CAFÉ COMPANION

🎾 Game 8 – Road Trip

Take your skills on the road.

🎾 Why This Game Matters

Testing and generalising your dog's understanding will give you great insights of your training gaps.

🎾 What You'll Need:

- Mat
- Treats (medium to high value)
- Folding chair
- Book or magazine
- Chew toy
- Happy Helper

🎾 Step-by-Step-Guide:

1. Set Up

Start in a quiet park with a few people and plenty of space. Choose the distance your dog can still focus on you and relax.

2. Build the Behaviour

a. Cue your dog to "hop it up" and reward.
b. Cue your "settle"
    i. If your dog decides to lay on their mat, reward
    ii. Give them some time to think and observe their environment
c. Take out your book and give your dog a chew
d. When your dog is finished with their chew, calmly, quietly drop a treat down to encourage them to stay
e. Release and finish the session
f. Next time you are at this spot, increase the duration after your dog has finished their chew.

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3. Add a Layer

Once you are happy with step 1, start to decrease the distance to your distractions (people walking around, kids playing etc.).
Gradually work your way closer to where the action is. You might be able to achieve this in one session; you might need a few more. Go at your dog's pace.
Start with a short duration and then increase the time you're spending there gradually.

4. Raise Criteria

First move on to busier parks, spots. Keep sessions short, increase duration gradually

Then:

Introduce yourself as a distraction. Think about what you are doing at a café:

- You find a table
- You settle your dog
- You go and order your coffee

a. Find a spot with greater distance to your environmental distraction
b. Set yourself and your dog up
c. While your dog is chewing, get up, take a few steps away
d. Calmly praise your dog
e. Repeat, each time gradually increase the distance
f. End the session when your dog has finished their chew

Next session:

a. Stay after your dog has finished their chew
b. Reward with a few calm, quiet cookie drops
c. Get up and take one step away, reward.
d. Gradually increase the distance
e. Gradually increase the duration at different distance intervals.

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Next:

Find a café where you can set up across. This might be your favourite place already.
Chose a time that is not peak hour.
Follow the steps above.

Depending on the location of the café, you might not be able to decrease the distance, that's fine. Instead, go at different times of the week/day where the activity at the café varies.

🎾 Troubleshooting:

My dog is coming off their Hot Zone when I move.

Observe your dog and listen to what they are telling you. Constant coming off the Hot Zone, tells you that they are not ready for what you would like, yet. Go back a few steps and make the progress more gradually. Leave if your dog becomes too unsettled and try again another day.

🎾 Advancing the Game

Settling and relaxing in different environments with different distractions = have a coffee Game 9.

🎾 Daily Use:

Take your time with this phase, it is an important part of the foundations. The more environments you can visit, the better.

Take a friend or family member to your outings.

You might find after a few sessions that your dog doesn't need a chew anymore. You can start rewarding with intermittent treats and praise.
However, when you change location, observe your dog and see if they need their chew in this new environment.

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🎾 Checklist:

1. Did you review your session?
2. Did you take your time with this game?
3. Did you dog relax?

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