

All dogs love to play. There is no doubt about that. But, what can you play with your dog that goes beyond just tossing the ball around the yard for awhile?

Games for dogs should be based in what your dog is good at. Sometimes this means tailoring games to the breed of dog. For example, hounds love things related to tracking and using their nose. Being more creative in the way you play with your dog means that you add variety for your dog and yourself.

#### **Ideas for Games:**

- **Sand Pit:** Many of the smaller terriers love to dig. Incorporate this into your game play by creating a sand pit utilizing a plastic child's swimming pool. Bring several toys and goodies out for your dog and partially bury them in the sand. Encourage your dog to dig to find them, and as he gets better at the game, bury them deeper.
- **Where's the Fuzzy:** Attach a fuzzy toy to a long light rope and a pole (often called a flirt pole or drive builder). Then, use the toy much like you would a similar style cat toy so that the toy moves quickly around the ground for your dog to chase. The more sporadic your movements, the more intense your dog will be about chasing it.
- **Catch the Water:** During the warmer months of the year, utilize your hose to keep your dog busy. Turn on the water and you can flip and move the water stream about. Most dogs want to try and 'catch' the water! If you use a watering nozzle, you can also raise and lower the pressure of the stream.
- **Hide n Seek:** Using two people, you can create a game of hide n seek. Have one person hold the dog, and the other person is going to be the hider. Hide in an easy location that the dog watches you go to at first. Then, the handler should say something like, 'Go Find Him.' Most dogs will quickly run to the location they watched you go to. Be sure to praise him for a good find. As he gets better at the game, you can hide in locations he didn't watch; then he will need to use his nose.
- **Where's the Treat:** This game encourages your dog to use his nose. Take 3 or 4 small plastic boxes and line them up. Take one really good food item your dog wants and hide it under one of the boxes. Bring your dog over and ask him to find it. This game can be increased in difficulty by hiding food in other kinds of locations once he gets the hang of it. If you really get into it, check out the training sport Noseworks.
- **Messenger:** Give two people a whistle. Before playing the game, teach your dog that the whistle sound means a treat reward. Blow your whistle and immediately treat. Do this several times. Now, he will run to where he hears the whistle in order to receive a treat. You and your partner can get further and further apart as he understands this game. Each time he comes to the whistle he needs to receive a treat. Now, for the messenger part, you can attach a paper message to his collar for him to take to the other person, if you want to.

These are just a few ideas to get you started on creating new games to play with your dog. All of these suggestions are for interactive play between an owner and a dog.

It's okay to throw the ball around too, but add variety to your game play. Interactive games make your dog think and work harder, and they help to build a closer bond between person and dog.