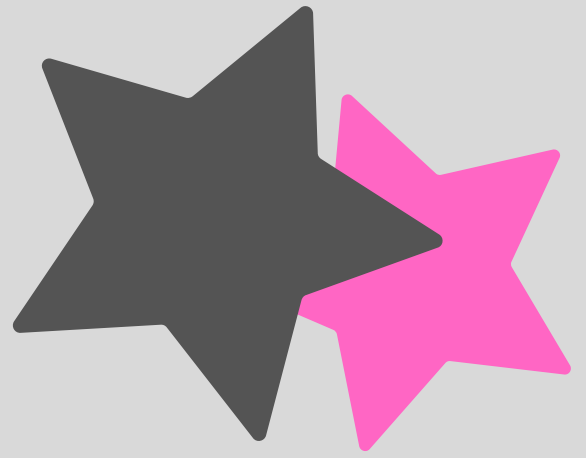




**TALK TO
THE PAW**
Dog Training and Behaviour



Training Games for Mental and Emotional Health



Training with your dog can look like fun!

It doesn't need to look like robotic obedience.

As well as giving your dog regular physical exercise, keeping them mentally and emotionally healthy is equally as important.

Mental health

is all about meeting the behavioural needs of your dog, alongside creating trusting, bonding relationships.

**We all need things to look forward to,
When we enjoy activities the brain releases dopamine, a feel good chemical which increases optimism.**

Brains also love to learn so introducing new challenges to your dog is great for their mental health.

Have fun with the following games.....

Game 1 : Scatter feed

Why?

- ★ Dogs love to use their noses
- ★ Sniffing releases natural endorphins
- ★ Joining in makes you fun to be around
- ★ Finding things together increases trust and bonding

How?

- ★ Grab a handful of your dogs' food or some tasty treats
- ★ Scatter them liberally on a clear, non-slip floor, grass or patio
- ★ Let your dog sniff them out
- ★ Help by pointing them out (this helps your dog associate your hands with good stuff)
- ★ Lots of praise when they have finished

Game 2 : Food toy

Why?

- ★ Food toys use natural hunting behaviours such as chase, bite and paw
- ★ This increases problem solving behaviours and improves frustration tolerance
- ★ Dogs love to work for their food, bowls are boring

How?

- ★ Use a toy which your dog loves
- ★ This could be a treat ball for chasers, a kong for chewers, licki mats for lickers or a wobbler for those who like to use their paws.
- ★ Add food or treats so that they are easy to access at first
- ★ Gradually increase the difficulty as your dog succeeds
- ★ Feed once a day using this new toy and wash daily

Game 3 : Find It

Why?

- ★ Sniffing increases exploratory behaviours which increases confidence
- ★ It is particularly valuable for dogs who lack confidence
- ★ It fulfills the behavioural needs of many breeds
- ★ It is a great game to play together

How?

- ★ Have your dog out of the room
- ★ Hide some small piles of 3-4 treats or pieces of kibble
- ★ Use low down and higher up spaces to encourage searching behaviours
- ★ Don't make it too difficult at first
- ★ Use natural objects like blankets or cushions to add a layer of difficulty

Game 4 : Go to

Why?

- ★ This game improves recall as well as increasing the listening skills of your dog
- ★ It is great fun to play both indoors and outdoors with all members of the family
- ★ It can become the basis of hide and seek search games or sports such as tracking or mantrailing

How?

- ★ Have your dog in front of you
- ★ Ask them to go toname of person...
- ★ Have that person immediately call your dog or tempt them with a treat or toy
- ★ Reward heavily when they reach the person
- ★ This person then sends your dog to the next person or back to you

Emotional health

is all about your dog being able to regulate their feelings by learning to cope when they are faced with new or difficult situations.

For some dogs, this can be when something unexpected happens, when something that works stops working or when there are changes to their routine or environment.

Emotional resilience is built during puppyhood but training can help adult dogs who have missed out on this early learning.

Have fun with the following games.....

Game 1: Slow feed from above

Why?

- ★ This game teaches impulse control around food
- ★ It can help with jumping up and snatching
- ★ It teaches manners around human hands and food
- ★ It allows your dog to be rewarded for calm behaviour without you having to ask them or tell them no

How?

- ★ Have your dog in front of you in a sit
- ★ Hold a treat between your thumb and forefinger high above your dog so they are watching but not jumping
- ★ Gradually lower the treat until your dog finds it hard but still remains sitting
- ★ Say "yes", turn your hand over and feed the treat from an open palm under your dogs' chin



**TALK TO
THE PAW**
Dog Training and Behaviour

Game 2 : Treat trails

Why?

- ★ This game is great for dogs who pull suddenly on the lead
- ★ It teaches impulse control around things on the floor
- ★ Letting your dog reach the treat creates a connection and communication when walking

How?

- ★ With your dog away, lay a trail of 5 treats, 1-2 metres apart in straight line
- ★ Bring your dog out on the lead and let them notice the first treat
- ★ Stand still and wait for them to relax to the point that the lead has a smile in it
- ★ Say "yes" and let them walk to the treat
- ★ Go with them so the lead stays slack
- ★ Make it harder by waiting for them to look at you before moving to the treat

Game 3 : Eye contact

Why?

- ★ This game is perfect for bonding with your dog
- ★ It encourages your dog to look to you when they want something or are unsure about something
- ★ Eye contact releases oxytocin, the cuddle hormone in us humans and literally makes us love our dog more

How?

- ★ Have your dog sitting or lying in front of you
- ★ Hold a treat between your thumb and forefinger
- ★ Slowly bring the treat up to the space between your eyes
- ★ Wait for your dog to look at your eyes and not at the treat
- ★ When they do say "yes" and give them the treat
- ★ Add a longer look at you as your dog gets the game

Game 4 : Arousal up and down

Why?

- ★ This game teaches your dog how to go from major excitement to slow down in seconds
- ★ It is perfect for scenarios such as playing with toys, visitors arriving or playing with other dogs
- ★ High arousal games can lead to mouthing, barking or jumping up in some dogs
- ★ Calming down literally relaxes them and slows their breathing so they can think again

How?

- ★ Play a game that gets your dog excited
- ★ This may be tug, chase or jump
- ★ Before they get too excited, say stop, scatter some small treats on the ground and stand still
- ★ Let your dog sniff out the treats and watch them take a deep breath
- ★ Play again and repeat

If you would prefer

to learn by watching videos you can find them by clicking these links

Slow feed from above

<https://youtu.be/GxE0boR06Wk>

Arousal Up and Down

<https://youtu.be/Wq3stpVCEEU>

Find it

<https://youtu.be/-sj9pdYsaEs>

Treat trails

<https://youtu.be/0eUX1lAAzM0>

Eye contact

<https://youtu.be/hgcVKGh2JG4>

Using food toys

<https://youtu.be/IIfLBDj10Ds>

**For information on where to
find us go to**

Website

www.talktothepaw.io

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TalktothePaw>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/talktothepawbristol>

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/talk.tothepaw/>

