



Play is our brain's favourite way of learning

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## **FUNDAMENTALS**

**Ditch The Bowl** - Use Bundy's daily food to reinforce wanted behaviours, help her make good decisions, and play games to build confidence and promote calmness. Be strategic about when you give it to her. Prepare a few options in advance, like frozen kongs, so you have quick distractions ready to go for those moments when you need them. (see Ditch the Bowl eBook).

**Crate Training** - This is something to consider which will be super helpful for Bundy to empty her bucket and for you to implement management when you cannot give her your full attention. All good things happen in the crate—this is Bundy's safe place, where she can switch off (see Crate Training eBook).

**Start as You Plan to Go On** – Think about how you want Bundy to respond to situations and start working towards that. Be specific—what do you want her to do when she feels worried? What do you want her to do when you walk past another dog? For example, if you want her to ignore dogs as you walk past, get her focus on treats falling form your hand (see Magic hand) - this will redirect her focus and teach her skills to manage her emotions.

**Management** – Bundy has developed some reactive responses to situations and will inevitably make poor decisions. Limit her choices by implementing management strategies to prevent those unwanted behaviours from happening. For example, when she sees another dog, move her away before she has a chance to react and if she does react, get her out of the situation as soon as possible. These strategies will set her up for success while you teach her to make better behaviour choices.

**Desensitise Triggers** – Notice the things that fill Bundy's bucket. For example, if the doorbell makes her anxious, our goal is to help her develop a NEUTRAL response. Ring the doorbell and do nothing, ing the doorbell, open it the door - close the door, have people ring the doorbell from outside and do nothing etc. Use this same strategy for any other triggers she may have.

**Mental Stimulation** – Bundy is a clever and energetic labrador, and keeping her mind busy will help avoid boredom and help her practise being calm. Use her food for treasure hunts in the backyard (which can also replace a walk), let her tear up cardboard boxes, give her puzzles, and of course, play with her!

Control the Controllable – You can't always control the environment, so instead, work with Bundy to build skills that help her move away, feel safe, or focus on something else. For example, offer her a stuffed kong or do a scatter feed when when the guinea pigs are out! (I'm still giggling about that!) Although Bundy would not be considered a bite risk, muzzle training to deter people interacting with her may be a good tool to have up your sleeve. (see muzzle training PDF)

**Clear Communication** – Be very clear with Bundy about what you expect. Phrases like 'stop it' or 'stop barking' are too vague. Instead, use clear instructions such as 'On your bed/mat,' or even throw a treat for her to chase/catch to redirect her. If she ignores you, it's likely because she doesn't understand what you want, so give her a little help.

Use Your Words Mindfully – We don't want our voice to become white noise to our dogs. If you give a command, such as 'sit,' and Bundy doesn't respond, it's not because she hasn't heard you—it's because she can't sit in that moment. Her bucket may be too full, or she may be confused. Instead of repeating the command, try getting her focus back on you by engaging with her (this could be tossing a treat) and brining her energy down so she can think. Once you have her attention, try the command again. Aim to only give commands when you are 100% sure she will follow through.

**Your Energy!** - Dogs mirror our energy, so it's really important to stay mindful of your own energy around Bundy. If you want calmness, you need to project calmness. If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed or just tired, it might not be the right time for an outing—choose something easy for both you and her instead. We do not need to walk our dogs every day!

**Your Bucket!** - Be mindful of not only of Bundy's stress bucket but also everyone else's. If things are getting overwhelming, do whatever you need to (as calmly as possible) to give yourself a moment to empty your own bucket.

**Be Patient** – Things may feel overwhelming at times, and it's normal to feel like progress is slow or inconsistent. Bundy may nail a skill one day and struggle with it the next—it's all part of the learning process. Just know that it's normal to have both good days and bad days. Stay positive and keep going! Those neural pathways in her brain are forming—you'll get there with time and persistence!

## LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

Following are games to play with Bundy - always start easy and increase the difficulty by increasing the duration, distance and distraction. *If Bundy struggles with a particular game - THAT is the game she needs to play!* 

There are A LOT of games to choose from - don't overwhelm yourself and try play them all! Choose 3-4 to start with and gradually grow your repertoire.

Remember, it is not only Bundy who is learning how to play, but you too! It takes coordination and practise so be patient with yourself as you learn:-)

**Reward Nothing**- whenever Bundy chooses calmness or makes a good choice e.g. goes and lies down in her crate/bed, calmly give her a treat. Do not worry if it unsettles her - keep capturing those moments and growing that tunnel in her brain.

**Luring with food** - have a small treat in your hand (hold it firmly between your thumb and palm) and get Bundy to follow your hand from left to right. Be sure to keep the food right in front of her nose and move slowly - release the food before she loses interest - start off with a short distance and work your way up. Watch my video for tips <a href="here">here</a>

# THERE'S A GAME FOR THAT CATCH

Helps Boost: Focus, Proximity,
Confidence



Start with a piece of food that's easy for them to see and easy for you to handle







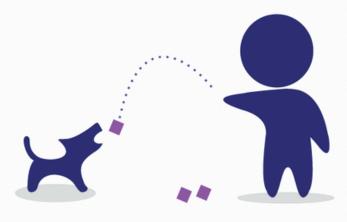
They can catch more than food....play catch with toys too

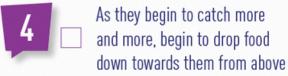


HELPS WITH...

Reactivity

Toss food towards your dog. Make it very informal and fun, if they drop it don't worry

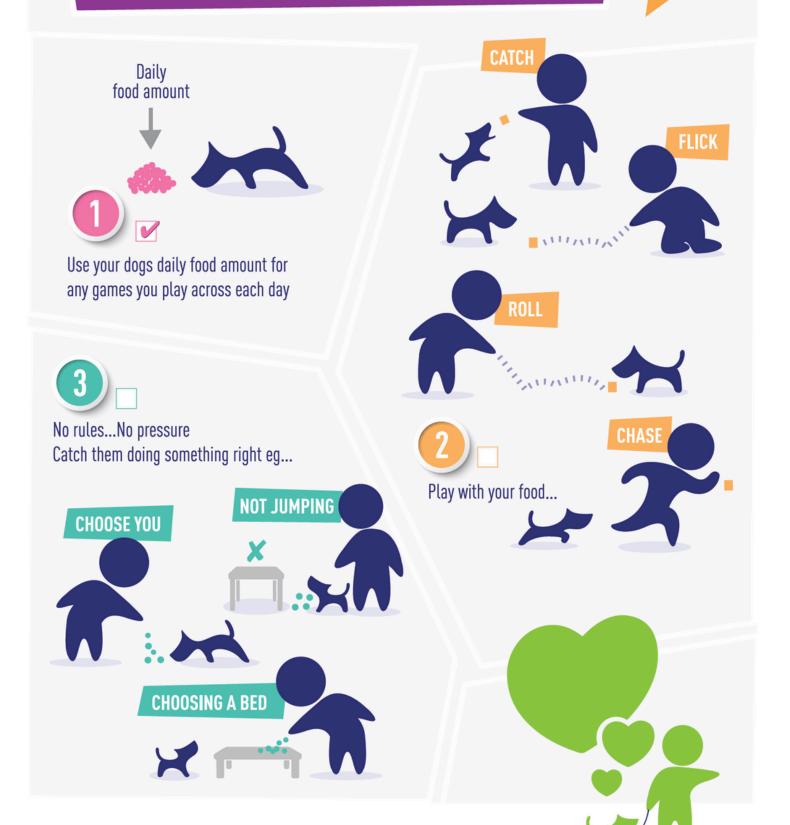




# THERE'S A GAME FOR THAT! FOOD FUN

#### **HELPS WITH...**

- Engagement
- ✓ Focus
- Reactivity
- ✓ Relationship





Helps Boost: Disengagement, Focus and Value for Proximity

Start this game by dropping a piece of food on the ground. Allow them to eat the food



Repeat a few times continuing to 'mark' that choice to orientate back towards you each time



HELPS WITH...

Listening to you

✓ Recall

And when they TURN towards you - mark that moment with a word like 'yes' or a click with a clicker, and drop another piece of food away from you



Add a leash and play the same game



# THERE'S'A GAME FOR THAT! SCATTER FEEDING

#### HELPS WITH...

- Lowering stress levels
- Reactivity
- A dog that worries
- Relationship building



Scatter feeding is a simple but effective strategy to use in different situations. It lowers excitement levels, allows us to achieve better focus and a calmer behaviour with one or multiple dogs, as well as growing tolerance of frustration.

HELLOOO...

Scatter feeding when you arrive home is a great way to lower excitement levels.

3 🗆

Entering a vehicle can be an exciting event.

Lower the excitement levels by scatter feeding into the cage or crates as your dog enters the vehicle.





Life is exciting, and daily distractions can increase energy levels. Scatter feed away from distractions to regain focus with one or multiple dogs.



Taking dogs out of a vehicle can send energy levels skyward again. Lower the excitement levels by scatter feeding as your dog exits the vehicle.

- ✓ Arousal up/down
- Calmness
- Thinking in arousal
- Optimism
- Grit and tolerance of frustration

# THERE'S A GAME FOR THAT! AEROPLANE FEEDING

#### HELPS WITH...

- 🖊 Jumping up
- Counter-surfing
- ✓ Barking at visitors or passers-by



Z TAKE IT SLOW!

Use a boundary (a bed, mat or anything your dog can sit or stand on). SLOOOOOWLY deliver a piece of food (aeroplane) in your hand to your dog's mouth.





When your dog settles, SLOOOWLY deliver the food again. If there is no snatching or grabbing, give the food to your dog.



This game helps make your dog much more thoughtful and calm around things that excite them. SL0000W delivery is vital when playing this game.



## HELPS BOOST... ✓ Listening to you





# THERE'S'A GAME FOR THAT! MOUSE GAME

#### HELPS WITH...

- Chasing
- ✓ Recall
- Counter-surfing
- Jumping up



Place a small handful of food in front of your dog, on the floor or on the edge of the boundary.



If they show impulse control, deliver pieces of food from the pile. If your dog tries to get the food, cage it with your hand.



While the food is caged you might find your dog sniffs, paws or licks your hand. Wait for that moment of back off before you reward with another piece of food from the pile.



5

Increase the difficulty by keeping the food uncovered for longer, playing with it before feeding or using higher value food.

Vary your delivery. Feed straight to your dog's mouth, flick food from the pile or occasionally release your dog to "get it!"



# PLANT POT PRISON LEVELS 1 & 2

**Boost Engagement & Relationship** 







As soon as your dog shows some self control... (stepping back, a sit or similar) lift the plant pot and allow your dog to access the food. Repeat a few times



Repeat steps 2,3 & 4 a few times and remember to balance control with allowing them to get it too....



Repeat step 2...while they are sniffing ask for a simple behaviour they know well eg. 'Sit'. When they do...allow them to get the piece of food





#### HELPS WITH...

- ✓ Recall
- Chase
- Saying hello to everyone
- Relationship



You will need 🗹

Warm-up with hopping on and releasing



Slooow delivery of food!



Begin to grow CALMNESS on the bed. As you slow yourself down and remain calm, your dog will become calmer too.



Vary how and when you feed, ping-ponging the delivery of food to the bed.

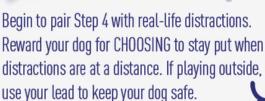
Wait a few seconds between delivering one piece of food and the next, then deliver one or two pieces a little closer together. Look for moments of relaxed

behaviour and feed those too.



Food fiddle -play with the food in your hands. If your dog remains on the boundary when you move around, deliver food to the bed.













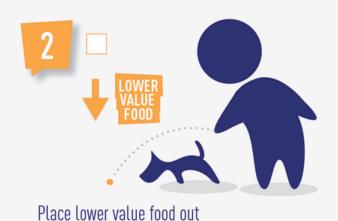
# THERE'S A GAME FOR THAT! PROXIMITY VORTEX

HELPS WITH...

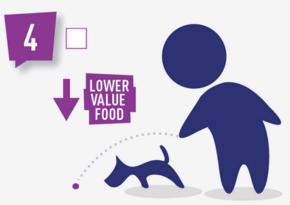
- Recal
- Walking on leash
- Relationship

Helps Boost: Engagement, Disengagement, Value for proximity









Deliver higher value food on returning to you...watch them return

to you faster each time!

Place lower value food out



# THERE'S'A GAME FOR THAT! CARDBOARD CHAOS

#### HELPS WITH...

- Reactivity
- Being cool with novelty
- ✓ Recall



Build your cardboard chaos, be creative. Include spaces to go under, over, on and through. Scatter some food among the boxes







Allow them to investigate. As they investigate scatter more food amongst the boxes without them noticing



Build gradually to make sure they are confident. Every now and then call them to you and then send back in to the cardboard.



Observe carefully. Notice their reactions. Are they comfortable and confident?





- Confidence
- ✓ Optimism
- Optimis
- ✓ GRIT
- Flexibility

# THERE'S A GAME FOR THAT! NOISE BOX

#### HELPS WITH...

- Novelty situations
- ✓ Noise reactivity
- Fear reactivity



Start with your empty box.
Drop food near the box.
Reinforce any slight
interaction with the box.

As your dog's confidence grows, drop food into the box. Hold the box to keep it steady to avoid your dog becoming frightened.





Items can be a mixture of paper, foil, bubble wrap, plastic bottles, etc. Add food to the box when they choose to get in and explore. If your dog is cautious, one item is enough to begin with.





# THERE'S'A GAME FOR THAT!

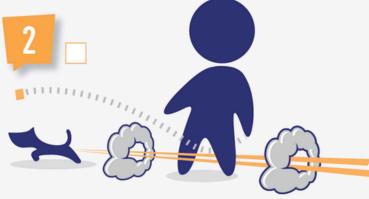
**HELPS WITH...** 

- Recall
- Staying close
- Walking on leash

Helps Boost: Confidence, Proximity,
Disengagement



Start this game by throwing a piece of food and see of they will chase it



This time throw the food through your legs for them to chase running through your legs to get the food



Turn around and throw another piece of food through your legs for them to chase again running through your legs to get the food

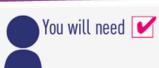




## THERE'S'A GAME FOR THAT AROUSAL ÛP. AROUSAL DOWN

#### HELPS WITH...

- Calmness
- A dog who can listen





Begin by calmly stroking, massaging your dog. Everything is relaxed.





Bring the arousal up with high energy play.





Back to arousal down - let your dog keep the toy and return to calm stroking and gentle massage.



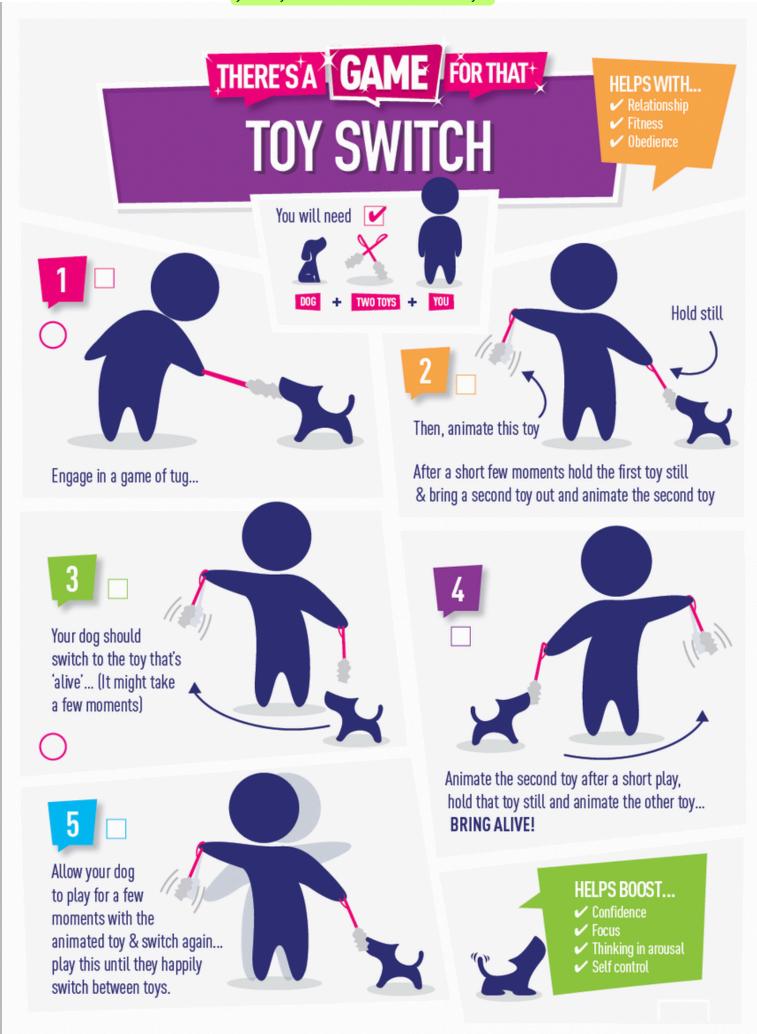




Keep sessions super short! Training should be a fun time, not a long time.



- Calmness
- Thinking in arousal
- ✓ Self-control
- Confidence



# THERE'S'A GAME FOR THAT! NOSE TOUCH

HELPS WITH.

✓ Optimism

✓ Retrieve

✓ Focus

This is a great game with many practical uses. We love to play this game to get the process of retrieve started. If your dog has an amazing nose touch, they are more likely to be able to figure out how to deliver an object to your hand. This game can grow confidence, as well as optimism.



With your dog's attention on you, extend your palm out to the side at your dog's eye level, perhaps 2-3 inches away from their nose. If they move toward your hand and touch your palm with their nose, say "Yes" and then toss a piece of food away. Remove your hand and as soon as they have eaten their reward and turn back, offer your hand again.

If, for some reason, your dog is hesitant to touch their nose to your palm, that's okay. Offer your hand and then with your other hand deposit a piece of food into your palm. This should encourage them to interact. Quickly fade this out once their confidence in moving toward your hand grows. Alternate hands and then, when your puppy is doing really well, delay your "Yes" and reward to see if they'll press even harder.

# THERE'S'A GAME FOR THAT!

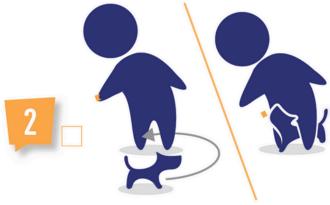
**HELPS WITH...** 

- Reactivity
- ✓ Recall
- Listening to you.

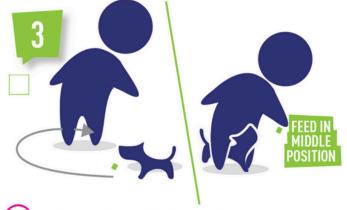
Helps Boost: confidence, Value for Proximity

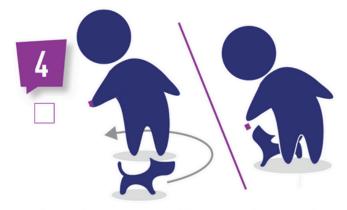
Arousal Concepts





With your dog in front of you lure your dog around your leg & into a 'Middle' position between your leg, feed in the 'middle' position





Toss a piece of food away & as your dog returns lure again around your leg

As an alternative to middle you can lure round to your side & feed in position at your side... feed in that position



Remember to play the game in both directions and both sides

# THERE'S A GAME LEG WEAVES

**FOOD OR TOY** 

#### HELPS WITH...

- ✓ Recall
- Lead walking
- Greeting without jumping up



Warm up with a short play with the toy



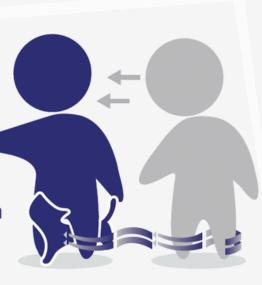
Step forward with one leg & present your toy behind your leg, let your dog go through your legs to get the toy... play!



As you play allow your dog to wrap around your leg & play in front of you



Build up by stepping forward to allow your dog to go through one way and then the other...then reward and have a play.





the opposite leg & repeat step 2



- Value for proximity
- Confidence
- Resilience



# THERE'S'A GAME FOR THAT! TWO PAWS ON

Helps Boost: Confidence, Optimism,
Arousal Concepts, Focus

#### **HELPS WITH...**

- On leash walking
- Listening to you
- Relationship
- Heel work
- Perfect 'conversation starter'





**WAIT** for your dog to <u>choose</u> to return back to the item and reward steps towards it



As they get closer each time then reward <u>any</u> paw on the item. Then throw a treat away



Begin to reward for choosing to stay and add duration and begin to add a 'release' cue eg. 'Break', 'OK', 'Free'



Take 'Paws On' to new locations

## THERE'S'A GAME FOR THAT THE CONE GAME

#### HELPS WITH...

- ✓ Novel situations
- Reactivity
- Relationship

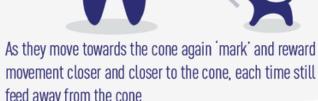


movement closer and closer to the cone, each time still feed away from the cone



Present the cone to your dog... As your dog moves towards the cone mark 'yes' and reward with your other hand away from the cone

YES!







Switch the cone for another item to generalise to other things...a muzzle, a harness, a plant pot.



- ✓ Confidence
- Optimism
- ✓ Flexibilty
- Value for proximity
- ✓ Focus

# THERE'S'A GAME FOR THAT! BALANCE PATH

#### HELPS WITH...

- Relationship building
- Reactivity
- Making novelty normal







Have your dog walk along the balance path (on or off-lead), picking up the pieces of food as they go. Look for slow and steady, not racing across at speed!



As your dog chooses to walk and feel the different textures underfoot, reward them with more food, feeding to the balance path.



Each time your dog negotiates the balance path, reinforce their confidence. Change the order of the items and add new ones to build their confidence, optimism and grit.



## GIVE IN TO LEASH PRESSURE LEVEL 1

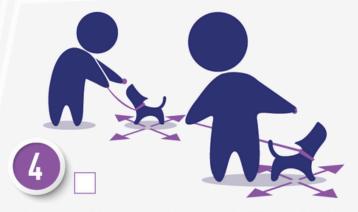
**Boost Engagement & Relationship** 





With your dog on leash apply gentle pressure to the leash & feed\*





Repeat step 3 but apply light pressure in different directions... Backwards feed / Forwards feed / Sideways feed



Reinforce each time your dog 'gives in' to the leash pressure...master this game before adding another level of difficulty...Coming soon!





# GIVE IN TO LEASH PRESSURE LEVEL 2

**Boost Engagement & Relationship** 







With your dog on a harness and leash add a piece of food to the bowl and apply gentle tension\* on the leash and wait



As soon as your dog turns towards **YOU** turn away and reward... Repeat steps 2 & 3 a few times









## REMEMEBER ....



Bundy is learning lots of new things .... it will take repetition and time for her to learn new skills and grow her confidence



Notice the small steps in the right direction :-)



Training is not linear - you will have good days and not so good days.



Be patient and consistent:-)

When you are not sure what to do, ask yourself 'WHAT DO I WANT BUNDY TO DO?'

Then help her achieve that :-)

If you have any questions along the way don't he sitate to get in touch!

Debxo

