

## K9 Nose Work - week 1

### Objectives:

- Get your dog excited about playing nose work games.
- Teach your dog that boxes are a cue for a fun game.
- Learn to sit back and allow your dog to work without interference from you.

### Supplies You'll Need:

- 1 dozen cardboard boxes of varied sizes for dog to search for treats.
- Strong-smelling treats your dog will love. I've had success with salmon jerky, gorgonzola cheese, and baked liver.
- 1 wide-mouthed plastic container with a lid (like a cottage cheese container) that your dog can stick his face into. You'll want to poke 3 holes in the lid with a scissors to allow the scent to escape.
- A room with space to move. If you have a very large area, like an unfinished basement, set up some barriers so the search area isn't too large. A dining area can be a good place to start since it doesn't usually have much furniture in it to serve as distractions.

### Set-up

- Move your dog to a room other than the one where you'll be setting up the game. If your dog has separation anxiety and wouldn't tolerate this well, try putting a baby gate across the door to keep him from interfering with your set up. You'll just have to be trickier when it's time to hide the treats.
- If you have multiple pets, you'll want to

work one dog at a time. Find a secure place for your other pets while each dog is working.

- Lay the open boxes on the floor in any configuration.
- Put a few smelly treats into the plastic container you've prepared with holes in the top.
- Put the treat container into one of the boxes.
- Place a few more treats onto the top of the plastic container so your dog gets an instant reward when they find it.
- If your dog is watching you set up from behind a baby gate, "fake hide" treats in several of the boxes by putting your hand into the boxes and moving it around as if you're hiding something there.

### Playing the Game:

**Y**ou really want your dog to be excited about this game. Our instructor told us nose work class was a "no obedience" zone. We weren't supposed to make our dogs sit and stay. This is all about increasing their drive to sniff and giving them a good time.

- Bring your dog to the entry way of the area where he'll search.
- Give him a sample of the same treat you've hidden so he'll know how yummy it is and start to get an idea of what he's searching for.
- Turn your dog loose to sniff out the treat.
- Stay quiet and still. Don't speak to your dog; just let him sniff. If he looks to you for help, show him your empty, open hands and he'll move on.

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- If your dog gets stuck—he moves away from the search area or gets distracted by something else—try to get him back on track in the gentlest way possible. You may want to try moving your body farther into the search area. Or try tossing one of the treats he's search for into the search area. If you work too hard to move him toward the treats, he may stop sniffing and just look to you for clues.
  - Your dog has found the treat when he eats the ones left on the top of the container. Don't get too excited when he gets near. You want him to make the find himself.
  - As soon as your dog has found and finished eating the treats on top of the plastic container, go in to open the container and feed the remaining treats to him *from the box*. You want him to learn at this stage that the boxes are a signal for the fun game.
  - Repeat the set up and find about 3 or 4 times. You want to be sure to end the game while your dog is still having fun. You can allow turns for other dogs in your house or pick up and put away the boxes until the next time.
- Greater speed in finding the treat.
  - Turning to you less often for help while searching.
  - A desire to nap after using his brain and sniffer.
  - Some finds will be harder than others depending on air currents in your room. Be aware that your furnace kicking on in the middle of a find can change everything.

Ready to move onto week 2? Check out the instructions [here](#).

### Practice

Set aside time throughout the week to practice. Continue to work in a fairly small space with the boxes as your dog learns the game.

### Things You May See From Your Dog This Week

We noticed the dogs in our class changing over time as they played the nose work game. Here's some things you may see from your dog:

- A high level of excitement when he sees the boxes come out.
- Greater confidence in searching.