



Sussex Brighton and East Grinstead Branch

Registered Charity No. 206630

APPROPRIATE PLAY

Appropriate play is an exercise that has a couple of really useful applications.

It teaches our dogs to have fun, but that there are rules and It is also a great exercise to help combat chewing and mouthing behaviour, such as your dog chewing on you or your clothing etc.

STEP 1: Select a toy that will be suitable for this exercise. Recommend would be something that you can use for a game of tuggy, that is long so there is less chance of your dog ending up chewing your hand instead of the toy by accident. See below some examples.



STEP 2: Engage in a game of tuggy with your dog. To engage them to do this try snaking the toy along the ground to encourage their natural chase instinct.

STEP 3: Once your dog has latched onto the toy, begin playing a good ol game of tuggy. Remember, if your dog vocalises during play, such as growling, this is completely normal

and nothing to worry about, unless it is teamed with other body language that suggests the dog is not enjoying the game. Dogs, particularly puppies, can vocalise a lot during play. It's just them being dogs and certainly won't encourage any aggressive tendencies.

STEP 3: If at any point your dog ends up chewing on you or your clothes instead of the toy, drop the toy, disengage with your dog and become very boring for 30 seconds. Once your dog's energy level has come down a bit, pick up the toy and re engage in your game of tuggy.

STEP 4: Continue the game with these new rules, any teeth on skin or clothing and the game stops for 30 seconds. Also stop the game for a short time if you feel your dog's energy levels may be coming up too much. If you stick to these rules, your dog will very soon figure out what is making the fun stop and realise that for fun to continue, you don't chew on the humans, you chew on the toy!

STEP 5: When the game is over you can indicate this to your dog by putting the toy away. However, it is very important that we don't just take things off of our dogs if they have it in their possession. Doing that is a very quick way for your dog to develop guarding behaviour. If your dog has anything in their possession, even if they aren't directly interacting with it, always practice swapping. Take a treat, waft it under your dog's nose and then lure them safely away from the toy (or any other item they may have that you want to retrieve). Once your dog is safely away from the toy, eating their treat, you can now pick it up and put it away.

If you need further help, you can find a dog trainer by copying and pasting the link below into your web browser:

https://abtc.org.uk/practitioners/?_abtc_role=animal-training-instructor