



# Hunting for toys

Any kind of activity that includes sniffing is great for providing mental stimulation and building confidence. This game, also provides outlets for dogs who love to sniff, track, and retrieve. Giving dogs outlets for these natural behaviours helps with loose lead walking, recall, reactivity, and reducing frustration. This game also helps your dog build 'impulse control' around exciting things.

## How to play:

1. You can use any toy that your dog really enjoys playing with for this, but I like to use toys that we can also hide food in like the Paws Pocket, Kong Ballistic, or The Clam from tug-e-nuff. The food can help bring arousal down once they find it.
2. Pop a couple of treats inside the toy and let your dog sniff it. (Keep hold of it!)
3. Gently take hold of your dogs harness or lead. If you have another person with you, get them to place the toy on the floor a few meters in front of your dog. If it's just you, gently roll it away from your dog.
4. If your dog tries to run towards the toy or vocalises, keep hold of them and wait calmly until they're still and quiet. As soon as they're still and quiet tell them 'find it' and let them go.

**Important!: wait until the toy is on the ground before releasing your dog to find it. This isn't fetch, it's finding!**

- Once they've got the toy, give them lots of verbal praise and move away from them to encourage them to bring it back to you.
- Re-set and go again!

## Building the skills

Build their ability to wait first.

Make it really really easy to start with, releasing them the second they're still and quiet. Then gradually increase the time you wait before releasing them (I'm talking one second at a time!)

Once they can wait consistently, increase the difficulty of the search. Increase how far you throw it, hide it behind objects, or have your dog wait in one room while you hide the toy in another room.