



ALL THINGS

TUGGING!



Thank you for joining us here at Dogs That

This eBook is a compilation of Tugging Tips for You.

These hints have one thing in common: they are all easy to use, and most can improve your dog training instantly.

We look forward to sharing many more tips throughout this coming year with you! We love to share our positive dog training knowledge with humans and their dogs worldwide.

I trust you will enjoy training success in utilizing these tips with your canine companion.
Happy Training!

Susan

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Of all the questions I have been asked during my career in dog training, I would have to say that tugging would be the hottest topic of all.

My students' top tugging complaints are:

- *My dog only loves... food (or balls!).*
- *My dog will not tug and looks sad when I try to make him.*
- *My dog will only tug at home.*
- *My dog does tug but has no joy, and I cannot use tugging as a reward.*

Knowing trainers were struggling with teaching their dog to tug inspired me to seek out answers to help. My passion in dog training is to make every behaviour I train into a "GAME". This includes **TUGGING**.

Working through the struggle to teach tugging will raise your own dog training to a new level. Conquering challenges is what brings each trainer new knowledge for the future. Let me share the keys to creating a great game of tug between you and your dog!



Why Does My Dog Need to Tug?

You may be asking yourself why is tugging so important anyway? Personally, I believe ALL dogs should learn how to tug with their owners. Here are my top 4 reasons why I think, without question, interactive tug games are a worthwhile investment in your time.

1 Ask Your Dog To Tug = A Dog That Listens

You ask your dog to do something... and he DOES!

Tugging gives those of us who want to train without verbal or physical correction, an easy way to teach our dogs that "you must do as I ask no matter what." Once a dog rehearses "I don't want to and "I don't have to" (or what I affectionately refer to as "don't wanna, don't hafta" moments), he learns that he always has choices when you ask him to do something. The kind of relationship I want with my dogs is if I ask you to do something, I will make it fun and worthwhile to follow through with the choice I want. Tugging helps dogs learn this quickly. I use tug early on in my puppy's life to get him to make the tough choices. "Yes you may want to tug with this toy but I am asking you to tug with this new one" or "Yes, you may want another cookie, but you must tug on this toy." I purposely set up "don't wanna don't hafta" moments outside of any important training so my dogs learn at a young age that saying "don't wanna" to me is never an option and in the future will make tough decisions easily based on these simple tug lessons.

2 Ask Your Dog To Stop = A Dog That Listens

When you end the game with "that's enough" your dog learns the game is over.

My dogs learn "games of tug" are F-U-N, but when the game is over, my "finished playing" cue ends the game. This helps to build the understanding that there are contingencies to my attention and the fun. Soon rules for "getting the toy" and "releasing the toy" are added. The model carries through to my household; no matter how much he wants something, he must live within the boundaries of my rules. No need for any kind of intimidating or harsh training, dogs learn to stop when I say "stop", "play" when I say "play"; all learned from the parameters of the game of tug.

Tugging is an amazing dog training tool and a skill that be cultivated with work on your part!

3 You Start & Stop the Game = A Dog That Listens

Working Through Arousal and Distractions.

Eventually, through the game of tug I will add the contingency of a control behaviour like "sit" or "down". I will build the dog's tugging up to a point where I withhold the tug until he "offers" one of these two control behaviours. This helps to build the understanding of contingencies to fun, and my attention is what drives all of his reinforcement. We shape the dog to offer one of these two behaviours. Once we have a reward history for a good choice while tugging we can then channel the dog's understanding of listening to our cues. This game will help him to learn no matter how excited he gets, he must always listen to what I want him to do. Asking him to do a behaviour is the first simple distraction I add to his learning in the game of tug. The success of this simple lesson of listening and compliance to your requests while tugging can carry into all your dog training and be a life saving lesson for all dogs!

4 Creates Arousal for the Game in Dog Sports

Focus for US!

For dog sport competitors, tugging is used as a way to 'focus' our dogs on "us" and "the work". The first day a puppy comes into my household I start him tugging; it builds focus for me and allows me to have a dog listening and working at his peak performance!



10 KEYS to Create GREAT Tugging

#1 Choose an Appropriate Toy

USE A L-O-N-G FLUFFY HIGHLY ATTRACTIVE TOY!

Start the game of tug with a toy that allows distance between you and the dog. Tugging can be intimidating to many dogs. For most dogs, this intimidation can be relieved by having a longer, fluffy, easy-to-grab toy, which allows your hands to be further away from the dog's mouth. Select a soft material tug that allows the dog to sink his teeth into. When selecting, consider the age and the breed of your dog to achieve great results.

Key Tugging Tip: Pick a toy appropriate for your dog's age, size and breed. Test drive a few... one at a time!



TUG TOY PURCHASING RESOURCES:

Say Yes Toys <https://4mymerles.com/product-category-say-yes/>

Cow Milking Inflatons can be found from local dairy farmers and farm supply stores.

Crunch-N-Tug: http://www.dogdreamstoys.com/Site/Crunch_N_Tug_.html

#2 Pick the Appropriate Time of Day to Play

STUDY YOUR DOG'S BEHAVIOUR.

Your dog will give you great clues when the timing is best for him to engage in a game of tug. Be a student of his "frisky" times. A great barometer of a "frisky" or "goofy" dog is when his eyes are bright, his tail is up and wagging, and his ears are on top of his head! Is it after a bath? Is it when you arrive home from work? Work with these higher arousal times to present your toy for "play time".

Key Tugging Tip: Initiate a game of tug when your dog is highly aroused, playful, and keen to engage with you.



SILLY DECAFF! Not a natural tugging dog, Susan found what made her a tugging maniac, A FLY SWATTER!

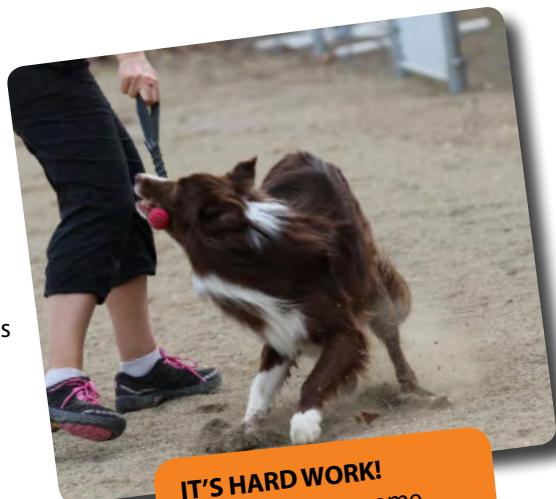


#3 Turn On Your Dog's Prey Instinct

SHOW IT ~ TURN ~ RUN!

We are encouraging your dog's emotive state, which triggers him to want to "chase and grab". Dogs come pre-wired to do this! Use quick changes of your direction or the toy's movement while engaging the dog with fast twitch motions from the handler.

Key Tugging Tip: Trigger your dog's chase drive. Use quick changes of direction. Show the toy ~ quick changes of direction ~ run!



IT'S HARD WORK!
To make the toy come alive you will have to put in physical effort and you might get a workout too!

#4 Perfect Your Mechanics

YOU WANT TO TURN ON YOUR DOG'S PREY DRIVE.

Engage your dog playfully with your touch. Use quick "push backs" or hand resistance on his chest as you show and tease the dog with the tug toy. This pressure and resistance engages the dog's opposition reflex, which when you release the pressure propels him forward toward the toy in a playful way. Quick, fast transitions from hand to hand makes the toy "prey" to the dog.

Key Tugging Tip: Turn on the dog's prey instinct through resistance and withholding of the toy while you make it moving prey.



PLAY LIKE A DOG!

Move side to side, maybe even add a few growls!

#5 Get Low and Tug Side to Side

FOR DOG'S WHO ARE LEARNING TO TUG AND PROGRESSING, REMEMBER TO PLAY TUG SIDE TO SIDE.

Playing tug side-to-side protects your dog's body while you, the handler, get low and playfully engage the dog. Watch two dogs play. One is usually planted while the other is moving side to side. Play like a dog!

Key Tugging Tip: How you tug with a dog is an important key. Protect the dog's neck and body from any jarring up and down motion by tugging side to side.



#6 Be the Prey! Encourage the Dog Toward You

BACK AWAY WHILE TUGGING!

Resist the urge to push the tug "at" the dog. This can be intimidating and counter-productive to what you are trying to achieve. Movement away from the dog but encouraging him toward you engages what? PREY DRIVE!

Key Tugging Tip: Engage the toy by backing away from the dog. Use quick twitch motions so the dog is coming to you and not backing away from you.

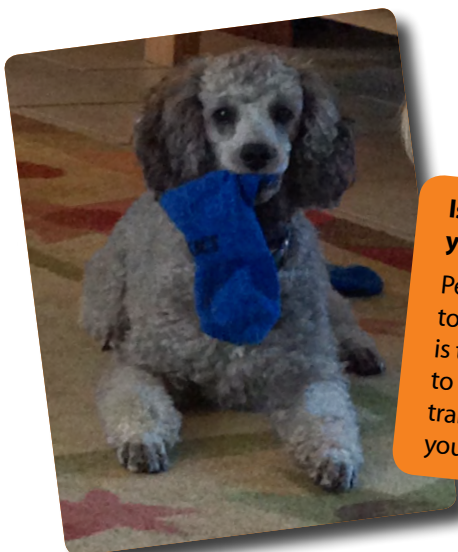


#7 Keep Your Tugging Session SHORT!

PLAYFUL, SHORT, ENGAGING SESSIONS.

Quick twitch, show it, turn, run games of engagement will keep your dog's arousal up, and his interest in the toy is maximized!

Key Tugging Tip: Keep your session short; end the game leaving the dog wanting MORE!



Is your dog trying to tell you something?

Perhaps his favourite item to carry around the house is the key to getting him to tug. Jump start your tug training with something your dog LOVES!



#8 Tug for Food-Loving Dogs

GET CREATIVE!

For the dogs who love food and are less keen to tug, here are a few fun suggestions for your tug training. All the above key tips on handler engagement, mechanics still apply. You are just creating a new and innovative toy that incorporates food.

Here are a few suggestions:

1. Present a dried beef tendon chewy for your dog to tug on.
2. Shape the dog to like to tug. This training process will have you focus on teaching the dog to pull the toy from your hands. Reward stronger and stronger pulling before rewarding with a food tidbit.
3. Food Pouch Toys. Fill a food pouch with smelly food, and just like above shape the dog to tug on the pouch to earn his reward. Evaluate the tugging. Is it genuine? Is it getting stronger? You can then decide to fight your dog for the toy a bit and open the pouch. Allow the dog to dive his head/nose into the pouch and get his own reward before quickly closing up the pouch and offering it again. Make this a fun process!
4. A Food Goo Sock: Fill a sock with gooey food. Show the dog the sock, and allow the dog to get interested in the food sock. Engage the dog with short quick sessions with the sock. Finish the session by lifting the toy playfully over your head and running to the kitchen to secure it in a plastic zip bag and put it in the fridge. (Food/sock safety!) This is all part of the process to create the excitement over the toy. The next training session, make a big deal over going to the fridge and bringing the toy out again!
5. Tennis Ball with Slit: Cut a slit on one side of a tennis ball and create a hole across from the slit. Knot a piece of rope and feed the end of the rope through the slit so the knotted end holds the rope and the ball together. Now you have a ball on a rope. Squish the ball so the slit opens up. Add a few tid bits of food into the ball. When the dog engages with you and the ball on the rope, you can reward the dog with the cookies from within the ball.



Key Tugging Tip: Try one or all of the above methods to strengthen your tug behaviour. Remember, you want to build the tug behaviour! Evaluate each session and grow longer and stronger increments of tugging with your food-loving dog.





#9

Contingencies and Tugging

ASK FOR MORE ~ RECEIVE MORE!

Dogs love to work. Making tugging more contingent up a behaviour strengthens the behaviour. Adding a wee bit of work to each tug session will help your dog to learn that tugging is a reward. Work = Play and Play = Work.

Stage 1: Start with a series of a few quick little tugs (gently pulling the toy out of the dog's mouth in between) the only "contingency" would be that the dog chases the toy from one side of your body to the other before the game would start again. Gently take away the toy; put your hand on the dog's chest, and playfully slam the toy down on the opposite side of your body telling him to "get it!"

Stage 2: Next grow the criteria to include waiting until he does "something" before the toy gets slammed for another round of play. Gather the toy up at your chest and wait. At first the dog may just jump up ... that earns the reward of the tug toy once. But then quickly grow the behaviour to be something more, such as him backing away from you or him making the good choice to sit. Once the dog does "something", praise and say "get it" and turn to RUN AWAY (continuing to watch the dog to keep a connection with him). This last bit about quick changes of direction to run away is the critical bit. It is about turning "on" your dog's prey instinct...and contingent tugging is the way to get you there!



Key Tugging Tip: Contingent tugging is shaping your dog to offer you a behaviour before engaging the dog with play. It is adding "work" to the play, which makes the play even more reinforcing to the dog. Dog's love to work, and you are adding work to the criteria of play.

Work = Play
and
Play = Work!

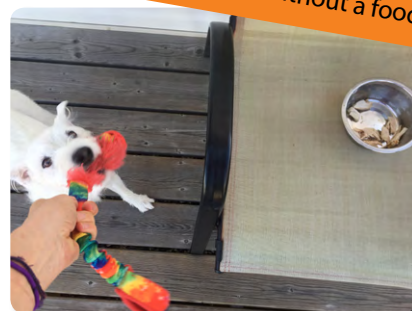
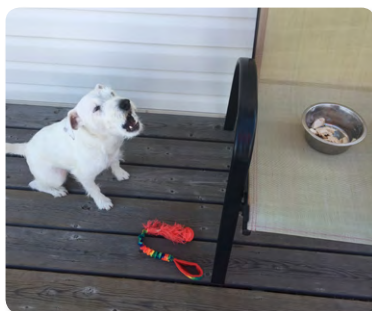
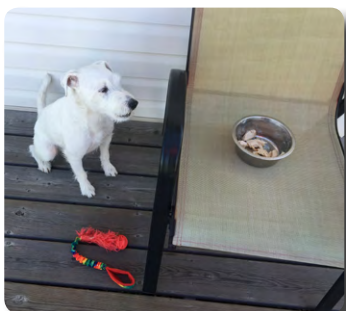


#10 Growing the Locations of His Tugging Behaviour

CHANGES OF LOCATION HELPS YOUR DOG GENERALIZE THE BEHAVIOUR TO NEW ENVIRONMENTS.

Changing locations grows the behaviour and helps strengthen the tugging behaviour under all conditions and distractions. Start adding distractions at home with this simple game:

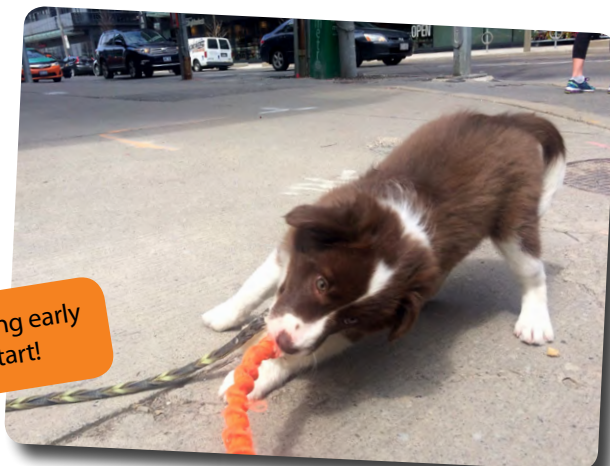
Advancing with BIG distraction!
A bowl of chicken. If this is too much, use a lower value treat, like a piece of kibble on the chair without a food dish.



In a familiar room place a piece of food on a chair (or a small bowl with food in it). Now ask your dog to tug right beside the chair. Here is where your dog learns to work through a simple distraction. If he is able to tug without challenge, add more interesting and new distractions (higher value food). We are looking to challenge the dog in a familiar location. With this simple distraction of a small amount of food, he may say "no way, the food is way more interesting than your silly game". If this happens, you will add distance away from the chair and try again. If your dog is completely distracted by the food, you may have to go to a completely new room to ask your dog to tug. When your dog genuinely forgets about the food on the chair, you can ask him to finish his game of tug and run back and give him a tidbit from the chair. You are well on your way to your dog is understanding that if ask your dog to tug even in the presence of a distraction, the game with you is more F-U-N!

Key Tugging Tip: Challenging your dog's understanding of the task at home in a comfortable environment helps him learn how to work through a "simple challenge" well before he is exposed to a bigger challenge in a new environment. Layer the learning of problem solving by pushing the understanding where he is comfortable.

Little puppy! Big city! Start tugging early with distractions and get a head start!



BONUS!

Key to Tugging: It's MINE Game!

When your dog “drops” the toy before you have ended the game yourself, here is your response: Play with the toy yourself! Throw it over your head, and have a GRAND TIME by yourself, entertaining yourself with the words... It's MINE! It's MINE! Taking the toy and raising it high as well as playing with it yourself encourages a new interest in the toy but also is a momentary loss of your attention to the dog. What do we all want? What we can't have!

Key Tugging Tip: If your dog drops the toy before “you” end your short session, resist the urge to beg the dog to re-engage with it. Play *It's Mine!* to create a new enthusiasm before offering the toy again.



REMEMBER the 10 KEYS to Create GREAT Tugging!

1. Choose an Appropriate Toy
2. Pick the Appropriate Time of Day to Play
3. Turn On Your Dog's Prey Instinct
4. Perfect Your Mechanics
5. Get Low and Tug Side to Side
6. Be the Prey - Encourage the Dog Toward You
7. Keep Your Tugging Session SHORT!
8. Tug for Food Loving Dogs
9. Utilize Contingencies and Tugging
10. Grow the Locations of Your Tugging Behaviour





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