

Steps in teaching the teeter for large dogs by Barb VanEseltine

Comfortable on a board

Using a travel board or removable teeter board, teach your dog to walk along it, turn on it, run from one end to the other and do 2o2o. Use a clicker, lots and lots of small treats.

Raise the board off the ground by suspending on a some bricks or boards – just raise a few inches. Repeat all exercises from the board on the ground.

Comfortable with movement under foot

Build or buy a booja board*. It can be a pretty large board over a smallish ball. Go very, very slowly. Click for sniffing it; touching with nose, touching with paw, touching with 2 paws, Work up to playing on the board (tug is good); if no tug, dog/puppy should happily get on board and do “tricks” (sit, down, beg). Eventually teach to run across and do 2o2o. Do NOT move to running across before dog is comfortable staying on it.

Running on suspended board

Suspend the teeter board between two 24” tables. Teach the dog to run from one table to the other, doing 2o2o on the second table. Reward for quick performance.

Bang-it Game

Using a jump, prop the weighted end of the teeter up in the air so that the other end is an inch off the ground. Click and treat (a lot) until your dog will pounce on the board from the front, banging it to the ground. If you think you are going to have a sound sensitivity issue, start this on carpet, then move to a harder surface and eventually put a cookie sheet under it. Stay in front and at one inch until the performance is great.

Move to the side, so that you are closest to the board and facing the down end. Have your dog come from behind you and jump on the board. When it hits the ground, he should move into the 2o2o position. This is a supposed to be done as a high-drive game: restraint your dog on his flat buckle collar and release him to jump into position. Repeat from both sides. Deliver your food so that he is facing forward, not looking back at you. Very gradually raise the lower end until is it at least elbow height on your dog (higher if this game revs him up).

This is a “maintenance game” – you can (and should) play it for your dog’s entire career to reinforce the 2o2o on the teeter.

Running down the teeter

Prop the weighted end of the teeter on a 24” table. Start with the lower end on the ground (the table will be near the middle of the board). Teach your dog to run down the teeter to the 2o2o position. Very gradually move the table back, raising the down end. Final part is when the board is level and the dog runs the entire length, with the board dropping the full 24” to the ground.

Running the full, adjustable teeter

Adjust the teeter until it is almost flat (up and down drop of only a couple of inches). Restrain your dog on his collar and then release and race him to the 2o2o position at the end. Party and treats. Repeat running on both sides. Repeat until you can send your dog, run on both sides and call your dog.

Raise the teeter in very small increments. Stay at each height until your dog is quick and confident.

Summary

Do not rush through this; use lots of treats and a clicker; have big parties.

*Booja Board

Also called a Wobble Board. Mount a hard ball underneath a sheet of plywood. Max 200 sells one which is 36” in diameter and is mounted on a 3” hard rubber ball. Other sizes can be used. They can be made by attaching a frame underneath the plywood and using a hard ball (Jolly balls work). Paint the top with non-skid paint.