



Summer Fun Indoor Games from Cheeky Dog Obedience

The Search Game

This is a great mind game that will help keep those minds working while having fun with your dog inside!

Begin with your dog in the room with you on a stay or wait. If you don't think your dog will hold his (her) stay have someone hold him there. Take one of your dog's favorite toys and place it in the corner of the room, making sure he can see where you placed it. Next ask him to "find it," "search," "look for it," etc.. whatever you want to use as a cue for your dog to search.

If your dog isn't fond of toys, use an especially yummy treat. When your dog finds it It is a party !!!! You can make a container (see photo right) out of PVC pipe and holes drilled or a storage container with holes and a tight lid. Make sure you reward your dog with the same treat and on the location of the container.



Right now, you are thinking well that wasn't a challenge. That was too easy and my dog didn't have to work for that at all. You are right! Your dog has to learn the game and the cue. But, it is a really fun experience and one your dog will learn very quickly. Next time, hide the toy or treat somewhere in the room i.e. behind the chair, under the couch etc... but make sure your dog can still see you. Ask your dog to find it and make it a party! Repeat this 2-3 times with each time being a success. You will be tempted to make it more difficult but don't!

Next, take your dog out of the room and hide the toy or treat in one of the places it was hidden previously. Call your dog to join you in the room and ask him to find it using the cue you have chosen... let him search for it. When he finds it..... it's a party! Repeat hiding the toy or treat in each of the locations and when successful.... Party and end when your dog is really excited and wanting more! If your dog indicates he has had enough than the exercise has gone on too long, so end it on a happy note and with a positive end.



In the next session, repeat the same steps just in a different room or area of the house. When he is successful with three locations then pretend that you are hiding in two of the locations and leave the toy or treat in a third, but don't let your dog know where you actually left the toy..... fake him out! Ask him to find it using the cue you have chosen. Watch how your dog "looks" for it.... Does he go to each location or does he go to the last one you were at or does he start walking in one direction and then quickly turn and go to where the toy/ reward is? Watch your dog's body language. Watch your dog's ears and tail set – these are very good indications.

When your dog is successful, hide the toy/treat in a new location that is a little more difficult without him watching, bring him into the room and ask him to find it. Watch your dog ... how does he move? How does he search? Once your dog is consistently successful with this game, you can then move the game outside. Start from the beginning. It is a new location with potential distractions, so it will be a new learning experience and environment.

Points to Remember

- If you use a toy... use this toy only for this "find it." If you are using a treat, use this treat only for this game. If you are using a treat, make it a high value, smelly soft treat or food – chicken, hot dogs, cheese, pepperoni....only for this game.
- Keep the training sessions short – 2 or 3 repetitions and no more than 5 – 10 minutes. End when the dog is excited and wanting more.
- Remember your tone of voice – keep it upbeat and happy.
- Once your dog understands the game, change the difficulty of the hides as well as the heights of the locations. But don't make it more difficult too quickly. Set the exercise up to be successful for your dog.
- Try not to help your dog with physical indications.... Let them find it!