



The Mannerly Dog

Nancy M. Kelly, B.S., CPDT-KA
Animal Trainer & Behavior Consultant
www.TheMannerlyDog.com
713.503.6338, mobile

Training Tip Sheet: Teach Your Puppy to Retrieve!

Why bother with retrieving?

- Retrieving is not just a fun game; it's a helpful skill.
- Retrieving is not just chasing after something; it's giving you that item.
- You'll want your puppy to give you things throughout his life:
 - A shoe he's gotten when you didn't intend for him to
 - Your shoe that you've asked him to bring to you
 - His leash to go for a walk
 - A ball that he's retrieved after you've thrown it
 - A tug toy when the game is over
 - Rocks or other items you don't want him to swallow
- Teaching your puppy to retrieve will prevent him from guarding items, which can become dangerous.

How do we start teaching a puppy to retrieve?

- Offer to trade your puppy a very tasty treat for any item he has.
- Don't wait till he has something valuable that you really want back; start with a toy.
 - Hold the treat in front of his nose so he can smell it
 - Feed him the treat as he drops the item to get it
 - Carefully pick up the toy so he doesn't feel threatened & try to grab it
 - Give him the toy back so he gets a double reward – treat plus the toy!
- Through this process, your pup will learn it benefits him to give you things.
- Use the same process as you teach him games like "fetch" and "tug."
- Remain calm and trade when he has something you don't want him to; it's much more efficient for him to bring you things than for you to chase him to try to get them.
- While you're training, put away your shoes and other things you don't want him to chew up.

What else can we teach puppies from this beginning?

If you train only the above, you'll help your puppy learn that it's better to give you things than to run away with them. From this foundation you can teach your pup to put things in your hand, name items you want him to bring to you, have him retrieve from a distance, and more.

Teaching your puppy a dependable retrieve requires you to commit to a training plan and use your time and energy to consistently work the plan, but this simple process is just how Service and Assistance Dogs, Gun Dogs, and other working dogs that retrieve are taught; just remember to reward your puppy with a treat each time he goes to the trouble to pick up something and give it to you!