HUNTING GAMES – GROWING TOGETHER

🎾 Game 38 - Cookies in da Bowl

We are testing our dog's value by asking them to choose to run past a strongly classical conditioned item – a food bowl.

🎾 Why This Game Matters

This is a game to add dimensions to your recall but also implementing IYC into real life. Can your dog ignore the reinforcement that they might have previously stolen?

You are calling your dog to you, past a distraction that you can control. To start this game, you can play this as an extension of Crate Games, have someone holding your dog or ask for a controlled position, like a sit or down.

🎾 What You'll Need

- Your dog
- Your dog's food distraction list
- Food bowl
- High and low value treats
- Phone on Tripod

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🎾 Step-by-Step-Guide

1. Set Up

You need to be on your guard for this game and have quick reactions. Always watch your dog for their choices.

2. Build the Behaviour

- Place an empty food bowl halfway between you and your dog.
    - Place the bowl to the side so it is not in direct line your dog will take to run to you.
- Drop a piece of food into the bowl and make sure your dog is noticing this.
- Without your dog seeing, take the piece of food out again.
- Move away, past the bowl - recall your dog.
- What is their choice?
    - Dog goes for the bowl
        - Quickly run over and cover the bowl with your hand.
        - Without saying anything, gently take your dog by their collar and move them away.
        - Call your dog to you but only praise/pet.
        - Reset and start over
        - If you have more than 3 inappropriate choices from your dog, move the bowl further to the side.
    - Your dog heads straight to you
        - Celebrate with a Collar Grab and a high-value cookie.
        - Turn and run together to the bowl, throw in a cookie before your dog realises it was empty.
        - Tell them to “get it” – this will maintain IYC clarity.
- Repeat for 3 successful recalls in a row before progressing.

3. Add a Layer

- Leave a low-value cookie in the bowl
- React and adjust accordingly.
- 3 successful recalls before moving on

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4. Raise Criteria

- Move the bowl closer into your dog's line.
- With your dog watching, drop a cookie in
- Without your dog seeing, take it out.
- Play as above.
- React to your dog's choices.
- 3 successful recalls before moving on.

Next

- Leave the cookie in the bowl.
- Watch for your dog's choices.
- If you have more than 3 "failures", move the bowl further to the side.
- 3 successful recalls before progressing.

Next

- Move the bowl even closer into your dog's line.
- Start by dropping the treat in and taking it out.
- Progress to leaving the cookie in the bowl.
- Watch for your dog's choices.
- 3 successful recalls before moving on.

Next

By now your dog's confidence and understanding for this game should be growing. We are playing a little bit with their minds as you won't run with them to the bowl each time after you have recalled them.
They also won't get the cookie in the bowl every time they came to you. This will teach them that in real life, not everything is for grabs.

- Put a cookie in the bowl
- Call your dog and reward with a Collar Grab and high-value treat.

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- Send them back to their crate or run with them to the spot where they started.
- Call them again
    - they may go for the bowl as they know there is still a cookie there.
    - Be quick to run over to cover the bowl
    - Reset, play again. Remember to only praise or pet them after a "failure". The good cookies only come for brilliant choices.
- Occasionally run with them to the bowl for a great recall – this can be their reward instead of the cookie to mouth.
- Give permission when you reach the bowl.

Next

If you had the bowl on your left side, change it to the right side or vice versa. Watch for your dog's choice as this is now a different picture for them. Act and adjust accordingly. Go back a few steps to remind your dog the game is still the same.

Next

- Place the bowl into the centre of your dog's line.
- Drop a cookie, take it out again.
- Progress through the stages with the bowl in the centre.
- The goal is that your dog can run past or jump a bowl that is filled with food!

Next

When you are ready, move this game into the kitchen and start with Step 2 – Build the Behaviour. Progress through the stages. Your dog will progress through his game quicker as they have great understanding from your previous play.

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🎾 Advancing the game

Here are a few options of how you can advance the game:

- Place the bowl on a higher level, like a chair
- Have multiple treats in the bowl
- Remove the bowl and have cookies on the table
- Have cookies on the counter
- Have cookies on the floor
- Increase the value of the food in the bowl
- Play ala "Cookies in da corner" with the food bowl – recall your dog and send them to the bowl to get the cookie. Recall them off the moment they eat the treat and run into the opposite direction. Reward in RZ.
- Vary your position when you call your dog, having them come into either right or left RZ.
- Play a game of tug (ONLY if that is higher value than the food in the bowl)
- Go outside

We want to grow our dog's understanding that they should ignore the distraction of food (or other distractions) and listen to our cues.

🎾 Troubleshooting

My dog keeps going to the food bowl.

Take your time to progress through this game. Revisit the notes in Step 2.
Revisit IYC, IYC Progression and all the other games where you have recalled your dog. Introduce distractions into those games.

🎾 Daily Use

Play this game twice today so you both can get the hang of it. Continue to play throughout the days/weeks to come and grow the game. The ultimate goal is to ignore all distractions and come driving into you when called.

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Move the game into different environments and increase the surrounding distraction levels e.g., play in your backyard.

This is not only a learning but also a testing game. How much value do you have when there are other choices around. It is a great way for your dog to understand inappropriate choices will never be accepted when you ask them to come to you. It gives you the confidence to know how to react when you are faced with a situation like this. Never punish your dog for not coming, take it as valuable information and adjust your training to your dog's understanding. Grow from there.

This game is also the steppingstone to implement real life IYC moments, growing both of your understanding that IYC is a lifestyle and always in place. You will notice that you will watch for these moments and take note of the choices your dog makes.

🎾 Checklist

1. Did you review your session?
2. What were your dog's choices?
3. Did you need to adjust your setup?
4. How far could you grow the game today?

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