Home made
Nose & Brain Games
For Dogs

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The idea
During the international dog trainers course, we frequently did various nose, think and stimulating mini-games. I wanted to do more with this, because I noticed the positive effects. Not only during the course, but also with my own dogs and those of our customers.

Activate, stimulate and reduce
The games activate working together with the dogowner and they will also activate the dog’s brain. They will stimulate the dog’s confidence, by winning a game. And last, but most certainly not least they will reduce stress trough sniffing and chewing on the reward.

Home made
Ofcourse you got loads of petstores filled with a variety of games. But what is more fun, creative and cost-efficient as making the games yourself?

With this little recipe book we give you all ingredients for making the games. With each game we will explain which material is needed, how to prepare and carry out the activity.

Extra: chef’s secret
As like in a cooking recipe book, at the end of each recipe you will find a short story and an extra hint.

Have fun!
I need to take a break already?

Of course we will not begin with taking a break, but the games will surely trigger the enthusiasm of the owner and the dog. While all our recipes are meant to reduce stress we must keep in mind fun things will also bring a certain tension.

The right moment to choose for a break will differ for each dog and is depending on several factors. Take the age of the dog for example; young dogs will more than likely be able to hold their concentration only for a short period of time.

Another factor to take into account is the stress level the dog will have prior before starting the activity.

Something familiar will give less tension as something new. By observing the body language and calming signals of the dog you will be able to see when it's time for a little break.

It is important to introduce the last gamerounds when the dog is still fresh, calm and interested.
Just a Starter

Simpel but very good to start with: tracing a dogsnack on the ground.

Ingredients

✓ Dogsnacks
✓ Suitable enviroment

Preperations

✓ Grab some dogsnacks
✓ Find a suitable ground
✓ Place and hide the dogsnacks

The activity

✓ Lead the dog to the area of the dogsnacks
✓ Let your dog search for the dogsnacks

Points of attention

✓ Start simple. The dog is allowed to see what you are doing. Drop the first dogsnack in front of the dog's nose to the ground.
✓ Increase the difficulty by stopping to show where you dropped the dogsnack and start hiding the dogsnacks.
✓ No time will be lost cleaning up after the activity 😊

Extra

The dogsnack you use is an important choice. We don't want to overfeed the dog to the point it will gain weight. Size matters, the dogsnacks don't have to be very big. In fact, the size of a pea will be sufficient enough. However, if you want to reduce the difficulty of the game, it might be better to get a slightly larger sized dogsnack. Another point of importance; the snack will be the reward for the dog. A soft, stronger smelling snack will work better as a hard snack!
Mr. Mailman

Got a nice little cardboard box from a mailorder? Don’t throw it away!

Ingredients

✓ An empty cardboard box
   (size may vary)
✓ (news) paper and a dogsnack

Preperations

✓ Open the box at one side
✓ Hide a dogsnack in a couple of papers and make a clod
✓ Hide the clod(s) in the box

The activity

✓ Lead your dog to the box and let him dismantle the clod(s)

Points of attention

✓ As like with the ‘just a starter’, start out by showing the dog you are putting a dogsnack in the papers. Another option is not put the clod in the box the first time
✓ Make sure the dog is able to get into the box
✓ The number of clods and their tightness will determine the difficulty
✓ As a variation you can also use for example an eggbox or a toilet roll

Extra

Are you afraid your dog will start demolishing everything in and around the house after learning this activity? Rest assured, the dog will not start doing such unwanted behaviour. Demolishing behaviour is caused and triggered by other motivations like uncertainty, anxiousness when left alone but NOT from a game. Another reason of this behaviour can be caused when a puppy had too much negative respons while discovering new things in his enviroment. They will then start asking for attention by stealing and demolishing things. Demolishing behaviour can also be caused out of boredom.
From the sea

Dog diving

Ingredients

✓ A childrens play bath or something similar
✓ Water or plastic waterballs
✓ Dogsnacks

Preparation

✓ Place the bath on the ground
✓ Add a layer of water or several balls in the bath

The activity

✓ Sprinkle some snacks in the bath and let the dog search for them

Points of attention

✓ Like in all other activities, building up the activity the right way is important
✓ Give the dog time and choice to get used to the water or the balls
✓ Make sure the dog is able to enter and exit the bath easily, or assist the dog with this.
✓ Adjust the activity on the size of the dog

Extra

His activity is especially suitable for pups. In a safe way and under guidance they are able to discover the world around them. However, it is also very important to take your time in letting the puppy discover new things. Overencouraging and too difficult activities will give the pup a lot of stress and therefore will cause a negative effect on the learning / discover process of the pup.
A Bottle of....

Especially for the handy man or woman

Ingredients

✓ Wooden groundplate, 2 wooden beams or poles
✓ Screws, angle brackets and a drill
✓ A thin beam, that will fit in the drillholes
✓ An empty plastic bottle

Preperations

✓ Firmly attach the wooden beams on the groundplate with the angle brackets
✓ Drill a hole on several heights in the beams
  Please note that the holes must be equally parallel
✓ Push the thin beam trough the plastic bottle
✓ Attach the bottle with the thin beam to the big beams

The activity

✓ When the dog is looking, put a couple of dog snacks in the bottle. Let the dog find out how to get the snacks out of the bottle.

Points of attention

✓ Dont start assisting the dog too quickly but make sure to help the dog before he gets frustrated.
✓ This game might be too difficult when it is the first brain/nose game for the dog
✓ Adjust the height of the bottle to the height of the dog, but also to his way of discovering things. Some dogs will use their legs to push the bottle while others will use their nose.

Extra

When you are helping the dog, filling the bottle or when you are looking at the activity; make sure to show the right bodylanguage! Dogs mainly communicate trough bodylanguage. If you for example bow over the dog, overencourage him, walk in a straight line towards the dog or when you are standing right in front of him, the dog will feel the need to react because these are threatening signals coming from you. In the least the dog will be distracted from the activity.
A surprise

Every dog likes a tasty snack, especially when it comes in a nice wrapping!

Ingredients

✓ Little box or basket
✓ Package safe filling
✓ Dog snacks

Preperations

✓ Make sure to check the package safe filling. It may not be too smelly and it must be a safe material.

The activity

✓ Hide the dog snacks in the basket or box, between the filling

Points of attention

✓ Keep good supervision. The filling and situation
✓ Build up the game from easy to more difficult

Extra

SNIffing and chewing got a great effect on the dog. By using its nose, the dog will stimulate his senses. By chewing or licking, it will reduce stress. The body will make endorfine, this hormon wil give the dog a sense of rest and happiness. So its nice for the dog to end an activity with chewing.

Please note, too much of something is always unwanted. Dogs with chronical stress for example, can have bold licking spots. These dogs became, more or less, addicted on endorfine. Over excessive licking on the body can be a sign of (chronical) stress.
Pulling the string

Pull the string and see what comes out!

Ingredients

✓ Pvc tube
✓ Rope
✓ A ball or a cup
✓ Dogsnacks

Preperations

✓ Unsharpen any sharp edges of the tube
✓ Attach the rope to the ball or cup
✓ When using a cup, you can put a dogsnack in the cup

The activity

✓ Put the ball or cup in the tube and let the rope stick out of the tube
✓ The dog must retrieve the ball or cup by pulling the rope

Points of attention

✓ In the begin, dont put away the ball or cup too far away in the tube
✓ Is your dog using his mouth or his legs?
✓ To assist the dog, you can decide to hold the tube to prevent it from moving

Extra

Instinct is something you can not remove from a dog. Weither its hunting, herding or guarding, a dog got certain needs based upon his instinct. In most cases however, its not wanted to let the dog fullfill those needs by himself. There will always be a possibility the dog will evolve unpleasant hobbies (chasing people or cats on the street for example).

Therefor, it is better to provide the dog with a good alternative to fullfill those needs.
Sniffing paradise

Searching for or making an enriched environment

Ingredients

✓ Items your dog can safely sniff on
✓ dogsnacks

Preperations

✓ Put some everyday items on the ground
✓ Lay some dogsnacks on the ground, in between the items (optional)

The activity

✓ Let the dog sniff at the enriched environment in his own pace

Points of attention

✓ Make sure all items are large enough, can’t fall down and don’t have sharp edges
✓ An ideal activity for puppies
✓ Often the dog will walk away for a second, only to return quickly to the enriched environment again
✓ As a variation you can also visit enriched environments like a farm or shoppingmall.

Extra

Don’t be afraid the dog will start eating off the street after this activity. This activity will not trigger this behaviour. A way for a pup to discover new things is by use of the mouth.

When a dog is obsessively eating, or when it’s eating faeces, this can be caused by a variety of issues like wrong food, something medical, boredom or stress.
Cheese tree

Once upon a time there was a Nordic dog trainer who found a very odd, old and mysterious tree. There were sausages hanging from the tree! The seeds from this tree were brought to The Netherlands where I sow them. It turned out that for some unknown reason the seeds turned into cheese trees?

Ingredients

✓ sticky snacks like cheese (or sausages, whatever your dog likes most 😊)
✓ A suitable tree, must not be too splinty

Preperations

✓ Stick or smear the snack to the tree.

The activity

✓ Lead the dog to the tree and let him lick off the snack from the tree

Points of attention

✓ Start out low so your dog can see what you are doing with the snack
✓ Give the dog time to figure things out
✓ Adjust the height to the dog’s height

Extra

When your dog starts barking before, during or after an activity, it is doing so because he wants to tell you something. Try to figure out what your dog is trying to tell you and assist him accordingly. Maybe the dog got overexcited by seeing the preparations, something around the dog could be distracting the dog or it might be just time for a break.

Never ever punish the dog for a bark!
Going offroad with your ATD (All Terain Dog)

Go have an offroad experience with your dog. Very instructive and a lot of fun to do!

Ingredients

- Enviroment with materials to go over, under, beside and trough
- All terain shoes (for the dog owner only)

Preperations

- Check if all materials are safe for the dog and make up a route

The activity

- Lead your dog through the route with the obstacles

Punten van aandacht

- Use safe materials only and use a slow pace.
- Pups only short routes and not to difficult. Absolutely NO jumping!
- Ideal for young and older dogs to find and train balance

Extra

It is important to do the parcour in a slow pace since the main focus must be on finding balance. Ofcourse its nice for a dog to make a sprint every now and then, but few dogs are actually build to run on a regular base.

Especially with a young dog, its balance will not yet be evolved completely. Therefor, too much running will have a negative effect on the evolvement of his body. For both young and older dogs running is a tention building activity and is a possible trigger for stress when done too much (like jogging along with the owner, along the side with a bycicle or when jumping over obstacles on a parcour).
Tracing a tripe bar

Some dried tripe bars

Ingredients

✓ Dried tripe bar
✓ 2 meter of rope
✓ An assistant (trackwalker)

Preperations

✓ Attach the dried tripe bar to the rope

The activity

✓ Let the assistant drag the bar over the ground in order to make a track
✓ The assistant must hide behind something and must remain there until you and your dog found the assistant
✓ You can also chose to just find the tripe bar

Points of attention

✓ Start literally step by step, simple and in plain sight. Later on, you can always extend the track with length hand corners
✓ The dog needs to have success in order to like this game
✓ Give the dog time to sniff and use his nose. When you are talking too much or when you trigger one of his other senses the tracking will most likely fail because a dog is only able to focus on one sense at a time.

Extra

Finders keepers! Give the dog plenty of time and space to eat his reward (the bar). Important: what you search for you must find! Don’t replace the gutbar with another dog snack. This will be a great disappointment for the dog and will have a negative effect on his enthusiasm.

Dogs who are possessive with food must be given plenty of space and rest to eat the reward. Don’t try to take away the reward and don’t punish the dog when he tries to defend the reward. After all, it is HIS reward since he found it successfully!
Hide and seek

Play some good old fashion hide and seek

Ingredients

✓ An assistant
✓ dogsnacks

Preperations

✓ Just start 😊

The activity

✓ Walk away from the assistant and the dog and call the dog
✓ When the dog is walking towards you, the assistant must call the seek command together with your name
✓ You can extend the game by slowly adding more space between you and the dog / assistant and by hiding behind something

Points of attention

✓ Especially with young dogs, build up slowly
✓ Don’t overexercise this activity. Repeat the game with a maximum of 5 times, then take a break

Extra

While the dog is waiting on a leash with the assistant, always make sure to use a chest harness. Actually we would like to advise to always use a chest harness, since the neck of a dog is not a suitable place to attach a leash as it can cause stress and problems with communications, neck, back, eyes, nerves or thyroid.
Sorting, the smelly way

Something is smelly about this activity.

Ingredients
- ‘Freshly’ worn socks 😊

Preperations
- Keep a couple of worn socks from people you know
  There might be a change you need to answer questions like
  “You want WHAT from me?” But we must make sacrifices for the cause eh? 😊
- Pull off one of your freshly worn socks and lay it on the ground together with the
  other socks you borrowed from others.

They activity
- Let the dog sniff on all socks followed by a request to search
- What will the dog bring you? Only your sock or maybe with all of them?

Points of attention
- Learning the dog to sort properly will, in most cases, take some time
  The same goes for ‘real’ track and search games
- An activity like this one is for fun and sufficient enough to start with sorting.
  A perfect result is not something essential and can be tried at will
- Be careful though! Some dogs seem to have an obsession with socks.
  The dog is not allowed to eat the socks.

Extra
Chef’s final tip: make sure to carry out all recipes with passion, love and
understanding for your dog, on a for the dog comprehensible level.
Give assistance and guidance when needed and stimulate the dog in a proper way.
Don’t rush an activity. Take your time instead and enjoy the moment with your dog.
Do it in a Burundian way!

Did you enjoy our recipes? Or maybe you got some questions regarding them.
Either way, please feel free to contact us!
Finale note

Did you enjoy our recipes? We hope that we have inspired you around the games and our vision around working and living with dogs.

Maybe you got some questions, please feel free to contact us!

Best Regards,

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