

Good Games & Bad Games

Games can be a fun way to teach basic cues, manners and self-control.

"Control the games, control the dog," -John Rogerson.

Always think about how the games you encourage could affect his manners with adults of all ages and children in his new home. Are you encouraging good manners and self control? Or out-of-control, rude behavior? Does the dog truly enjoy the game you want to play?

Bad game: "Catch me if you can"

You stomp, he runs - or worse, dog grabs something and you chase him to try to catch him to get it back. [Teaches him that he can out-run / out-maneuver you. Makes him impossible to catch if he ever gets out!] A better version is encouraging the dog to chase you, to speed up a come when called. Be careful to maintain focus on excitement levels to avoid jumping, mouthing, etc.

Good game: "Find it!"

You hide something (treat or toy) and send the dog to search. An excellent "scenting" game that relieves stress and gives good mental and physical exercise.

Bad game: "Tug of War" for keeps.

The dog leaps to grab the toy and pulls, sometimes growling, until he wrestles the toy from you, running off with the toy. This often turns into a keep away game. Increases resource guarding, snatching and competition between dog and human.

Good game: "Tug of War" with rules!

You present the toy and give the green light for the game to begin. "Wait" "Take it" "Pull!" "Drop it" The game begins and ends when you say, and when the game is over, you keep the toy until the next game! Teaches self-control. Add cues. Use tug as a reward for nice loose leash walking or for coming when called.

Bad game: "Throw the ball!"

Dog pushes his ball at you, staring intently, ordering you to "throw the ball !!!" and then snatches it just as you reach for it. When he does allow you to throw it, he dances around teasing you with it instead of delivering it to you.

Good game: "Fetch"

The game becomes a training session: "sit" "wait" "get it" "bring it" "drop" or deliver to hand or put your toys away. Interactive toys should be put away until the next game.

Bad game: Wrestling and play fighting.

OOPS! Encourages jumping up, mouthing, biting, chasing, and pits the dog's strength against the person. No teasing, roughhousing. A dangerous game when played with children or grandma. Always treat the dog with the same respect you expect him to show you.

Good game: Tricks!

Tricks teach you to be a better trainer and your dog to be a better learner, Exercise your dog's mind! Teach your dog to sit up, roll over, shake hands, or even balance a biscuit on his nose!

Great game: Mind Games.

Build brain power! Encourage games that use his senses, his problem solving ability, games that help him learn..

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