



# Getting Your Dog's Attention

## The Nothing Game

Stand with the dog and simply do nothing ... until the dog pays attention to you! Then you come alive and respond to the dog. In this game, the dog is rewarded for making a choice to be attentive, rather than you trying to force the dog to pay attention to you. Here is how it works:

1. Stand with the dog, holding the leash.
2. Without directly staring at the dog, be vigilant about observing what the dog is doing.
3. Whenever the dog happens to glance in your direction, **MARK** and deliver a **TREAT**.
4. Repeat several times until the dog is consistently orienting toward you.
5. Begin **MARKING** and **TREATING** for eye contact lasting 1-2 seconds or longer.
6. If the dog is staring at you, good job! Take one or two small steps, continuing to ignore the dog. **MARK** and **TREAT** if the dog looks up at you or maintains eye contact.
7. Step to either side, continuing to **MARK** and **TREAT** for maintaining eye contact, or looking up at you

*Tip:* Timing is very important, as well as enthusiasm while you are treating. You are rewarding the dog for being attentive to you, by likewise devoting attention to the dog.

## The Magnet Game

Imagine the dog's nose is one magnet and the treat in your hand is the other magnet. This game is lots of fun because you can get the dog to move his head in silly directions, but be careful to reward the dog before he becomes frustrated!

1. Present a yummy, super stinky treat right in front of the dog's nose.
2. Move the treat slowly in different directions: side-to-side, up and down, in circles.
3. After just a few seconds of this silly game, give the dog a **TREAT**. Remember to give them a separate treat from your other hand, because we don't feed them the treat that is directly in front of their nose.
4. Repeat. You can continue to use the same lure treat.

*Tip:* Keep the treat close to the dog's nose or he will look away! Just as with a magnet, you will lose the "attraction" if your treat is too far, or you move it too quickly.

## Find It

This is one of the easiest games to play with your dog, and can be a very useful first step for addressing a number of behavior issues. A dog who is fluent in this game will begin searching for

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treats even in highly distracting situations. We use this game to direct their attention to the ground instead of the distraction. Here is how it works:

1. Say "find it" once, in a gentle upbeat voice.
2. Drop 2-3 **TREATS** within the dog's reach (i.e. within the length of the leash).
3. Repeat.

*Tip:* Keep this game moving quickly — as soon as the dog finishes eating and starts to look back at you, say "find it" and drop treats again. You will keep the dog more interested and engaged if the game is fun and quick, and they are getting lots of treats!

### Touch

Touch is a fun game for the dogs once they understand the concept of targeting your hand. Targeting means the dog looks for your hand and enthusiastically touches the palm of your hand with their nose. Touch is a useful exercise for multiple reasons — it can be used to build a shy dog's confidence by rewarding the shy dog for approaching a new person's outstretched hand; it can be used to teach a mouthy puppy to interact with people's hands in a fun way that requires a closed mouth; and it can be used to redirect a dog's attention away from a bird, squirrel, or other dog in order to prevent the dog from overreacting to the stimulus. Here is how it works:

1. Bury a treat between your fingers and hold out your palm towards the dog. Do not say "touch" yet — we will add the verbal cue later.
2. As soon as their nose touches your palm, **MARK** and let them have a reward **TREAT**. Remember to feed them a treat from your other hand, instead of the treat between your fingers.
3. After a few successful repetitions, simply hold out your palm with no treat, and wait for the dog to touch the palm of your hand with his/her nose. **MARK** and **TREAT** every time the dog does this!

When the dog is offering the behavior consistently every time you hold out your palm, start saying the word "touch" just before you hold your palm out toward the dog.

### Watch Me

This is the most powerful focus game because it can be used to direct your dog's attention straight to you. Here is how it works:

1. Put a treat on their nose and slowly raise it up and hold it next to your eyes.
2. When their eyes move from the treat, and look directly into your eyes instead, **MARK** and **TREAT**.
3. After a few successful repetitions repeat the same motion of moving your hand from their nose to your eyes without a treat in your hand. When they look at your eyes, **MARK** and **TREAT**.

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