

## Play Training Your Dog for Agility

**Try these five games to get your dog excited about agility!**

*Terry Long*

### Love My Toy

**Materials:** An old sock or a toy into which you can stash treats

**How to play:** This teaches the non-toy motivated dog to love a toy. Place a yummy treat into the sock or toy. As soon as your dog sniffs the toy, let him eat the treat directly out of the toy. Gradually require him to become pushier with the toy (nosing it, biting at it, etc.) before letting him get the treat. Your goal is to be able to throw the toy a few feet away from you and have him dash to it. Make a big deal over him when he does.

### Toy Race

**Materials:** Any toy (or food tube) your dog loves

**How to play:** Hold dog by collar, place toy on floor, take dog 10' from toy, lightly restrain, give a verbal release, and race your dog to the toy. This is great for building speed and drive.

### Sit/Stay-Toy Race

**Materials:** Any toy (or food tube) your dog loves

**How to play:** This game is the same as the Toy Race except that you ask for a Sit-Stay of longer and longer duration before giving a verbal release to get the toy/food. This is great for start line stays and fast starts.

### Tug with Rules

**Materials:** A toy that is easy on your dog's mouth and allows at least 12" between his mouth and your hand

**How to play:** Tugging is great for interaction and bonding. Rules: Sit first, wait for a release to grab the toy, drop it on cue, and a timeout for grabbing hand instead of toy. If he loses his grip, no regripping; the game starts over with a sit.

### Find It!

**Materials:** Any toy (or food tube) your dog loves

**How to play:** While your dog is watching, "hide" his toy or food tube in an obvious location. Hold him back for a moment, and exclaim, "Find it!" Let him go and praise him when he gets to it. Play with him or feed him the treat. Gradually hide the toy in locations he can't see and will have to use his nose to find. Your goal is to leave him in one room on a Sit-Stay while you hide the toy and then release him to "Find It!"

Terry Long, CPDT, is a writer, behavior specialist, and agility instructor in Long Beach, Calif. She can be reached at [aboutagility@dogworld.com](mailto:aboutagility@dogworld.com).

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