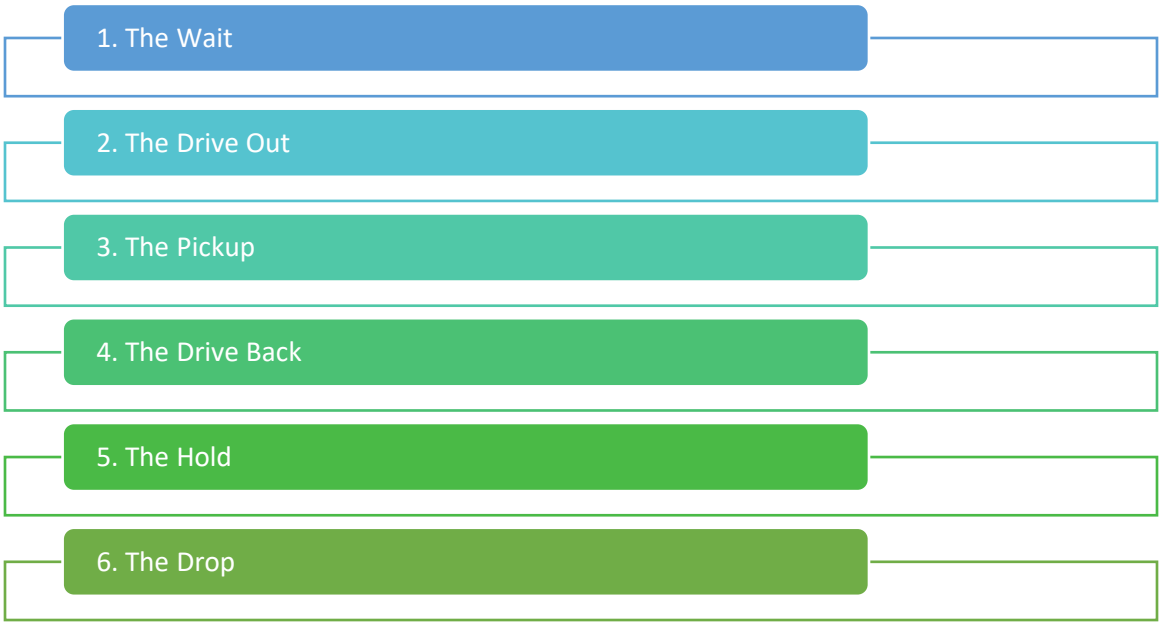
HUNTING GAMES – THE FOUNDATIONS

🎾 Game 12 – Shaping Toy Pickup

Curiosity becomes commitment.

Before we get started, let's break down the 6 behaviours we need from our dog to retrieve:



🎾 Why This Game Matters

This is where retrieve mechanics begin. We shape deliberate interaction before expecting lifts.

🎾 What You'll Need

- Your dog
- Neutral toy
- High-value treats
- Phone on tripods

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🎾 Step-by-Step-Guide

1. Set Up

Low distracting space. Toy on the floor. You are sitting on the floor or in a chair.

2. Build the Behaviour

- Mark investigations – throw cookie for a reset
- Then mark nose touches
- Then mouth contact
- End your session:
    - throw cookie away and pick up the toy

3. Add a Layer

Wait for brief lifts.

End session with cookie throws before picking up the toy.

4. Raise Criteria

Increase the duration of mouth contact/lifting gradually. Be mindful to not ask your dog to give up their toy yet.

🎾 Advancing the Game

Multiple clean brief lifts in a row = ready for structured pick-ups → Game 13

🎾 Troubleshooting

My dog grabs the toy and runs away.

Quietly go over to your dog (no chasing) and trade the toy with a high value food. Use their Mine! cue if it's reliable. If they run away when you approach, initiate a game of chase by running into the other direction. They will either drop the toy while running towards you or when you play Collar Grab upon arrival, take the toy off. Review the value of the toy, find something that has no value for your dog to pick up.

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Checklist

1. Is engagement deliberate?
2. Is chewing minimal?
3. Are sessions short?

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