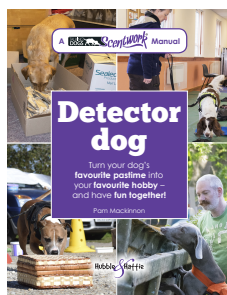




TEACH YOUR DOG TO SNIFF! HANDOUT



For more information, I recommend my Talking Dogs Scentwork® Manual:

DETECTOR DOG

This is available directly from Talking Dogs Scentwork® by going to:

www.scentwork.com or from Amazon
or www.dogwise.com (for US based students)

SCENTED ARTICLES

Preparation

Sprinkle some catnip (or other distinctive scent) onto the bottom of your storage tin. This initial sprinkling of catnip should last for a couple of months or so. After that time, empty the storage tin of the used catnip. Sprinkle in some fresh catnip as before and off you go again. Place a piece of kitchen roll over the top of the catnip. This simply prevents mess when you use the mouse, you don't want to spread pieces of dried catnip around. Of course, if you have purchased an official TDS Starter Kit, the catnip comes in a bag. Leave it in the bag, the scent easily flows from the bag onto the articles and is much less messy so there's no need for kitchen roll. Then sit your unscented material articles on top of the bag of catnip or kitchen roll. Close the lid of the storage tin and leave for 24 hours. After a day, your articles will be scented with catnip and ready to use for scentwork searches.

Used articles

Once you have used the article in a search, do not return it to the storage tin. I recommend putting it in a ziplock bag or container until you can wash it. Putting it back in the tin when it is used and soggy will contaminate the tin with the smell of your dog's slobber and make the dried catnip damp which in turn will make it rot and lose its smell. Do not store the used articles in an area that you may want your dog to search as it will become contaminated with the used articles. I put mine on the kitchen windowsill where my dogs cannot reach it and it is a room that I never ask them to search. Wash the article at 60 degrees to help minimize the smell of both the catnip and eliminate the slobber. Washing will not eliminate the scent of the catnip, etc., but it will get rid of any other contamination. Don't use heavily scented washing powder as this will make the article smell of the washing powder scent, which could confuse the dog. Which scent is he looking for, the catnip or the washing powder? Scent free powder for sensitive skins or just a tiny



amount of your regular powder should do the job. It has been suggested that washing at a high temperature without using washing powder would clean and de-scent the article but as my washing machine takes an age to wash at high temperatures I haven't tried it. You can boil wash them in a basin if you only have a couple of articles to clean. Once the article is dry, re-scent it as you did before.

Finding food

If your dog prefers food over toys, no problem. My strong recommendation is to use cheese, just a value brand mild cheddar or similar. Cheese is fabulous for scentwork as you are less limited to where you can hide it than you are with a toy. You can stick cheese to walls, fences, furniture, boxes, cars (for vehicle searches), plastic, wood, the list goes on. In fact cheese will stick almost everything except cold metal. Your dog won't be eating huge quantities of cheese when searching so it shouldn't affect his weight or wellbeing. You can of course use other food, preferably something soft, smelly and sticky. Biscuits are not great for this stage of scentwork as they have a much smaller scent picture than cheese or other soft foods and are easily found and eaten without you realizing it!

STARTER SEARCHES

Starter searches should be short, straightforward and he should find something at every search. Remember to play a good game with the find, or help the dog get all the cheese out of the box. If you skimp on the reward, the search may go downhill. As the handler, your job is to gently guide him towards, not directly to, the hide when appropriate. Rather than letting him struggle or risk him becoming frustrated, guide him towards the hide and suggests he searches there, simply by moving towards it and using the hand gesture. You may also repeat 'Find it' if you think he needs that extra encouragement to keep working. When he does locate and indicate on the find, you can ask the question 'Have you got something?', stepping away as you do so ready for him to pull it out and have a game with you.

Three or four search sessions, each consisting of three or four searches, a week is perfect for most dogs though some very busy dogs may happily do more. Keep scentwork special so that whenever you want to play your dog is always keen to search, so don't over-do it.

SAFETY FIRST

Consider the safety of the area you are searching. Cables from lamps, the TV or the computer are easy for the dog to get tangled in, so don't place the find amongst them or encourage your dog to search them if you don't want to risk the dog breaking anything or getting a fright as he pulls a lamp off the table. Think also about chemicals and cleaners. These are most often found in the kitchen, bathroom and outdoor areas such as sheds and garages. Make sure they are safely out of reach or choose not to search in certain areas.

Final tips:

Make a note of where and when you hid articles to ensure you are not hiding articles in the same places all the time. It also helps to know where previous hides were in case your dog indicates on them when there is nothing (except residual scent) there.