

Teaching "Give" (The Trading Game or: "Get that Sock out of your mouth!")

"Give," is a useful behavior to teach your dog. It teaches your dog to drop objects out of his mouth voluntarily; no need to play the "snatch and keep away" game.

- Give him a toy he likes (and is likely to put into his mouth) while you say "take it." Wait until he's engaged in the toy, then say "Give," once, pause for a second and lure his face away from the item with several great treats in your hand. When the dog drops the toy, click or say "Yes," to indicate that this is the behavior you are rewarding, and let him nibble the treats—one at the time--while you pick up the toy **WITH YOUR OTHER HAND!** This is a two hand exercise! When he's done eating it, **GIVE THE TOY BACK**, saying "take it." Let him chew for a few seconds, then repeat the exercise.

You are trying to teach him to willingly trade and not to fear that he will lose whatever he is trading to you. So he both receives a treat for complying with your cue as well as a life reward: getting his toy back. (Once you use this in "real life," you will need to take things and **NOT** give them back. You want him to willingly do this, and he will if you practice.)

- Repeat several times. After a few days, he should be able to spit out his toy as soon as you say "Give" and **BEFORE** you lure him. In that case, click and treat after he spits out his toy, rather than luring his face further away.

- Practice with many different objects – going from low-value items to high value items, i.e. from a Nylabone to a cow hoof, but please only practice with items you are going to give back during this exercise. Do **NOT** practice with forbidden items! In real life, you will sometimes need to trade with forbidden items, but do not do it in a training session as it may give your dog the idea that it's OK to have since you gave it to him in the first place. Please also manage your dog around items he is not supposed to have to limit the amount of times you must take a forbidden object from him.

This should be practiced frequently. This is not only a useful exercise to teach your dog to drop forbidden items, but also a great way to teach your dog that he does not need to guard any of his toys and other favorites from you. Practice this as a game! You do not want to intimidate him into dropping the toy but get his willing compliance. You want to teach him that you are the provider of everything he needs and that he is not in competition with you over his resources. However, when you practice this, a few minutes at a time go a long way. From the dog's point of view, this can be a pretty annoying game. So finish on a good note and let him chew that pig ear you practiced with....(Pig ears tend to be high value....so work your way up to pig ears pretty slowly.)

If your dog does **NOT** trade willingly, I strongly urge you to contact a professional (positive) dog trainer. Not trading willingly includes—but is not exclusive to—eating faster, stiffening, running away with the object and hiding, snarling, showing teeth, growling etc.

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