



NEW DOG OWNER TRAINING PROGRAM

GOOD GAMES; BAD GAMES

The information in this handout is intended as a general guide only

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Games can be a fun way to teach leadership and control

"Control the games; control the dog"

- British behaviourist John Rogerson

The kinds of games you play and how you play them will directly influence your dog's behaviour. A large number of behaviour problems seen in adult dogs can be traced back to the games they played as puppies. Do the games you play with your puppy encourage grabbing, biting or chasing?

"Having a dog is largely a matter of teaching the dog self-control. A good dog - and a safe dog around children - sits when he wants to jump, resists when he wants to take, and releases what he wants to hold onto. Anything you can do to foster that kind of control is for the best. Everything you do with your dog teaches him something! Make sure that the games you play foster the behaviours and attitudes you want ... Good games promote cooperation and control." - Sarah Wilson, Good Owners, Great Pets

Bad game: 'Catch me if you can'

You stomp, he runs - or worse, dog grabs something and you try to catch him to get it back (this is a possessive power trip for the dog. It teaches him that he can out-run/ out-smart/ out-maneuvre you. It makes him impossible to catch if he ever gets out!)

Good game: 'Hide and Seek'

You hide and the dog searches until he finds you. This teaches the dog to come when called and how to find you when he can't see you. You can also hide a toy or a biscuit and encourage him to find it - this is an excellent "scenting" game!

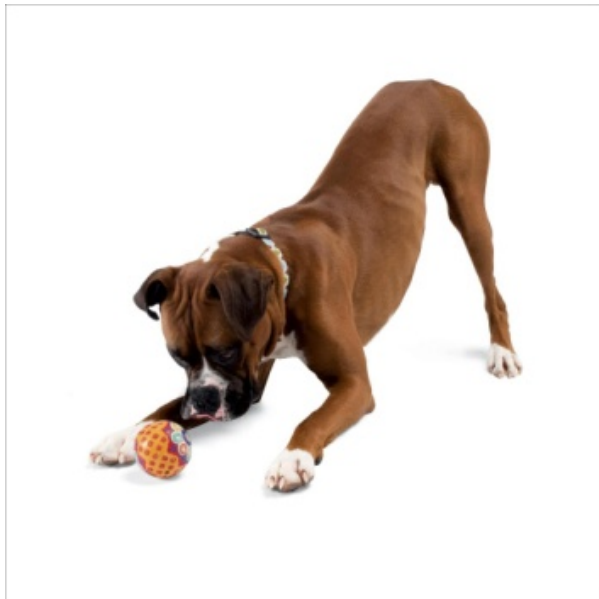
Bad game: 'Tug of War' (for keeps)

The dog wrestles the toy from you, sometimes growling, and wins, running off with the toy. This is a major power trip and confidence builder for your dog. It often turns into a 'catch me if you can' game.



Good game: 'Tug of War' (on YOUR terms!)

You present the toy and invite the dog to play. You make all the rules! "Take it" "Pull!" "Out" The game begins and ends when you say so, and when the game is over, you keep the toy until the next game! This is a leadership exercise - use sparingly. In case of over-stimulation, end the game abruptly. This teaches self-control.



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 the ball, he dances around, teasing you with it instead of delivering it to you. Again, a power trip for the dog - it teaches him that he can give you orders.

Good game: 'Fetch'

You bring out the ball and invite a controlled game of 'fetch' - the game becomes a training session: 'sit' 'wait' 'get it' 'bring it' 'out' and you put the ball away until the next game! Pack leaders get to decide when and what the rules are and when the game ends. Always stop when the dog would like to play longer. Leave him wanting more!

Bad game: Wrestling and play fighting

A BIG NO, NO! Encourages jumping up, mouthing, biting, chasing and pits the dog's strength against the owner. This type of play is a definite ego-builder and teaches the dog he can 'run for higher office' and win.

Good game: Tricks!

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! Teach your dog the names of his toys or names of family members. Teach him to deliver notes or find your car keys!

For more information, read our handout [How to Play with Your Dog](#) or go to www.diamondsintheruff.com