HUNTING GAMES – THE FOUNDATIONS

🎾 Game 19 - Tag & Tug

Do you remember playing tag when you were a kid? How much fun was that? Now you can play this game with your dog.

🎾 Why This Game Matters

This game is all about increasing your dog's arousal, playing a fun game of chase but still being connected to you.

Sessions should be short and sweet.

By pushing (tagging) our dogs away from us, we are increasing their drive to chase and when they catch up with us it is a big party.

Although this game is super fun when you play a game of tug at the end, it can also be played with food.

🎾 What you'll need

- Your dog
- High value tug-toy or high value treats
- Phone on a tripod

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🎾 Step-by-Step-Guide

1. Set Up

Low distracting environment with non-slip floor

2. Build the Behaviour

Let's start by conditioning the push as your dog might not be comfortable (or too excited) being pushed away.

- Sitting or kneeling on the floor, gently place your hand on your dog's chest - feed them a treat.
- Increase the pressure each time. Watch for your dog's reaction. Adjust the pressure if needed.
- Increase your pressure to a slight push – give a cookie.
- Repeat above steps standing up.
- Give your dog a gentle push and take a few steps away. Reward your dog when they have followed your step.

3. Add a Layer

- Push your dog away and start running into the opposite direction.
- Have a fun game of tug when your dog has closed in on you
- When using food:
    - reward on the move when your dog is at your seam

Repeat and play in many different rooms in your house or sections of your backyard.

4. Raise criteria

Slowly add distractions to this game. Starting with level 3 – 5 distractions. Once your dog is still engaged playing with you, up the distraction levels but take note when they make the choice to leave and check out the distraction instead.

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🎾 Advancing the Game

Take this game on the road. Surprise your dog with a fun game during a walk – make sure to choose a moment when they are already focused on you. We don't want to use this game to disengage them from a distraction, your dog should be fully motivated to play!

🎾 Troubleshooting

My dog is very excited by the push and mouths or jumps up on me.

- Put your hand on their chest, say your "search" cue, throw the cookie on the ground for them to take.
- Repeat this a couple of times.
- Increase pressure until you can give them a push
- Once your dog has stopped mouthing or jumping, you are ready to start playing.

Dog is leaving to seek out distraction

Quietly walk over, take them gently by the collar.
Either use distance with the same distraction level or decrease the level of distraction.

🎾 Daily Use

A fun and quick game to implement every day. This will not only increase your dog's arousal level for another game to play, but lets them use their drive for chase, tapping into one of our dog's natural instincts.

Try to get at least 10 short sessions in each day.

The push gives us a head start and builds up drive for our dog to chase us.

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🎾 Checklist

1. Did you review your session?
2. How often did you play today?
3. Is your dog comfortable being pushed?
4. Is your dog ignoring distractions and chases you?

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