



# How to Motivate Your Dog

Do you really know what motivates your dog? When your dog is motivated he learns much faster. Many owners have never really thought about what motivates their dog. They assume because he's a dog that he will enjoy 'Dog' things i.e. things most dogs find rewarding. Applying this to your dog is akin to saying that ALL humans enjoy playing sport (I know I certainly don't!).

What one dog finds rewarding or pleasurable may be boring, unpleasant or even punishing to another dog. For example, some dogs absolutely adore car rides while others get car sick. Rewarding a dog that experiences motion sickness with a car ride may be viewed as a punishment by the dog. Some dogs are utterly obsessed with fetching ball while others can't see the point and consider fetching dull!

Many dogs do not enjoy being patted on the head but I continually observe people rewarding their dog with a food treat then patting it on the head, or worse still using a pat on the head as the reward! I watch the dog trying to communicate to the owner that he's not enjoying the pat on the head. I advise the owner. I turn around two minutes later and observe the owner still patting the dog on the head. This is punishing the dog for obeying commands.



Make a list of the 10 things your dog enjoys. List in order of preference e.g. 1=Most Enjoyable 10=Least Enjoyable. Be honest – does your dog *really* prefer Praise to Going for a Walk?

**Your list might look something like this:**

1. Food
2. Walks
3. Going to the Park (Off Leash Area)
4. Fetch (Ball or Frisbee)
5. Tug
6. Games (Hide & Seek, Go Find It etc)
7. Car Rides
8. Belly Rubs
9. Pats
10. Praise

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## Other rewards could include:

- ❖ Spending time inside
- ❖ Spending time outside
- ❖ Chewing a Kong, Rawhide or similar
- ❖ Playing Soccer
- ❖ Play with other dogs
- ❖ Training sessions
- ❖ Cuddles
- ❖ Getting up on the couch or bed
- ❖ Baths (some dogs LOVE them!)
- ❖ Being brushed
- ❖ Massage
- ❖ Jogging
- ❖ Running beside your bicycle
- ❖ Getting Visitors
- ❖ Going Visiting
- ❖ An Outing - Anywhere
- ❖ Lazing in front of the fire
- ❖ Jumping all over you while you lay on the ground
- ❖ A game of chase (where he chases you!)
- ❖ Engaging in Dog Sports (Agility, Flyball etc)



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