

# Games To Play With Your Dog - Hide & Seek

Play is an important part of owning a dog, and is a great way to build a fun and loving relationship between you. If you ever observe dogs when they greet at the park, the majority of them love to play and interact with other dogs around them. Our dogs are such a fun species to be around and we can help to encourage this behaviour by playing games with them at home and whilst out on walks. This really helps to show your dog that you are so much fun to be around and can be a great aid for teaching dogs with poor recall problems.

## How Do I Play The Hide & Seek Game?

The hide and seek game can be played with people or with toys, and to begin with we will explain how to introduce this game with people.

All you will need is some of your dog's favourite food treats to use for a reward (if your dog is not motivated by food then use a reward that you know he loves, such as a toy or attention).

-  Start by introducing the game in the house. Ask a member of the family to hide somewhere in the house whilst you tell your dog to wait.
-  Once the family member has hidden, ask them to call the dog either using his name or by whistling softly.
-  As soon as they do this, release your dog and say "Find him/her" in an excited tone.
-  When your dog finds the hidden person, reward them.
-  Repeat the above steps, and gradually increase the difficulty.

To begin with you need to make this game as easy as possible for your dog to find the hidden person, as this will keep your dog engaged in the game. If you start off by making it too difficult then your dog may lose interest quite quickly.

Once you have played this with your dog in the house and your dog understands the game, then you can progress to playing this game outside. It is a very simple game to play outside and all it involves is simply stepping behind a tree or a bush whilst you are out with your dog. It will not take long for your dog to realise that you are gone and will turn back to look. If he walks on without realising then you can call him or whistle to attract his attention. Once he knows you are missing he will come running. Give your dog lots of praise when he finds you.

If you are walking your dog with somebody, then one of you can gently hold the dog back whilst the other person runs off and hides. Once you have hidden you can call or whistle for your dog as the other person releases him. Always praise your dog for finding you. Start this game easily by only hiding a short distance away (your dog may lose interest if you run miles away to hide on the first attempt). Once your dog understands the concept and starts to find you easily then you can challenge him by increasing the distance. This game will allow your dog to track you by using his hunting and tracking instincts.

Some people can find this game embarrassing, especially if you pop out from behind a tree or bush and come face to face with another human, but it is a great game for your dog and it encourages him to use his nose.

The above game can also be played with your dog's toys. You will need one or two of your dog's favourite toys and some treats.

-  Send your dog into another room whilst you hide the toy.
-  Rub your hands on the toy and then hide it.
-  Call your dog back into the room and place your cupped hands close to his nose whilst you give the cue "Find it".
-  Observe your dog and if he approaches the hidden place give him praise and say "yes". If he moves in the opposite direction to the hidden place then say "cold" to tell him he is in the wrong area.
-  When he finds the toy give him lots of praise and play with the toy for a moment, and then you can take the toy off him and start again.

This game allows and encourages your dog to use their amazing sense of smell, and it also satisfies the dog's hunting instincts, whilst providing them with mental and physical stimulation.

### **Why Should I Play With My Dog?**

Playing with your dog increases the bond between you and it provides your dog with the mental and physical stimulation which will allow them to live a long and happy life. When it comes to playing with your dog observe them to see what they enjoy and what motivates them. This will enable you to create and adapt games to reflect that. If owners forget how important it is to play with their dogs, then their dogs will have a way of finding their own amusement.