PROGRAM

🎾 Game 35 – Marked Retrieves

Sit in RZ, wait, retrieve, drop on cue. Almost the whole chain.

🎾 Why This Game Matters

A Marked Retrieve is a retrieve where your dog has seen the dummy fall and has locked onto it before you send them. This skill is the cornerstone for a hunter and more advanced retrieves.

➡️ Ignore all distractions, focus on the task on hand, go out and come back with purpose.

- Patience in RZ while dummy is thrown (self-control around triggers)
- Go out with purpose (working away from you)
- Pick up and retrieve (the fun is with you!)

🎾 What You'll Need

- High-value treats
- Dummy on toggle or a toy you can throw with distance
- Phone on tripod

🎾 Step-by-Step-Guide

1. Set Up

Start playing this game in a low distracting environment. When we start playing, we're looking for precision rather than distance.

I use the cue "hunt" for marked retrieves. If your dog is already playing fetch, use their familiar cue.

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2. Build the Behaviour

- Ask your dog to sit in RZ
    - you can use a platform if this gives your dog more information
- Drop your dummy on the other side of you
- Make sure your dog saw the dummy land
- Release
- Put your hand out to receive
- Ask for dummy release, but let it still drop to the floor
- Reward to mouth or floor (mix up)

3. Add a Layer

- Drop the dummy into different directions around your dog
- This might change how they respond
- Play as above

4. Raise Criteria

- Find a corner or wall
- With your dog in RZ, throw the dummy into the corner/wall
- Make sure your dog is looking at it
- Release
- Turn and run away
- Ask to give up the dummy
- Reward

Next

- Increase distance to the corner/wall
- Either turn and run or keep standing to receive the dummy (still dropping on the floor)
- Mix it up
- Reward

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Next

- With your dog in RZ, throw the dummy
- Release when your dog is locked onto it
- Ask to give it up when they come back
- Reward

🎾 Advance the Game

Play in different environments. Start with less distance until your dog has good understanding of their part in the game:

- Wait in RZ
- Lock on dummy
- Retrieve on cue
- Drop on cue

🎾 Troubleshooting

My dog is moving off when I throw the dummy.

Pay them a few cookies while in RZ. Review the stage where you drop the dummy and delay your retrieve cue – your dog might anticipate the release already.

When moving on to the throw, reward your dog for sitting in RZ before and after the throw – then send them.

🎾 Daily use

Play as many games as you can get in today and over the following days. The Marked Retrieve is the foundation of all other retrieves we're introducing later.

🎾 Checklist:

1. Did you review your session?
2. Did your dog hold criteria?
3. Was the go out purposeful?
4. Were there any distractions?

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