



Rules of Tug

Playing tug according to the rules is an excellent physical and mental exercise for your dog and a good opportunity to improve your dog's manners.

1. Warm up: Ask the dog for a "sit" or lure the dog in to a sit.
 - Having four paws on the floor is also acceptable if the dog does not know "sit".
2. To start a round: Present the tug toy and say "take it".
 - The dog should not engage in tugging before the cue "take it"; if they do take the toy before the cue, drop the toy so no tugging is happening.
3. Tug with the dog and vary the length of the tug game. Use lateral (side-to-side) tugging movements rather than vertical (up-and-down) movements to avoid damaging the dog's spine.
4. Teach the dog to "drop it" on cue.
 - Initially, present a high value food item to encourage the dog to drop the toy. If the dog starts to consistently drop the toy for the food, you can start using "drop it" with the food, and then phase out the food and only use the "drop it" cue. Some dogs may never get to this point and that is ok.
5. To end a round: There are two ways for the tug game to end
 - The dog drops the toy for "drop it" or food.
 - The dog "wins" and you let go.
6. Fouls: If the dog mouths your fingers, hand, or arm at any point, let go of the tug toy and step back from the dog for a mini-timeout of ~5 seconds.
 - If a dog does it more than once, end the tug session and leave the run.
7. Instant Replay: To start another round of tug, start over at Step 1 - ask for a "sit".