



Yunde Canine Enterprises

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The "Tug It!" will have most dogs (big and small) tugging quickly. The intention of the "Tug It!" is to teach the dog to tug and then transition this behaviour to other more traditional tug toys, it is not meant to be a tug toy in and of itself. The Starter version "Tug It!" is for those dogs that do not have any tugging behaviour at all, whereas the Advanced version "Tug It!" (that has a tighter weave) is for those dogs that have some tugging behaviour already that you want to enhance. It is important to transition to the Advanced "Tug It!" and then traditional toys as per the instructions below.

Why Tugging?

Why is playing tug so important you ask? It has been shown time and time again that the act of tugging fosters playful interaction between dog and trainer. Dogs that have successfully learned to play tug know that their toys come alive when their human is tugging with them on the other end. The dog comes to learn that the best toy in the world is the one that their owner is on the end of.

Unfortunately, for many different reasons, the dog's natural desire to play tug with their owners can be desensitised. Frequently, dogs are happy to take a treat from their owners but can turn their nose up when it comes to tugging. The treat, once taken by the dog, doesn't do much to foster the relationship between dog and owner.

Toys are an integral tool to provide reinforcement from afar. If food is tossed to a dog often times the dog can't see it so they resort to the undesirable behaviour of sniffing. When toys are tossed for reinforcement to dogs that love to play tug with them they quickly will bring the toy back to their owners for a rousing game of tug.

What to Do

Present the "Tug It!" to the dog. The dog will begin to sniff and lick it. Soon the dog will start to mouth the "Tug It!". As it does, the dog will start to get some food reinforcement. The result is that the act of mouthing is immediately paired with the primary reinforcer, food. Once the dog starts to mouth the "Tug It!" gently grasp the handle and start to exert some tugging pressure away from the dog. The dog will start to mouth the "Tug It!" harder to ensure it doesn't go away. The harder the dog mouths the "Tug It!" the more food reinforcement the dog gets therefore the act of tugging harder gets immediately paired with the food. This results in making the tugging behaviour stronger.

The starter version should be used for dogs that have absolutely no or extremely little tug drive. Once the dog starts to hold on and tug gently, which should happen quite quickly, you should go immediately to the advanced version. Following this principle, it is possible that the dog would use the starter version for an extremely short amount of time. Possibly only one tug session. It is highly dependent on each individual dog. Some dogs use the starter version for much longer. If the dog takes to the starter version immediately, and the handler needs to move quickly to the advanced version, by no means is that bad. It simply shows that the starter version did what it was intended to do.

The advanced version is much stronger than the starter because the starter is meant just for the dog that won't tug at all. The advanced will withstand quite a bit of tugging. However, remember that this is a training device. If the dog is tugging hard on the advanced version you should start to make the transition to a traditional tug toy. Do this by starting to diminish the amount of food you use in the "Tug It!" and by wrapping some of the food in some craft store (non toxic) batting/filler. The "Tug It!" will now start to resemble a more traditional tug toy.

What Not to Do

The "Tug It!" will have most dogs tugging quickly. Keep in mind that the "Tug It!" is a tug training device NOT a chew toy. The intention of the "Tug It!" is to teach the dog to tug and then transition this behaviour to other more traditional tug toys. Dogs will quickly learn to love the "Tug It!" and the mouthing behaviour will increase. **DO NOT** leave the dog unattended with the "Tug It!" as you could risk the dog shredding and ingesting it.

Also, it is important that whatever model is being used that you are at the end of the "Tug It!" and tugging back. The dog should not be allowed to get the "Tug It!" in its back molars and grind. That is not tugging and should be discouraged. That's not the behaviour you should be training.