

Movement Games Outside

Taking Movement Games Outside

Find a quiet and safe place outside to play, like your backyard or patio. When practicing these games outside, you are going to be competing with more distractions. If you are not in a secure area, have your puppy on leash. Using a long line is very useful for this situation, for it gives your puppy more room to move about and therefore better opportunity to learn the behaviors you are targeting. Practice keeping the long line out of the way of your puppy's face so she is less tempted to grab it, keep the long line loose so it does not prompt your pup by pulling on her, and keep it free from tangling with objects in the area. You want your puppy to follow you because she is cued by your body and voice, not by the leash.

Movement Game: Walk and Drop - Outside

Have some small treats ready in either a pocket or treat pouch. This game can be played with a regular length leash if needed.

1. Take a 1-2 steps at a 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. Wait for your puppy to offer an appropriate behavior - sit, look, standing with "four on the floor," and 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.
4. Just before your puppy is finishing up his treats, begin walking again.
5. Repeat the steps above several times.
6. Move in random directions. Use your Attention Sounds or your puppy's name to help you maintain focus with your pup. This is going to look a lot different than when you played inside - distractions are everywhere.

You will want to practice this exercise as often as you can for short segments with breaks in between. Once you see your puppy walking near you and looking relaxed, without jumping or grabbing at pants, he is ready for you to increase the distance you walk before stopping and dropping treats. Your goal with this game is to walk the entire length of the yard 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.

Trainer Tip

- If you have a very distractible puppy, put him on leash and give him a moment to sniff around. Then, play on leash for the first few go rounds of playing the game. Once you see better focus, take the leash off.
- If one of your puppy's favorite activities is too sniff, don't place the treats on the ground. Instead, keep them in your hand and rest for fingers on the ground by your foot and allow your puppy to eat the treats out of your hand. You will want to capture and reward a lot of eye-contact to keep the nose off the ground!!!

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Follow Me! Game - Outside

Practice this game off leash outside if you can, in a secure area. If the area is not secure, put a leash on your puppy but hold it just to keep it out of the way. Keep it loose. This game is great for playing in the the yard, eventually even including the front yard.

1. Have your rewards ready.
2. Take a few steps backwards, encouraging your puppy to follow you. Reward your puppy when he catches up to you and is near you.
3. Take a few more steps and do the same.
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 - this could be eye-contact, being near you, sitting near you (either in front or at your side), following you, etc. 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. Use a happy voice and Attention Sounds to keep your puppy's attention - you are now competing with distractions for your puppy's focus.
6. Once your puppy is doing well at following you and choosing good default behavior, begin to play Speed It Up, Slow It Down. Stop moving if your puppy starts jumping and wait for your puppy to choose an appropriate behavior you can mark and reward. Bring it back down to help your puppy calm down, then build more slowly so your puppy can earn to manage excitement levels.
7. Over time you will change your criteria with excitement - you will only say your RM and reward with treats if, when you ramp it up, your puppy remains calm and doesn't jump or nip. If you are okay with the jumping, but keeping paws off you (that is what my expectations are: a dog can jump, but paws stay off, he gives space, and no mouthing or trying to take things out of hands without permission) - that will be your criteria.

Insight - Sometimes jumping is not about excitement but worry. More sensitive puppies will jump at legs because they are feeling insecure, worried, or fearful. This can be the case when outside or out and about. So get to know your puppy and be mindful of your surroundings. If you feel your puppy is jumping because he is concerned, DO NOT PUNISH!!! Take your puppy to a quieter place. You can also stop playing the Follow Me game and do DMT. Be your pups emotional anchor so he will trust you and knows he can turn to you for help if needed.

The jump that the little black-tri puppy does in the Follow Me! Game outside on the grass at the end is out of worry. A noise happened (we were at a track meet and the races started) which made her turn her attention away from me. I used my Attention Sound to get her attention back to me again, but she was worried and jumped for help. We stopped playing, I did some DMT with her, and then we settle in a nice spot to chill for a little while. It is important to know what the jumping is happening for this reason. Jumping out of worry needs to be handled differently than jumping out of excitement. You want to be a safe place for your pup and be a good emotional anchor for her.

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Trainer Tip

- **ADD OTHER GAMES:** You have a number of games that you can play here. Walk n' Drop and Follow Me are just two, but Attention Sounds, Name, Orientation, Pick Me! are other games that you should be putting into your time outside with your pup so she responds to all of them.