

# PUPPY POWER!

PROVIDE AN ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT AND PROMOTE  
POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING



# Absolute puppy

We just can't get enough of training puppies!

**It is SO very important to us,**

**and a topic close to our hearts to set our dogs up for success from day one and provide them with an enriched environment and promote positive behaviour right from the beginning.**

We know that's what you want too, but sometimes there seems like an overwhelming amount to do right? And we don't always know what to do!

So here at absoluteDogs we want to give you a hand right from the start! We feel that this guide should allow you to make a good start. You can dip in and out as you need and you can keep this as a resource for many years to come!





# TOP TIPS TO REMEMBER BEFORE ANY OF THE TRAINING STARTS:

1. Puppies need A LOT of rest.
2. Make sure all basic needs are met, eating (we will talk about this later), stimulation, water, gentle exercise, variety and like we said above REST!
3. Safeguard your puppy around new experiences. They won't always make the best decisions with dogs, people, cars, children and so much more.
4. Make good decisions for your puppy - no your puppy does not know best!
5. Start the way you mean to go on. So decide what you want in the long run and work incrementally and fairly towards that goal!

## BUILD CONFIDENCE & OPTIMISM

As soon as we possibly can we start building confidence and optimism with all of our dogs, whatever their age and that includes our awesome puppies! In so many ways the puppies are the most hungry for the learning we can offer, they are like little sponges!

We see our young dogs learning as a series of little games and it's super awesome FUN! We like to play lots of games both at home and out and about in new environments for our new dogs. We want to secure a super strong bond that's pretty ROCK solid as soon as we can so that our dogs really want to be around us and likewise we want to be around them too!

You will be amazed at just how much YOUR puppy can learn with simple 3-minute games (or once you get good at them even less!!) In this eBook, we will share with you our top tips and some of our absolute favourite games to play with our dogs, to be honest dogs of any age, it's super hard to choose, they are all crazy fun and great to get stuck in to!



# DITCH THE BOWL

**Ditch the bowl - Now I truly hope you have heard us say this before, but if you haven't here it is again just in case and we want to be sure that you know that this applies to puppies too!**



Straight away we want to work on building up a relationship bank account with our puppy, so most of their food is earned directly from us. In fact you will very very quickly find that their really isn't enough food in the day for your puppy! And the smaller the dog or puppy the harder it is!

We use all of our daily food in teaching them key life skills through the use of games and promote ORIENTATION and PROXIMITY and FUN.

“  
**Straight away we want to work on building up a relationship bank account with our puppy, so most of their food is earned directly from us**  
”

In this eBook, we share some awesome games to get you started on the right track! Learning together and earning together is a super way to BOOST a relationship!



**DITCH THE BOWL eBook - VIEW NOW**



# BOUNDARIES / CRATES / PENS

**When we aren't working with, or supervising our pups directly or very very close by, it's super important to give them a safe place to be – one where they learn to be calm and relaxed and one that they are safe from the world and the world is safe from them too.**

At the end of the day not all dogs, cats and other household members need to be with a puppy 24/7. Breathing space is healthy too, it's all about moderation.

Boundaries are a super way to build a great family pet or even motivated sports dog. We do have a free **boundaries eBook** that

comes super highly recommended and that is the perfect resource to get you and your dog started whatever age and stage they are at.

As well as giving your dog a very safe place to be, it's also important that you give them something to do until they fully learn to be calm and relaxed in that new location. We need to add some good value to the CALM zones! If our young dogs are left with nothing, they may find it disappointing and struggle to be left or even offer less desirable behaviours so we ensure a positive activity at all times.

For us, we usually give our puppies a stuffed kong (we use green tripe or something suitable - this could be your dogs dinner made moist you can get quite creative) or

---

**Boundaries are a super way to build a great family pet**

---

a stuffed activity toy. \*\*See our ditch the bowl ebook\*\*. This is a super great way for our pups to learn that being left alone is okay, in fact it's quite nice and it also doubles up as a way to help promote calmness in a very safe place.

**VIEW - BOUNDARY GAMES eBook**



# CALMNESS PROTOCOL

We love the calmness protocol, and its important you start from the minute you are able to with your dog.

## A dog who is calm for the majority of the day:

- can conserve energy for learning and performance
- does not have issues with being in a bad headspace
- is a pleasure to live with and an awesome teammate
- travels effortlessly
- can both switch on and switch off when needed
- is able to make better decisions

So, how can we promote this on a daily basis with our dog? Here are four simple steps you can follow....

**Step 1:** Normal day to day household environment try to gently and discreetly observe your dog.

**Step 2:** When you see calm and settled behaviour calmly feed and slowly and confidently walk away.

**Step 3:** Keep repeating this calm feeding but only approach when your dog or puppy is calm, try to be very discreet and non interested and only feed your dog if they are remaining calm.

**Step 4:** This can be done at home, but also in other environments to promote CALMNESS everywhere and anywhere.

“  
A dog who is calm for the majority of the day is able to make better decisions  
”



# HANDLING IS FUN PUPSTER

**Have you ever considered training your pup to be really comfortable when being handled whether that's by you or someone novel to them?**

This one is crucial to us and ideally this handling training starts young, as young as possible. At the very least we would like them to be happy with owner contact, and touch, anyone else is a bonus! Why? Well, because it is useful for a number of reasons...

- If your dog needs to be checked over by a vet
- Handling really can build confidence
- Nail trimming, ear cleaning, brushing, grooming, clipping, massage, osteopath, physio, and general day to day maintenance
- Basic care and welfare especially if you ever need it for rehabilitation or convalescence for your dog



## TOP TIPS HANDLING

**Here are some key steps you can follow when teaching your pup to enjoy being handled!**

**Step 1:** Keep the energy calm and drip feed part of their daily food very slowly for gentle touch or slow handling.

**Step 2:** As they are feeding, gently stroke them. Nothing crazy just calm strokes, remember to keep the energy low!

**Step 3:** Ideally have them facing away gently stroke under the belly and around their whole body.

**Step 4:** Progress to put arm entirely under the belly rewarding ahead and with head up off the floor and making sure it's still a very fun process for your dog.

**Step 5:** Progress to gently picking up each paw, handling claws and individually rewarding your dog with food, remember part of their dinner is fine, and feed ahead of them to keep their focus as each paw is lifted.

**Step 6:** If you have a small dog, you may want to consider also picking them up. We want them to be comfortable if we ever have to pick them up / carry them for any reason. Remember it's all value in the happy dog bank account! Relationship and basic care is everything.



# SOCIALISATION

**Let's dispel some myths about socialisation - your dog doesn't need to meet 100 different types of people in a week and the window doesn't cut off dead on 16 weeks.**

Let's say it's a little more flexible and organic than that. Sure there are cut-offs for the best exposure but that doesn't mean they are finished learning completely and you can't grow their confidence through games and learning specifically targeting confidence.

Here at absoluteDogs we feel it's less about specific exposure and more about a good quality variety of experiences and having an optimistic, flexible and reinforceable learner.

In addition to this, by establishing great value in things that you can use in their learning later, for example toys, food, praise and proximity we know that they will have the reinforcement value to be able to adjust and flex to life as and when needed.

We like to ensure that our puppies get quality over quantity in terms of their learning and exposure.

---

**“ we feel it's less about specific exposure and more about a good quality variety of experiences ”**

---





# PUPPY BITING /BARKING

**Puppies can get very excited when they get a burst of energy, and some for sure have lots of energy. This is normal - they are young and full of fun.**

It is very common to play bite and nip, your puppy is NORMAL. Sometimes they bark and bounce to instigate play or any attention, and sometimes worse! For some dogs any attention is good attention, they really just want to be noticed whether it's for good or bad reasons. They really aren't at all fussed; they will potentially take either!

When your dog wants to play or get you to pay them attention and you want them to settle, have a toy, a chew, a stuffed kong or an activity nearby and to hand to redirect their attention away from you and from thinking about you. This can be part of their daily food ration and it will allow you and them a healthy activity and that breathing space that you need! Ensure that you deliver the distraction in a very low key manner, remember we want to start growing

CALMNESS with our dogs and pups when they are young as possible and we want to rehearse the room and the energy to work with the environment.

Frozen kongs or chews can also be good, knowing that your young dog may have a sore mouth. This may be the answer and this could even give them a super good chance to soothe their gums. This could even be part of why they are biting in the first place so cooling teething opportunities are great strategies for settling them at a young age.

Calming strokes and massage can also help to calm excited puppies or if they are barking in their crate due to overexcitement, then cover it over with a blanket or similar. Crate covers are easily accessed and very very useful in terms of helping to be a super

“  
**It is very common to play bite and nip,  
your puppy is NORMAL**  
”

useful additional training tool. Have a crate or puppy pen or quiet space always available for your puppy if he or she does need some settle time away from the action. This is super super normal! It doesn't need to be a punishing place - it needs to be a place to settle, a calm space, a relaxing space and a space where your puppy can settle.

With puppies and dogs in general always try to have an answer, a strategy (like the crate

cover) or a solution to help you through your struggles. As with all training, always ensure that you have met all of your dogs needs first, for example make sure they have had adequate toilet breaks, water and food and stimulation.

Play some of the cool games with your puppy throughout the day to put the great energy they have to good use. They can learn key skills through the art of play, fun and games.





# PUPPY PLAY!

**Play is about FUN! So many people treat play as an exercise, it's not an exercise, it's PLAY and you don't want to have too many rules - it will suck the joy from the play!**

Those who can play together will stay together! You may get worried about who is the boss and who should win, well this isn't the point at all with play - we need to open our mindset to a whole new world, a fun world that can incorporate super fun play.

Remember a fun bond is one that will last a lifetime and through play and great relationships you can beat almost any struggle, it can be based on trust, fun, play and joy! So lose yourself, lower those inhibitions, get on your hands and knees, make sounds like Tarzan, roll on your back and fling your arms in the air, put your

stereo on loud, turn the volume up and do whatever it takes to let go and enjoy playing with your puppy, they will love it!

We like to have music on in the background as it really helps to bring our energy UP - remember whatever it takes for you then just do it!

Keep YOUR play sessions fast, exciting and fun! Short, sweet, high energy and engaged is the key to success.

Give your pup EASY WINS, let them take the lead, let them feel super strong, let them have their toy and parade it and most of all enjoy spending some good quality time together. We love to play with our dogs every day in some way and so will you, try

“  
**Those who can play together  
will stay together!**  
”

a variety of good quality and fun toys and bring them out as a special occasion rather than having them out at all times. We don't have 24/7 availability, they come out as and when they are needed.

We like tug-e-nuff.co.uk and thoroughly recommend their range of interactive toys!

**GO VISIT TUG-E-NUFF NOW**



# HOW TO HOUSETRAIN A DOG OF ANY AGE!

**Well dogs and puppies, they are predictable, they often want to go after any event, and more frequently the younger they are.**

Firstly, we try to have and practice the gated communities approach to life with our dogs, they don't have free access to everything all of the time, at least not until they know the way of the house and the way of the world.

Their freedom in the house is totally dependant on their learning and age and stage, after all it would be potentially dangerous to give them completely free reign 24/7 unsupervised.

**With regards to house training:**

**Be vigilant** - watch for the signs they never hide that they need to go there are always the obvious signs, spinning, looking agitated, sniffing, pausing....be vigilant!

**The younger and smaller the puppy, the smaller the bladder.** If they are generally active then they may need to go as often as every 15-30 minutes, not so much when they are sleeping but when they are active. Keep a close eye!

**Put going to the toilet on a cue** "be busy", "hurry up", "quickly"..... say it every time you take them out to go and reward them lavishly if they oblige!

**Don't leave it to chance take them out more regularly rather than less,** and take them out at all different times of the day.

**Teach them to go on all new surfaces** so, for example, some dogs will not toilet on concrete and others won't toilet on gravel, teach them to toilet wherever you require, it makes life travel easier in the long run.

**If there are any accidents, clean them up very well.** The scent of any accidents gives your dog the idea that this could be bathroom, if it isn't then make sure that you make this super clear to your dog!

**If there are any accidents handle them gently,** they are not intentional and you don't want to punish them in any way. If you do see them go to try to toilet in the house, interrupt them but don't scare them or punish them, they aren't being difficult they are simply learning.

**If you have any problems,** firstly rule out any urinary tract infection or bladder issue then become more vigilant and watch them very closely for all signs of needing the bathroom.

**Good luck, it's a short part of the journey,** and there will be lapses, have patience and a good vigilant attitude and you will be just fine.



# HARNESS SHAPING

**Yes you really can shape a harness!  
We want to train our dog to be comfortable wearing a head collar or harness using the concept of shaping.**

Shaping is basically letting your dog lead the learning! This is useful for a number of reasons:

- No more battling before, after or during a walk
- This avoids a harness/headcollar/collar on topping up your dog's stress bucket often leaving it close to overflowing before you even leave the house!
- Builds confidence!
- Builds optimism!
- Its super fun and a great way for your dog to get their dinner, after all using a bowl is overrated.

“

**Shaping is basically letting your dog lead the learning!**

”

**There are five steps to achieving this:**

**Step 1:** Have your harness, headcollar, collar and or coat and treats ready.

**Step 2:** Shape and reward any movement towards the harness.

**Step 3:** As you get more movement towards the harness begin to reward your dog with treats through the hole where the head would go.

**Step 4:** Progress to your dogs whole head through the hole of the harness and drip feed whilst in that position for more duration. Make this place a super happy place.

**Step 5:** Progress to lifting harness straps against the body and eventually fastened. Gently start to fiddle and move them all around and ensure your dog is happy to have you handle them generally. With and without the harness on.





# CONFIDENCE GAMES

**This is so, so very important for a pup and there are so many options for you to be able to have a go at home that are simple, at a low or no cost and effective.**

Here are just a couple of examples that we at absoluteDogs love:

**Noise box** - Can your dog eat from a noise box? What on earth is a noise box I hear you cry? Well a box with anything you have that you can play in, maybe some left over unused packaging or a big piece of bubble wrap, some balls or tin foil, maybe even an old baking tray - really you name the game and it's a great way to recycle your unwanted items for at least a few weeks.

This game builds the concept of being OK with noises, and novelty - in fact noises are super FUN and mean FOOD and a good time. All you need is a box and any recycling that is safe for your dog to move around safely. Scatter some of your dog's regular food in to the noise box and off you go, it's very simple! However, it's important to build up slowly with your pup – even if he seems super confident,

softly softly catch your monkey. We have been surprised by some dogs reactions to novelty so initially you may only want to put one item in, or even no items in your noise box until you see that your puppy is happy eating and just chilling around the box itself.

**Climb inside** - Another example would be asking your dog to climb inside something, can you think creatively?

Using a bin, suitcase or barrel or anything you have that could work on its side can be great for this, it's a novel experience! First of all, we look for any interaction with the bin/barrel and then softly softly we need to move it on, perhaps a nose in, then a little more...and so on. Remember to keep the bin / barrel still and supported whilst your dog is getting used to climbing inside.

Once they are leaping in and super optimistic, you can move the bin/barrel slightly from side to side for an extension to this game and add in a level of movement. If you use a suitcase you can use the lid for novelty! We love to grow and teach confidence in our dogs!





# I LOOOOOOVE MY NAME GAME

**We LOVE this game! We want to see your dog's eyes literally glimmer and sparkle when they hear their name!**

To teach this response, we add a TONNE of value to the name by reinforcing every time your pup hears it. So.....Throw a piece of food out or wait until your dog isn't looking at you in a low level distraction environment maybe somewhere like your garden! If you have thrown food, then your pup will want to go and get it so let them go to find the food.

Once they have eaten the food they will then very likely turn back to look to you to look for the next piece, we are aiming to get a whip lash turn long term but right now any

turn will be acceptable at the puppy stage. Just before they turn, say their name and timing here is EVERYTHING. It's going to happen - it's all a matter of picking your moment! When they are back at you, reward copiously for coming back and re engaging and orienting to you.

It REALLY is that SIMPLE!!!

“  
**See your dog's eyes literally glimmer  
and sparkle when they hear their name!**  
”





# FOLLOW ME...

**Exactly as the name suggests, walk and feed your dog for following you and walking with you by your heel and gently checking in with you.**

Remember when you ditch the bowl you have many opportunities to feed your dog. It's awesome! Create a magic reward zone around you that is highly reinforced and builds your pup's confidence to be in that area remember it's MAGIC!

Walks are not just about getting from A to B and mentally and physically exercising your pup – they are about spending good quality time together, building that relationship, being an awesome teammate and having fun together. Take time and ENJOY each other!

“

Create a magic reward zone around you that is highly reinforced and builds your pup's confidence to be in that area

”





# ORIENTATION

**We want our dogs to orient back to us – we like to think that we have a proximity zone around us, and we want to reinforce that concept and invest in the focus bank account from day one.**

Remember this does not have to happen outside; this needs to happen anywhere and everywhere.

Teaching that focus and orientation is **FUNDAMENTAL** to all good relationships and it will help make other life choices so much easier in the future, like choosing to orient away from a distraction like a jogger, picnic or guest to the house.

“  
**Teaching that focus and orientation is FUNDAMENTAL to all good relationships and it will help make other life choices so much easier in the future**  
”



## TOP TIPS ORIENTATION

**So, we hear you, you want this but how can you teach this...**

**Step 1:** Work in a safe and easy environment ensuring you are working within your dogs limits to ensure absolute success.

**Step 2:** Throw a treat out or a piece of your dogs dinner (remember ditch the bowl) and after they eat it, they turn back towards you...mark them for this and reward by throwing a treat in another direction. Sounds simple huh? Simple and successful JUST what we like!

**Step 3:** Build in a little restrain, gently hold your dog, throw your treat or piece of dinner and the repeat step 2.

**Step 4:** Have mini breaks after a few repetitions to give your dog some good physical praise and a mental break before starting the game all over again.

**Step 5:** Keep your games short and fun, the results are FAST!



# ORIENTATION, LEAD WORK

This transitions super well to the bigger picture, from the orientation game to one played over bigger distances and at home to train the concepts and skills involved for you and your dog to be able to enjoy a really cool loose-lead walking game.

“

Train the concepts and skills involved for you and your dog to be able to enjoy a really cool loose-lead walking game

”



## TOP TIPS ORIENTATION LEAD WORK

**This is one of the most important games we play to teach your dog to have and to enjoy a loose-leash!**

**Step 1:** With your dog on a suitable lead and collar or harness....throw a piece of food, mark and reward any and all orientations back towards you.

**Step 2:** Throw another piece of food, sometimes in another direction, mark the orientation back to you, take a few steps forwards or in another direction before throwing another piece of food.

**Step 3:** Remember to keep that leash loose and relaxed. Also the food you use can simply be your dogs dinner, it does not need to be treats or anything particularly special!

**Step 4:** Change your direction, move in a different direction and mark and reward your dog for being close to you and for orientation back to you each time. Your placement of reward is super KEY!

**Step 5:** Orientation game + lead = loose leash walking. Now how exciting is that!!!!!!



# RESTRAINED RECALLS

**This game is super for not only building up your recall but also tolerance of frustration and a fraction of arousal training for later on.**

Okay this is truly one of our absoluteDogs favourites, we simply LOVE it! So what is a restrained recall? Restrained recalls are where you have someone hold your dog, or gently restrain your dog, walk away or run if you are feeling energetic and give the recall cue.

To start with, the person restraining the pup should let go immediately and in a timely fashion, the pup does need to be able to locate the handler.

## TOP TIP

*The distance you walk/run away from YOUR PUP should be appropriate to their age and development and then build it up from there!*

If you train by yourself regularly and can't borrow someone, play this game with a longline attached to your pup's harness and restrain your pup by holding the line on one side of a tree, lamp post or park bench, come on let's get creative!

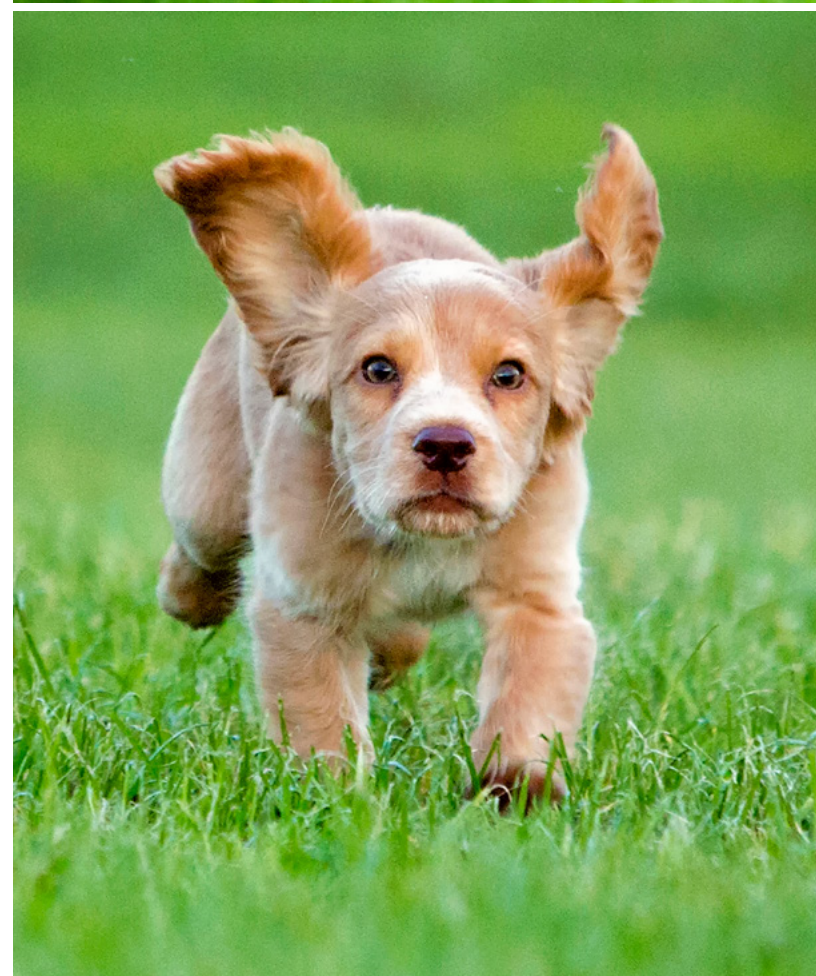
Now with you on one end and your dog on the other you have a restrain, now you simply need to amp it up and then decide the right moment to let go!

When your pup catches up with you, reward with HIGH ENERGY and tell them what superstars they truly are and make the reward be like a mini reward EVENT! Party and play HARD!

————— “ —————

**The distance you walk/run away from YOUR PUP should be appropriate to their age and development and then build it up from there!**

————— ” —————





# MOUSE GAME

**Have some food in the palm of your hand or place some food on the floor for your pup. If your dog goes to take the food, either close your fist quickly but gently, or use your hand to cover the food on the floor, think of it like caging the mouse.**

Remain calm, unexciting and deliberate in covering the food and make sure you are playing with a hungry dog – your dog may

try various tactics to try and get the food from under your hand. Remember clawing, pawing, barking and biting are all options but not choices that you will pay!

Your dog will at some point back away even if it's a minimal weight shift you need to watch closely for it! As your dog backs away and shows some impulse control, open your fist or lift your hand from the floor.

If your dog doesn't go to take the food then give them a piece or encourage them to GET IT. If they go to grab the food again, simply cover it as before - cage that mouse!

This is a basic manners game and it's a GREAT one! This is a super fun game for teaching basic and very gentle impulse control.

---

**If your dog goes to take the food, either close your fist quickly but gently, or use your hand to cover the food on the floor, think of it like caging the mouse**

---





# TOY SWITCH

## This game is insanely AMAZING! SWITCH!

Okay so how is this a game that has made the cut? Well seriously, we wouldn't be without it!

So what do we need to do, switch between toys by animating the one your dog is not currently playing with and practice until your pup will happily switch between toys readily as and when you offer them - this teaches adaptability and flexibility from day one.

This communicates to your dog that you are always the BEST thing in the town, the environment has nothing on you and it is a super good exercise of arousal balance and being flexible in the responses they can choose!

**Step 1:** Ideally use a couple of toys that are the same or multiples of the same toy, the more identical the better, we like [www.tug-e-nuff.co.uk](http://www.tug-e-nuff.co.uk).

**Step 2:** Release your pup to play on to one toy with a 'get it' or your release cue. Animate the game and excite your dog but don't go crazy we have to swap in a second and this can be super tough!

**Step 3:** As your pup plays and engages with that toy, let it go...your pup still has it, pick up your next toy and give them the release cue for them to get that new toy with you. We use SWITCH! But the word can be anything that suits you!

**Step 4:** If your dog won't switch then immobilise the first toy until they will switch to the fun and animated one! You can also include a bit of body contact. It helps to build confidence and resilience for future real life events. Body contact is optional and not essential at this stage. All we mean by body contact is a gentle stroke or a little touch in the play!

**Step 5:** Try and be ready to pick up your next toy to make the game slick and fun. Preparation is everything!





# MIDDLE

**I know we say it a lot, but Middle really is one of our FAVOURITE games. We love it because it encourages proximity – and it is so super great for a young pup!**

**Middle is magic!** You will wonder how you ever lived without this behaviour as it solves a whole load of struggles in one go! This is literally one of the best behaviours we have and know.

## **The benefits of middle are huge:**

- It lowers arousal
- It gets your dog into a safe place QUICK, for example if a dog was running your way.
- It allows you to position dogs that don't like being handled, for example on the weighing scales at the vet.
- It builds the idea of a proximity zone and confidence zone.

**It gets your dog into a safe place QUICK, for example if a dog was running your way**

## TOP TIPS MIDDLE

**Step 1:** Hold your dog back with them between your legs and have some treats ready....as you let go, give them a release cue and as they move forward immediately deliver food reward as they arrive into the middle position.

**Step 2:** With your dog on a boundary, give a release cue and stand ready for them to arrive in that middle place.....as they arrive immediately deliver food. Try to keep varying your position so they have to work hard to find it!

**Step 3:** Move your position a little each time around the clock face. And start to move and add in a level of arousal and excitement to the game, we cannot tell you how much we love this stage!

**Step 4:** Now you should be able to throw a treat away from you after the middle position to get them out of the position and reset and when they CHOOSE to return to the middle position immediately mark and reward. Yahoo party!

**Step 5:** Add them now going in to middle from the front around the back of your leg to middle position. Creativity geniuses!

**Step 6:** Once they are offering the behaviour really reliably begin to add a cue...verbal, hand signal or both. We LOVE middle!

**Step 7:** Add some impulse control...when in the middle position drop a piece of food out in front...or a toy or a frisbee, give them a release cue to get it. Party on!



# CONCLUSION

Developing skills in your new puppy through games is the most enriching and empowering transition you will make.

Games prepare your puppy for their future life, allowing them to approach each new and exciting situation with the right skills, minimising fallout, bad choices and bad experiences.

This is so super cool and we cannot wait to see the heights that you reach!





**Absolute Dogs®**

[absolute-dogs.com](http://absolute-dogs.com)