

PLAYING TUG – CHEAT SHEET

GOAL: To play a game with the dog which incorporates fun, training, and exercise. Please use this sheet for a quick reminder of how we recommend playing tug with a dog who already knows how to tug. If you would like to view the detailed version, please use the following pages for reference.

GENERAL RULES:

- You are the source of FUN- playing energetically with the dog when you both have the toy (vigorous tugging)
- The dog must never make (mouth) contact with your hands or other body parts, must always drop the toy when asked, and must not 'take' the toy until the cue is given. Breaking the rules results in a temporary end to the game (and fun), for a minimum of one minute. Put the toy out of reach of the dog, and ignore the dog during the break.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Get the dog excited about the toy, and then say 'take it' and allow dog to put toy in mouth and tug on the rope.
2. Play vigorously.
3. Cue the dog to 'drop it'.
4. If the dog won't release the tug rope, try:
 - Putting a tasty treat right in front of the dog's nose
 - Tossing several treats onto the ground
 - Decreasing your counter-pull on the toy as much as possible
 - Squeaking a squeaky toy (which is kept in your pocket for this purpose)
 - Dropping the tug toy
5. When the dog releases the toy, give the dog the treat and ask the dog to sit. Once the dog sits, immediately encourage the dog to 'take it'.

HELPFUL HINT

- With a dog who is not highly motivated to tug, either don't require the dog to sit, or give a treat and then encourage the dog to 'take it' again.

TUG TRAINING (DETAILED)

GOAL: To engage the dog in a mentally stimulating activity that expends energy through the combination of play and training. This game also teaches shelter dogs to control themselves and inhibit their behavior at a time when they are very excited.

GENERAL RULES:

- You are the source of FUN. Play energetically with the dog when you both have the toy (vigorous tugging).
- The dog must never make (mouth) contact with handler's hands or other body parts, must always drop the toy when asked, and must not 'take' the toy until it is offered. Breaking the rules results in a temporary end to the game (and fun). Put toy out of reach of the dog, and ignore the dog the break.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. 'Tease' the dog with tug rope. Entice the dog with toy- hold the tug rope and move it back and forth in front of the dog, encouraging the dog to chase and leap after it.
2. Excitedly say 'take it' and allow the dog to put the toy in their mouth and tug on the rope. If the dog is hesitant, praise after the dog puts the toy in their mouth.
3. If the dog takes the toy before you say take it, 'play dead' with the toy. Reduce counter pull as much as possible and skip to step 5 (don't play tug).
4. Play vigorously (move it around back and forth or apply steady counter pressure) for approximately 15 seconds to one minute.
5. Cue the dog to 'drop it'. Follow the instructions for 'drop it', below.
6. If the dog won't release the tug rope, try:
 - Tossing several treats onto the ground
 - Decreasing your counter pull on the toy as much as possible
 - Squeaking a squeaky toy (which is kept in your pocket for this purpose)
 - Dropping the tug toy
7. Once the dog releases the toy give the dog the treat and immediately return to step 2.

INCORPORATING TRAINING CUES

1. Once dog is quickly and regularly releasing the tug toy when asked, start asking the dog to perform a cue ('sit') before gaining access to the toy.
2. As the dog gains proficiency at the game, you can ask the dog to perform multiple cues in a row, before allowing the dog to 'take it'.

(next)

DROP IT

1. When done with a tugging bout, hold a high value treat directly in front of the dog's nose and wait.
2. When the dog releases the tug toy, feed him the treat.
3. Allow him to 'take it' again.
4. Once the dog starts releasing the tug toy every time you put the treat in front of his nose, start saying 'drop it' before presenting the treat.
5. Once the dog starts releasing the tug toy as soon as you say 'drop it', start producing the treat as a reward (i.e., comes from your treat bag) instead of as a lure (put right in front of dog's nose).
6. Some dogs may be more motivated to 'drop it' with a second toy as a lure, instead of treats.



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