

absolute dogs

Naughty But Nice

3
MINUTE
GAMECHANGERS



1. CONE GAME

To play this game, all you need is a **plastic cone or cup** that your dog can fit their muzzle in and their **dinner!** In this game, you reward your dog for any kind of interaction with the cone and then progressively become more specific about placing their **nose in the cone**. We have a video of this game to share with you:

<https://game.absolute-dogs.com/muzzle-love6fpimq5e>

Once your dog has this behaviour down, you can switch the cone for all kinds of things!



THE BENEFITS OF CONE GAME:

- It builds **optimism**
- It promotes **confidence**
- It arms your dog with a crucial skill should they ever need to wear any of the following
 - a. **Muzzle**
 - b. **Buster Collar**
 - c. **Head Collar**
 - d. **Harness**

IT'S TIME FOR THE CONE GAME!



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*Stop worrying about
what can go wrong
and **GET**
EXCITED ABOUT
WHAT WILL GO
RIGHT.*

2. ORIENTATION GAME



THE ORIENTATION GAME CREATES:

- A crazily focussed dog!
- It promotes confidence in distracting environments!
- It creates a default bounce back! whenever your dog leaves you on a walk!
- It's the start of a super retrieve!

Naughty But Nice dogs can often find themselves wanting to **interact** or **react** with things in the distance and **independently** from the owner. This makes it very difficult to give them freedom in distracting environments and trust they will bounce back. **We created the orientation game for this exact reason!**

How to play:

1. Start this game in a **very easy**, low distraction environment where your dog is used to playing with you!
2. Throw a piece of your dog's dinner out (about one meter away)
3. After they finish eating it, of course, they are going to look back at you for more. At that moment of them orienting back to you, mark the movement with a **"YES"** or a **CLICK** (if you use a clicker).
If they do not look back at you right away, just wait them out and mark the moment they do look back. You may have to start playing this game on lead first.
4. Follow the marker with the reward of throwing another piece of food out to continue the game.
5. Play this **everywhere, anywhere** and **as often as you can!**

3. "MIDDLE"

THE BENEFITS OF MIDDLE ARE HUGE:

- It lowers arousal
- It gets your dog into a safe place **QUICK**
- It allows you to position dogs that don't like being handled

1) We like to shape this trick, which means rewarding successive approximations of the final behaviour - or rewarding things your dog does that are closer and closer to the final behaviour in mind!

2) To do this, we mark and reward turns and steps towards behind us to start with, rewarding by placing the treat or toy behind us and eventually between legs.

3) Do this until your dog is consistently heading around your leg and then between your legs. At this point, placement of the reward should always be in the final position - between your legs.

4) Build duration into maintaining position between your legs by providing a rapid rate of reinforcement in this position. Then work on reducing the rate of reinforcement while your dog stays in one place.

5) Now we can work on the final behaviour we want - a sit! You can:

1) Shape the sit by marking and rewarding weight shifts backwards until your dog sits.

2) Cue a sit, repeat a few times and then wait your dog out for him/her to offer it.

3) Cue a hand target with your hand above your dog's head such that he/she sits when targeting.

TOP TIPS! If you want a high energy, tucked sit, then using a hand target is a really good way to get this! Tucked sits are more accurate to maintain the final position and you can shape these also, or, if your dog has a specific cue for a tucked sit, then use method two with that cue!

6) Build duration into maintaining the sit position between your legs by manipulating rate of reinforcement again. Here is where you can add your release cue too!

7) Work on proofing the sit for you moving away now by rewarding for sit maintenance as you change position!

8) When you are happy with the final behaviour, introduce your cue ("middle", "centre", "position") just before your dog performs the full behaviour and rewards lots!!!!



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4. CHIN TARGET

THE BENEFITS OF CHIN TARGET ARE HUGE:

- It lowers arousal
- It allows you to take control of your dog's gaze
- It is a confidence booster
- It is great for establishing focus in very distracting environments



- 1) We have a formula for teaching body part targeting. It involves value priming, place away & capture, adding a cue!
- 2) **Value priming: this is to ensure that your dog is not only comfortable with hand placement on chin but actually sees it as a predictor of something fun or tasty! We want to build this value, so that your dog will eventually seek your hand out with his/her chin!**
- 3) You do this by placing your hand under the chin, marking the moment, and rewarding. Use super tasty food or extra special toy and work slowly as this can feel strange to some dogs!
- 4) **It is at this point that you should also add duration into the targeting with rapid-fire rate of reinforcement. You can reward directly to the mouth, maintaining chin contact with hand!**
- 5) Do this until your dog shows super desire for resting his/her chin in your hand! Once your dog begins to press more firmly into your hand when you withhold the reward for a couple of seconds, move onto the next step.



TOP TIP!! Adding a release cue to this behaviour can be lots of fun! Use your usual release cue or say another one and then disconnect hand from your dog until they begin to predict the new release cue as the end of the behaviour and disengage themselves.

Reward release each time!

- 6) **Place away & capture: this involves placing your hand slightly away from the chin and capturing the moment your dog seeks it out with his/her chin! The key is to build lots of value in the hand so that they seek it out and don't progress until your dog is showing that he/she understands the behaviour!**
- 7) Do this until your dog has a good understanding of the moment that he/she targets his/her chin to your hand as the desired behaviour.
- 8) **Now build distance by moving your hand further away! Work on building two steps, then three steps, then side to side motion!**
- 9) Add the cue when you have the final behaviour by saying your chosen cue ("chin") before you can guarantee your dog will work to target your hand with his/her chin. Simple!



GET

EXCITED ABOUT

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5. CALMNESS PROTOCOL

THE BENEFITS OF THE CALMNESS PROTOCOL:

- It makes calmness the default:
"When in doubt, be calm!"
- It allows our dogs' stress buckets to empty much quicker after stressful events
 - It is a confidence booster
- If they are being calm and settled, they aren't doing a whole range of inappropriate behaviours!

1) Offer your dog a medium-value TREAT when he is settled and relaxed. If he gets up from position after you have walked away, ignore him. If he has stayed settled and relaxed, then return and give him another one.

Do not use a clicker or other excitable marker for this - we find that silence is most effective! Give the treat calmly and deliberately. Don't be disheartened if your dog does get up or gets excited afterwards, the calm behaviour is what has been reinforced!

At first, if your dog gets up or becomes excited as you walk towards him with the treat, you can still give the treat. Once your dog knows the game though, only reward when they don't move and don't get excited. In complex, especially distracting or dangerous environments, play this on lead in an easy location to start with and then increase the difficulty.

Make sure to be rewarding your dog when their body is relaxed and they are not focussing on the food. **Don't create a faker!**

2) **IGNORE** your dog (especially for attention-seeking behaviours), wait for him to settle and relax and call him over for attention. Do not do this too regularly or you risk the dog yoyo-ing between the floor and you!

3) Time the rewards (treat or attention) with external **DISTRACTIONS**. For example, a person walking past the house, a noise outside, a dog barking in the distance, someone cheering in the next agility ring, etc.

This will reward your dog for remaining calm in the face of distraction and also change their emotional response from a negative one of anxiety or increasing arousal to a positive one of calmness (low arousal) with the external distractions.

TOP TIP: Use a reward dispenser (a toy containing treats, e.g. a kong), especially in the face of distraction, as a long-lasting reinforcement! The chewing action will further promote calmness and relaxation. These are especially useful when your full attention can't be your dog and rewarding calmness.

If you also want to train your dog to occupy themselves with toys in the house, then you can use the above tips, but, instead of doing them when your dog is settled and relaxed, implement the tips when your dog is occupying himself with a toy!

