



THE DOGGY DIGEST

TRAINING TIPS BROUGHT TO YOU BY MUTTS WITH MANNERS

The Art of the Trade: Teaching Your Puppy to Share
By Trelle Dandridge - Mutts with Manners

Puppies are curious little collectors. Socks, shoes, remote controls, if it's within reach, it's fair game. While this can be frustrating, it's also a golden training opportunity. Teaching your puppy to happily give up an item in exchange for something better doesn't just save your belongings—it helps prevent the development of resource guarding.

Dogs, like people, are more willing to give something up when they know they're getting something of equal or greater value in return. By practicing this "trade-up" method, your puppy learns that surrendering an item doesn't mean losing, it means winning.

Even more importantly, this builds trust. Instead of feeling the need to guard or run away with treasures, your puppy begins to see your approach as an opportunity.

How to Train the Trade

Step 1: Choose the Right Reward

Always trade for something your puppy values highly. If they picked up a sock, trade for a delicious treat or a favorite toy. The higher the value, the faster your puppy learns.

Step 2: Start Simple

Offer the treat or toy first. Let your puppy smell it, then gently cue, "Drop it" as you present the better item. The moment they release the original item, reward with the trade.

Step 3: Praise the Exchange

Mark the moment with enthusiastic praise: "Yes! Good drop!" This makes giving things up a fun, positive experience.

Step 4: Practice Often, Proactively

Don't wait until your puppy has something inappropriate in their mouth. Practice with toys and safe objects so they learn the routine. That way, when they do grab something off-limits, you already have a reliable skill in place.



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Preventing Resource Guarding

Resource guarding, the instinct to protect food, toys, or stolen items, often begins in puppyhood. By teaching your puppy that people approaching means good things happen, you can prevent guarding before it starts.

Regularly practice trading up with food, toys, and everyday objects. Over time, your puppy will not only let go easily but may even bring you items to see what wonderful thing you'll offer in return.

Pro Tips for Trading Success

- Never chase. Chasing turns it into a game of "keep away," reinforcing the very behavior you don't want.
- Stay calm. Avoid yelling or grabbing, the trade should feel like teamwork, not a battle.
- Vary the rewards. Sometimes it's a treat, other times a tug session or a squeaky toy. Keep your puppy guessing in a good way.
- Build trust. Always give what you promise. If your puppy trades for a treat, pay up!

The Big Picture

Negotiating with your puppy is more than damage control—it's an investment in their future behavior. By using the trade-up method, you protect your belongings, teach valuable life skills, and prevent resource guarding.

The result? A puppy who sees you not as competition for resources but as the giver of good things—and that's a partnership worth building.

Rescue is our passion, positive reinforcement is our promise! www.muttswithmanners.com