

Let's FETCH!

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As a child you had a dream of having a dog who you could throw a ball to and have him bring it back and drop it lovingly at your feet. Instead you find yourself chasing Fido with him taunting you with that catch me if you can glare.

Sadly your vision of fetch has become a game of tag where you are always "it." Amazingly enough, your dog has trained you! What you're currently doing is fetch in reverse, but we can learn from the cleverness of our dog and use it to beat him at his own game.



Eddie, Ali and Ziggle
from The Florida Keys

1 First hold the ball a few feet in front of him and move it around excitedly. Because dogs are naturally attracted to movement this often peaks their interest. If that doesn't do the trick, try dragging it along the ground quickly or bouncing it. Once you've got his attention, throw the ball no more than five feet away from you.

2 If he goes to pick it up, quickly clap your hands and start running away from your dog while encouraging him to chase you. It's important to wait until your dog has the ball in his mouth before you start clapping and running. Do not say his name or ask him to "come" because you could distract him.

3 What if your dog starts coming to you but stops short? Just clap more while continuing to run away from him. Under no circumstances do you move towards him! Previously he refused to move towards you and now you're going to refuse to move towards him. There are few dogs that can resist a good game of chase.

4 The moment he gets close and drops the ball, immediately throw it. This is his reward. Initially, don't require your dog to do anything but drop the ball or you could risk him becoming frustrated or bored. Don't be discouraged if he will only fetch a few times in the beginning. Be sure to end the game while he is still successful so that during subsequent play, he'll be more likely to fetch longer.

5 If your dog comes to you, but refuses to drop the ball, do not face him or reach for the ball. If he is truly enjoying the game he will make it a point to face you and eventually drop it. Be patient!

So there you go! There's nothing we can't do with our dogs when we combine play with their natural instincts.
Happy fetching!