

Games to Play With Your Dog: Tug

And the rules to play them by

Game to Play With Your Dog tie directly with your dog's "natural wiring." Your dog's hard-wired behaviors are predatory and to forage for fun and food, they include:

Rush: Move 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.

Bite, hold, shake: Once your dog has caught the prey it will bite onto it and hold on, the prey will wriggle and try to get loose.

Dissect and eat the prey: Your dog has a natural desire to tear things apart to either get to food or to consume food.

Tug

Rules of the Game

- No teeth on skin, EVER – not even by accident!
- The person decides when the game is turned off
- The dog must release the toy and sit to turn the game back on

How to play

1. Begin by showing your dog a toy that they like to tug with, invite your dog to take the toy by shaking it or wriggling it around on the ground and say "Get it".
2. Once your dog has the toy, tug on the toy for a few seconds while saying "tug".



Additional Resources

Please contact our Behavior Team to speak with a skilled behavior specialist.

BehaviorTeam@spca.org

214-461-5169

www.spca.org/petuniversity

Enroll your puppy in basic obedience classes to encourage good behavior and to build a strong bond between you and your dog.

See also:

- [Games to Play With Your Dog – Find It](#)
- [Games to Play With Your Dog – Hide and Seek](#)
- [Games to Play With Your Dog – Retrieve](#)

3. When you are ready to turn the game off, grab up both ends of the toy taking up as much slack in the toy as possible, say "Drop It", and freeze your hands and arms stiff until the dog let's go of the toy.
4. As soon as the dog lets go of the toy either cue your dog to sit or simply wait for them to sit. As soon as your dog sits, repeat from step 1.

If at any time your dog lands teeth on skin, drop the toy and walk away. Your dog will learn that putting teeth on your skin makes the most thrilling part of the game go away. Sure, your dog will end up with the toy but he will have lost his play partner and, because dog's are social animals, he will likely do his best to do whatever it takes for your not to leave the game.

After a few seconds you can resume the game with your dog. Some dogs will even bring the toy to you almost as an apology for messing up and asking you to come back and play.

At the end of your game you can let your dog keep one or both of his toys so he can chew on them while settling down.

This is a great game to play with your dog while teaching him how to control his impulsiveness.