or herd sheep into a pen. In present day times, most dogs are faithful companions at home, yet these instincts are still present. If a dog hasn't been given a job, they will create one for you; reeking havoc at home. Here is a list of fun games that you can do at home, to allow your dog to use these instincts in an appropriate, non-destructive way:

#### **Jumping: Does it seem like there are springs attached to your dog's feet?**

**Agility at Home:** Create a few agility jumps using a few chairs and broom handles. Chairs with slotted backings are best. Face two chairs with the backrests facing each other a few feet apart. Slide a broom or mop handle through the slots of the chair. Now you have an agility hurdle. Encourage your dog to approach and then jump over it, using treats to guide them. Orange plastic cones or snow plow markers can be set up into a straight line. You can teach your dog to weave in and out of the markers using a treat to guide your dog. They are fairly easy to set up. Remember to remove agility equipment when finished to avoid accidents. If you are really handy and want to make your own personal agility equipment, there are tons of youtube videos online with instructions.

#### **Chewing things they shouldn't, Staring, and Pacing: Is your dog bored?**

**"Which one?"** Teach your dog to be patient and have self-control while also entertaining your friends. Have your dog sit and waiting while facing you. Have it wait while you hide a treat in one of your hands behind your back. With Both fists closed tightly, hold both hands out in front of you and say "which one?" allowing the dog to sniff both of them. When the dog thinks they know which hand it is they will either stare/lick at the hand or tap it with a paw. If they choose the right one yell, "Yes!" and let them eat the treat.

**This trick can be extended:** Find three similar objects. I like to use upside down dog dishes, plastic Frisbees or orange cones, plastic flowerpots, and plastic Tupperware. Have the dog sit and wait while you hide the treat under one of the objects. I like to have the dog facing away, or pretend to place a treat under all objects (but really only one has the treat). If the dog breaks the wait, bring them back to where they were and try again. You may have to lift the object at first to let him eat the reward. Over time, the dog may learn to knock the object over for the treat. Make it random where you hide the treat and add more objects as time goes on. The dog is only allowed to play the game when they sit and wait patiently!

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## **Sniffing: Is your dog's nose always glued to the ground?**

**“Find It!” Inside game:** Use your dog's favorite toy/ball for this game. It helps if the dog has a name associated with the toy. Have your dog sit out of view while you place the special toy behind an object in the room. Let your dog out and sniff your hands. They will recognize the scent. Then tell them “Find it!” or “Go find your ball” (using name of toy). They will search frantically for it. If they seem frustrated or starting to lose interest, start asking them to check around the room. Use a finger and point to where they need to “check” for the toy. Slowly work to where the toy is hidden. If they find it yell, “Yes! You found it!” and act really excited. Reward your dog by throwing the toy or playing tug.

**“Find It!” Outside game:** You will need twenty to thirty foot cotton or nylon leash handy. A flexi-leash is not appropriate as the dog may get tangled. Gloves can prevent you from getting rope burn. Have someone the dog adores help you. One person should hold the dog while the other hides just out of view. After a minute or two, the person holding the dog yells “Find it.” You will follow your dog on the long leash to the missing person. If the dog knows the person's name (for example: Grandma) say, “Find Grandma!” if the dog finds the person, lavishly reward the dog with treats. Slowly increase the difficulty adding distance and different terrain. If there is no one to help, hide treats or toys before going back inside to leash up the dog.

## **Come command: Did your dog forget what this means?**

**Ping-Pong Dog:** Remind your dog what it means to come back to you, before they go outside. Have someone your dog adores help you. Stand six feet apart from your helper. Both of you should have treats on you and the dog should have a six foot or longer regular leash attached to his flat collar. Holding the dog's collar, have your helper yell your recall command (usually come, here, front, etc). When the dog reaches that person, they will say “yes!” and reward the dog with a treat. Then the helper will hold the dog while you yell the recall command. When the dog reaches you say “yes!” and reward with a treat. Repeat another five times back and forth, and end the game with the dog being successful. If the dog does not come to the person who called it, that person will grab the leash and reel the dog in, repeating “yes!” as the dog gets closer in a positive happy tone. Reward with some petting but no treat, reward the dog only when it actually comes to the person. Increase distance slowly as dog gets really good at this.

**A Tired Dog is a Good Dog!** This statement exists because it is true. When your dog is working both physically and mentally, they will be happier and more exhausted then if they went on a leisurely walk. Remember to have fun and that *All Dawgs trains good dogs!*