



## Your Chase-Driven Dog

For dogs who are chase-driven, chasing may be very normal when it comes to a tennis ball but may require both training and management for dogs that want to chase cats, cars, bikes, squirrels, or anything that moves. For some breeds of dog (hounds and retrievers for instance) they have a natural instinct to chase that has been bred into them for many years. However, this instinct can be dangerous for your dog without proper management and training. Here is a way to control, and embrace that impulse, safely!

### Curbing Chasing Behavior

Modifying this behavior starts with understanding that you are dealing with your dog's impulse control. The goal is to teach them when they get excited for something to wait for you to release them, rather than being allowed to chase it immediately.

Start with your leash and some high value treats (or a toy if your dog is more toy motivated). Leash your dog and start to walk, every time your dog looks at you without your prompt give the verbal cue "watch" and deliver a treat. If you are clicker training your dog, this is a perfect opportunity to incorporate a click. Practice this behavior every time your dog is on leash, even if it is just to go potty in your backyard. You must be diligent in your follow up with the treat and cue, and with continued practice your dog will learn this cue. We recommend 10-15 minutes of practice daily or anytime your dog is on leash.

This type of training is teaching your dog to focus on you, rather than another stimulus. Once your dog has mastered checking in with you and the "watch" cue, you can practice with them off leash (if your yard is fenced in) on a long line. When the stimulus is present, give the "watch" cue and your dog should recall to you. If not, go back to the leashing exercise and continue to practice and gradually introduce them back to the stimulus involved environment.

### Indoor Cats

Many dogs can learn not to chase cats indoors. Dogs and cats operate a little differently that can make it seem like they aren't compatible, but they may just need time to acclimate and learn to respect one another. In many situations your dog wants to treat your cat like a dog and smell its rear end. Your cat most likely will not appreciate this type of greeting. However, allowing your dog to safely get some smells from your cat can make a world of difference in their cohabitation success.

Start with those high value treats, your dog on a leash, a spray bottle of water, and your cat in a carrier. Position your cat in the carrier on the floor and while the dog is on leash, to safely pull back if needed. Allow your dog to approach and sniff the carrier, when your dog walks away or looks at you, praise, and reward with a high value treat. If your dog gets too overly intense utilize the water bottle to safely redirect them away. Once the dog calms down, you can try to reapproach the carrier again to gauge your dog's interest. Continue positive repetitions until you feel comfortable letting the cat out of the carrier. Still keep your dog on leash for safety while training.

By rewarding good behavior, you are reinforcing the behaviors that you seek from your dog, and they learn to understand what you want them to do. It can take a few introductions for both your dog and cat, and due to the stress of the situation for both animals you may want to limit them to 10-15 minutes each. In the meantime, give both animals a safe place to stay apart, calm down, and regain their confidence before you start training again.



## Appropriate Chase

As mentioned above, chase is deeply engrained in many breeds of dog, therefore allowing them to chase in a healthy and safe manner is necessary. Allowing your dog regular exercise with chase gives them an outlet for their natural behavior while they have fun!

- Fetch – probably one of the oldest but still most enjoyable games for your dog to play. They get to exercise and engage with their chase behaviors.
- Tug – this game is great practice for dogs and their impulse control. Teaching your dog the “drop” command using high value treats and dropping the tug toy on your command, is an exercise in impulse control. Start with a few pulls, give the verbal cue “drop” and wait for the dog to release the toy. Upon release, say “drop” give the treat. Repeat this until your dog understands the “drop” command. Then gradually extend the tug game and give the “drop” cue. The longer you play the harder it is for your dog to want to drop the toy. Build up so that your dog always drops on your command, and you have really taught them some wonderful impulse control!
- Swimming – if your dog likes the water, incorporate some fetch in a safe body of water. Swimming is of course a physical workout for the dog but retrieving the ball while swimming adds a mental stimulation element that is sure to wear out your dog. A good dog is a tired dog!