

Kelly Krager

From: Aidan, Positive Petzine [editor@positivepetzine.com]
Sent: Monday, September 03, 2007 12:56 PM
To: Kelly Krager
Subject: [positivepetzine] Dinner-time fun for Sophie

Hi Kelly and Sophie, last lesson we looked at what causes about 75% of all dog behavior problems - lack of exercise and mental challenge. So here's a game you can play with your dog, it doesn't take much time and it will be really enjoyable for your dog.

First I'd like to tell you about an e-book that a friend of Positive Petzine wrote, [BrainWork for Smart Dogs](#). It's got dozens of great ideas for games and exercises you can give your dog to work him like a dog loves and needs to be worked. There is a huge volume of really great ideas in this e-book, and it will change your way of thinking about your life with Sophie.

Would you believe that your dog is capable of following a track left by a person and finding them at the end, and that you can teach this in the time it takes to feed his normal daily meal without any extra training? Many dog owners are learning about the sport of Tracking. Find out if your dog has what it takes to be the next Tracking Champion or Search and Rescue hero!

The plan is really quite simple. You take a portion of your dog's normal meal in a plastic bag. Then you 'lay the track', just walk normally across your yard, placing a piece of food in each step.

Pretty easy right? Your dog shouldn't have any trouble at all finding all the food you left lying around the yard. When he gets to the end of the track, tell him what a good boy he is and give him the rest of his meal. He doesn't actually have to find anyone at the end, yet. He just needs to find the food.

Next meal you do the same thing, but don't place the food in every footstep. Leave a few out, one here and one there. The idea is to make your dog work a little harder to find the food, but still succeed really easily.

Next meal you do the same thing, but place food in every second footstep.

Next meal you place food in every third footstep.

Continue in this fashion, adding a few mild changes of direction to the track. Make it easy for your dog, the idea is to have him succeed really easily. This is just the beginning after all.

What we're trying to teach is a connection between the scents left on a track and the food. At first it's just a continuous trail of food, but as you start leaving food out your dog will have to look for clues. The consistent clue is that the food is always where your footsteps have been.

Dogs already know how to track. They are born with an amazing ability to find things using their noses. What we are teaching here is that we want them to follow footsteps. The food reinforces this behaviour.

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Most dogs love this game, it makes dinner time so much more fun! Dogs are genetically programmed to work and hunt for their food. It doesn't take long to give them this fun and enriching game to play.

Who knows? Maybe you have the next Tracking Champion or Search and Rescue hero right under *YOUR* nose?

Note: this article has been translated into German and can be found at <http://www.positivepetzine.com>

Regards,
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Editor

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