

THE NAME GAME



Why do we teach the name game?

The name game not only ensures your dog knows its name, but that it turns its attention to you when you say its name. I often hear from clients that my dog has selective hearing. Here's a method to avoid this and ensure you can get your dog's attention every time you call its name.

Here's how we play the name game:

1. Best to try this after your puppy has had some exercise, is sitting calmly somewhere near you, and is awake.
2. There should be minimal noise distraction, so turn down the TV and do this when you're the only one in the room, initially.
3. Now suddenly say your dog's name. Say it clearly, with moderate volume and, emphasizing the first letter of his name. You shouldn't yell, just be clear and speak up.
4. When your dog turns and looks at you, praise and reward them. **Go to them to deliver the [treat](#) if they don't come to you.** Practice this a few times a day.
5. **If your dog doesn't look at you, don't repeat his name.** Try again later when there is less distraction.
6. **Slowly** begin adding in distractions, and then keep increasing the distractions with TV volume, your backyard, your front yard, in the woods, on a busy street, near a school when kids are going home, outside of a dog park, etc.
7. Continue to think of new and greater distractions to strengthen your dog's name response skill.
8. Maintain this skill by using it throughout your day, but remember to praise and reward every time.

NOTE: If you use your dog's name and don't reward him for looking at you, he'll learn to ignore it when he's interested in something else. If you reward him every time you use his name, he'll learn to always give you his attention. Think about a child saying mom, mom, mom, mom, mom, mom, mom! After some time mom might be casually thinking, "yes" but often not turn or verbally respond.