



## Find a Toy!

### A great behavior to reduce rowdy greetings and excitement barking

Did you know that many dogs don't jump or bark when they have a toy in their mouths? The act of getting a toy and bringing it to a person can give an energetic and enthusiastic dog an outlet for their excited energy when saying hi and when people come to the door.

### How do you train it?

1. Start with a toy your dog loves to retrieve or play with—like a stuffed toy or a ball.
2. Stand near the door, then toss the toy for your dog to go and get. Just before the toss, say: Find it! When your dog gets the toy and brings it back, play an enthusiastic game with your pup and the toy.
3. Once your dog is loving this stage, start putting the toy (instead of tossing it) in plain sight. Stand by the door and encourage your dog to “find it.” You can run up to the toy together and back to the door to play.
4. Gradually increase your criteria by first sending your dog for the toy, then moving the toy to different parts of the house. Looking for the toy is part of the fun, but be sure to make the find games easy enough that your dog stays excited and is having fun.
5. Once your dog is happily running around the house looking for the toy, you can add in a doorbell or knock just before the cue: Ding-Dong, “find it,” and play. Soon your dog will start looking for the toy when the doorbell rings.

Won't it be fun to see the expressions on people's faces when your dog comes running to the door with a stuffed toy!