

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG Hey, everybody. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. I am Susan Garrett, and I want to know, do you exercise your dog daily? Maybe one time a day, two times a day, three, four times a day. You might be saying, "Oh, Susan, I would love to, but I can't because ____". I want you to hold that thought because somebody like me, when you come to me and say, "I have a problem, I have a behavior problem with my dog." The first thing I'm going to say is how much exercise does that dog get? Because there is a definite link between the physical, mental stimulation your dog gets in a day and the amount of trouble the dog gets into. If you want to make sure your dog is mentally and physically stimulated, you got to get them some exercise.

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And on top of it, it's just kind. Dogs love to move. They need to move. So, when you say, "Oh, Susan, I can't because ____". I'm going to say to you, there's excuses and there's a result. Your excuses, you can keep building them up in your mind and that will justify why your dog isn't getting exercise, but let's get you some results.

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So, it doesn't matter if it's a rainy day or if you're snowed in, or if it's COVID and you're in lockdown or maybe you've had a hip replacement and you really can't move. Today, I'm going to provide you with 20 activities you can do from your home. Some of them are going to give your dog mental stimulation, some physical stimulation, some both, but after today you have no more excuses.

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I'm going to start with the ease of use and go down to things that are more complicated, but none of these games are dependent on each other or very few of them. So, you can jump right in and do game 14 without having done games 1 through 13. First game is the *search game*. And all that you do is you get a pile of cookies, hold one in your hand, grab your dog's collar, let them see the cookie, say the word 'search' and toss the cookie out on the floor, releasing the dog's collar so that they can grab the cookie. When they come back, you're just going to do it again. Start by just dropping the cookie right in front of your dog.

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And I would start with something sticky like cheese. So, cheese is great because they can see and it's not going to roll too far away. And it's a color, well ideally you don't have an orange floor, but in for most floors, it contrasts with the color of the floor, it's easy for the dog to see. Once the dog gets that, you can go to things that you can, that will roll so the dog actually has to chase. That's the search game, game number 1.

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Game number 2 is just a *game of tug*. Get your dog engaged with a game. And if your dog doesn't like toys take an old sock and put a, you know, a piece of food in that, or a bunch of food in that sock, tie a knot in it and let the dog tug with the food sock. Right. Game of tug, super easy, gets the dog engaged.



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Game number 3 is *find the cookie*. So now we have a dog that will chase for cookies. All that you're going to do is take a face cloth and put the cookie half hidden under that face cloth and let your dog even see you hide it and release them and tell them to find it. And they'll easily find that. Graduate to putting that behind a couch cushion so they have to move the couch cushion. Now game is on, you can say, find it and start hiding it in more complex places. So, the dog has to use their nose and rampage your apartment to find whatever you have hidden for them.

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This works as well if your dog has a favorite toy, like if they love tennis balls, then you can hide the tennis ball. Game number 4 is a graduation of the find it game. And you're going to take that cookie and you're going to put it inside of a toy, like a rubber Kong. So now you're hiding the Kong with the cookie inside. They're still going to smell for the cookie and then when they find it, they have the joy and excitement of trying to get that cookie out of the Kong. That's the *find it plus game*, that's game number four.

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Game number 5 is another graduation on that is you're just going to *hide the Kong alone*. And when the dog finds it, you're going to throw cookies on the floor, search, have a big celebration. "Yay. You found it." And then throw cookies on the floor and you're not hiding cookies, you're, actually they're scenting for the Kong itself.

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Game number 6 is a game I've played with all my puppies my entire life. It's called the *Smoke Ya game*. And it can start by just holding the dog back, pushing them and then running and they chase you, and you catch them that you give them their favorite toy or cookie. And that graduates to running if you have an island in the middle of your kitchen, running around the kitchen. Now be careful, you don't want to slip and fall, and you don't want your dog to slip and fall.

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So, if your floor surface is freshly polished, make sure that you're not going crazy in that environment. So, you're just getting the dog to chase you when they catch you, you give them a cookie. Um, that is the Smoke Ya game. Game number 7 is the, I call it *proprio path*. Now this is great for the dog's focus concentration, and actually is really, really good for their body as they're learning to balance. And what I do is I make— it can start off with a straight path of things you find around your house that the dog has to walk across. So, it might be, I used to use a phone book, but I don't think there's any such things as phone books. I would duct tape that phone book.

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So maybe get a couple old novels out. And pile them up, make them wide enough for the dog to step up on. And then you could put a couch cushion in there and then just a regular step stool. You could get like a, uh, a piece of four by four that the dog has to walk across imbalance on. Just make a path that the dog has to walk across and you're going to give them cookies every step of the way along that path. You could get a plank and put it between two step stools. So now they have to balance between that plank. Proprio path engages the dog, they have to focus. It's physically tough for them. They learn balance. It's awesome. Once they get really good, you can ask them to turn around and go back the other way in the midst of that path, maybe even make a right angle or two in your path.



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That's game number 7, proprio path. Game number 8, *the magic cup game*. Now this game looks impressive to your friends, but it's super easy. Take your dog's favorite cookie and hide it under a plastic cup. Just move the cup around and wait till the dog tries to get it out. Now, if you've played the search game, they they're going to know to find it.

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As soon as they make a motion towards it, open the cup and let them have it. You're going to keep doing this till they're going to bump it with their nose or their paw and that will be your indication. Open the cup as soon as you get that, now you're going to move it up, mix it around with two cups and the dog will use their nose, bump it, open it up, boom. And then you get the three magic cup game and it looks super cool, but it's really, really easy for any dog to learn.

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Game number 9 is *the yoga rollout*. Yeah, that's good for both of you, not what you think. Take out your yoga mat and put cookies in it and start rolling it up. So, you get the whole yoga mat rolled up and it's kind of bumpy and then put a cookie right at the base of the yoga mat so that the dog eats it and as they're eating it, their head may bump the yoga mat and lo and behold there's another cookie under there. So, then they bump it again and there's another cookie under there. And they keep bumping it until they've rolled out the entire yoga mat.

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Now, if you haven't played any of those other games, here's what I would suggest. You only roll up that yoga mat partway, just enough so it holds its form and only have the dog roll it out to the end. So, it's super easy for them to get the end, and then graduate to a full yoga rollout.

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Game number 10 is *walking downstairs*. Now this, my dog walks up and downstairs all the time. This sounds super easy. Put your dog on a harness and just start at the bottom step. Have them walk down one step and then walk down two steps. Walking down steps takes a lot of strength and it's difficult for dogs. They just want to run. So just start with one or two steps until you graduate to a full flight. Now, those of you who say, "Oh, Susan, I live in an apartment. I don't have steps." Take your couch cushions and make a step super easy.

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Game number 11 is the *muffin tin game*. Take them off in tin and fill it with, uh, cookies and just let your dog eat the cookies out of the muffin tin. Now, what you're going to do is you're going to start with one little muffin tin hole, put a cookie in it and put a pair of socks over it. So, the dog has to move the socks out of the way to get the cookie out. Then fill it with two holes with and two socks, and then you could fill your whole thing with socks, but only put cookies and say half of the muffin tin. You can graduate to filling it instead of socks, using something harder to move out like tennis balls, fun game keeps your dog busy. That is the muffin tin game.

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Game number 12 is *teaching the pop-up stand*. That's where you put your hand over your dog's head, they pop up to touch your hand and they land in a stand. And now I'm going to leave you a link, I'll give you full instructions on how to teach this to yourself. Just [follow the link](#) in the show notes.



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Number 13 is just *doggy push-ups*. You ask your dog to sit and then you give them cookie, ask them to down, give them a cookie. And if you've done the game before the stand game, ask them to down, give them a cookie. Now do a combination of it. Maybe they have to do two things: down, sit. Then they get their cookie. Maybe three things: sit, down, stand. Maybe four, and graduate them, they might have to do like 10 things before they get that one cookie. That's doggy push-ups.

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Game number 14, my all-time favorite game, *Crate Games*. Now this one is little involved. So, I'm going to give you a link to our [Crate Games Online](#) that you can take your dog to. It's a great activity for you and your dog and it gives you all kinds of behaviors at the end of the day.

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Game number 15 is *Hot Zone*. A dog bed— take a raised dog bed, a regular dog bed. It's ideally you don't want to do this with a dog bed without sides. It works best with sides. Give your dog a cookie for being in there and say the 'search' and throw the cookie on the floor. You want your dog to want to stay in that hot zone. When they can stay, you're going to move further and further away. And so that they are holding that position in the hot zone before you say the word search. When they get good at it, add a double hot zone. So, they go from one bed all the way to the other. You might add three of them so that's the game, they start racing between those three beds. Hot Zones, that's game number 15.

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Game number 16 is *fetch*, simple game of fetch. Throw a toy, your dog picks it up and brings it back. Now I would start by not having a long distance, especially if you have slippery floors, just have the dog go a short distance. So, drop the toy in front and tell the dog to get it, they turn around and grab it and then you guys can have a great game of tug. You can add the game where the dog goes out to get the toy and ask them to sit, before they get to it. And then they get it. So, you're adding a surprise sit in the middle of your game of fetch.

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Number 17, *hide and seek*, super easy. Either have somebody hold your dog, put your dog in the hot zone, or start from crate games. And you just go and hide somewhere in your house, somewhere easy at first, and then call the dog or release them. When they find you, have a big game of tug or something the dog loves. Stand up and run so that they play the Smoke Ya game before you give them the cookie. You could start by just giving them cookies when they find you but add it into activity where you're moving. If you can, because I remembered, some of you had your hip replacement, so you can't do the running with this one. Okay. So that was, um, the hide and seek.

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Game number 18, this one is more technical. *Getting your dog to weave between your legs*. Alright. So, stand with your dog, ask your dog to sit and then just step over for your dog so you're straddling them. Give them the release word and throw the cookie out in front saying search. So now the dog is coming from between your legs and throw the cookie towards your left foot. Do that a few times and then gradually don't give them the cookie but have them come in behind you and drop the cookie behind your left leg.



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Very quickly, you can graduate this to dropping a cookie between your legs as they've made that one loop. And you're just going to carry on and doing it to the right side. Pretty soon you'll have them weaving between your legs.

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Game number 19, I put it near the end, isn't really a difficult game, but it requires a piece of equipment. So that's why I put it near the end. It's *the ladder game*. An extension ladder along extension ladder or if you have one of those emergency fire exit ladders, those cloth ladders that you hang out your window that we'll do. Just roll it out.

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What you want to do is you're going to get your dog to walk through the ladder. Put them on leash, drop a cookie in between each rung and at first the dog just eats their way across a ladder. We only ever want the dog walking, turn them around and once they get comfortable with eating the cookies between the ladder rungs, you're only going to drop a cookie every second or third rung.

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So, you're getting them walking between the ladder. This is really, it's great proprioception, where they have to be very conscientiously moving their paws through the ladder rungs. It's great exercise for your dog and mental stimulation as well. Okay. And our final game, number 20, again, one of my all-time favorite games, we're going to teach your dog to *back up*. And it sounds very complicated, but it's really cool.

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What you do is you take your hot zones— so, this is one that you can start from the hot zone, or you can just take a couch cushion off the floor, get your dog to get on the cushion, give them cookies, release, search, go find that cookie. Do that a few times so that they recognize there's value for getting on that couch cushion or hot zone. Now, what you're going to do is you're just going to move forward and have them step off the cushion to you and you're going to give them a cookie in your hand. And then you're going to wait.

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Now, if you've given them lots of cookies for being in that zone, they may either turn around and get on it, but they may just, since they already have, they're super close, they may even have their back feet on it, they may just push back to get on that. When they do that, you're going to pull the cookie along the floor towards the hot zone. Eventually move yourself out so that they're backing up to get in that hot zone.

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The key to this game, it combines what I talked about in our last episode, [episode number 31](#) in Shaped by Dog, your placement of reinforcement, the key to games is your placement of reinforcement. You want to roll the cookie between your dog's front feet so that their head is down and they're continuing the backup motion because the cookie is rolling between their feet as they backup and they find it, "Ta da! Here's my cookie." It's a great game, but I put it at the end because it is slightly more technical.





Episode: #32

20 Easy Ways to Exercise Your Dog at Home

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Well, there you have it, 20 easy ways that you can exercise your dog regardless of where you are. Now the next time you hear somebody say, "Oh, I'd love to exercise my dog, but I can't because—" you jump in and you can tell them you've got to go check out Susan Garrett's Shaped by Dog episode number 32, 32, 32, because she's got you covered. 20 easy games that anyone can play regardless of your situation or where you're living.

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And on top of it being fun for your dog and on top of it stimulating their brain and exercising their body, it's bonding guys. And that's what help build our relationship. Make our relationship to our dogs even closer. That's it for me on Shaped by Dog. We'll see you next time on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

[How to Train Stand on Cue \(YouTube\)](#)

[Crate Games Online](#)

[Video Blog: 5 Games for Puppies](#)

[Podcast Episode 31: 5 Simple Hacks to Help Your Dog Learn Faster](#)



About Susan

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades. She has won multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events with every dog she has ever owned over the past 30 years. Susan was one of the very first dog trainers to share knowledge online when she opened her "Clicker Dogs" website many years ago. Susan has helped hundreds of thousands of people enjoy a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, blog posts, podcasts, free dog training and dog agility video series, and online dog training programs.



A natural teacher and an entertaining speaker, Susan is world renowned for her dog training knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Her understanding of how to apply science-based learning principles to both competitive and family pet dog training has been pivotal in changing how dogs are trained.

Susan is now helping many thousands of dog owners in 82 countries have the best relationship possible with their dogs. The real joy for her comes from bringing confidence to dogs and their owner through playful interactions and relationship building games that are grounded firmly in the science of how animals learn.



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