



## Teaching Your Dog to “Drop-It”

Instead of trying to physically remove objects from your dog’s mouth, why not teach him to “drop it” on cue? Forcing a dog to release anything from his mouth can cause resource guarding by making the object seem scarcer, and thus, more worthy of guarding.

It is much better practice to teach your dog that hands coming toward him mean good things are to come – even while he’s enjoying a meal, treasured toy, favorite treat, or stolen sock! Follow these steps to teach your dog a reliable “drop it.”

**Step 1:** Tempt your dog with a mildly interesting toy that he has already had before. Let him put his mouth on it, and after 5-10 seconds cue him to “drop it” then pull a treat out of your pocket and place it in front of his nose. Give him the treat when he drops the toy. Practice this step until he drops the toy without seeing the treat first.

**Step 2:** Tempt your dog with a mildly interesting toy that he has already had before. Let him put his mouth on it, and after 5-10 seconds, cue him to “drop it.” When he does, say “yes!” and pick up the toy, then give him a treat from your pocket. Repeat several times.

**Step 3:** Tempt your dog with a novel toy. Let him put his mouth on it for 5-10 seconds and then cue him to “drop it.” When he does say “yes!” and give him a treat from your pocket. Repeat.

**Step 4:** Tempt your dog with a novel toy. Let him put his mouth on it for 5-10 seconds and then cue him to “drop it.” When he does, say “yes!” and then present the toy to him again and tell him to “take it!” Let him play with it for a few minutes and then repeat the exercise.

**Step 5:** Randomly, when your dog is playing with a toy on his own, approach him and cue him to “drop it”. When he does, praise him and tell him to “take it” and give him the toy back for him to play with or remove the toy and give him a treat. Mix it up so that he doesn’t ever know if he will get the item back or not.