WORLDWIDE

Absolute Dogs

SEXIER THAN A SQUIRREL CHALLENGE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SQUIRREL CHALLENGE 101

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AROUSAL QUESTIONS

NOISY DOGS

It is important to remember that barking and whining are part of normal dog behaviour! However, it can become excessive or inappropriate and that's where we come in to help with solutions!





Q **How to deal with dogs that cry/moan/ through the games??**

Q **I need help with my dog who gets over aroused with any food or toy item. I'm working on calming games but the mere scent of a bit of kibble has her vibrating. Also she is demanding to play – jumping up, barking etc. Should I respond by playing a calming game?**

A It sounds like your dog has a very strong understanding that toys and food = high excitement! This is a real positive as the games will help channel all of this awesome value through you as their owner! The missing piece of the puzzle here is ditching the routine – your dog has become "hard wired" to only respond to food or toys appearing in one way... to get crazy excited! By ditching the routine you can work to "uncouple" this prediction and as a result you will have a dog slightly more able to think!

> "By ditching the routine you can work to "uncouple" this prediction and as a result you will have a dog slightly more able to think!"

Q **My dog's "Happy behaviour" includes barking and I find really it unacceptable or difficult to manage. How can I let them be happy but also be comfortable myself?**

A You need to be comfortable with what you allow here. A "Happy behaviour" such as repeated barking may be something you want to limit and only allow in certain situations, yet one like middle or leg weaves would be much more appropriate anywhere!

> "If your dog is making a game out of long lasting chews then why not try keeping hold of them at one end to fix them."

Q **I'm having struggles with my dog barking or whining at inappropriate times of day or night – how can I get them into a good routine so that I can work/sleep!**

A Limiting rehearsal is key here so if you know that something will trigger your dog or they whine at a certain time of day or night then get prepared! You may want to give them a long lasting chew to keep occupied or get up and take them outside calmly and settle them back down again before they are getting noisy. Using a covered crate can really help dogs feel settled too. Tackling calmness and optimism will help support a more settled and quieter home. You may want to look at both the arousal and calmness lives! These resources are filled with great information for you!

> "Tackling calmness and optimism will help support a more settled and quieter home."



Q **Ditch the routine and bowl has caused my dog to whine more, bark, become unsettled or they are prompting me to interact with them more and it's becoming a problem.**

A First of all, you are definitely not alone! While many dogs are naturally more mentally flexible and optimistic than others and take to this new awesome way of living pretty easily and quickly, there are a few who do find it a little more challenging. As always we are here to help!

It sounds like your dog may really benefit from adding in more calmness. With dogs who have opted for a quiet, passive coping strategy in the past it can be quite a shock to learn that now they have moved towards active coping that they begin to try new strategies! This is generally a positive sign as you are now aware and can tackle your calmness!

Q **What's the best game I can play to combat stress, anxiety and barking in the car?**

Q **My dog who is barking on lead - how do I use the games to stop him being reactive on lead?**

Q **Barking Question - Constant barking at the skylight and won't settle in the evening even after long lasting natural chew/kong/lick mat. Barking at anything that moves in the garden, next door talking, another dog barking etc. during the day. What can I do to stop it?**

Q **How can I disengage my dog when he's barking at people/dogs that pass the window/garden - any help and advice would be appreciated? Loving the games and really seeing a difference in my dog.**

Q **Our dogs keep barking and jumping about when people are walking past the house, they hear people in their gardens or delivery people come to the dog – how would I tackle this?**

Q **How do you help calm your multi-dog household when they hear noises outside? We have five dogs and if one sets off barking, they all will rush to join and check it out.**

A We would definitely be looking at some management on this one. Reducing rehearsal will really help you here, as will ditching the bowl and routine. Try not to allow your dog to practice these behaviours by blocking access to doors or windows and using a crate or pen when you are not around to help them. If they are happening outside your home then we would recommend that you think about taking a break from walks to focus on playing the games in the challenge. These type of behaviours are all a result of a little too much arousal and a sure sign that you have yet to grow true calmness in your home.



AROUSAL QUESTIONS

BUILDING CONFIDENCE & AN OPTIMISTIC NATURE



Q **How do you encourage your dog to want to be around people?**

A If you are asking yourself this question we would encourage you to think about why you desire this especially if your dog is not so keen on it. You might want to look at working on increasing your dog's optimism generally so that they automatically see novel events or people as a positive.

> "You might want to look at working on increasing your dog's optimism generally so that they automatically see novel events or people as a positive"



Q **Filled items or lick mats only keep my dog busy for a very short time and they are immediately back to running around or barking again?**

Q **When we give our dog a chew, she gets super excited and goes around the house with it whining and is desperate to go outside and burying it I think! This has the complete opposite effect of what we were hoping! We wanted to calm her down! Any ideas of what we should do instead? Respond by playing a calming game?**

A The key here is that you are looking for more calmness. If your dog is making a game out of long lasting chews then why not try keeping hold of them at one end to fix them. This is so that your dog learns how to interact appropriately with the item.

Q **Are there any games we could play to boost their confidence with strangers and children?**

Q **How do I reprogram my dog's brain to accept being touched by strangers? Before she came to me a few months ago she obviously had a bad experience and I want to help her be comfortable again.**

A It sounds like your dog would benefit from a more optimistic outlook so that they automatically think that anything they encounter, like new people or children which might seem new or ambiguous to them, are a positive event! We have a little saying that "the best reaction is no reaction" meaning that your dog just notices something and walks on by! By using the games you have in the squirrel programme you are already helping to boost your dog's personality so that they become more optimistic! The key here is to work with the games and not be tempted to expose your dog to lots of strangers or children as this might just confuse and upset them...It will come - Great job!

> "By using the games you have in the squirrel programme you are already helping to boost your dog's personality"

Q **As with us being in lockdown, I am afraid that playing so much with my dog now will result in anxiety issues when things go back to normal – what would you advise?**

Q **I would love some help with teaching my pup how to be alone in the house or even a room for a reasonable amount of time.**

Q **I am worried now about how my dog is going to cope when I go back to work. He was only ever been left for a max of a couple hours per day. As it is if I so much as go upstairs he will sit and cry and whine at the stair gate. I can give him something to distract him, but this only stops him or half an hour what can I do?**

A Take a look at our calmness triad which shows you how you can build in the games but also keep your dog's independence. The key is to start in manageable steps for your dog and build things slowly.



Q **How would you tackle things where an owner tries to be "more exciting" to bring up the dogs arousal level but the dog looks confused or scared?**

A As individuals, dogs will all react to things differently and it is super cool that you are observing your own dog so well! It may be that for your dog you need to match their energy and bring them up more gently. Think about what gets them excited in the environment? Do they love chase? Perhaps "catch me if you can" or "paint the town red" would be a good start for you? Do they enjoy a little sniff, maybe "plant pot prison" will be your go to game!

> "Make sure that your dog is hungry by resisting the temptation to pop a bowl of food down 'just in case'."

Q **Can the bucket grow over time? Will it get bigger for my dog playing these games or is it set on personality?**

A We believe that your dogs' bucket will be defined by their personality HOWEVER.... that personality is fully changeable. You can absolutely grow your dog's bucket, slow down the fill AND make the hole bigger!

Q **My dog is not understanding these games. She has no interest in having her kibble playing games? She will do it with treats and toys, just not kibble food? What should I do as I don't want to over feed with treats then put dinner in a bowl in the evening?**

A We would recommend that you ditch the bowl completely and keep sessions to either "only food based" or "only toy based". As if your dog favours one over the other, it can become challenging or frustrating as an owner to provide a rewarding experience for your dog. Make sure that your dog is hungry by resisting the temptation to pop a bowl of food down 'just in case'. We will be honest and say that the single biggest struggle that people have with kibble is actually focusing on the fact that it is "just kibble". When you start to unlock the possibilities of the reward experience by varying the way that you use or present the kibble, you will skyrocket the value and your dog will be begging for their kibble. We have transformed thousands of dogs whose owners told us they "didn't work for food at all"...you have a great starting point!

> Each dog and owner journey is unique and will have its own celebrations!

Q **My dog keeps sitting down during the games, going still, getting 'stuck' in one position, or barking in frustration – help! How do we move on and keep things positive? I feel like they are "shutting down" before I'm even finished playing!**

Q **Happiness question – We did the leg weaving challenge. My dog did it, but didn't bring much energy. What is the best way to engage his energy up better?**

Q **I would love to see or hear something about working with a scared dog, specifically one that just shuts down and if given the option will back away or flee the situation. What game would you play for that?**

A Firstly, well done for great observations and noticing that you really want to work towards a solution on this one! If they are a little unsure or confused, some dogs can opt to just "be still" or have a favourite "go to" position that they are just hoping is the right answer! If you are finding this, then you can encourage more movement by making sure that you play games where you are standing up and both you and your dog are keeping moving, such as room dash or catch me if you can. Hold off on games where one, or both of you, are static. When you are introducing more static games, keep them very, very short and remember to "reset" your dog often by throwing a piece of food away for them to find. This acts as a reminder that they can keep moving around.

Q **My dog is a stubborn breed and isn't as quick as your dogs in the video – is that OK?**

A Here's the thing...It really is such a myth that certain breeds are more "stubborn" than others! There are, however, some individuals who find the environment entertains them SO WELL that they have yet to learn that working with their owner as a team can provide that exact same variety and spontaneity that they love! Some dogs immediately take to the games and zoom around just like ours, but others have a slower, gentler approach – it is the journey which is important here! Each dog and owner journey is unique and will have its own celebrations!

> Where you are introducing more static games, keep them very very short and remember to "reset" your dog often



> It's really such a myth that certain breeds are more "stubborn" than others!

Q **What would you recommend to help with resource guarding please? She doesn't guard against humans but my other dog. Thank you!**

A For our dogs, great choices are always inspired by calmness. While we would reassure you that this behaviour is part of normal "dog behaviour" there are also pro-active steps you can take to combat this. Working through the calmness triad will naturally allow your dog to make a more appropriate choice. Ditching the bowl and the routine are key to removing things that may predict excitement or anxiety and lead on to guarding. The toy switch game is awesome for teaching a framework to your dog that the best deal is always with the item you have to offer (and not whatever they are guarding!). Be sure that you are setting your dog up for success as much as possible – if you are feeding them and another dog, do it in separate areas or rooms. Use boundaries to cut down unwanted interaction too and you will certainly be on the right track!

Q **I've just finished watching one of the games and I'm not sure it's going to be right for my dog just now because my dog is already naturally quite still and not interested – what do I do?**

A There is a brilliant recording in the Facebook group that explains how the "Arousal Seesaw" affects our dogs in daily life and how games can have an impact. Keeping in balance is so KEY to loving life with your dog.

AROUSAL QUESTIONS

MY DOG JUST LOSES THE PLOT A LITTLE IN SOME WAY



Q **On today's walk with my dog they were engaged with me and looking at me. Another dog comes round the corner on lead and he loses the plot, I could not disengage him, and then it was all over for us until we got home. I tried playing games without success, should I just stop?**

A Your dog would certainly benefit from taking a break from their regular walks as it doesn't sound like its much fun for either of you! Working on the games will help shape your dogs' personality to become more of a flexible thinker and have an optimistic nature.

Q **I have very food orientated dogs. They get so excited and focus more on the food than what I am trying to achieve with them. Ideas please, and yes, we do calmness games.**

A Ditch the routine is VITAL to struggles like this. The sight of food is probably sending your dog's arousal sky high because they are predicting that food = high arousal fun. This is actually a great struggle to have as you have tons of desire for your rewards!! We might go for games like "paint the town red" or conversation starters where you can just play the game and not worry about too many rules or achievements! Alongside this, to encourage a little more thoughtfulness, we might go for "plant pot prison" to slow them down and help encourage a little thought.



Q **Hand biting is my issue whilst playing high arousal games. How do I get the calmness from the game, Aeroplane, transferring to the different context?**

Q **How to work on the desire, in e.g. the whip game, without getting a dog in crazy high arousal that starts nipping at my legs?**

A When you are playing the games, some dogs will need to be shown in stages. With something like a toy based game it is really important to make the bite area very clear on the toy (we like to use a sheepskin chaser toy) and keep it away from your body until the dog gets used to where they should target. With a game like "Play with my Toy" watch very carefully on the mechanics of the game and your dog will learn that grabbing the toy is the fun part! The other option, of course, is that right now, these very high arousal games may not be for your dog. You can pick any of the games to play! We would always recommend teaching boundaries so that your dog has framework to bring their high arousal back to a lower level without rehearsing biting or nipping at you.

Q **We didn't walk our dogs for a couple of days and they've gone absolutely crazy, we can't cope with them now! Help!**

A This is down to your dog's telling you that their excitement is generally very high in your home and it is the physical exercise of walking and running which is usually keeping these unwanted behaviours "in check". However, you stopped walking them for a reason – most likely because you were also having struggles during your walks too. Calmness is your friend for both struggles here – establish it in your home and then grow it beyond!

> "Working on the games will help shape your dogs' personality to become more of a flexible thinker and have an optimistic nature."

> "If you find that even "getting ready" for a game session sends your dog a little high then try mixing things up"



Q **How do I calm my dog down after playing the games?**

A Oops! Calmness to the rescue! You could pop your dog on a leash or boundary to limit their choices, scatter feed or pop away in a crate with a long lasting chew. We would recommend you take a look at our calmness resources for help on this one.



Q **Help! The games are making my dog way too excited. They're biting me, tugging at clothes, snatching food, jumping at me, trying to climb all over me or going off to do zoomies!**

A It sounds like your dog really wants to interact with you! This is amazing! Where we see this type of super excited behaviour we would definitely go with staying at very basic stages of the game you choose and keeping sessions super short – perhaps just a minute or less. If you find that even "getting ready" for a game session sends your dog a little high then try mixing things up and randomly doing some of the steps of getting ready to play through the day. Follow this by NOT playing but instead having a calm cup of tea and giving your dog a long lasting chew! For dogs that are brand new to games even getting their food out can be crazy exciting so do observe your own dog and listen to what they are telling you.



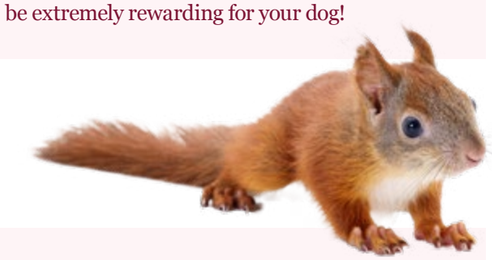
SQUIRREL CHALLENGE

DITCH THE BOWL & FOOD INTEREST



Q **What do I do once I have used up all of their food playing the games if I am not walking them?**

A We think firstly congratulate yourself on being such an awesome games player! There are a few "easy hacks" to making your food last longer! Firstly, count out your pieces of food – this way you can easily limit yourself to short, snappy games. If you feed kibble then many brands are available in "small bite", semi moist foods can be broken into pieces and raw mince dehydrated into little 160 (ice cube) moulds. Although some games do need nice large pieces, many of them you can use these smaller options to increase your "pot of value". With filled items such as bones or the A-OK9 calm mats, you can partially fill or lightly smear rather than completely filling with food. Resting on a boundary or in a crate is a great way to set your dog up for calm success. The occasional "ninja feed" will keep them guessing but use up very little food allowance! Lastly, you can look at your transitions – instead of always feeding rapid fire, can you fiddle with the food a little or slow down your delivery? Anticipation of food can be extremely rewarding for your dog!



Q **Ditching the bowl question – if you sometimes need to put your dogs in kennels would you still ditch the bowl for all meals or keep feeding one meal at a time in a bowl so when they go there they will still eat out of a bowl?**

A Stay flexible on this – some kennels will allow you to prepare filled bones or other items for part of the day or scatter a portion of your dogs' food. Other kennels are more fixed and want to feed from a bowl. Either is fine – don't worry, you can pick up from where you left off when you return! The same goes for vet visits or any other time you cannot be there!

Q **My dog won't do the scatter feeding. They have lost interest if they have to do it on grass and not the patio. How can I teach my dog to find food?**

A For this struggle we might start with a game like "paint the town red" so your dog is learning to follow the food and then progress to the "orientation games" so they are having to find food (keep your throwing distance short to start) and move on to scatter feeding that way.

Q **The games seem to be heavily reinforced with food. Can you switch the games to play with toys instead? How do we know when too much food is too much?**

A Food is a primary reinforcer which means that it will be rewarding for your dog without any additional learning involved. It keeps things simple and is hugely powerful especially in the initial learning stages. When your dogs are more fluent at the games, we would actively encourage you to be as creative as possible with your transitions and reinforcers! You could use toys, praise or even another favourite game or behaviour to reinforce the last! It really doesn't tie you down to food at all. With judging their weight, we would look at over all condition but also keep an eye where you are substituting other foods in as part of their main diet.

Q **What can you bind their kibble with to stuff in kongs?**

A The simplest way which works for many kibble brands is to soak it in plain water or use water from your cooked veg! There are many other ideas out there – usually foods which are good for the A-OK9 calm mats are also useful to bind kibble. You can always swap a small amount for 'wet' food instead.

> "To help your dog with eating the food you could try soaking it for a short while just in water – experiment with what works best!"

Q **How do I ditch the bowl for multiple dogs? How do I stop them competing during scatter feeding or for long lasting chews?**

A Ditching the bowl for multiple dogs can seem really daunting at first. We find that the most powerful step here is simply to get started in whatever form that looks like for you. If that looks like one meal for one dog each day taken while working on calmness or games through the day then that is how you start – gradually you will want more of what you are getting and find ways to food prep and weave in game sessions!



Q **I feed hypoallergenic food which is small and very hard. It takes my dog some time to chew this and means we can't play the games as fast – does this matter?**

A It's time to get creative! Firstly, I would have a look at the brand your dog is comfortable with as they may do a range of kibble sizes to help you mix things up a little. To help your dog with eating the food you could try soaking it for a short while just in water – experiment with what works best! In addition to this, many companies do an equivalent wet food which you could use for stuffed items, A-OK9 calm mats or as this food is typically very dry, you may be able to cut it into chunks or part-dehydrate it! Think outside the box!



Q **My dog will not take food out on a walk, won't engage with me, just runs off with their toy, pulls like a train, doesn't give me any focus or is always sniffing!**

Q **My dog just doesn't want to play, they aren't interested in me or the games at all – what do I do?**

Q **I use toys for training my dog and she is doing really great but she will not work for food?**

Q **I am not having any success ditching the bowl. My dog has no interest in the games no matter how exciting I get. What should I do?**

Q **I am still struggling with ditch the bowl. I have tried mixing up the kibble with other higher value rewards, but if he gets a kibble piece he drops it immediately and if he gets too many, by chance, in a row....he leaves. He will eat his kibble out of his bowl, but not for games. Should I change his kibble?**

A These struggles are definitely going to become your strengths as your dog is so clearly showing you where they are "right now". You can laser target exactly the skills they need! What a bonus for you! Dogs that show this type of behaviour are typically really interested in the variety and constant novelty that the environment gives them. Ditching the bowl is more important than ever for these guys as you want them to get maximum enjoyment from the rewards you have on offer. Once you have a few well practiced games under your belt (we recommend funder, typhoon and tornado as a start so you can replicate the crazy ever-changing surroundings) then you will be able to compete and WIN time after time!





Q **Did you know that A-OK9 has a calming supplement which also soothes and balances your dog's tummy? We have found that many of our clients who have introduced this have later been able to move their dog away from hypoallergenic foods!**

Q **Is there going to be a point when things just seem to click?**

A Yes – and we find that often comes as students ditch the bowl and pair this with ditching any daily routine too. Every dog is different and some will take to it immediately. Whereas others might be a little slower to take things on board. It is also the case that some owners are just naturally smoother with their mechanics for playing the games than others so the key is practice but keep it random! Videoing yourself helps so much!

Q **What do you do if you have a dog trained to leave food when it's dropped on the floor? How about if you've taught your dog never to chase you or food or toys? What then...?**

A As always, there is a solution! You can add in a cue to allow your dog to get the food during the game – this way you will still have the default behaviour that you originally wanted and trained but also be able to add some variety to your dog's day! Some games are easier than others to adapt for this but we do also expect a level of impulse control from our dogs so it certainly is achievable. Try building boundary games as a great foundation for quickly and easily communicating when your dog should play and when they should rest!

Q **Are your dogs so attentive because they are really hungry?**

A Our demo dog team spend their days as much loved family members. Their attentiveness is DESIRE! This grows as we work on our relationship with them through the games and because they always have a fun time this then feeds back into even more attention! They all maintain an excellent level of fitness and sensible weight for their type by using the same Ditch the Bowl process that we are sharing with you now. When they are working with us on set, they would likely earn a fair amount of that days food at the time so they would experience different levels of satiation through the day – it would be impossible for them to always be hungry as you can see them playing games for their food on the videos!

"Try building boundary games as a great foundation for quickly and easily communicating when your dog should play and when they should rest!"

Q **My dog only has wet or raw food – How do I play?**

A We love to look for solutions so we would definitely encourage you to think up new creative ways to deliver the food! "Wet/Raw" food can vary a lot in its consistency – some food that comes in trays or tetrapak can simply be cubed and used in a similar way to chunks of raw meat! Canned food seems to suit filled bones or kongs perfectly, along with raw mince and both of these work really well on a metal coffee scoop or spoon! Really bloody mince or very jelly like wet food work quite well in refillable squeezy tubes! Another popular option is dehydrating! Raw mince is brilliant for making into 'meatballs' or using pyramid pans and likewise with wet food you can part-dehydrate to form a crust on the outside to keep your hands cleaner and mess free! With our own dogs, we will simply substitute whatever is most practical for the session we are doing.

GAME PLAY QUESTIONS

DITCH THE ROUTINE

Q **My burning question is what's the best way to train with your dog when you have two kids at home (under 5)? I try and train her with a mix of the kids being around but occupied, kids being around but in my face and just on her own but what the best thing to do?**

A It sounds like you have great suggestions to ditch the routine and really mix up your dog's training which is awesome! If you can then 1:1 learning is often best for you and the dog to start off but could then quickly be progressed to your kids being around but occupied (we love this option as it is helping your dog to work with distractions). Once you're all pretty competent with that then sure, allow your little ones to do as they would more normally. It is actually really awesome that you have two super cool mini distractions at home as your dog will get used to just "ignoring" whatever else is going on and working with you!

> "Using pens, baby gates, doors, room dividers or crates can be a real gamechanger for setting you both up for success and not failure!"

Q **We stopped walks to work on the games – when would you say is the right time to re-introduce them?**

Q **I am thinking of ditching walks until we have some of these games mastered at home. Does this concept apply when his reactivity is out of fear? If I retake my dog out will this make him worse as we have taken him away from the situation?**

A We LOVE that you did this so very much and cannot help but think you are a true #gamechanger! Our focus is always to train the dog in front of us so whether they are ready for walks again or not may vary – observe them "in the moment" when you are looking to take them. Have you worked on your ditch the routine where walks are concerned? Do things like putting shoes on, picking up the lead or popping your dogs harness on cause crazy excitement? Ideally, you want to be starting with a CALM dog so I would recommend getting ready to leave and observing well. You can always walk out the door, feed, turn around and come home! If you do find things "seem worse" then you may not have progressed as far as you need in and around your home. You can always put a video up on our supportive Facebook community.

Q **Should I change the value of the food that I use in new environments?**

A This is where you really want to be training the dog in front of you. Remember that it is the type of food itself PLUS the transitions you use AND the framework of games which all come into play for your dog in deciding just how rewarding you are for them!



GAME PLAY QUESTIONS

MANAGEMENT AS TRAINING





Q **My dog picks up food inappropriately – counter surfing, stealing from the table, picking up items on walks, eating plants. What should I do?**

Q **Would you have any suggestion on games to help with excessive digging in the garden?**

A Ooh! Super cheeky...There are certainly some great solutions for this! Stopping rehearsal is key here – management is part of your training plan. We like to use a gated community to give our dogs a framework for calm and appropriate behaviour. Using pens, baby gates, doors, room dividers or crates can be a real gamechanger for setting you both up for success and not failure! Once you have a nice balanced level of calmness your dog will have increased capacity to focus on you when you are out and about. You can then start to add in all the super squirrel games – choose any that you enjoy to start you off and they will be far too interested in you to look at that mouldy old sandwich or dead fish!



“Using pens, baby gates, doors, room dividers or crates can be a real gamechanger for setting you both up for success and not failure!”



Q **When my dog is inside he stands and watches the parrots until they throw food and feed him. I can’t block off the cage because they can throw the food across the whole room. I have tried to teach my dog not to be around them but he gets rewarded by them. What can I do to distract him?**

A We cannot stress this enough – always, always set you and your dog up for success! If your dog is being rewarded for hanging out with the parrots and this is an issue for you then we would suggest limiting your dogs’ access to the room they are in. One suggestion we would make is that you could cover your parrot cage whilst the dog is in the room to prevent rehearsal. You could also use a covered crate for your dog if they need to be in that room when you are not around. Alongside this, training boundaries and using the games to promote proximity and self-control will provide a longer term solution for you.



Q **I am starting walking pretty much from scratch with my large, very sniffy and anxious rescue. Would you suggest a head collar or double clip harness for more control? We have not walked at all since the adoption and previously think our dog was only used to pulling like a train, lurching to sniff on very infrequent walks, and experienced months in rescue.**

A We love a challenge! Which tools we might use would depend on the dog a little – we would certainly recommend a non-restrictive double clip harness as these act to help balance your dog (as a rule, look for ones with the “Y” front rather than straight across the front). For some dogs we might use a headcollar such as Blackdog just to help guide them a little once you re-start walks. The key though will be in the games, working to build your relationship and your dog’s love of being close to you is an intrinsic element of loose leash walking.

Q **Which games should I use when I am out on walks to get more attention... my dog just chases, puts his nose down and sniffs or sees birds and he’s gone!**

A The more you can mix games up the better! The environment is offering your dog SO MUCH that they love and you need to be competing with that and WIN! Crazy right? Ditching the bowl and routine are crucial for achieving the spontaneity a novelty of the squirrel (or sniffs, or birds, or deer.....)

Q **I really want to jog or run with my dog but he gets very excited and jumps up how do I stop this?**

A There’s certainly a game (or several) for this! Starting with lower energy games like “paint the town red” will help get your dog used to you moving when they are in a more controlled framework. You could then introduce a game like magic hand to progress this and look to re-direct your dog away from you with a game like orientation before they come in to jump up! We would always recommend that your dog is checked over by a vet and has fully developed before starting any more intense level of exercise. Typically, as a rough guide, this would be 12 months or older for most dogs. In addition, a well-fitting, non-restrictive harness is essential. Usually these are the type specifically designed for exercise.

“We would always recommend that your dog is checked over by a vet and has fully developed before starting any more intense level of exercise.”

Q **When I get the lead out for either going for a walk or training my dog, my dog starts to play tug. He won’t leave it. We have tried to distract him with toys and food, but he is not interested in either?**

A Ditch the routine is VITAL to struggles like this. The sight of your leash is sending your dog’s arousal sky high because they are predicting that leash = walk = high arousal fun. Working to uncouple this association and to establish calmness will help you massively.

GAME PLAY QUESTIONS

BOUNDARIES



> “Action prompts do not have to be barking. They can be shifting movement, tail wagging, changing position, and more...”

Q **On boundaries (and other places) my dog will sometimes bark at me for attention/next piece of food. What should I do?**

Q **How can you tell if your dog is “fake calm” on a boundary?**

A Dogs will bark in this situation because they are “action prompting” ... either they really want a different, more exciting outcome or they are anticipating something exciting might happen. Action prompts do not have to be barking. They can be shifting movement, tail wagging, changing position and more.. They are all signs of a calmness FAKER!! This is where you need to step in and teach them that they got it wrong...it’s not “disco pants” time, it’s PJ’s time! Offering an alternative, less desirable outcome will help to reduce frustration. One of the key elements of this is ditching the routine because it is predictors in your dog’s day which are leading to them dressing all wrong!



Q **I have been teaching my dog boundary games. She picked it up really well. When I try to release her from the bed, she won’t come off. How can I fix this?**

Q **What’s the best package to buy for boundary games?**

Q **How do I build longevity on the boundary? Freddie has a high food drive and will go on his bed right away because he expects the reward, but when I try to extend the time between treats, he comes off and it becomes a vicious cycle. He comes to expect the food and won’t stay without it how can I fix this?**

Q **I have played the Aeroplane game and Mouse game but the minute I move into the kitchen or into a different room she moves off the bed? What do I do next? We have been practising boundaries for a while now?**

Q **I have a question on boundary games – where can I look for more information on these?**

A To extend your boundary games learning we would recommend that you purchase the boundary games DVD or digital download from our online store.

We would look at progressing this to more “real life” scenario where you are moving around the room that you are in or simply sitting quietly and not constantly needing to reward. Firstly remember that central to your boundary games is... your RELEASE CUE so certainly top this up and it will become a privilege! Secondly, think about your reward experience alongside your existing games. You could add something like “food fiddling”, where you just pick up and pop down food to ditch the routine of constantly rewarding with food to the bed. Another struggle which can accompany this is that of “fake calm” as instead of actually being calm, the dog simply learns to be still as long as it is being fed. Signs of fake calm can include constant tail wagging, being excessively still and maintaining eye contact with you at all times.

GAME PLAY QUESTIONS

RECALL



Q How do I build confidence in letting my dog off lead without risking him running off?

Q In the house and very large garden, our recall is great. On our beach walks, he's off to any other dogs or folks that appear. He is not improving and I am keeping him on a long lead most of the time. I'm on day 10, should I continue to keep him on the lead?

Q How do I build this behaviour for my dog? How long would you play it before you try it outdoors?

Q I have lost my dog's recall over the last few months. What do you suggest I do? Which games should we play to get my dog's recall back?

Q My dog's recall when on walks is great for birds, people, other dogs etc. but, if she smells food, I just cannot get her back, particularly if it's bread, which she can smell from hundreds of metres away! Any advice, or games that will help?

Q How do I fix my artful dodger? My dog will come back to me when I call her to me to go back on her lead. She then dodges my hand while I try to put her lead on and dashes just out of reach. The entire time she is just grinning like it's the best games. How can I catch her?

Q My dog has perfect recall off lead in open spaces. I can easily call her back even when she's playing with another dog. However, recalling her from the garden when she hears the neighbours in their garden is very difficult. She barks at them and I want her in quickly to stop her. I don't understand how a perfect recall in large open space can be easier than a small garden. Any advice would be appreciated?

Q What should I do if my dog started hunting in the garden? I want to leave him out whilst it's sunny to enjoy it, but can't get him to come back in?

Q I am out walking my dog using my ditch the bowl method, feeding when we get to my dog's favourite part of the walk. She runs off. Should I discourage that behavior?

A Games, games and more games! Once you get to the stage where you can use one game to reward another, your whole off-lead time can be structured around a framework of games to start with as you gradually transition to allowing more and more freedom. We recommend using a non-restrictive harness and long line as an intermediate point.

We would definitely be looking at some management on this one for the immediate future. Reducing rehearsal is going to help you massively here. Keeping your dog on a lead is definitely essential if you are losing them in some way trying to recall them – even if that means in your own garden. There's two brilliant lives on the learning for boosting recall for you in the Facebook community on this.

> "Keeping your dog on a lead is definitely essential if you are losing them in some way trying to recall them"

Q **Recall question that being asked should I not use my dogs name to recall them?**

A We like to keep a special "recall name" for our dogs – as an example Lauren's top level agility dog Fiji, Lauren will call her using the word "Gee" and Tom's crazy NBN Border Collie Bet recalls to the word "Paa". These are just random words which feel comfortable for them to say that are both quite soft sounding words which don't naturally take up stress in your voice if you are a little concerned about where your dog is actually heading! Why? Well, you may live with other family members, have friends, go to training classes etc. where people use your dogs pet name all the time and expect many different outcomes – that's confusing for your dog and one thing you want to avoid is a confusing recall cue!



GAME PLAY QUESTIONS

FOCUS ON TOY PLAY

Q **Catch me if you can question how can I switch from using food to a toy for this game? Do I need to use two of them?**

A When working with your dog, it is super important to observe their likes and dislikes. If your dog prefers food and you are looking to build their love of toys then we would recommend starting your session with toys only. However if your dog struggles with retrieving or releasing toys, you might want to wait until later in the course where we cover these aspects of play for you.



Q **My dog loves to chase. He is pretty good at retrieving, loves tug and whip it even more. How should I use these games to stop him chasing critters?**

A First off, learning to play the games at the very basic desire level is super key to being able to use them on real-life critters! The more desire you can get, the more realistic and solid your impulse control will be. This makes sense right? If your dog didn't really love the game, there is no way you are gonna be sexier than a squirrel!

> "We would always advise to keep food and toy play separate to start, as food smell or the expectation of food in your hand alone, can lead to inappropriate biting."

Q **How do you teach our dog to let go/ drop a tug or flirt-pole toy so we can start upping the ante on rewards (he's a dog who can easily destroy these types of toys within seconds and also has a dangerous habit of eating/swallowing some soft items)**

Q **My dog is not interested in toys, tug or whip it. Would be grateful for any help to get her to play?**

Q **My dogs don't play with toys - at all! They want food and then they want to be left alone. They're not affectionate and they're not "players". How do I stimulate these behaviours?**

Q **Our best toys are food related, a sort of clam toy and a ball that can be stuffed. They're the only toys she's reliably interested in, and even then, they have to have food in them. Is that okay for toy switch?**

A When dogs are new to playing in this way they have yet to learn where the "target" part of the toy is. The more exciting we make this target area in terms of look and feel for your dog, the easier it will be to help them learn which is the bite area. We would always advise to keep food and toy play separate to start, as food smell or the expectation of food in your hand alone, can lead to inappropriate biting. With a dog who isn't interested in toys – you absolutely do not have to play with them. In so many of the games, food can be switched out. By varying the way you deliver the food (bouncing, catching, chasing, following, bowling, in a food toy) you will encourage your dog to become mentally more flexible and play with you!

Q **I am struggling to get my dog to play the games involving toys when on a lead. How do I fix this? He will play on a harness, but once the lead is added, he is not interested in playing any more.**

A Great question! We would be thinking about your dog's mental flexibility. Your dog has very likely learned that playing "never" happens on leash so they automatically think "that cannot possibly be what she wants?" In our experience, ditching the routine so that you pop a harness and leash on at random times of the day, using a long line and take away any expectation of playing in a certain way can really boost on-lead play.

Q **I don't have any identical toys. Is it absolutely necessary or will a similar toy do?**

A We'll leave this one up to you as it really depends on what you are seeing from your own dog. If your dog has two similar toys that they love pretty much the same then sure, for some dogs this will definitely work! Other dogs might be a little less flexible so may need identical! We love an excuse to buy new dog toys though!!!

> "By varying the way you deliver the food (bouncing, catching, chasing, following, bowling, in a food toy) you will encourage your dog to become mentally more flexible and play with you!"



Q **I have a gun-dog breed who I want to keep their soft mouth – is there a way to still play tugging games and keep this?**

A Sure there is! We love working with our super Labradors who can tug like demons, yet also bring back birds untouched! The key here is to use different toys for tugging or carrying games and have different cues so that your dog understands what you want.

Q **My dog keeps pushing the kibble back into my hand and won't take it from my hand. If I drop the food or throw it, she will take it. Is that okay?**

A Think about why your dog might be doing this behavior. Is she head shy? Could you teach her to catch instead? That way you aren't teaching her the value is in the floor/wherever you throw the kibble, but it is still coming from your hand. Try Aeroplane feeding to see if this way makes them more willing to take the kibble!



Q **I am trying to play the games, but my dog will only do them when I have food in my hands – help!**

A Your dog is learning new skills and working with you. It is really important for their learning that we reward them well and with something that they value. We Ditch the Bowl! To increase our daily opportunities to give our dogs the best rewards for games that we want them to learn.

GAME PLAY QUESTIONS

LEARNING TO PLAY



> **“Did you know that the more varied and unpredictable you make your days, the EASIER your dog will adapt to change...”**

Q **I am playing the game “Don’t put Baby in a Corner”. Why does my normally enthusiastic puppy, after eating the treat, just lies down and, as a result, doesn’t bound back to me?**

A Try playing other proximity games such as Orientation game, Proximity Vortex, Magic Hand, even two feet on (but on you!). You could also try using a toy instead of food to get that bounce back, then progress to food at a later date.

Q **Playing happiness, what are classed as happy behaviours?**

A Happy behaviours are going to be unique to your dog! You may find that some of them are a little more socially acceptable than others. Some of our dog’s happy behaviours include: Jumping in the air, spinning, digging, sit pretty, barking, leg weaves and middle! Take the time to observe your dog when they are happy, but not “over aroused” and you will find their “happy behaviours”.



Q **Will these games help with pulling on lead?**

A Yes, absolutely! Although this course isn’t specific to loose leash walking, it is certainly a common struggle that we see, especially where squirrels or other small furries are involved! All of the games which promote value in proximity to you will certainly also help with stopping pulling. In addition to adding value for keeping close to you, there are also games for helping your dog to disengage from distractions – plant pot prison is just one great one to promote this!

Q **Is it OK to be working so much on proximity when I want independent searches for my dog training for search and rescue? How about when I am running with my dog – will I always be tripping over them now?**

As the concepts of proximity and independence aren’t mutually exclusive then playing games which keep your dog close wouldn’t have a negative effect on any sport or work that requires your dog to work independently. We have had thousands of dogs through our online and in person teaching where the goal is to work independently to some degree and we also work our own dogs in areas like Gundog, Tracking, Herding and Agility. If anything, we find the value they have to come into proximity when asked is a huge BONUS!

Q **How do you end the session of games?**

A This is such a thoughtful question and if you are here looking for the answer to this – seriously well done on your learning! We would look to bring arousal down at the end of the session by scatter feeding, giving a long lasting chew or stuffed bone, or doing a little calm massage, perhaps paired with a crate or boundary. Remember that clipping on the leash should never be a signal in itself for the game to stop. Be flexible and play both on and off leash!

Q **How often in a day should we play these games and we mix the games up or stick to one game a day? How do I know if my dog is full up if they aren’t having regular meals? With “ditch the bowl” should we stick to mealtimes or can we just play any time?**

A These are really common questions and they are basically all asking the same thing – “What should my days look like now?” and the short answer is really that the opportunities are endless. Did you know that the more varied and unpredictable you make your days, the EASIER your dog will adapt to change and the calmer they will be generally? This is because they no longer feel as though they have to predict everything that might happen and can just default to the idea that not a lot happens until the moment you decide to play! You can play anywhere, anytime to suit you and your dog. Rather than the idea of them getting “full” it might be more helpful to think of your days as providing all nutritional requirements! If you are adding in a few treats to play games, you would simply remove a little of their regular food.

Q **My dog is deaf or blind. Will these games work for them?**

A Absolutely! We have worked with many deaf and blind dogs through our online and in-person businesses, and found that they love the games just as much as other dogs! Many of the games can be adapted to use visual or verbal signals, and of course, smell! Your deaf or blind dog will already be used to this way of communicating, so in some ways, you have a head start! Where we use verbal markers such as “yes”, we find some owners will still use verbals but many use a “thumbs up” to mark something right – just have fun with it and don’t think too much on whether your dog can see you mark or not as long as they are playing! We love games like “Paint the town red”, “catch me if you can” and “magic hand” for deaf dogs as they have really clear signals for what you’d like your dog to do!



Q **I am becoming sexier the squirrel to my dog by playing these games, but will my dog do this for another family member out on a walk if they haven’t played with them?**

A We often find that once family members come out on a walk with you and see how much easier and smoother things are going that even the toughest “you want me to do WHAT” cookies crack! Remember here that not only are we boosting relationship but also enhancing our dog’s personality through games. So although the relationship element may still be a “work in progress” for your friend or family member, your dog’s slowly changing personality will shine through and help them out!



Q **What would you do if you have a dog that engages with you, but not really the games?**

A First off – be happy that I had such a great relationship with my dog! With introducing the games, as your dog has such a great relationship with you, they might actually find food a little punishing to start off with because their "super" reward is to be with you! So games like "catch me if you can" build on these strengths in your relationship. Let your dog catch you and just celebrate. Do what usually makes your dog super happy! They may just feel like handing them some kibble or a small treat is a bad deal when they could have fuss and praise for example! You can look at ditching the bowl alongside this and we have included a couple of super links below to help you out!

Q **I think I have messed up a game – how do I fix this?**

Q **My dog has started not wanting to go into certain rooms in the house. They are backing up and barking. What can I do? What game can I play?**

Q **Am becoming frustrated that my dog won't come to me or near me to play the games. What game can I play to make them come to me?**

A The most important thing is for you to mentally "let it go". Games are fun and should never make you feel like you are under pressure as this is likely to make your dog feel the pressure too. Take a break, re-visit the game and start again from scratch rewarding your dog for what you like along the way! It is super, super important to listen to your dog and remember, if you are really having a struggle – the Facebook community is always there to support you. Adding a video of you playing can so often help get the feedback you really need!



Q **How would you split up the games for a multi dog household?**

Q **Is it best to play with both dogs at a time or just one?**

A You are free to decide which dogs play games, which dogs rest and which dogs don't have a turn just now! The Calmness Triad will really help you out here as you can keep your dogs rotating around it to ensure you have a base level of calmness in your home.

Q **I feel like I am failing at the games – my dog just wants to do anything except play with me or if they do play, even something like a leaf falling distracts them – HELP NEEDED!**

A Firstly, you are learning a new skill yourself and then teaching it to a different species! Give yourself a break and focus on what you ARE doing well which right now is embarking on a new journey to skyrocket your relationship with your dog and create an awesome new unstoppable team. Abraham Lincoln FAILED to get elected as president multiple times – that was his journey to a place in the history books for multiple extraordinary successes. Most importantly: You only fail when you stop trying!

> "...handing them some kibble or a small treat is a bad deal when they could have fuss and praise for example!"



Q **My dog is OK playing the games in an open area like my garden or the park, but won't play inside my home?**

A It is great that you have noticed this and we have a few thoughts on perhaps why this is the case...First off, it could be that you have created your home as a "calm" space and your dog is so used to this that they're questioning why you have suddenly changed the rules! Next, it could be that they lack a little bit of confidence or are losing their sight and worry about bumping into things. Perhaps it's a little noisy or chaotic for them inside your home and they prefer the extra quiet space to think? Whatever the answer is, we would recommend just trying some very simple games first – how about "paint the town red" keeping the "paintbrush strokes" quite short and feeding often!

GAME PLAY QUESTIONS

PLANT POT PRISON

Q When I play the flower pot prison game my dog becomes very static. How can I get him to be more responsive?

Q When playing Plant Pot Prison, if I don't lift the pot my dog just starts sniffing around my hand or the pot for food. Should I try to redirect his attention or is it OK when he disengages but still remains focused on the pot?

Q Is it okay to go back a step when the dog won't back off?

Q We managed the game a couple of times, but he disengaged so much he just walked away as soon as I put the treat under the pot? How do you keep the dogs attention?

Q I can't get my dog to back up? How do I get them to do that? They will just sit or lie next to it?

Q If your dog starts pushing the item around, do you stop them or leave them to it?

A EASY WINS are your friend here - The idea with this game is that the dog disengages from the pot in some way, but for that pot to represent something "real life" in terms of distractions you first need desire. It sounds like you may be missing some desire in this game. I would use something that is fairly high value, play when your dog is quite hungry and stay at stage 1 of the game (or go back to stage 1) where you are not lowering the pot at all. Lots of very easy wins are often the answer here! Once you move to the next stage, they are really going to desire what is under there and sniffing around your hand for food is normal, simply wait them out until they offer something different – even if that is just stare at the pot, sit or lying next to it... it's a start! Try not to be tempted to redirect or interfere with your dog learning how to disengage themselves as they will come to expect that you will always be there to interrupt them in real life too which is really impractical!

> "Try not to be tempted to redirect or interfere with your dog learning how to disengage themselves as they will come to expect that you will always be there to interrupt them"



Q How do you call your dog away using their recall cue? Do you treat them when they come to you or do you turn them back to the object and give them the object?

A You can use their recall cue. We like to mix it up and will sometimes use an exciting noise...PRO level...you could just run and see where the value is – is it with you or is it with the food! Just as with the cue, you can also mix up where you reward – you can reward with you to increase their value to be with you or race straight back to the pot and uncover it for them! The first stage, building desire, is so key here!





GAME PLAY QUESTIONS

CATCH, MIDDLE, MAGIC HAND & MIDDLE ON THE MOVE



Q **How can I use two paws up or Middle in a new environment?**

A I think firstly it is really useful to understand the idea of "new environment" for your dog. If you move from your kitchen to your lounge to your bedroom you are moving into new environments. Each time you transition it is super useful to open a new "conversation" with your dog. With two paws up you can take a small item with you and for middle simply ask for the behaviour once you arrive, whether they are able to perform it, how they take the food and how readily they do so will give you a real insight into your dogs' arousal level and emotional state. It will ensure that you gauge whether adding in more excitement or arousal at this point is a good idea or whether instead you could opt for some calmness. While you are out and about both two paws up and middle can be used as boundaries to anchor your dog to something in the environment or in to you for protection. Middle also makes for a powerful recall behaviour!



Q **Magic hand – My dog just keeps sitting. How can I keep her in a stand position?**

A One of the most common struggles we see with Magic Hand is the owner not rewarding the dog fast enough or often enough so they have time to think about the fact that the owners hand has gone in the air. Many dogs' initial choices on this are either to sit down or to jump at the hand – neither of which we are looking for here! It is OK for your dog to not catch straight away and then go snuffling around on the floor for food – in fact if they do and then re-focus on to you that is super powerful learning for your dog!

Q **What age should I teach my dog to catch should puppies be catching?**

A With puppies, the way they develop skills can be really varied depending on their age and stage. Playing "catch" is about so much more than simply catching the food. Young puppies can always try the game, and if they are not yet ready, just make a note to revisit in a few weeks time! There are plenty of amazing games that very young puppies can really excel at such as very easy versions of "paint the town red" or "tornado". These are super starters for puppies alongside middle!

Q **Movement Middle Question – My dog just keeps sitting down and won't move with me. How do I fix it?**

Q **Middle question – My dog won't weight shift with me. What should I do?**

Q **My dog keeps going into a sit when trying to do middle move how to be move it on and keep them standing?**

A Reviewing the video is always a great place to start when you are struggling. Start with the "middle" video from Day 12 (Conversation Starters) and be sure you have a great "middle" game with your dog standing. Remember to lure your dog around and feed – if you are finding your dog is sitting down then you might want to adjust where you feed to be slightly lower. Remember to release your dog out of position before they have a chance to sit! If you're struggling to get your dog to move with you then we would always top up "middle" game first and then revisit both "magic hand" and "middle on the move" another time!

> "...if you are finding your dog is sitting down then you might want to adjust where you feed to be slightly lower"

Q **My dog is very comfortable with middle, would you still lure in position or would you use a signal word?**

A This is awesome news! The answer is you can be flexible on it – It really is up to you... some students prefer to add a verbal cue and this can be really useful when using it as a recall behaviour, but equally others are happy to keep luring or use a mix of both.



Q **Anyone got any tips on how I can get my dog to catch they really aren't getting it?**

A Perseverance, fairly large easily seen pieces of food – cubed raw meat or cooked chicken both work well for learner catchers! Keeping your hand at the same height each time and letting your dog adjust to your hand and not adjusting your hand to the dog may help you.



Q **My dog offers some of the games like 'Middle' without being asked – can I take advantage of this in some way?**

A Yes, ABSOLUTELY! Whenever your dog offers a behaviour or game that you like you can reward it with food, toys or verbal praise. This will help your dog really come to understand what you like and want more of in future! There will come a point where you might want to put a game like 'Middle' on cue to stop your dog from zooming into middle at awkward moments! Once you do this, you would then stop rewarding any games that are offered without a cue.

GAME PLAY QUESTIONS

GAME SPECIFICS



Q **What does the game "This is my SEXY side" help with?**

A Do you struggle with poor recall, chase, pulling on leash, jumping up, running off, going to greet other dogs or people, or escaping through doorways or gates? Sexy side can form part of your armoury of games to turn any of these common struggles into strengths!

Q **Conversation starter question – I would like to get two feet on an object like a bowl, but how do I train this from the start? How would I get it so that my dog didn't sit when they do this please?**

A There are two main approaches to this game; you can look to use "shaping" where you reward your dog trying successive approximations of the behaviour that you want. However, we find that using food to lure them up onto the object works just as well for most dogs and owners. In situations where you are getting an additional unwanted behaviour such as a sit or down with two feet on we would definitely recommend luring and feeding on the object. Try to keep your dog moving and not look for too much duration at first – you can release them by throwing a piece of food away from the object and be ready to lure them back on again. We would recommend starting with something which has a stable, non slip surface to give your dog added confidence.



"You can look to use "shaping" where you reward your dog trying successive approximations of the behaviour that you want..."



Q **What are your top tips on treat delivery for games like typhoon and tornado?**

A With games like Tornado and Typhoon you are able to mix up when you deliver the reward to your dog depending on how you're feeling and what you'd like to see more of! If your biggest struggle right now is your dog running off or pulling on leash then you might want to reward mostly near to your body as your dog is turning, but if it is more something like recall then you might want to practice rewarding out in front of you so that they are practicing turning back to you for more games.

Q **Isn't it true that large dogs don't like running between legs, or being around legs, as they have to duck down?**

A We'll be honest here and say that this isn't something that we've found with our students once their dogs have a good level of confidence and optimism. Games like Tornado and Magic Hand get your dog used to being around your legs and maybe a little two feet up to build some general confidence! That said, remember that not all games HAVE to be for you and your dog at this stage, it may just be that you build confidence and value for proximity and the rest comes later!



Q **Are these games different to any of the other courses that you offer?**

A The 25 Day Squirrel Challenge was created to give back to the dog owning and training community at a really challenging time for all of us! All of the games are newly filmed and we have included some of our newest e-books just for you! We are always innovating and creating so of course there is a lot of new content here, but we also couldn't leave out a few old favourites which really are powerful in the war against the squirrel!

"...a long handle like a chaser toy will allow you to let your dog pull you around and hold on to the toy in a joint game rather than taking hold and going elsewhere!"

Q **I have a question on "Whip It": if my dog has health issues, should I play "Whip It"? What sort of dogs would you play "Whip It" with, and how do you go about doing it?**

A "Whip It" is a super physical game, so if you have any queries on health, then we would always advise talking to your own vet first. Although we have vets on our team, they wouldn't have access to your individual dog's notes and care. However, if you are looking to use "Whip It" to create impulse control, you could also look at "the Mouse Game".

Q **Help! My dog wants me to chase her for the toy and not the other way around like with "catch me if you can"!**

Q **My dog just stands there and looks at me. What can I do to get them to chase me?**

Q **My dog runs straight past me so quick I can't give her a treat. What can I do to make her catch me and not the environment? How do I avoid the drive-by?**

A This is actually a pretty cool struggle, because it tells you that firstly, your dog loves toys and secondly, they also love the chase game! All you need to do is to gently bring them around to our way of thinking. It might be that your dog is struggling with the "rules" that are put on the game – perhaps you could start by just restraining a little and running a few paces then letting them have the toy. Remember with your toy – choose something your dog likes but also try to be clever with it. A toy with a long handle, like a chaser toy, will allow you to let your dog pull you around and hold on to the toy in a joint game rather than your dog taking hold and going elsewhere!



Q **How do I see the dogs bucket empty? What are the signs on that?**

A All the behaviours which naturally come out of the "calm box" would indicate that your dog's bucket is empty. Calmly lying in their bed, having an appropriate long lasting chew and not barking or racing around would certainly be more obvious signs. There can be more subtle ones too like not leaping up the moment that you do or not being hyper vigilant for noises.



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