

BUILDING RELATIONSHIP WITH TRICKS

When it comes to training your dog, one of the biggest influences on success is the relationship you share. If you have a fantastic relationship, built on trust, fun and understanding, the more successful your training will be.

One way to supercharge your relationship is to engage in fun activities and games with your dog, without any social pressure over the outcome. For this reason, trick training is perfect!

Working on learning something new and fun together simply for the joy of doing it will enable you to understand your dog better as well as sharpen your training skills and create a stronger connection.

Choose easy tricks to begin with and make sure to progress at your dog's pace, so that they are having fun every step of the way. You can then progress to more advanced and challenging skills.

The more you boost your relationship, the more you will notice its effect in other areas of training too, such as recall or loose lead walking. Relationship is at the heart of it all!



HAPPY TRAINING!

INTRODUCTION TO LURING PART 1

There are many ways we can teach a dog new behaviours. One option is to use luring. Luring is where your dog follows something they would like - usually a small treat between your fingers - in order to complete a desired action. They are given the treat as a reward. This is a simple but effective way to build behaviour quickly and is fun for your dog.

Start by holding a treat between your thumb and fingers. Show your dog and move it slowly away from their nose so that they follow it by moving their body. Be sure to keep it close to your dog's nose - if the gap widens at any point, bring the food close again and move more slowly.

You will want to mark and reward your dog every step to begin with before lengthening the distance that your dog will happily follow the lure before you reward them.

You can move the lure in different directions to get your dog to change direction or at different heights to encourage your dog to shift position. Moving the food in an upward arc will prompt your dog to sit, and moving it low will get them to lie down.



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INTRODUCTION TO LURING

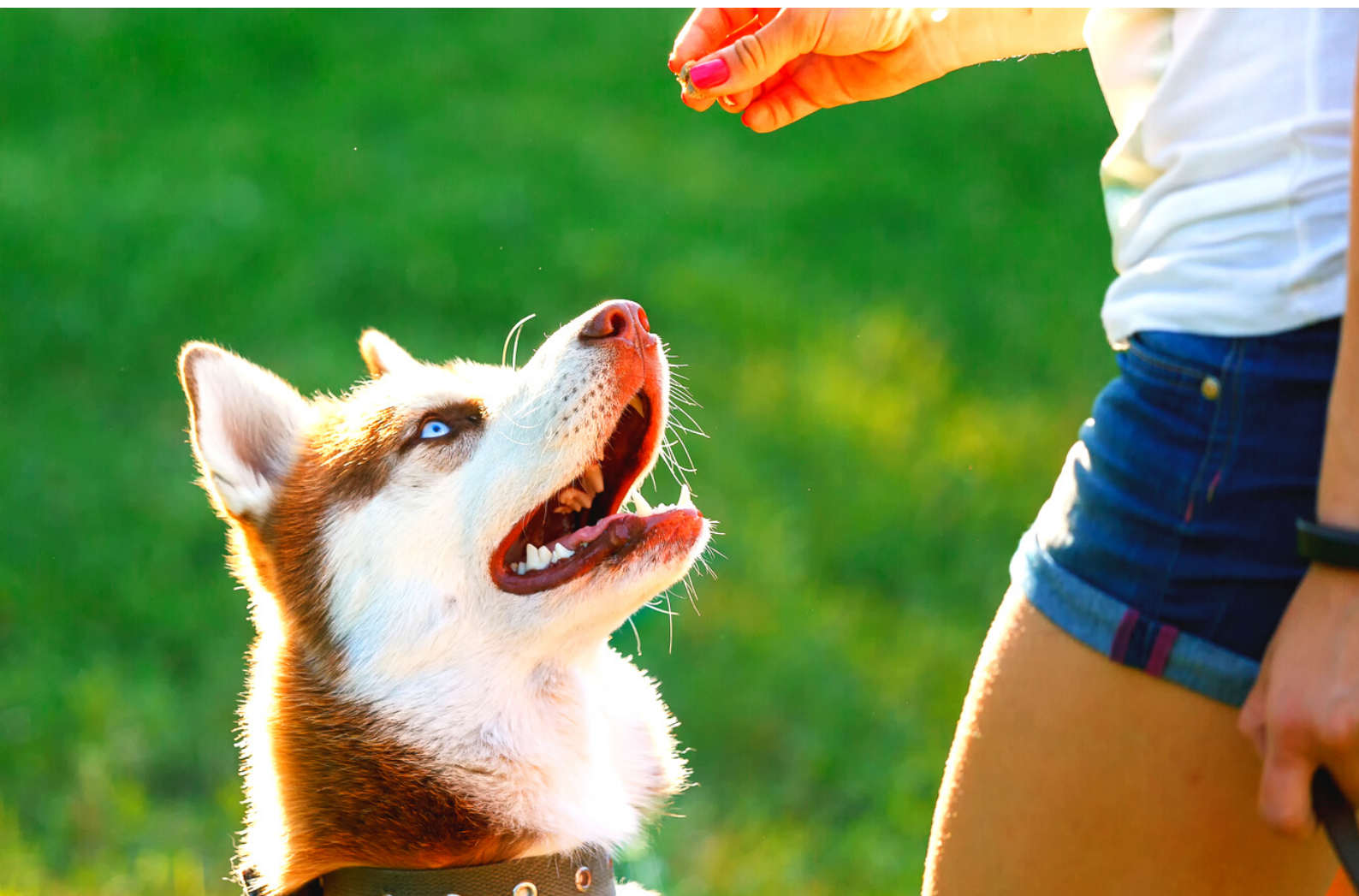
PART 2

It's important to note that when luring your dog can become really fixated on the food. This can sometimes overshadow the behaviour you are trying to teach. If you want your dog to eventually do the behaviour without food in your hand, it is important to fade out the food lure as soon as possible when teaching.

After a couple of repetitions of luring the behaviour with food, repeat the action without food in your hand. Your dog will follow as before and you can mark and reward them with food from your pocket or treat pouch instead. This will teach your dog that even though they can't see the food, they will still be rewarded for their efforts.

This builds trust and helps keep your dog's motivation to work with you high. If your dog is struggling at any point, you can absolutely drop back to an easier stage or reintroduce the lure for a few repetitions as needed.

It's also important to keep training sessions short and fun. If your dog gets tired, they won't be able to learn as effectively and might get frustrated.



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SPIN AND TWIST

Teaching your dog to spin is great to enhance flexibility and is a fun activity to do on your walks. You can teach using targeting or luring. To start, stand facing your dog and using a food lure, hand target or target stick get them to move in a large circle in front of you. Mark and reward when they get back to their starting position. Make sure to move at nose height so your dog can comfortably reach the target without jumping.

Progress to moving in a smaller circle for your dog to follow. Eventually you can reduce your hand signal even further, so that a quick flourish is all you need to prompt your dog.

You can also add a cue word such as 'spin'. Simply say before giving your hand signal and soon your dog will start to move, as soon as they hear it.

Don't forget to practice in both directions so that your dog can build flexibility and muscle strength on both sides of their body.



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CRAZY 8 TRICK

Teaching tricks is a great way to boost your relationship with your dog.

Crazy 8's involves teaching your dog to weave around your legs in a figure 8 pattern. It's perfect for boosting confidence and focus.

Start with your dog standing in front of you and use a lure or hand target to get your dog to move through your legs and around to your side. Mark and reward them on the outside of your leg each time.

Make sure to practice in both directions and go at your dogs pace throughout. This is an unusual behaviour for your dog so give them time to think and keep it fun.

When your dog is doing well, put the 2 sides together so that they complete a full figure 8 before being rewarded.

Over time you will be able to lessen the hand signal you give your dog, or even prompt just by shifting your weight to each side.



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CREATING A TRICK ROUTINE

Having fun in training is really important for both you and your dog. The more enjoyment you create, the stronger your bond will become and the more reliable your training will be.

One activity which is great to do with your dog is build a short trick series or fun routine that incorporates some of the behaviours you've learnt so far. Think about how you can combine different positions and transition between them. Try varying the speed of different actions and using props to mix things up a little.

The more creative you become, the more fun it will be and the novelty will keep your dog engaged and wanting to know what comes next.

You can even perform to music, tying in the different actions with the theme and tempo changes.

It's also a great way to practice getting your dog to do multiple behaviours before you reward them. In time you can celebrate with a big reward at the end of the whole sequence!



HAPPY TRAINING!

HIDE AND SEEK

When you have taught a recall cue to your dog, one game which really helps to supercharge their response is hide and seek. You'll want to practice this in the home and out on a long line before playing this game off lead when your dog has a great recall.

Start by distracting your dog with something to smell. Run away a short distance and hide out of direct sight.

Call your dog using their recall cue and when they come rushing over, reward them with something they love. Distract them again before running off to a new hiding place. Be sure to make it easy and fun for your dog. The idea is to get them excited about finding where you went so don't make your hiding places too concealed!

The more you practice this, the quicker your dog will become at finding you when you call.

Practice in lots of safe locations and watch your dog's enthusiasm to recall skyrocket.



HAPPY TRAINING!

TREASURE BAG ADVENTURE

Enhancing the relationship you share with your dog is so important. Everything is underpinned by your bond - from focus, polite walking and recall to your dog's physical and emotional wellbeing - a relationship built on trust and love is essential.

One fun way to bond with your dog on a walk involves taking a backpack of interesting objects along with you.

Start off by walking to a quiet location together. Lay down a blanket for your dog and encourage them to settle with you.

Slowly start to unpack the items from your bag one at a time, letting your dog sniff and investigate each in turn.

You might bring out a novel treat for your dog to try or share some food like an apple or carrot.

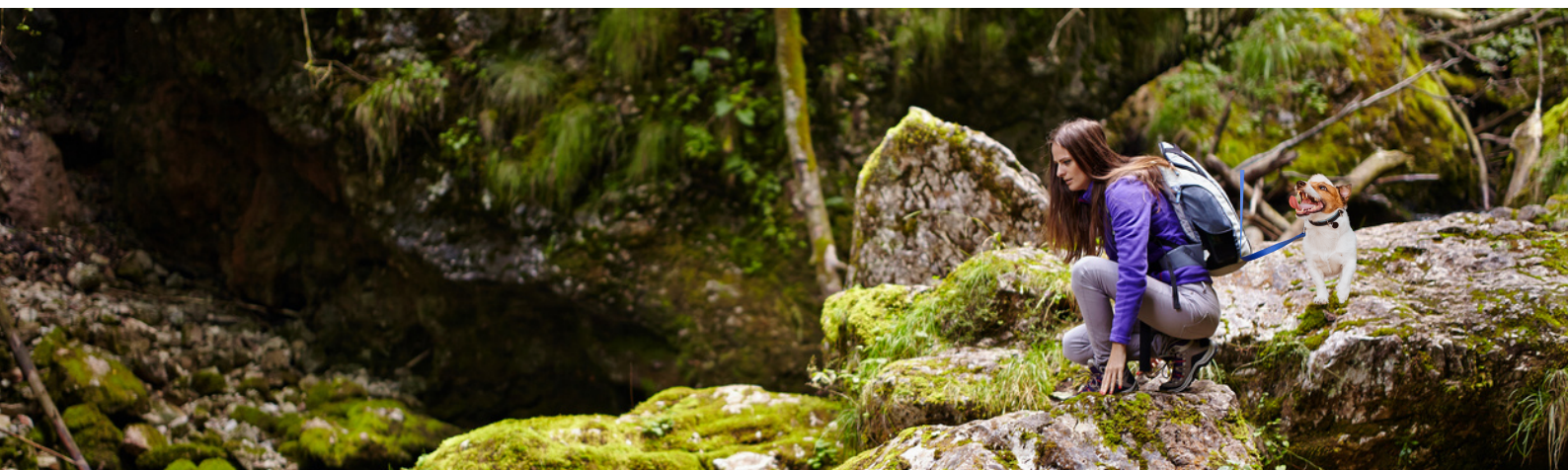
Perhaps you've brought a toy to enjoy together - encourage your dog to engage with you in play.

Another thing you can do is collect anything interesting you find on your walks and bring them on these adventures. Maybe you have a feather or piece of sheep wool, or you've brought a cloth that you wiped over a friend's dog to capture the scent.

You want each experience to be interesting and enriching for your dog.

When you have finished your activities, pack everything away and head home.

Mixing up where you go and what you take with you will make this something your dog will always look forward to!



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SNIFARRI ADVENTURES PART 1

A sniffari is a walk where the sole purpose is to let your dog sniff out interesting odours in the environment. They get to decide where to go and how quickly to walk. It's a totally different scenario to walking for exercise.

Giving your dog the choice to follow their nose is really empowering and will help them build confidence, relax into the environment and satisfy their need to exhibit natural behaviour.

If dogs don't have the opportunity to sniff and have outlets for their needs, they can become frustrated and this leads to many undesirable behaviours such as grabbing at the lead, barking at passers by and humping.

This frustration is natural and much like you would feel if you went for a scenic hike, and as you get to the best lookout spot, your walking partner rushes you on and you miss the breathtaking view.



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SNIFARRI ADVENTURES PART 2

Sniffaris allow your dog to be a dog, which is essential for their wellbeing. Sniffing adventures will leave your dog feeling relaxed and content. They will sleep better and find it easier to cope with everyday events, having had their needs met.

You can help your dog understand when it's time for sniffari and when you are planning to walk in a more direct fashion by being consistent. One option is to use different leads or harness attachments for each activity. Alternatively you could use a longer lead for sniffaris and a shorter one for regular walks.

Creating a pattern like this will help set your dog up for success as they will understand what to expect in each scenario.



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CREATIVE CANINE CUISINE

An interesting and fun way to bond with your dog is to prepare a nutritional home cooked meal you can both enjoy. You can get inventive and use a selection of ingredients that your dog loves as well as some new flavours. You will first want to make sure that your chosen ingredients are safe for canine consumption - a quick internet search will help you be sure. Some popular ingredients include beef, chicken, turkey, salmon, carrots, squash, broccoli, peas, sweet potatoes, rice and potatoes.

Gently cook the meat, vegetables and rice or potatoes. You can even use a crock pot to make it simpler.

Once you have finished cooking you will want to season your meal, but not your dog's. Pop your dog's food in a bowl to cool down before giving it to them.

Your dog will be sure to love it!

Feel free to experiment with different textures to find out when your dog prefers. You can blend their food or even partially freeze it for added variation.

Afterwards settle down next to each other to watch your favourite film.



HAPPY TRAINING!

FLIRT POLE FUN

When living with dogs it's important to remember that they have been bred for many generations for specific roles. When dogs aren't being worked in these roles, it is important that we provide them with outlets for their natural behaviour to ensure that they are fulfilled and don't seek out inappropriate alternatives.

For dogs who love to chase, a flirt pole is a brilliant outlet.

To start with you want to get your dog's interest. Act as if it is the most special thing you've ever seen and your dog will wonder what you have.

Next drop the toy to the ground and using the pole, make it dart across the floor as if it were alive. Vary the speed you move it so that your dog is close behind and motivated to keep chasing.

Keep changing direction and make it fun and unpredictable. When your dog catches the toy, praise and let them tug, shake or parade it around. Be mindful to tug with the toy and not the pole.

Wait for your dog to drop the toy or trade for some treats before playing again.

Remember to keep sessions short so your dog can't wait to play again next time.



HAPPY TRAINING!

BONDING THROUGH HAND FEEDING

When it comes to living with dogs, relationship is everything. There are many ways to build a connection but one simple yet effective activity is hand feeding.

Start by settling next to your dog in a quiet part of your home. You're going to slowly feed your dog their food, one piece at a time from a flat hand.

This exercise is really simple but very effective. Spending time feeding your dog in this way, without asking for other behaviours will create an association between you and something your dog loves. This will help to build trust and your dog's focus on you, as you mean good things are about to happen.

This is a perfect exercise when you first bring your dog home, but it is also really beneficial to strengthen your relationship through the adolescent stage and reinforce calmness around food. It also helps to prevent dog's from developing guarding behaviours around food.



HAPPY TRAINING!

TAKE A BOW

Teaching your dog to bow is a great exercise to help maintain flexibility, build core strength and balance. It will take time to build your dog's strength to hold this position for duration.

To begin, make sure you are working on a non slip surface. Start by rewarding your dog for standing facing you. If your dog automatically sits, use a treat to lure them to step forward and reward them at nose height to keep them standing.

Now you can start to teach the bow position. Start by using a food lure or hand target, moving diagonally down and backwards from your dog's nose towards their back paws. As soon as your dog's weight shifts backwards you will see their elbows bend. Mark this and return to the standing position to feed.

Practice at this stage, gradually progressing to a deeper elbow bend, whilst their back legs remain straight and continue to feed in a stand.

When your dog can touch their elbows to the ground and keep their back end in the air you can transition to rewarding them in the bow position. Mark for elbow contact and feed between their front paws. Feed multiple treats, one after another while your dog is in position. If their bottom drops to the ground or they get up, stop feeding.

When your dog is good at this, fade out any food in your prompting hand. Move your hand in the same way as before and when your dog bows, mark and reward from your treat pouch.

Eventually you can add a cue such as 'take a bow' by saying just before you give your hand signal.

Practice in short sessions to gradually build up your dog's core strength and the duration that they are able to bow for.

As always make sure to go at your dog's pace



HAPPY TRAINING!

WRAP AROUND

Teaching your dog to run out and around an object before returning is a great way to build confidence and add an extra level of fun to your walks.

To start, set out an object in your home or garden. Walk towards it with your dog before using a lure or target to guide them around. Mark as they reach the far side of the object before moving backwards and rewarding your dog in front of you.

Practice until you can reduce the signal you give your dog to get them to move around the object. As your gesture becomes less exaggerated you can also start to signal from a greater distance away.

You can even develop a different cue for each direction so that your dog will be able to move in a clockwise or anticlockwise fashion depending on the signal you give.

When your dog is really good at this, start to take it out on your walks and use objects in the environment.



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