

## Structure Your Dog Training To Create Food Drive In Your Treat Fussy Dog

### Speaker Key

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### Transcript

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If you are one of the people trying to train a dog who really is indifferent about food, you may think 'this dog training is never going to work for me.' And you know what, you're probably right. Unless you have something of great value for the dog, educating that dog isn't going to work.

We need something the dog loves, something. And food is that best something that we can give them. And after today's episode, you will be well on your way to knowing exactly how to start creating food drive in your dog.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And to begin with, let's carry on with what we talked about in [episode number 269](#). Now there, I listed the things you might be doing that actually is encouraging your dog to refuse food.

So please, please go back and listen to that episode first and then follow up with this one and then the next one. Now let's do an overview of what your day and weekend life is like when we have a dog that we really need to encourage them to have more drive for food.

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First of all, there's the [general exercise](#) that the dog gets, ideally daily. And that isn't just a walk around the block. Think about how much exercise you and I should have. Like you know, experts say we should move every hour.

Imagine if your dog got the chance to go outside every hour. I get it, that's not realistic. But don't think just a little walk around a block or two every other day is enough for your dog. We need them to get out and explore. And ideally, I would like you to [let them off leash](#) run.

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Now I get it, that might not be possible where you're living but check out and see if there aren't [sniff spots](#) that you can rent that you can let your dog off leash somewhere in your neighborhood or a little drive not too far out of your neighborhood.

But most of all, it needs to be a safe place for your dog. If that's not possible, restraint recall. It could be as simple as your dogs on a long leash. Your friend holds your dog by the shoulders, and you lead out, call the dog and run and have the dog chase you. Get them moving faster than a walk or a trot.

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Do that on a daily basis, and we're going to change your dog's physiology, which is going to change their need for nutrition and the way they look at nutrition. We're going to add some food into those restraint recalls down the road, but let's just get them happening to begin with. And if you don't have a friend, no problem.

Two things you can do. Number one, go up to somebody that looks friendly in the park. And you can just say, "Hey, do you like dogs? Could you please just hold my dog while I recall him to me?"



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The other thing, if that's a little out of your comfort zone, what I sometimes would do is I would find a smooth pole, wrap my leash around the pole, so now there's some opposition. The dog's on one side of the pole, I'm on the other. I would call my dog's name, throw the leash around the pole so that he would get a chance to chase me.

Now that works best if you already have a history of the dog coming to you on a restraint recall. Please don't do that for the first time in an area that you aren't sure if your dog will come. Alright so, getting them out daily for exercise. If they'll chase a toy, that's great. But also included in those walks is just some good old sniff time.

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Let them investigate, smell all the different senses. That alone exhaust dogs, using their nose, taking it all in. So, just a nice casual walk, some sniffing, and some running, some getting the body moving. Now, also you want to be sure there's some scheduled rest time throughout the day and the week.

Sometimes, especially with new dog owners, they tend to overschedule their dog. We're going to go to this class on Monday and this class on Tuesday and this puppy play session on Wednesday and this. You know what? Just have some chill time with that dog. Let them learn how to relax.

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Practice the relaxation protocol like I spoke about in [podcast episode number 191](#). We need them to know how to both have fun and how to relax. So, we get them out for some regular exercise, have some scheduled relaxation time throughout the week and ideally daily.

Next, you're going to know what is super [high value food](#) to your dog. Now, if you're listening to this, you're listening to this because you want to create drive for food. But you need to experiment something like, go to the grocery store and get liver pâté. Or if you can find some dog treats that have beef tripe.

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My dogs go crazy for tripe treats. I'm warning you, they stink, they're horrid, but the dogs love them. Experiment 20 different things that your dog may love. What you don't want to do is give the dog the same thing all the time. Variety is key.

We're trying to create a value of reinforcement, an array of reinforcement. So, try all kinds of things. Ask your friends, post on social media, "My dog's a picky eater. Can you give me any suggestions of things that your dog absolutely loves?"

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And when you find something, don't go crazy giving it to your dog, save it for special occasions. We want to use it, but we don't want to overuse it. So, experiment with dry food, semi-moist food, and some moist food. Things like raw dog food. And if that grosses you out, you can cook that raw dog food. Things like, I mentioned liver pâté. So, dry, semi-moist, and moist. Those are really good things.

But I would encourage you, please make sure they're still really nutritious for your dog, ideally. I am pretty fussy about my own dogs. So, there's some really great healthy treats that they will go gaga for. So, it's exercise, it's relaxation, it's knowing what is the value of the food.



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Next, while we are retraining your dog, please don't ask them to take something you aren't a hundred percent confident they will take. Now, I just told you to experiment. So, you might put like a different treat on a paper plate and let your dog sniff them all. You might just put two or three.

I got to tell you; you can increase the value of food right away by moving it. So, you might put one little treat on a paper plate and move it around, so your dog has to chase it in order to sniff it. See if that is a way to increase the value for the food. But what you want to make sure you don't do is don't ask your dog to take a lower value treat at a time when they're highly unlikely to take any treat.

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Lower value treats happen in the comfort of your own home, when they're more relaxed and they're more likely to take it. But honestly, if you've got treats that your dog will sort of take occasionally, let's put those to the side for now. We're only going to work with [medium and high value treats](#).

Eventually we're going to go back to those low value treats. I promise you; your dog will take those too and happily. Next, just know this is the long game. Your dog is highly unlikely to like magically develop food drive overnight. It could happen. It might start, especially when you add the games that I'm going to teach you, but it's highly unlikely it's going to happen overnight.

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So no, it's a process. Be patient, take notes. This is where you are today. Take notes where you are tomorrow and next week. It will improve if you are patient. It's not that your dog is defective. It's just that your dog currently has a history that includes refusing food or saying, "I don't want that." And we're just going to change that, but you need to be patient and play the long game.

Recognize that reinforcement isn't a moment in time, it's an activity. So, when we start playing these games, the [reinforcement process](#) starts the moment you say yippee or whatever you say to celebrate your dog doing something well, and it carries on to the delivery of the reinforcement for the dog, the placement of the reinforcement, how that dog receives the reinforcement.

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So, those could all be different in that I might ask you when you're playing one game to throw the reinforcement on the floor. That's the delivery. That's how the dog receives it. That's the placement. The next time I might say, call your dog and run away and give the dog the food while running.

That's a different way for your dog to receive it. But it's all part of the reinforcement process. There isn't just an infinitesimal slice of time that tells your dog that's right and don't think about anything that happens before or after that. Reinforcement is a process. Keep remembering that.

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What we're going to work on with these games is what you've heard me say on this podcast many times before, a transfer of value. So, what your dog loves most of all, we will put into the food we want them to love. So, your first assignment is to think about activities that your dog loves.

Is it going for a swim? Is it going to the park? Is it when your kids or your partner comes home from school or from work when they can anticipate that's going to happen? Well, if you have an activity that the dog loves, here's what I want you to do. Once you've identified what is a high value reward, your first assignment is to take a little piece of it and even put it on a paper plate, hold your dog by the collar, get them to see that paper plate moving, tell them to "get it, get it, get it, get it."



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And when he catches up to the food, tell him, “chow”. It's on a paper plate. We are telling him you can eat it from this vessel. So, get them excited. You're going to have him eat the food and then say, “Now let's go, boom.” Whatever that activity is. If it's “Now let's go play Frisbee.” “Now let's go for a walk.” “Now let's go for a car ride.” “Now let's go see, daddy's home.”

Whatever it is, is that activity. Eventually, you could just give them a cookie, just say “cook” and feed them a cookie into the mouth and say, “Now let's go play frisbee.” or whatever it is that we want to get a transfer of value. So, whatever the dog loves, we're going to add food, one little piece before we're going to do what the dog loves.

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Now, scientifically, this is called the [Premack Principle](#) in that if you do behavior A, you get to have behavior B. Where I've seen this go wrong is when the dog always knows behavior B is right there. Sometimes behavior B is so exciting, the dog just can't eat the food and that's not going to work.

Sometimes the dog will say, “Okay, I'll eat the food because I know I can get behavior B. But I'm never going to eat that food when behavior B isn't right in my sight.” So, the goal, yes, you can do it when the dog knows you're about to do something, but the goal is to get them to eat the food in a quiet, calm way and then say, “Now let's go for a walk.” or whatever it is that they love.

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So, let's call it a surprise Premack. That the dog doesn't have to see or know that what they love most of all is coming. The food happens and then magically that great behavior that they love is going to happen next. And that's when we truly get the transfer of value.

And if this hasn't worked for you before, I want you to ask yourself in great honesty, have you been showing the dog that big value thing behavior B first? I had a student many, many years ago in California, and she had a Terrier.

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And she said, “Well, my dog loves to do the barn hunt.” And I said, “Okay, well, let's get him to play with a toy before barn hunt. But you've got to drive around and not let him out of the—.” But she didn't. She would use, “We're going to get the rats, we're going to get the rats, we're going to get the rats.” And the dog knew he was at a place where there were rats.

You want to do it where the dog doesn't know. So, if it was barn hunt that your dog loves, then you're going to, you know drive to the barn hunt, but don't let him out of the car. Get him to eat a cookie and then say, “Let's go get the rats.” or whatever your cue to “We're going to go do barn hunt.” is.

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This student of mine did it for years and never got a transfer of value. Never. Sometimes she'd let him see the rats and then take them back to the car and say, “Eat the cookie.” And it was tug on the toy. It's not going to work, not going to work. The value is too overwhelming.

The transfer isn't going to happen because the dog knows, “Alright, I'll do that because I want to get what I want. But if what I want isn't available, I'm not doing what you want.” Alright so, it's surprise Premack. That is what is going to be your focus. And if the word Premack scares you a bit, don't worry about it. Just say to yourself, ‘in order for my dog to get what he wants, most of all, he has to eat a cookie.’



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And it's going to be a high value cookie for the next little while. And then you can go to a slightly lower value cookie if the high value cookies are working really, really well. And finally, I want you to understand the difference between celebrating a success and cheerleading in order to, hopes to get a success, because that is a big problem with a lot of people who want their dog to do something so much.

"I want my dog to tug with a toy." "I want my dog to eat the cookie." And you get the dog, you go, "Do you want the cookie? Look, mommy's got the cookie! You're going to eat this cookie?" And it's cheerleading. All that I want you to do. Yes, we're going to amp them up for different things. But once we present the dog with the cookie, like here's the cookie, I'm going to roll it.

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And you can say, "Get the cookie." Then as the dog is getting the cookie, stop the cheerleading. Once they grab the cookie, whoa, you can go crazy. "That's a good boy! That's so exciting!" We're going to celebrate, not cheerlead. Wrap your mind around what is the difference.

Now, second cousin to cheerleading, and this one I'm okay with, is before you let the dog go, you kind of rev them up and pull them back. "Ready, steady, go." But as they're doing their thing, we're quiet, we're looking, we're observing when the dog does what we want, then we celebrate. This will make more sense when we're actually playing the games.

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But I want you to think about if the dog disengages. I don't want you to start to become a cheerleader to try to get them engaged. That was trial number one. It didn't work. Let's just, you know take the dog back, put them up, let them chill for a bit. And we'll look at that game again and see what we can do differently.

If a dog disengages from a rabbit, the rabbit doesn't stop and come back and go, "Hey buddy, I'm right here. Hey, don't you want me? Come on, come on." Bunnies don't chase disengaged dogs. So, if the sight of the bunny isn't enough to motivate the dog to chase, then the dog just doesn't chase.

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So, if what you ask the dog to do, one of these 10 games that I'm going to teach you isn't enough to get your dog excited about playing this food game, then don't chase a disengaged dog. A rabbit wouldn't do it, and you don't have to do it.

What you could do is go the other way. And say, "Hey, we're done. Let's go.", take off running. And he's going to go, "Wait a minute. This is where you hunt me down." No, rule of the rabbits. We don't chase disengaged dogs. We want dogs to become engaged, become connected to us and want to chase us.

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And that is exactly what's going to happen when you start playing the games I have for you in the next two podcast episodes. So, for now, I'd like you to go over the general steps that I've mentioned here today.

Go to social media, get some help. 'What is the best treat or what is the best food reward that your dog loves that I can try on my currently picky eater?' And hey, why not jump over to YouTube and use this video in the comment section as a way.





## Episode: #271

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If you're listening to this podcast episode and you go, "Well, my dog loves these things.", come on over and write them and include the brand names. I don't care. Write them in the comments so people can come over and watch this video and refer to the comment section as a great resource for high value food rewards.

Okay, in our next episode, I'm going to go through some categories of games, and I'm going to actually teach you games that you can play with your dogs to help increase their food drive. I'll see you next time right here on Shaped by Dog.

### Resources:

[Podcast Episode 269: Why Do Some Dogs Seem to Have Less Food Drive Than Others – 10 Reasons to Consider](#)

[YouTube Video: 15 Ways To Exercise Your Dog](#)

[Podcast Episode 147: Teach Your Dog To Listen Off Leash And Far Away](#)

[Sniffspot.com](#)

[Podcast Episode 191: Get Your Dog To Calm Down With This Common Sense Protocol For Relaxation](#)

[Podcast Episode 59: Why Your Treats Aren't Working for Your Dog](#)

[Podcast Episode 179: Help For Dogs Refusing Treats: Case Study With Training Plan](#)

[Podcast Episode 177: Dog Training Outside The Box: Transfer Of Value Case Study](#)

[Podcast Episode 90: Premack, Dog Training and Transfer of Value](#)



## Structure Your Dog Training To Create Food Drive In Your Treat Fussy Dog

### 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.



### Meet Us Online

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