



Which bed?

Play 'Fetch' as explained previously but this time set up the crate at one end and a trampoline bed at the other.

Extend the distance as the dog becomes more successful.

Have the dog sit on the bed as the starting point then on command, run to the crate to fetch a toy to bring back to the bed.

Having the bed gives the dog a finishing point for this game and helps build its skills for the next crate game.

Obstacles

Once the dog knows that the aim is to get to the crate to fetch a toy to bring back to a hammock bed, build some obstacles to increase the challenge.

If a tunnel isn't available, make one out of a line of chairs making the dog go through the legs.

Start by setting up a tunnel and send the dog from the hammock bed through the tunnel to the crate to fetch a toy to bring back through the tunnel again and onto the bed.

Other obstacles might be to wind around witches cones or jump over objects.

Once the dog knows the game and that there will be rewards at the end, the options are endless.

Things to Remember

- You are the keeper of the fun
- Only use high value treats
- Encourage good behaviour
- Never punish
- Take one step back if things go wrong
- Reinforce learned skills before starting a new session
- Have fun!



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GREAT CRATE GAMES

GREAT CRATE GAMES

Crate games are lots of fun for puppies and adult dogs and they help to reinforce the skills that they have learnt through crate training. They also learn that good things happen when they are in the crate. Crate games teach dogs impulse control so that they stay on task even when there are lots of distractions going on around them.



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Impulse control helps owners maintain control of their dog when at the park, beach or wherever other dogs and people are around.

A dog that has good impulse control will know that there is more value in listening to their owner than chasing other dogs or running off down the beach.

Time for fun

Although crate games are essentially training sessions, to the dog it is all just a lot of fun. The dog will be encouraged by your own excitement and enthusiasm and will want to keep repeating the same behaviours that it knows make you happy and gives it a reward.

Take along a lot of high value treats such as broken up pieces of sausage and cookies and use these often to reward all of the good behaviours.

Never punish the dog if it makes a mistake as this will only draw attention to it and change the atmosphere of the training session.

Instead, ignore the mistakes and spend a moment working out where you went wrong in the training. Did you rush the dog and were your commands clear? Take one step back in the process to reinforce the correct behaviour and use lots of praise and reward to make sure the dog knows what it was that you wanted.

At the start of every session, reinforce the skills taught in the previous session before teaching new ones. Then, at the end of the session, both you and your dog will come away with a sense of achievement and probably with a tighter bond than when you started. You may even start to develop your own 'Great Crate Games' to add to our list here.

Where'd it go?

This is a great game for puppies. Sit next to the crate with the puppy and prepare a chew toy so that the pup can see what is happening.

Once it is excited about the toy, place the toy in the back of the crate and close the door.

The pup, standing on the outside, will hopefully begin to show signs of wanting

to get its toy and might keep looking at you or pawing at the door.

Once it is really excited, open the door and let the puppy go in on its own.

Follow this routine several times over a few days and eventually, if the puppy looks calm, close the door behind it and watch as it happily sits down and chews its toy.

Look at me, look at me!

Once the dog has learnt to sit at the back of the crate, make sure that the dog knows that you have its favourite treats in your hand and then have one of the kids run past the crate or throw a ball across the front of it.

If the dog stays seated and keeps his eyes on you, open the door and reward it generously with lots of praise.

Repeat this several times and then try it with the door open.

The aim of the game is for the dog to stay focussed on you because the value in your hand is far greater than the enticement of the other things that are going on around it.

Yer in, yer out

Yer in, yer out was developed by dog agility trainer Susan Garrett (www.susangarrettdogagility.com).

Start with the dog inside the crate. Open the door and reward the dog if it stays seated in the crate.

Step a little back from the crate and excitedly call the dog who will jump out towards you but when you don't give it a reward, it will go back in the crate which

is when you can immediately give it a delicious treat (even if it doesn't sit).

Repeat this several times gradually moving a little further from the crate.

The dog will probably bounce around you a few times when it comes out because it is so excited but can only be rewarded when it has gone back into the crate.

Yer in, yer out too

This is the same as the previous game but developed a little further to introduce a tug toy.

When the dog is inside the crate hold its tug toy behind your back and open the latch with the other hand.

Remember only to open the door if the dog is seated at the back of the crate.

Show the dog the toy and call it out and have a quick game of 'tug' for just a few seconds before taking the toy away and waiting for the dog to return to the crate.

When it does, reward it immediately with lots of praise and treats (keep the toy hidden).

The dog should be able to return to the crate even with the distraction of the toy.

Fetch

Set up the crate with the door wide open and then stand with the dog a few metres away from it.

Choose the dog's favourite toy for fetching and use it to play with the dog for a few minutes. Then, enthusiastically throw the toy into the crate for the dog to fetch. If the dog is reluctant to go in, throw it close to the door and then a little further in until the dog just can't help itself.

Eventually increase the challenge by moving further from the crate and flinging the toy at full strength straight in

through the door. It may be necessary to put a cover on the crate so that the toy doesn't come right out the back though. Reward the dog when he brings the toy straight back to you.

If there are other dogs that know this game, line them all up with their own crates to have a go at it together.

This game can be developed into a very fast paced game that can give the dog a really good work out even in the confines of a backyard.

