HUNTING GAMES – THE FOUNDATIONS

🎾 Game 9 - Hold Back Recalls

Playing this game will start teaching your dog that coming back to you is always fun!

🎾 Why This Game Matters

If your dog has ignored your previous recalls (either name or recall word), I would strongly suggest choosing a new one. Be creative, you can choose whatever you like but make sure it is upbeat and happy!

By adding a bit of restrain, we are increasing our dog's excitement – they want to go into the opposite direction we are restraining them from. Furthermore, we are harnessing our dog's love for chasing!

🎾 What you'll need

- Your dog on a flat collar
- A harness (if comfortable for your dog)
- A pole or tree or a happy helper
- A long leash (3-4m). Make sure it will slip around the tree or pole.
- Phone on a tripod
- Low – high value treats or a low - high value toys

🎾 Step-by-Step-Guide

1. Set Up

You can play this game on your own or you can find a happy helper who will hold your dog while you walk away.

Choose an outside area or indoor with non-slippery floors.

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HUNTING GAMES – THE FOUNDATIONS

2. Build the Behaviour

- Take a low-value treat and a high-value treat (or toys)
- Say “search” and toss the low value treat on the floor, let your dog go to get it
- When your dog is eating the treat, turn around(!) and run away, call their name (or recall word)
- When they arrive at your side, grab their collar, say your LSM (cook, yes) and feed the high value treat (or play a game of tug).
- Start with minimal distance and increase the distance of your throw and how far you run.

3. Add a Layer

- Have your dog on a well fitted harness or a wide flat collar
- Hold your dog back by either harness or collar, toss a treat out in front of them and let them go to chase the treat. We want the dog to be pulling towards the cookie.
- Release them with your “get it” cue.
- If your dog is not comfortable with being hold back, put their dinner dish out, hold your dog with your hand across their chest and let them dive to the bowl.

4. Raise Criteria – on your own

If you are playing inside, find something solid where you can warp your dog’s leash around e.g. the post of a staircase.
If you’re playing outside, find a pole or a tree where you can wrap your dog’s leash around. Make sure the leash will slip around the object first. If you are playing outside, make sure the distraction level for your dog is not higher than 3.

- Increase your dog’s arousal level by playing a game of tug or run around. This will help them to be focused on the game.
- Wrap your leash around your tree or pole and clip it to your dog’s harness or collar.
- You are both facing the same way, each of one side of the pole.

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HUNTING GAMES – THE FOUNDATIONS

- Put a little pressure on your leash and excite your dog with some silly play. Toss the leash behind you so it doesn't get caught, let go of the leash and run, facing forward
- Call your dog by their name or your new recall word.
- Big celebration when your dog arrives with a high value treat or toy. Remember your collar grab!
- Increase the distance you run away from your dog.

Raise Criteria – With a helper

For sensitive dogs, ask your helper to hold their leash.

- Ask your helper to hold your dog by putting one arm around their chest and the other under their belly: or both hands on their shoulders.
- Walk out a few steps (only as far as your dog is confident with), crouch low as if you are taking off into a sprint and look at your dog. Have your reward hidden.
- Call your dog by their name or you new recall word and run away. When they are close, reward and have a party with them.

🎾 Advancing the Game

- Increase the level of distractions to a 4 – 5 (these are strategically put out!)
- Reduce your motion but still run away when you call – this will put more value into your verbal cue.
- Continue to play around with your body position and movement to invite the chase.
- Add standing still occasionally when you call your dog. Evaluate the intensity of the response and adjust if needed.

Short, fast and fun sessions should increase the intensity of your dog driving towards you, so should increasing the distance a bit each time.

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🎾 Troubleshooting

My dog doesn't come all the way in.

Calmly walk over to them, take them by their collar and guide them back to the pole or your happy helper. Reduce the distance you walk out. Be more exciting with your crouching down and calling them.

My dog goes for the distraction

Calmly move them away from the distraction and place it out further away from y our dog's running line. If your dog still goes for the distraction, use a lower value distraction and review your dog's distraction list!

🎾 Daily use

Try to get in three sessions each day. Try to do 10 recalls during each session.
The more you play this with your dog, the more value your recall word gains by putting money into that reinforcement account. Play this around your house and in your back yard or in a quiet park with low distractions (4 – 5 max).

A recall can be life saving for your dog and a great recall means that you will call your dog once (either their name or your new recall word) and they turn on the spot to run to you.

Always make sure to take your dog's behaviour as information – was the toy too much of a distraction? Was the park we played in too much of a distraction? And go back a step.

Run **AWAY** from your dog facing forward, watch them from your peripheral vision.

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🎾 Checklist

1. Did you review your session?
2. Is your dog confident with the restrain?
3. Is your dog's head spinning around when they hear your call?
4. Is your dog coming racing towards you?
5. Look at your dog's T.E.M.P (Tail, Ears/Eyes, Mouth, Posture)

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