



# The Mouse Game

The mouse game is a fun way to help your dog learn calmness and patience, and disengagement skills.

Food manners don't come easily to our dogs usually... they're natural scavengers which can make it hard to break the habit of trying to snaffle food the second it lands on the floor!

But the mouse game helps us get started changing this automatic response.

## To play:

1. Load yourself up with some food rewards in a quiet spot with your dog
2. Pop one treat on the floor and cover it with your hand (imagine your hand is that little basket at the end of the game 'Mouse Trap'!)
3. Don't say a thing as your dog tries their best to get the treat; they might try licking, pawing, or nosing your hand out of the way.
4. Wait until your dog offers some behaviour that shows they're moving AWAY from your hand; a tiny head turn, a slight back up, a glance away
5. Mark and flick the treat to them as a reward
6. Repeat! Repeat! Repeat!

7. Start to wait for slightly bigger signs of disengagement before rewarding each time, a bigger step back, a more deliberate move away, a sit, a down.

When you know you can cover the treat and they'll automatically move away, it's time to make it harder!

8. Once your dog has backed up, lift your hand up super slowly so the treat is no longer covered and see if they can stay where they are. If they stay, mark and flick the treat toward them. (Be ready to cover the treat back up if they make a move to get it!)

## Making it harder

- Can you do this with multiple treats?
- What about a couple of different piles?
- What happens if you move the food around a little bit whilst they're sitting there?
- Can you drop the treat from a short height?
- What about a greater height?
- Can you throw it gently?!