



## Games to Teach Your Dog

### Fetch

Place your dog on a leash. Toss a toy or ball and encourage him to get it. Call the dog back to you and show a good deal of enthusiasm when he shows interest in the toy. Clap your hands or make kiss noises to encourage his coming to you. If he won't drop the ball, have another one in your hand. Make the ball in your hand more interesting by paying attention to it. As your dog drops the ball in his mouth, say the word "drop" and immediately toss the one in your hand. Repeat this several times until your dog is fetching and dropping. Then let the dog off the leash and try throwing the ball farther away. If the dog refuses to come back or drop, simply turn around, fold your arms and act uninterested. If the dog brings the toy to you, you are back in the game. Remember that **you** should always begin and end the game. It's a good idea to end the game before the dog grows tired of it.

### Hide & Seek

While playing with a toy with your dog, move the toy behind your back and encourage him to "find the toy." Help him out if needed. When the dog finds it, make a big deal of it and say the name of the toy. Repeat this until your dog gets the idea. The next step is to hide the toy by a chair or table and say, "find your (name of toy)." By teaching the name of each toy, he's learning to differentiate between toys. Once this is established, you can ask him to go find a specific toy to redirect him from doing something mischievous. As the dog progresses, you can eventually place him in another room and close the door while you hide the toy. Open the door, ask for a sit and once he sits, say "Find your (name of toy)." You can also hide and then call your dog to come and when he finds you, cheer "what a smart dog!" The interaction with you is the reward. When you establish boundaries, your dog learns that he gets attention by playing by your rules.

### Tug

**Don't play this game if you are having any issues with possessive aggression!** Have one or two toys specifically for tug (so your dog doesn't think all objects are for tug). A rope toy and tug ring make great tug toys. Hold one toy in one hand and hold the other toy behind your back. Invite your dog to grab hold of the tug toy, do a few tugs then bring the other toy around and entice him to play with it. As the dog drops the first tug toy, say "drop." Once he engages with the new toy, pick up the first toy. Again, bring your hand around to show him the toy that was dropped and entice him to play. Repeat each step until the dog gets the idea. If he won't drop the toy, as with the fetch game, turn away with the other toy in your hand and fold your arms. You are sending the message that if the dog doesn't play by your rules, the game ends. *Owners should always begin and end the game in possession of the toy.*

### Sit:

If your dog does not already know "sit," practice the basics until he sits on every command - ask him to sit by putting a treat in front of his nose and moving it directly back in an invisible line toward his tail. When your dog rocks back into a sit, praise him and give the treat. If you ask your dog to sit and he decides not to, he gets no praise and no food treat.

You'll be surprised at how quickly your dog catches on. When he sits every time you ask him, start mixing up the rewards. Sometimes give food treats and sometimes give a pat on the head, or a brief game of fetch with a favorite toy. He is now earning your attention by sitting, not jumping.

The next step is to expect him to sit a little longer each time before getting the treat or attention. Start with short intervals, first about 3 seconds, then 5, then 10. If he gets up too quickly, do not give him food or attention. Before long, he should be able to sit for a full minute or two.

## High Five

If you want to teach your dog to give you a “high five,” just follow these easy steps. Don’t worry if your dog is standing or sitting. Dogs can give a “high five” whether they stand or sit.

- Put a tasty, strong-smelling treat in your fist, and hold it by one of your dog’s front “knees.”
- Wait.... Wait some more.
- If your dog sniffs your hand to get the treat, that’s good. Just wait.
- Watch your dog’s front paw. Either one will do.
- If your dog lifts his front paw up to try to get the treat from your fist, tell him, “Good boy (or girl),” and give him (or her) the treat.
- Be patient (this is where kids really shine!). Some pets take a long time to use their paw to touch your fist. If your dog seems to be having a hard time, lower your fist a bit closer to the ground. Make it easy for him to lift his paw, even if it’s just a little bit.
- Say, “Good boy,” and give your dog the treat every time his paw touches your fist.
- After he touches your fist 10 times and gets 10 treats, raise your hand about an inch higher.
- Have him touch your hand, say, “Good boy” and give him the treat.
- Do that 20 times.
- Raise your hand about an inch higher again. Have him touch your hand, say, “Good boy,” and give him the treat. Do that 10 times.
- Now you’re ready to give your pet what pet trainers call a “command,” a special word (or two) that your pet learns to associate with what you want him to do when you say it in order to get the reward (like a yummy treat!). Say “High five” or “Go Tigers” or whatever you want your command to be. Then, show your pet your fist with the treat in it. When he touches your fist, say, “Good boy,” and give him the treat.
- Every time you want him to give you a high five, give your command, and show him your fist. You should be able to raise your fist pretty high now. (Some dogs and cats can even do a high five over their heads!) Just be careful not to ask your pet to do something he can’t do or that might hurt him. Now you and your pet have a cool trick to show your friends when they visit.

## Teach Your Dog to Look at You

Getting your dog to look at you on command is an invaluable tool. One of the most important things you can teach your companion animal is to look at you. Some people want their pets to look at them when they hear their name. Others use a specific command like “watch” or “look.” Either way, getting your animal to look at you on command is an invaluable tool.

Begin by holding a tasty treat at your pet’s nose. Give the command of your choice and bring the treat up between your eyes. When your companion animal makes eye contact with you, say “yes” and give them the treat.

After three or four successes, remove the treat from your hand. Raise your hand just like before, placing a finger between your eyes, say ‘yes’ when your pet looks you in the eye, and immediately bring the treat out with your other hand. Before you know it, you’ll no longer need to raise your hand. This ‘trick’ is definitely worth the effort. You know you have their attention when ‘all eyes are on you’.

For more information about pet behavior and training, please **visit our website at [michiganhumane.org](http://michiganhumane.org)**.