

OWNER RESOURCE 04 / 05

Simple Scent Games at Home

Two easy searches with a clear start, finish and time to recover

ABOUT CANINE UK

Canine UK starts with audit before assumptions. We look at the individual dog, their health, behaviour, environment and everyday life, alongside the needs and capabilities of their owner. Our approach puts safety, welfare, practical progress and owner understanding first.

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Choose one easy search. Finish safely. Allow recovery.



Canine UK photo collection. Cover image is illustrative, not a behaviour diagnosis or technique demonstration.

Simple Scent Games at Home

Two easy searches with a clear start, finish and time to recover

A short, easy search lets you observe how your dog explores, solves a small problem and recovers afterwards. Choose the activity around the dog in front of you.

Prepare first

Use one dog with an adult supervising throughout. Keep children and other animals away. Choose a familiar, clear indoor floor. Remove hazards, including loose objects, cables, medication and rubbish. Use food suitable for your dog's normal diet, allergies and health needs. Count every piece before placing it.

1. Follow a food trail

Prepare five to eight small food pieces and a visible finish reward. Let your dog see the first piece placed. Lay a short straight trail with the pieces close together. Invite your dog to follow at their own pace. Avoid pointing at every piece. Acknowledge the final find and give the finish reward.

2. Try a visible room search

For a separate easy session, place four to six pieces on open floor edges along one side of the same safe room. Let your dog watch. Give your search cue once, then observe quietly. Keep every piece visible and reachable without climbing or squeezing behind furniture.

Finish and recover

Use a clear finish cue and leave together when you can do so safely. Do not force your dog away. Only once your dog is safely away, check each location and collect uneaten food. Account for all pieces. Allow quiet recovery. Record whether your dog could finish and settle, not just find food.

Safety and support

Skip these games if your dog guards food or spaces, eats unsafe material or cannot leave a search. Stop for frantic gulping, guarding, fear, frustration, pain or unsafe movement. Do not reach in, take guarded food or force your dog away. Keep others away and seek an individual assessment before trying again.

Choose one easy search

Two separate activities. Read the preparation and safety guidance before trying either one.

One dog. Adult supervision. Safe indoor floor. Suitable food. Count every piece.

FOOD TRAIL



5 pieces shown + finish reward

5 to 8 small pieces in a short, close straight line, plus a visible finish reward. Let your dog see the first piece and follow at their own pace.

OR

VISIBLE ROOM SEARCH



4 visible pieces shown

4 to 6 visible pieces along one side of a safe room. Let your dog watch. Keep each piece reachable without climbing.

Finish safely, then recover

Do not force your dog away. Collect uneaten food only once your dog is safely away. Account for all pieces and allow quiet recovery.

When to skip or stop

Skip if your dog guards food or spaces, eats unsafe material or cannot leave a search. Stop for distress, guarding, frantic gulping, pain or unsafe movement. Do not reach in or take guarded food. See page 2 for the full safety guidance.

My scent game record

Plan one easy search. Record what you observed and keep the next step small.

Chosen game and safe search area

Food suitability and hazards checked

Food pieces placed, eaten and collected

What I observed during the search

How the search ended and recovery afterwards

Next decision: repeat, simplify or seek assessment

Need help with your own dog?

This resource is a starting point, not a substitute for an individual assessment.

A Canine UK audit helps us understand your dog, your concerns and your circumstances before recommending an appropriate pathway.

Request an audit

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canineuk.com/contact-us/