

**DOG TRAINING
STRUGGLE?**

THERE'S A

GAME

FOR THAT

ZERO TO HERO!

**HOW TO BECOME A
GAMECHANGER**



Absolute Dogs®

Cutting edge science blended with a huge spoonful
of optimism and a great sense of humour.





THE GAMES MASTERS

Tom Mitchell and Lauren Langman are a formidable force and are the faces of Absolute Dogs. There is nothing quite like them. Their combined expertise is truly unique.

Together they founded The Absolute Dogs Training Academy, Naughty But Nice & Pro Dog Trainer. They have written and released books, DVDs and standalone online courses.

Whatever breed of dog you own, Tom and Lauren will help you realise your dog's highest potential.

THIS IS TOM

Tom Mitchell is a veterinarian, behaviourist, dog trainer and author.

Tom brings science and passion to his work. He's a standard poodle guy who loves to use his white board and gets a kick out of helping people.





THIS IS LAUREN

Lauren Langman is a dog trainer, author and world level competitor in the crazy fast-paced dog sport of agility.

She also owns and runs a highly successful dog training centre of excellence in Devon, UK.



CONCEPT TRAINERS

The good news is that all of the concepts in your dog's brain are dynamic.

They can change naturally over time and they can be actively changed. They are mouldable and you hold the key to transforming them. You do this by focusing on the individual concepts that need work.

Instead of focusing on the outcome – the behaviours that a dog presents with – concept trainers look at what they are putting into their dog's brains with a view to shaping it to enable the dog to deal with anything that arises.

So just how do you work on the concepts that your dog needs? ***You play games!***

SO WHICH CONCEPTS ARE MOST USEFUL WHEN IT COMES TO TRAINING YOUR DOG?

Well your question is about to be answered!

CONCEPTS

There are so many concepts you can train, here are some of the key concepts:

CALMNESS

- Creates a default state of calmness
- Calm dogs make great choices!
- Helps your dog to become calm after excitement
- Calmness is KING!

INDEPENDENCE

- Helps your dog to be happy and calm in their own company
- Means they can be left alone
- Great for any working, assistance support or competitive sport dog

FLEXIBILITY

- Creates confidence when the routine or environment changes
- Helps your dog 'go with the flow'

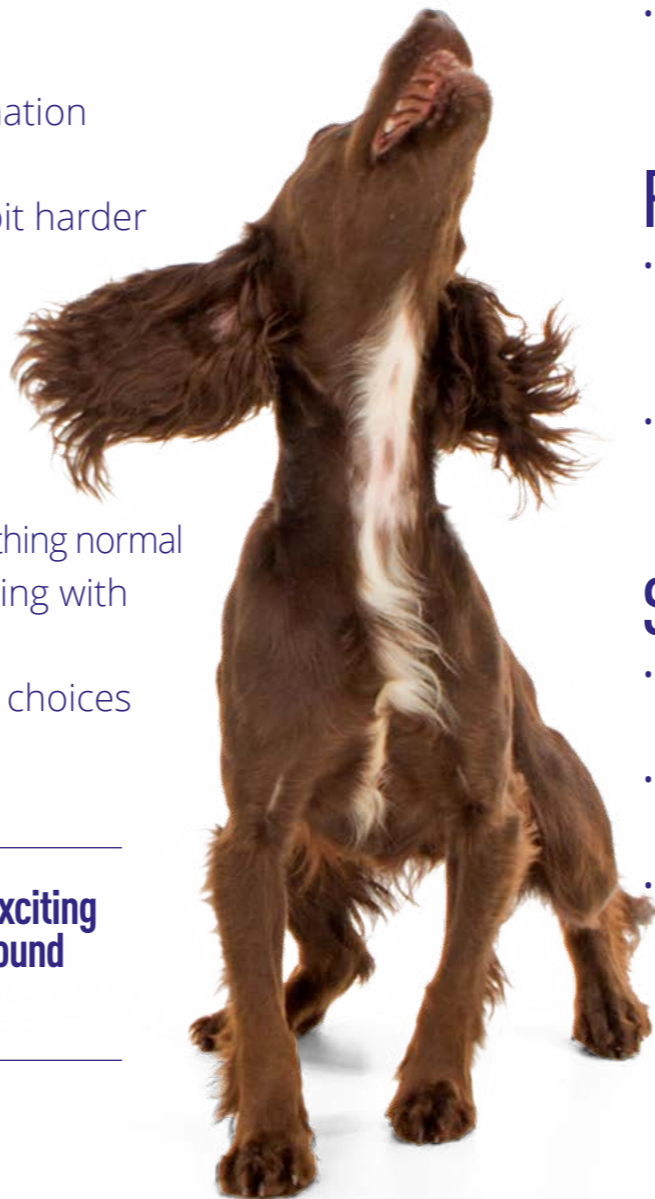
GRIT

- Builds real determination and staying power
- Will work that little bit harder and never give up

CONFIDENCE AND OPTIMISM

- Sees Novelty as something normal
- Approaches everything with a happy life attitude
- Overall makes great choices

“
Making you the most exciting
& cool thing to be around
everywhere!
”



PROXIMITY

- Creates a dog who chooses to stay close to us
- Your dog to chooses to come back to you
- Regularly checks back in with you
- Making you the most exciting & cool thing to be around everywhere!

FOCUS

- The ability to be able to listen to you even in a distracting environment!
- Develops a dog who can stay on task....stick with the job at hand

SELF CONTROL

- Can offer self-control around exciting things!
- Can listen, think and respond to you in the face of exciting distractions
- Your dog will understand the concept of 'permission' to do something they love

TRAIN FOR THE SITUATION, NOT IN THE SITUATION

It's human nature to try and problem solve to attempt to fix the problem from within it.

You get into the problem and you find a way to resolve it. But that doesn't work for your dog or the way their brain works. Concept training enables you to train FOR the situation, rather than IN the situation. This leads to real-life results as you have given your dog the necessary skills they need to cope with any situation in advance.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT GAMES TO ENHANCE THE RIGHT CONCEPT

Let's take a look at two typical training struggles. We'll delve into what concepts need enhancing and one of the games that will help to enhance those concepts.

STRUGGLE

Murphy pulls on lead and sometimes doesn't come back when called

Concepts that need enhancing:	Proximity and Focus
Game to play:	Magic Hand

HOW TO PLAY:

STEP 1: Without your dog have a handful of food in an upturned hand, maybe 5-10 pieces maximum, and drop it from your hand to the floor through your fingers with you taking control! Make sure you decide when each piece should fall and at what pace. Adjust the height to make sure that you are super comfortable without your dog!

TOP TIP: *If you can do it well without a dog then try it on the other side. Most handlers are better doing it on one side than the other! It is important you can be versatile and do this exercise on both sides!*



STEP 2: Have your dog on lead at your side. Use your 7-10 pieces of food and go to the same position that you have already practiced! Have your dog stand roughly under your hand and let food fall from the sky as your dog starts to work out what is going on! Don't worry your dog probably won't try to catch them just yet. Don't rush as your dog will need time to adjust to figure out where they are coming from!

TOP TIP: *There is no hurry at this stage. Try to wait for your dog to lift his head to re start the game. At that point let the food drop. Don't adjust the food for your dog, let your dog adjust to where the food is!*

STEP 3: Your dog is now starting to try and catch we hope - try to wait for the FOCUS up and as they do release the food from the sky. Your dog will get better and better at the focus up as you time it cleverly with the food falling from the sky! It's the best way to reward spontaneously and your dog will never know when it's coming as the hand is upturned so doesn't really give any clues!

STEP 4: As your dog is getting better and better at the game and at catching you can start to make minor adjustments with your body to help them to work out where to place themselves for future focus games on the move! Subtle and soft movements only please, nothing too big and dramatic, think more like weight shift style than big steps, keep it soft and adjust only very very slightly!

TOP TIP: *Don't try to move too far or too much before you have the subtle adjustments. These subtle adjustments are the foundation steps for success and they are FUNdamental!*

STEP 5: Take this show on the road. Try this in one new place per day, just static at first, don't add movement, static only! Try this in a good few places and then gradually start to add more and more steps in as you feel it's going well!

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 ”

STRUGGLE

Poppy gets very excited when visitors come to the house

Concepts that need enhancing:	Impulse Control and Calmness
Game to play:	Boundary Games

We've written a whole other eBook on Boundary Games! To grab your step by step guide on how to teach it go to:



So what you have all been waiting for - the step by step guidelines:

STEP 1

Reward any interaction with the bed or boundary (e.g. looking towards, stepping towards, putting a paw on, etc.) Basically SHAPING value to the bed!

STEP 2

Reward choice to go on bed with no verbal cue. You want your dog to ♥ LOVE ♥ the bed! You can't have too much love for the bed!

STEP 3

Feed lots, be generous for being on the bed - drip feed to bed and don't feed directly to the dog! You want to feed CALMNESS and you want to feed the BED! SLOW feeding. And then if you think you are feeding SLOW, get a little SLOWER again.

STEP 4

Release off with a cue (e.g. 'okay', 'break', 'free' you can decide the cue.) Throw food a second or two after the verbal release cue - whatever you have chosen.

STEP 5

Wait for your dog to make the choice to go back towards or even better hop onto the bed. Reward hugely, massively and in a big way when you dog is back on the bed to build the value - remember don't use the cue yet to get on the bed, hold fire on this one.

STEP 6

Don't forget that release cue, the release cue is VITAL to maintain criteria, so that your dog knows when to get off again! Remember you get to choose the release cue!

“ WHILE BUILDING DURATION, FIDDLE ABOUT WITH FOOD IN YOUR HANDS. IT'S A SUPER COOL THING TO DO TO BASICALLY HELP TO TEACH YOUR DOG TO DO NOTHING ”





ALL IT TAKES IS THREE MINUTES!

When we play games with our dogs, we want it to be a FUN time, NOT a long time!

Our games are designed to be played in 3-minute games! They are designed to fit into your busy lifestyle. They keep both you and your dog engaged and can happen anytime, anywhere. Both you and your dog will be left wanting more. Everyone has 3 minutes...while boiling the kettle, waiting for your toast, watching tv!

There are no rules, just games, play and a whole lot of FUN.

THE LINGO...

We use a lot of crazy lingo here. If you've been around dog training before, you may recognise these, but read through this part anyway. This isn't just any dog training. Our Game Masters have put together something truly innovative.

DITCH THE ROUTINE

Of all our games, this is for sure the most challenging for the humans. Dogs are experts at reading us. They seem to know that when you sigh before standing a walk is imminent.

Your job is to keep them guessing, and not just once, regularly, this will become lifestyle. So sigh and stand, then sit back down. Pick up your dogs lead and then put it back down again. Your dog may protest at first, but because you've ditched the bowl, you'll have a pocket of kibble and

a fun game breaks out instead at random times of the day! Set being unpredictable as a challenge for a week for you, it's hard we know, we are all creatures of habit. Sit in a different chair. Pick up your keys and set them down. Take the dog for a drive and never get out of the car. Shatter that routine to smithereens.

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DITCH THE BOWL

Don't underestimate the value your dog places on his food. We're not talking treats here, we mean his daily allotment of food be it kibble, canned, or raw. By putting his food in a bowl, you are putting tremendous value in a thing, a bowl to be precise. Wouldn't you rather that value transfer to you, as their owner?

Each day, you'll measure out his daily ration and then look for opportunities to play. Yes, play. Carry some of his food with you or distribute it around the house. You want food

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Some dogs take a few days to adapt to ditching the bowl, but it won't take as long as you might think
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in every room as you never know when opportunity to play will strike. We are always ready to catch them doing something right. Some dogs take a few days to adapt to ditching the bowl, but it won't take as long as you might think. As soon as he figures out that food means fun, it's Game On! One thing ditch the bowl doesn't mean is constant feeding. You still control when and how much your dog eats.

If you want to read more please check out our ditch the bowl eBook



AROUSAL

Imagine a seesaw. Sometimes arousal is up, other times it's down. Many dogs struggle with that tipping point. They can't seem to find the on/off switch. We can teach you to install one. It's one of the things most dog training misses.

DMT

Distraction-Mark-Treat is always played in that order, and we always have a reward at hand. DMT can stave off a reaction before it ever even gets started. It's also a handy gauge of your dog's arousal level. We find a soft mouth means the dog is not bothered by the distraction while a snap is a sign things are getting tense, or just very fast and very aroused eating. DMT begins at home without distractions. Just you, your dog, and a pocket of his dinner. What could be easier?

“

DMT can stave off a reaction before it ever even gets started

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REHEARSAL

Preventing rehearsal of things we don't want our dogs to do is key. For example, if we don't want our dogs to jump up at visitors, we could pop them in a pen or crate with a tasty filled Kong or Bone when visitors arrive. Preventing rehearsal is huge so set your dog up for success! This may mean a lot of management in the early stages but don't worry – management is training because we are limiting our dogs from rehearsing behaviours we don't want while we work on games to rehearse the behaviours we do want.

IMPULSE OR SELF CONTROL

This one is key for so many dogs. Some dogs really struggle with impulse control/self-control, they see, smell, or hear something and they are on it. Nothing gets in their way. Other dogs, seem to have great impulse control. Nothing bothers them. A squadron of squirrels could saunter by and they wouldn't twitch. Sounds great, but we like to say there's no impulse control without a pulse. Let us teach you how to engage both ends of this basic need.



BUCKET

Lots of talk about buckets here. It's our metaphor of rising stress levels. Too much stress, the bucket overflows, and BOOM—over-reaction. We teach you the science behind the bucket and help you poke a hole in the bottom.

STACKING

Triggers are impossible to avoid, but too many too close together and the bucket gets overflowed. Science has shown that it can take up to 72 hours

to allow stress hormones to return to normal after reaching threshold. Keep track of those triggers, even the little ones. This could be as simple as someone coming to the door, fireworks, a loud neighbour, a naughty cat or a new addition to the family. They can add up quickly. Once you begin to notice them, you'll learn how to avoid a reaction and deflate them.

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72 hours to allow stress hormones to return to normal after reaching threshold

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SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT ON CALMNESS

Out of all of the concepts, calmness needs a special mention, a moment in the spotlight!

Calmness is king because when it comes to solving many, many dog training struggles, calmness is where you need to begin.

Introducing the calmness triad! It's really important that you fully embrace all 3 elements of the calmness triad. Growing calmness needs to fully become part of your dog's life style. Each and every day. Take it on fully, no half measures!



The calmness triad is made up of:

1. Passive Calming Activities

Employ your dog in a calming activity where your involvement is minimal. It is their time to enjoy some enrichment. This could be things like, Scatter Feeding, Stuffed Kongs, Filled Tracheas, Dehydrated Treats, Scenting, Puzzle Feeders.

2. Calmness Protocol.

Or as we like to call it; the REWARD NOTHING Game.

Pick moments when your dog is naturally calm, catch them doing what you want and reward it! Success with this game only comes when you embrace your inner-ninja! What we mean by this is the way in which you deliver the reinforcement.

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Make it as non eventful from your part as possible. Calmly pick up a piece of your dog's food, calmly walk over to where your dog is, and calmly place it down on the bed that they are on and walk away. Be as ninja as you can possibly be!

3. Active Rest

Making sure that your dog gets enough rest is so essential to their ability to be calm. If that means popping your dog into a safe space where their choices are limited then that is the way to go. You might use a crate, a pen, a suitable boundary (remember, you need to limit choices for anything except rest) or a smaller room in the house.

It's important to build up value for the spaces that you are going to use and for the independence that your dog needs to be happy and relaxed in their area. Do this by initially keeping sessions short, staying nearby (visit often) and making the area super rewarding by providing calm feeding opportunities.



YIPPEE!

So now you have read our zero to hero guide, we have one question for you; Are you ready to become a gamechanger?

You are probably wondering what next?!

Just how can you reach even greater heights as a fully-fledged gamechanger?!

Head to **absolutedogs.me/solutions** to see what training solutions are available to you to turn your dog training struggles into strengths. The ultimate transformation awaits you and your dog!

Owning your dog will become the reason WHY you got your dog in the first place! What a phenomenal destination you are heading to!

We can't wait to get started on this incredible journey with you! Now gamechanger; go turn your training struggles into strengths!

TO THE GAME PLAYERS, THE FUN MAKERS
THE OWNERS WHO INSPIRE RATHER THAN FORCE OR DEPRIVE

THE JOY FINDERS

TO THOSE WHO WHEN FACED WITH A STRUGGLE SCREAM
THERE'S A GAME FOR THAT
WHO REACH OUT & GRAB REAL-LIFE RESULTS
& NEVER (NEVER) STOP TRANSFORMING
THROUGH GAMES

Absolute Dogs

DOG TRAINING STRUGGLE?

THERE'S A **GAME** FOR THAT



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