

DROP IT/TAKE IT

(RULES OF TUG)

Your guide to helping your dog learn to drop and take items on cue during tug



Drop It/Take It/Rules of Tug

Goal: Dog will safely play tug with an adult, learning to drop and take an item on cue. Dog must have enough toy drive to be engaged and playing with a toy to teach this skill. This plan is not for resource guarding dogs.

STEP	WHAT DO YOU DO?	DIG-IN	SPLITS/NOTES
1	Say "drop it", stop engaging in tug/play with the dog and put food right in front of the dog's nose and then drop the high value food on the floor immediately in front of the dog to get the dog to let go of the toy to collect the food. Mark "YES" as soon as the dog begins to open their mouth to release the toy.	Allow dog to tug/play for 5 seconds	Split to lower value toy or less time playing. While they are eating the food, pick up the toy.
2	Say "drop it", stop engaging in tug/play with the dog and toss high value food on the floor immediately in front of the dog. Mark "YES" as soon as the dog begins to open their mouth to release the toy.	Allow dog to tug/play for 5 seconds	
3	Invite the dog to re-engage by saying "take it" and present the toy to the dog again		Can toss for fetch if dog won't take from you.
4	Repeat Step 2	Allow dog to tug/play for 15 seconds	Split to shorter time dog has item to play with ("dig-in" time). No food lure.

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STEP	WHAT DO YOU DO?	DIG-IN	SPLITS/NOTES
5	Invite the dog to re-engage by saying "take it" and present the toy to the dog again		
6	Repeat Step 3-4	Increase dig in time gradually up to 5 minutes	
7	Repeat steps 3-4 with variety of toys and other higher value items like bully stick	Varied	Split to shorter dig-in time

[See a video demo of this plan here!](#)

Once dog has solid Drop it/Take it then incorporate into your tug game.

RULES OF TUG:

1. Dog must sit politely before the game begins.
2. Game begins only when you cue it ("Take it!").
3. He drops when you cue "Drop it!"
4. Short intervals (<10 seconds) between "Drops" early in training. (You can make them longer as the dog's "drop" becomes more reliable)
5. **Any teeth on skin or clothing, even accidental, ends the game.**

Impulse control is the critical aspect of this exercise. Before cueing each new game to start, hold the toy out to the dog for half a second. If he goes for it without the cue, take it away (timing is important here and mark "Too bad!"). He can take it only when you give the cue to "take it".