

7 Retrieving Games That Calm Excitable Retrievers

Training With Instinct for Pet Retrievers

Calm Canine Companion

Introduction

Many retrievers are energetic, enthusiastic and eager to be active. These qualities are part of what makes them such enjoyable companions, but they can also lead to behaviours such as over-excitement, constant chasing, or difficulty settling. These behaviours are not usually the result of disobedience. More often, they reflect natural instincts that have not yet been given a clear and constructive outlet. Retrievers were developed to search, retrieve and work in close partnership with people. When these instincts are understood and used in a structured way, they can help form the foundation of a calm, responsive companion dog. The exercises in this guide are intended as a simple starting point, helping you work with your dog's natural abilities in a calm and thoughtful way.

Before You Begin

- 1 Keep sessions short and manageable
- 2 Begin in a quiet environment
- 3 Focus on calmness rather than speed
- 4 Allow your dog time to think
- 5 End each session while your dog is still engaged

The Exercises

1. Calm Before the Retrieve

Encourage calmness before action by waiting for stillness before throwing.

2. Short, Controlled Retrieves

Keep retrieves short and controlled, avoiding frantic repetition.

3. Returning to Hand

Encourage your dog to return calmly and remain with you.

4. One Retrieve, Then Pause

Pause between retrieves to reduce over-excitement.

5. Simple Memory Retrieves

Let your dog remember and retrieve from a short distance.

6. Gentle Hunting Exercise

Encourage calm searching rather than repeated throwing.

7. Finishing Calmly

End sessions calmly to reinforce settled behaviour.

Bringing It Together

- 1 Channel energy into purposeful activity
- 2 Develop calmness and self-control
- 3 Improve focus and responsiveness
- 4 Strengthen the relationship between dog and owner

Final Thought

When instinct is guided with care and understanding, training becomes clearer, behaviour becomes calmer, and the partnership between dog and owner becomes more rewarding.