

# Games to Play with Your Pup: Hide & Seek

This game ties directly with your dog's "natural wiring." Your dog's hard-wired behaviors are predatory and to forage for fun and food. "Find it" games tune into your dog's instinct to find prey or food, mainly using their nose. Some dogs prefer to use their eyes, such as sight hounds, and others are more alert to things that they can hear, such as dogs with erect ears like German Shepherds. Your dog has a natural desire to stalk and rush prey. Rushing is moving suddenly towards prey, hopefully making it turn and flee. Your dog gets a great adrenaline rush from chasing prey or toys that can trigger the prey drive response in your dog.

## Hide and Seek

It can be fun for you and your dog to play Hide and Seek much like you would with a child. Find a hiding space where your dog cannot see you but can hear you such as behind a piece of furniture, behind a curtain, behind a door, in another room, etc. and then call your dog to you. This is also a great way to reinforce your dog for coming to you when called. When your dog finds you, you can give him some treats and some praise or you can engage him in a game of chase.

## Hide and Seek with Toys and Treats

Tell your dog to sit/stay out of sight—or put her in another room to prevent her from seeing you hiding the toy. Hide a favorite toy. Make the hiding places easy at first, and as your dog gets used to the game, you can increase the difficulty of the hiding places. Then, go release your dog from the sit/stay or the room, and ask her excitedly to "Find it!" When your dog locates the hidden object, praise happily and excitedly. If your dog likes playing tug, and the toy can be used for tugging, you can play a quick game of tug with your dog when she finds the toy. Then, start all over again. You probably only want to do three to five finds per play session.

This game burns off energy—by making your dog use her nose to find—teaches your dog to actively search for her own toys, teaches your dog become more reliable at sit/stay when excited, and, most importantly, is a lot of fun!

Your dog's desire to search and find can also be used when you're away. Just before you leave the house hide treats all around the house and/or yard. Pieces of dry dog food, hollow bones, or a Kong stuffed with peanut butter are all good choices. Be sure your dog is out of sight when you're hiding these treats. Then let her out, leave the house, and your dog will not even miss you the first 30 minutes you are gone. It is important that you leave in a very calm manner, avoiding any excited good-byes.