



## *Hand Targeting – More than just a Trick!*

Even Moxie, the scruffy, tuffy little urban puppy, knows that training is not only fun and entertaining but essential to her happiness with her mom Stefanie?! Training a behavior that can install an important obedience command, counter-condition a shy dog, and be shaped into tricks besides is truly a gem!

Hand-targeting refers to your dog touching or targeting your flat palm with her nose. What are the advantages to such a behavior?

First and foremost, it can offer a very reliable recall. If your dog is used to getting a very lovely treat for flying across the room and touching her nose to the palm of your hand, then you have a very strong contingency plan should you accidentally drop the leash on the street and need to get your dog to return to you.

If your dog is a robust greeter, perhaps a little too robust for the comfort of some visitors, having your dog “say hi” by touching her nose to the visitor’s hand and then return to you for a treat is a great way to redirect her energies.

Alternatively, if your dog is hand-shy, making the hand a predictor of good things is a great way to get her more comfortable with the presence of hands in her airspace. And if she’s shy around new people or visitors, she can “say hi” and then return to the comfort of your side for her treat.

Once you can lead your dog through space with your hand, you can steer your dog through a series of fairly impressive tricks, like “jump,” “tippy-toes,” and “spin.”



*Moxie targets*

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### *Introductory Training Offer*

Get an extra 30 minutes of training when you purchase a 4-session training package.

(Offer details based on location.)

Call **WOOF GANG** at **646.345.5116** to make an appointment.

### *Tips about Tricks*

Particularly with large breed dogs, tricks are a great way to make people more comfortable in their presence. Who can be scared of a dog who waves goodbye or plays dead on command?! In addition, certain tricks can actually help calm an anxious dog or make her more playful at a moment of stress.

**WOOF GANG** can teach you some real crowd-pleasers that you’ll enjoy as much as your dog will!

### *About the Trainer*

Dog trainer **LAURA GARBER**, CPDT-KA, is a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and is certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), the first national certification for dog trainers.

Laura has authored articles about dogs and dog behavior in dog-centric magazines and on-line resources.

Laura believes strongly in strengthening the bond between human and companion animal. For this reason, she regards training as an exercise in building relationship rather than obedience. Such an approach promises greater understanding and symbiosis within our family packs.

Log on to [www.myWoofGang.com](http://www.myWoofGang.com).

### *Give your Dog a Job!*

Nowadays it’s rare that we ask our house dogs to do the work for which they were intended, even as those traits still surface, often to our dismay. By tapping into the natural traits of your dog, channeling them in positive, creative games and tasks, you can discourage some of the more troublesome aspects of their behavior.

Let **WOOF GANG** teach you fun jobs for your dog that will work her mentally as well as physically!

## Hand Targeting (cont.)

### Installing the Command

For a jumpstart, rub your pup's favorite treat on the palm of your hand, just to leave a bit of its aroma there. Now put your flat palm right next to one side of her nose. Invariably, out of curiosity, she will turn her head to sniff your hand. At the very instant that her nose touches your hand, say "yes!" or "good!" in a happy voice and give her a little piece of treat from the other hand. Repeat this, not demanding any distance, but just putting your hand right next to her nose.

At some point, something will click for your dog. You'll notice that she starts to turn intentionally and firmly plant her nose on your palm. Then you know she's made the connection – touching the hand earns her a treat. At this point, up the ante a bit. Place your hand a foot away from her, making her move to reach it. Then start moving your hand around, and moving yourself about the room.

When you have a reliable behavior, meaning that you would just about bet your life that, if you put your hand out, your dog would touch it, it's time to introduce a verbal command like "touch." Give the command, then put out your hand. You want the word "touch" to become the predictor that a hand will be offered.

### Making It Fun

Now, with the help of a training partner, each of you stocked with the same treats, have the dog tag back and forth between you as you both move about. It becomes a very fun game – it will firmly install the touch behavior and your dog will enjoy the active aspect of this game!

### Tricks for Treats

**Say Hi:** Once your dog is consistently touching her nose to your open palm, have another person place their open palm at your side. You give the verbal cue "say hi," and then you mark the behavior

with a "yes!" or "good!" as soon as the touch happens. Then offer her a treat. Gradually have your training partner move farther away from you. You give the command "say hi," which means to your dog to look around for a hand to touch, verbally mark the behavior as she touches your partner's hand, and then you offer the treat.

Now both you and your training partner can stock up on treats, stand a few feet apart, and send the dog back and forth between you. Each handler sends the dog to the other's hand by saying "say hi," then marking and treating.



Moxie does tippy-toes

**Tippy-Toes:** Hold your open palm steadily above your dog's head, at a height which she can touch by standing on her hind legs. If you'd like, you can precede the hand prompt with the verbal cue "tippy toes."

**Spin:** With your dog in front of you, hold your open palm at your dog's nose height. Lead her around in a tight circle. You can precede the hand prompt with the verbal cue "spin."

For this article in its entirety, log on to [www.myWoofGang.com](http://www.myWoofGang.com).



## Ask Woofie...

**WOOFIE**, my Welsh Terrier Moxie is such an active pup! What are some ways that I can expend her energy?  
Stefanie

**Hiya, Stefanie!** As with any dog, finding breed-specific games can be a great way to tire them out while also giving them the joy of practicing the jobs they were bred to do!

Herding dogs were bred to herd flocks of sheep, so the sport of sheep herding can be great fun for them! For less expensive alternatives, herding behavior can be directed to other outlets, such as the waves at the beach. Dogs bred for pulling large loads, like Newfies and huskies, may enjoy the sport of cart pulling. Scent hounds were bred to follow a scent, so getting involved in the sports of tracking and nose work can satisfy their desires. Retrievers enjoy swimming and a brisk game of retrieve.

Terriers like Moxie were bred to hunt and chase game such as badger, fox and otter, so finding chase games for her would be great. I bet she'd love the sport of lure coursing! You can simply buy a lure course whip from a tack shop, attach a squeaky toy to the end of it and take Moxie out into a large fenced-in area for some fun! These breeds also enjoy digging so putting a sandbox in your yard and teaching Moxie to dig for treasure will no doubt please her greatly!

Happy sporting! **WOOFIE**



Agave is a very sweet, gentle, loving girl who wants nothing more than a belly rub and some love. She also enjoys the company of other dogs. If you're looking for a sweet, patient canine life-mate, visit Agave at the Liberty Humane Society.