



## All Fur Paws, LLC

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### FOCUS GAMES

These games are designed to help your dog focus on you and not intently focus on other things, such as leaves, other dogs, people, SQUIRRELS, etc.

#### 1) Check-Ins: Engage/Disengage Game

- This game is simple – reward (reinforce) your dog when s/he looks at you.
- This is a SHAPING exercise. You aren't going to ask/show your dog what to do; s/he has to figure it. Be patient!
- GOAL: Have your dog "check in" with you from time to time on walks, etc. on his/her own.



You will need: You, your dog, treats

- PHASE 1:
  - Be in a quiet area with few distractions (your kitchen).
  - Show your dog you have treats in your hand.
  - Move away a bit and stop. Don't say ANYTHING to get your dog's attention.
  - Wait for your dog to look at you (make eye contact) and when s/he does say "YES/GOOD" and give a treat.
  - Move again. Repeat.
- PHASE 2:
  - Be in a more "active" area (outside your house).
  - Again, show your dog that you have treats in your hand.
  - Don't say ANYTHING to get your dog's attention.
  - Wait for your dog to look at you (make eye contact) and when s/he does say "YES/GOOD" and give a treat.
  - Move again. Repeat.
- PHASE 3.
  - Go to an area with more distractions. Go for a walk.
  - Follow the above points.

**VARIABLES:** Don't show that you have treats. Keep them in your pocket or pouch.  
Ask for longer eye contact before treating  
Eye contact made? Yes!, but wait for a sit before treating.  
What type of and how many distractions are there (high value, low value)?  
Sometimes you treat, sometimes you only say GOOD/YES.  
If your dog isn't checking in, lower the distractions (back away).

Play this game often - when you are watching TV, sitting at the table, standing outside with your dog, riding in the car, etc. **Acknowledging anytime your dog looks at you!** Treating is an extra perk.

## 2) Go to your Mat

- End Goal: Your dog will go to the mat, sit, and eventually wait, down, etc. This is VERY useful for when you are preparing meals, going to the vet, people entering the house, etc.
- Again, this is a SHAPING exercise. You aren't going to ask/show your dog what to do; s/he has to figure it out on his/her own.
- **HUMAN RULE: Don't talk a lot.**

You will need: You, your dog, mat, treats



- PHASE 1:
  - Be in a quiet area (living room).
  - Place mat in front of you and put a treat on the mat. **Don't say anything!**
  - As soon as your dog TOUCHES the mat, say YES/GOOD. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
  - *TIP: Have another person call your dog away to reset the exercise.*
- PHASE 2:
  - Be in a quiet area with few distractions.
  - Place mat in front of you – NO treats on the mat. Point if you need to.
  - As soon as your dog TOUCHES the mat, say YES/GOOD and give a treat. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
- PHASE 3: Introduce the cue word (mat, spot, etc.)
  - Place mat in front of you, put treat on mat and say "MAT."
  - As soon as your dog TOUCHES the mat, say YES/GOOD. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
- PHASE 4:
  - Place mat in front of you (NO treats on the mat) and say MAT
  - As soon as your dog TOUCHES the mat, say YES/GOOD and give a treat. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
- PHASE 5: Add ons...
  - Move mat to a busier area (your yard).
  - As soon as your dog TOUCHES the mat, say YES/GOOD and treat.
  - ***THEN, add on:***
    - Wait for eye contact. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
    - Wait for a sit. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
    - Wait for a down. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
    - *NOTE: You can ask for sit, down - but it's fun to see what your dog will offer you.*
- PHASE 6:....and beyond:
  - ***Your dog must know WAIT before doing this.***
  - Put mat where you want your dog to sit and wait (while you open the door)
  - Say MAT and wait for your dog to go to the mat, sit, etc. YES/GOOD when he does then ask for WAIT.
  - Take a step towards door. If your dog WAITS, return to him/her, say YES/GOOD and treat. Baby steps.
  - If your dog breaks, Oh-oh! and go back to the mat and start over.