

Movement Games Inside

Playing games boosts the value in you and builds your relationship, which is so crucial. It also teaches a puppy the concepts of how to choose appropriate behaviors, and manage his own behavior so you don't have to. Movement Games promote proximity, focus, impulse control, and orientation - all necessary components for good recall and loose leash walking and what I call Walking with Manners (on and off leash).

Movement Games - Bite-Inhibition and Your First Walking Games

Puppies need to learn to not jump or bite at our pants, ankles and feet when we are walking around - our bodies and clothes are not toys! For a puppy it is engaging in play, for a human it is not appropriate. Movement Games teach appropriate alternate behavior for jumping and nipping while you walk, reinforce "four on the floor," help a puppy get used to collars and leashes, and are the foundation for good manners. They will also teach you how to respond and understand and work with arousal levels which perpetuate these natural puppy behaviors.

Movement Game: Walk N' Drop

You can practice in a hallway or room. Have some small treats ready in either a pocket or treat pouch. You are going to use this game to teach your pup to follow you, as well as to curtail jumping and any mouthing at you or your clothes/shoes.

1. Take a couple of steps (that means 2) at a slow walking pace, so as to keep excitement levels down. Use a light and happy voice if needed to coax your puppy to follow you.
2. Just before your puppy catches up to you, stop. You want to time this so that you stop walking at the distance your puppy needs to not jump or nip at your legs or feet.
3. Place treats on the floor next to you foot and point them out to your puppy. You want to do this before any inappropriate behavior - jumping, nipping, etc.
4. Just before your puppy is finishing up the treats, take a few more steps and stop.
5. Repeat several times.
6. With practice, you will them be able to wait for appropriate behavior - sit, look, standing with "four on the floor," then say your RM and praise and place a few treats on the floor at the side of your foot. Point them out to your puppy so he sees them and goes to eat them.
7. Just before your puppy is finishing up his treats, begin walking again.
8. Repeat the steps above several times.

You will want to practice this game as often as you can throughout the day for short segments with breaks in between. Once you see your puppy following you and looking relaxed, without jumping or grabbing at pants, he is ready for you to increase the number of steps you take before stopping and dropping treats. Your goal with this game is to walk the entire length of the hallway or room with your puppy and have him follow nicely, anticipating when you will stop and offer an appropriate behavior so you will drop treats.

I really want you to work on capturing appropriate behaviors when they are offered and marking and rewarding them. Help your puppy learn to manage his own behavior and make the right choices on his own, so you don't have to be cuing all the time. Additionally, your puppy is still learning cues, so they are not reliable yet anyways!

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When you can go the length of the room, create a little more excitement, either with your voice or a direction change or posture change. Choose one, and play it first so you can see how your puppy reacts and if it is a trigger for him to get excited (and get mouthy or jumpy) or if he can handle it just fine. Then work with a different one, then another, until your puppy is settled into the game in a more stimulating circumstance. He is now ready to move to the next game.

TRAINER TIPS:

1. **The Active Puppy:** If you have a very active, exuberant puppy who is just very mouthy or jumpy, when you stop, toss the treat away from you so your puppy has to turn around and move away from you to go get it. Make sure that you time this so you toss before your puppy catches up to you. Say you RM while your puppy's paws are still on the floor, then toss away from you. Once your pup starts to settle or understand how this game works, you can then work on dropping treats at your feet. You can end the game with play with one of the toys as a final reward.
2. **Morning Energized "Bunnies:"** For first thing in the morning, when your puppy's battery is full and he is ready to go, you will want to use this game so you can get down the hall to let your pup outside for morning potty time and for getting things going in the morning. Strategically place containers of kibble/treats around the house, so that you can be ready to play wherever you are. Keep some in your bedroom, at the end of the hall, etc. Train the behavior you want in real life situations.
3. **Persistent Tuggers:** For those puppies that get a hold of your clothes and don't let go, use a collar grab. Hold the collar and make it so that your puppy can no longer create tension and pull on your clothing - it will save your clothes and make it boring for your pup. When he lets go, praise your puppy and then toss a few treats away from you for him to get. The tossing gives you time to move away and get more treats to begin playing the Walk n' Drop Game.
4. **Be Proactive:** Start this game before your puppy has the desire to mouth on you. Play at those times you know your pup has a hard time with self control. Stop before your pup does the jumping or mouthing. Take charge and teach and reward the behaviors you do want, and prevent the rehearsal of the ones you don't.

Movement Game - Follow Me!

Now it's time to put a number of concepts together! This takes focus, but with fun! Promotes proximity! Impulse control! Teaches great default behavior for manners. It is a core game for relationship and value in you! This game should be played often, with your puppy, adolescent and adult dog.

Now, all treat rewards come from your hand close to your body. Reinforce the value of proximity! You will again play with ***capturing - marking and rewarding any appropriate behaviors your puppy chooses. Do not use cues!***

Movement Games Inside

Practice this game off leash and inside first. This game will apply to everyday life when you are walking around the house and your puppy is free to move around with you.

1. Have your rewards ready.
2. Take a few steps, encouraging your puppy to follow you (you can also use an Attention Sound or your puppy's name - vary it). Reward your puppy when he catches up to you and is near you.
3. Take a few more steps and do the same. This is essentially the Pick Me Game, but you are now moving about. You are rewarding for proximity.
4. Now take more steps, moving in different directions - forwards, backwards, side to side, circles, etc. and every few moments stop. Say your RM and reward your puppy for good default behavior choices:
 1. eye-contact
 2. staying near you
 3. sitting (either in front or at your side)
 4. following you
 5. turning to you
 6. Four on the floor...
 7. Reward anything that reinforces proximity (being close to you), foundation behavior (sit, look), orientation (turning around to face you or coming back to you).
5. Have fun with this game. Use a happy voice to encourage your puppy to follow you and keeps things playful.
 1. Practice using your pup's name (mark and reward eye-contact)
 2. Practice your Attention Sounds
6. Bite-Inhibition: This game is also for teaching impulse control with mouthing. So practice stopping to prevent arousal mouthing. Timing is important. Same goes for jumping.
7. Remember that play is a great reward. Experiment with toys, too. Not all puppies are good at playing with toys, but this would be a valuable desire to build. Flexibility in rewards is important.