



TUG-OF-WAR GAME & RULES

HOW TO APPROPRIATELY PLAY THE GAME OF TUG

TUG-OF-WAR is a healthy display of a dog's predatory nature. Tug provides great mental and physical exercise that you and your dog can enjoy together. It's also a great way for you to bond with your dog.

However, it's important that we teach our dogs to play by the rules. The rules are important because they can stop any overstimulation or inappropriate behavior on the dog's part. These rules will help keep the game safe and fun for everyone.



RULES OF THE GAME

You, as the leader, should always initiate and end the game. Keep the tug toy out of reach until game time. When the game is over, let the dog know and put it back away.

Your dog should release on cue. Use just one word like **"GIVE"** or **"RELEASE"** to indicate to your dog that you are to receive that object. Teach this with several objects before beginning tug-of-war to avoid any frustrations while teaching it during the game. If you're tugging with your dog and the dog will not let go after your cue, stop tugging and ignore the dog.

Teach your dog when he may get the tug toy. Use a word like **"OKAY!"** to cue your dog that the game has begun and he can now grab his end of the toy.

Start with a low-key game at first. When your dog releases the toy, ask him to sit and then hide the toy behind your back. Once your dog is sitting, slowly move the toy out to begin play again. If the dog remains in a sit, use your cue word to indicate he may play tug again with you. Repeat this several times to teach your dog self-control when playing tug.

GAME STOPPER! The game ends if the dog's teeth touch your skin or clothes, even if it's by accident. If this happens, let go of the toy. If the dog also drops the toy, you can pick it back up and put it behind your back while you ask your dog to sit. If your dog sits, you may use your cue to begin play. If your dog does not release the toy after his tooth touches you, simply drop your side of the toy and ignore the dog by walking away. You may even have to leave the room. With repetition, your dog should learn that the fun game ends if he does not follow the rules. Discontinue the game for at least one hour if you have to walk away from your dog.

