



Training Plan for Roger

Goal: To increase engagement and focus on you using play, improve leash manners, and manage interactions with other dogs.

1. Core Philosophy: Play is King

The biggest takeaway is that **play is Roger's highest value reward**—better than food because it is interactive. You are not just a provider of resources; you are a provider of excitement, challenge, and cooperation.

- **The Mindset:** Play must be nurtured. It is an intellectual curiosity for dogs.
- **The Rule:** For now, **forget about play rules**. Focus entirely on motivation. We want his drive for play to blossom even more!
- **The Tool:** Tug toys, balls, especially balls on a rope. [Here is a great resource for tug toys.](#)

2. Daily Exercises & Homework

A. "The Best Thing at the Party" (Walking Strategy)

- **The Setup:** Walk Roger and Travis separately, but still on the same walk. 1 dog per person. If you are out together, you must be working independently with your respective dog.

- **The Goal:** Prevent the dogs from focusing on each other or the environment. We want them to focus on you, for at least a part of the time.
- **The Action:** * Bring a tug toy and high-value treats.
 - Engage Roger constantly. Be more exciting than the environment.
 - Do not let the walk be passive; make it "time together" involving interaction.

B. Leash Pressure Training

- **Objective:** Teach Roger to yield to the feeling of the leash without a verbal command or lure.
- **Location:** Inside the house, very low distraction.
- **Equipment:** Flat collar or Starmark collar.
- **The Steps:**
 1. Stand with Roger on a leash.
 2. Apply **slow, steady pressure** on the leash in a specific direction (do not jerk).
 3. Wait for him to "break" or move toward that direction.
 4. **Immediately** mark with "Yes!"
 5. Move briskly 3-4 steps in that direction to show him "that was the right move."
 6. Reward with a treat.

3. Equipment & Tools

- **Collar:** Continue using the Starmark collar as it was effective and Roger did not seem bothered at all. If he sensitizes to the collar, please reach out to me.
- **Rewards:** Tug toys (essential) and treats.
- **Leash:** Standard leash for pressure work.

4. Medical & Health Action Items

Veterinary Visit:

- **Arthritis Baseline:** Get a check-up/baseline for Roger's joints/arthritis.

- **Neutering Consultation:** Discuss the process for neutering Roger and Travis.
- **Why this matters:** Being unneutered creates a "hand tied behind your back" situation regarding behavior and interactions with other male dogs.

5. Management Strategy ("Defensive Driving")

Since Roger is reactive or focused on other dogs, you must be his advocate.

- **Scan the Environment:** constantly look for other dogs, especially those giving "hard stares" or trying to instigate.
- **Avoid Scuffles:** Do not give other dogs the opportunity to engage.
- **Evasive Maneuvers:** If you see a potential trigger, get out of the situation immediately using your play/engagement tools to redirect Roger. It will also be good to teach Roger "Let's go!" [Here is a great video.](#)

6. Next Steps

- Focus on these protocols for now.
- **Future Goal:** Once individual handling improves, try walking both dogs together. I would be happy to help you with this and could even bring one of my own dogs to create different levels of challenge in terms of distractions.