

Scent Games Marcia Albert

Find It !

For this game your dog should know and respond very well to “Wait” which means he will remain in a “Sit” or “Down” until he hears a release word.

- Put your dog in a “Wait”
- Place a treat in your hand and let him sniff it
- Place the same treat about three feet away from him
- Ask him for a “Watch” and then you cue “Find It” *
- Encourage him to take and eat the treat-click as he first approaches to eat
- Gradually move the treat farther away until you are able to hide it anywhere in the room
- Increase the difficulty by hiding the treat in another room
- Vary the reward by hiding some of his favorite toys
- Remember to click as he first sees the treat

Where’s Jack?

To play this game you must first teach the dog the names of the people you’ll play this game with.

- With the first person (let’s call him “Jack”) in the same room as your dog ask the dog “Where’s Jack?”
- Immediately have Jack call the dog and give him a treat
- You’ll click once as he approaches Jack
- Do this several times
- Next when you cue “Where’s Jack?” Jack should not call the dog, but Jack should continue giving the treat and you will click once as the dog approaches Jack
- After a few times of the dog reliably going to Jack without being called have Jack stop offering treats, but you will give the dog the treat
- Jack will no longer offer treats or carry any treats—we want the dog to follow Jack’s personal scent not the scent of treats
- Now Jack goes to an adjoining room and when you cue “Where’s Jack?” follow a few steps behind, click and give the treat
- Continue with Jack hiding in several rooms of the house

Soon you’ll be ready to move outside.

- Have Jack hide within a small radius-but let the dog see where Jack is going
- Cue “Where’s Jack?”
- When the dog finds Jack you click and treat
- Gradually increase the radius but let the dog see where Jack is going
- Make this more difficult by having Jack hide a few feet left or right of his entry point

- Once the dog is easily finding Jack have the dog move his position by a few feet before you release him so he becomes slightly disoriented
- Next, Jack hides without allowing the dog watch him
- Finally, Jack hides when the dog is completely out of sight
- Make this more difficult by increasing the distance and then by adding unknown people to stand with Jack so the dog must single out Jack

Scent Discrimination with Articles

Your dog will find the object you have handled from other identical objects. Play this game in your living room.

- Find several identical metal articles and number them to eliminate confusion (spoons work well)
- Select a strong smelling treat—cheese, hotdogs or pieces of bacon
- Handle one of the pieces of treat and rub it onto your fingers and then handle spoon #1
- Toss spoon #1 about 5 feet away and have your dog retrieve it—as he drops it for you click and treat
- When he is easily retrieving spoon #1 begin to toss it farther away and gradually toss it where he needs to work a bit to get it-behind a chair, etc. continue to click and treat
- Next take spoon #2—handle with clean hands so it has no food scent- place it on the floor and toss spoon #1 5-6 feet away
- As he delivers spoon #1 click and treat
- Should he retrieve spoon #2 ignore him completely-no voice correction, no body movements just wait and allow him to self correct-he will given the opportunity
- If your dog has mistakenly picked up spoon #2 wash it off so there will be no scent from his mouth (which has been chomping on treats) to confuse him.
- Continue to toss spoon #1 5-6 feet away for several times and when he is reliably selecting spoon #1 toss it a foot closer (4 feet away) to spoon #2
- Give him several retrieves at this distance and then gradually toss closer to spoon #2 until the two spoons are about 2 feet apart
- You want your dog to specifically eliminate spoon #2 so make certain the two spoons are close enough to force him to make a choice

Now you are ready to add a second unscented spoon. Place spoon #3 5-6 feet away from spoon #2 and begin again.

Try making the game more difficult with these suggestions:

- Don't allow the dog to watch as you toss the spoon
- Add several unscented spoons
- Use leather and wooden articles-making certain that all objects made of the same material look alike. Remember that when you begin with a different material start from the beginning.
- When your dog is able to work with different objects mix them together being careful to have only one scented article in the group