

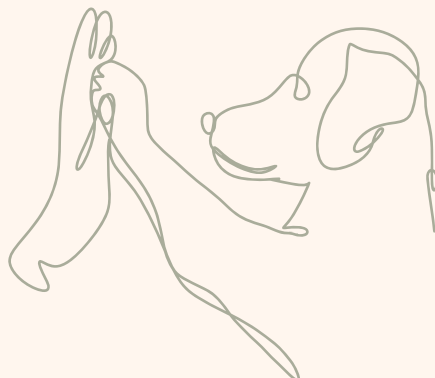


Besti Vinur Mannsins  
Nutrition & Training

# Your little **REWARD**

# **HANDBOOK**

**HOW TO USE REWARDS SUCCESSFULLY**



[www.bvm.is](http://www.bvm.is)

# Hello, **I'M DOREEN**



I am the founder of **Besti Vinur Mannsins**, based in beautiful Iceland. This handsome young man in the picture is my dog **Flóki**.

With this handbook I want to **help you** understand what makes a valuable reward and how to find the one(s) that truly motivate your dog.

# WHY THIS HANDBOOK?

*Rewards are everything!*

Rewards can **make or break** your dog training!

Each of them has a **certain value** to your dog. If the value matches the task, wonderful! If not, you will deal with a lack of motivation or over-stimulation. Both make learning harder or impossible.

Also, rewards have **big competition**: Other dogs, awesome smells or other things around pull for your dog's attention! So, **your reward has to be the most exciting** option around.

Figuring out what your dog sees as a valuable reward is key - you just have to observe!

**There's a whole world of rewards!** Let's begin!

# REWARD TYPES

1.

## TREATS

Treats are the easiest way to reward your dog. They keep most dogs happy and focused (unless yours is a true treat maniac).

### ► DO'S:

- Go for the **really good stuff** – dogs love tasty, smelly and moist treats! Meaty treats fulfill the criteria.
- Cut them into **small pieces** (about your pinky-nail size) – easier to chew.

### ► DON'TS:

- Skip dry or oversized pet-store-treats. They're rarely motivating and often crumble, disrupting training.

# IDEAS

- ▶ Meat chunks (raw, fried, cooked, oven baked)
- ▶ Lifrarpylsa
- ▶ Blóðmör
- ▶ Cheeses (low in lactose, e.g. parmesan, cheddar and no moldy cheeses)
- ▶ Sausages/hot dogs or similar
- ▶ Beef jerky
- ▶ Cooked ham & bacon  
(small quantities due to salt)
- ▶ Roast beef
- ▶ Oven dried chicken, liver etc.
- ▶ Self-made treats
- ▶ Dog Cookies from Sweet Aurora  
(Bergstaðastræti 14)



# GET CREATIVE

Treats can be delivered in manyfold ways - some might be more, some less **fun for your dog**.

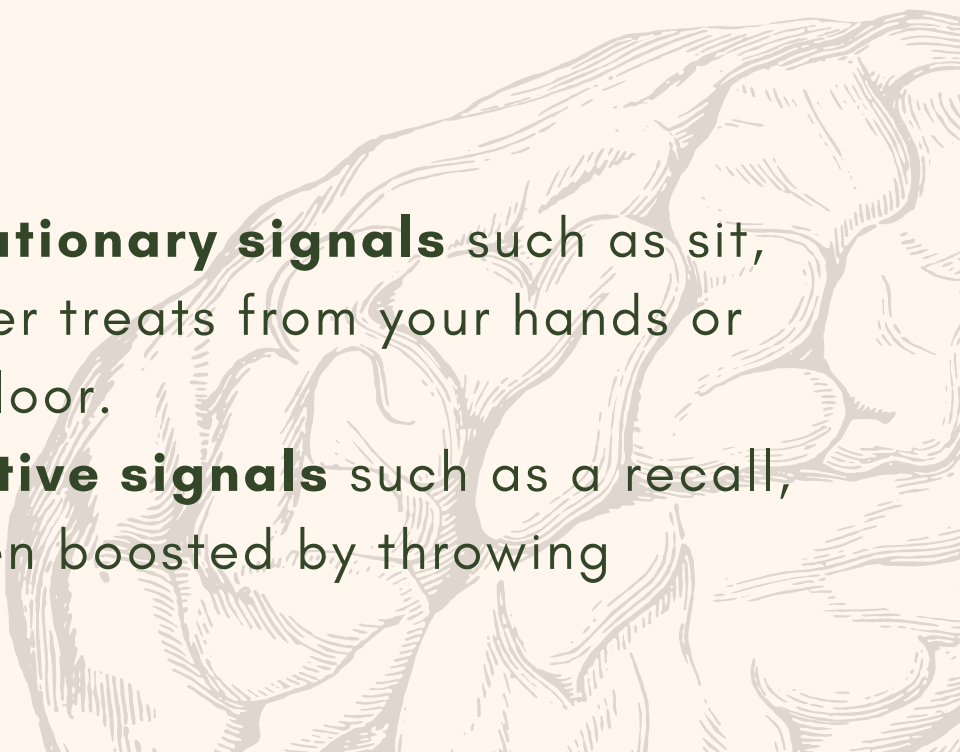
Try it out!

- ▶ From your hand (switch left & right)
- ▶ Throw them up in the air, so your dog needs to jump
- ▶ Lay them on the floor - closer or further away
- ▶ Throw them on the floor - more or less speed and more or less far away
- ▶ **Optional:** Food dispenser

## TIP

When training **stationary signals** such as sit, it is best to deliver treats from your hands or lay them on the floor.

When training **active signals** such as a recall, motivation is often boosted by throwing treats.



## 2.

## ACTIVITIES

Activities are a great way to get “slow” or not-so-food-driven dogs motivated! Plus, they are wonderful tools to bond with your dog, because you are doing fun stuff together!

**Good to know:** Some dogs need a little time & practice to learn how to enjoy new activities.

### ► **DO'S:**

- Try lots of different activities! Be as creative as you can – mix it up and see what your dog truly loves!

### ► **DON'TS:**

- Don't get your dog too hyped up. There's a sweet spot between motivated and overstimulated. Overly excited dogs can lose focus and learning becomes harder, which makes training tough!

# IDEAS

- ▶ Hide & seek (treats, toys, oneself)
- ▶ Encourage sniffing: Sniffing trail with a big reward at the end, or simply let them explore.
- ▶ Playing tug
- ▶ Scuffle
- ▶ Frisbee/ball games (throw towards your dog)\*
- ▶ Flirt pole: A pole with a toy attached to a string, mimicking prey to chase \*
- ▶ Fetch/retrieving games
- ▶ Chasing/ being chased
- ▶ Water games (swimming, water hose etc.)
- ▶ Digging (sand, in a forest etc.)
- ▶ Car rides
- ▶ Obstacle courses

**\*Do not do this excessively - overdoing these games is unhealthy for your dog's mind and body!**



# 3.

## SOCIAL REWARDS

Some dogs just loooove social rewards! They release oxytocin, the "feel-good" hormone that helps with **bonding and happiness**. You can use social rewards in many ways: To keep things calm or to motivate your dog!

### ► DO'S:

- Pay attention to what your dog enjoys. Figure out if they love cuddles, praise or some other type of social interaction!

### ► DON'TS:

- Don't force your dog to accept social rewards like cuddles, especially if they are not into it. Some dogs only enjoy affection in certain settings (e.g. at home, but not outside). Respect their boundaries!

# IDEAS

- ▶ Cuddling/snuggling
- ▶ Stroking (try soft, slow, stronger, faster...)
- ▶ Massage (same as stroking)
- ▶ Jumping into your arms
- ▶ Verbal praise (here, try everything from a high-pitched voice for motivation to a calmer praise to keep your dog going with what it is doing)
- ▶ Grooming
- ▶ Just being with you or some other person or animal that your dog likes
- ▶ Meeting doggy friends



# FIND THE RIGHT ONES

Choosing the right rewards takes a few easy steps:

1. Get creative.
2. Test your ideas.
3. Observe your dog's response.
4. Use each reward in the right context.

Start brainstorming ideas from all categories - treats, activities, and social rewards .

Then test them in different situations:

- in **calm moments**, e.g. a “sit” at home
- in more **challenging moments**, e.g. a “sit” around other dogs

# FIND THE RIGHT ONES

**Rule of thumb:** The harder the task, the higher the reward's value!

If you're calling your dog away from another dog, that reward has to be really worth it!

**Remember:** Your dog needs to *want* the reward more than what's going on around them.

My **worksheets** at the end of this file can help you create a top-10-rewards-list for your dog!

# Couple of last words

- Always make training a fun experience for your dog and remember to smile at your dog. You will become their hero!
- Choose rewards that are healthy and safe for your dog – in case of doubt, consult a professional.
- Don't train when you're in a bad mood! Your dog will pick up on it.
- End each training on a positive note, so your dog can't wait to do it again!

**If you have any questions about training or nutrition, just get in touch with me!**



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Warm wishes, Doreen

# REWARD BRAINSTORMING

**Reward**

**My Dog's Rating**  
(1 = refused, 5 = best ever)




**Try out different reward ideas & rate them.**  
**Remember: Your dog decides what is rewarding for him, not you ;)**

# MY DOG'S TOP 10



No.	Reward	Use in this situation
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

High-value-rewards should be used in challenging/new/distracting situations.



**HOT TIP: Combine the best 2-3 rewards for RECALL ONLY!**

# DISCLAIMER

The information in this handbook is intentionally simplified to ensure easy understanding. It does not cover all aspects of dog training.

Adjustments may be necessary for puppies, old dogs, dogs with health and/or behavioural issues.

The listed ideas are intended for healthy, adult dogs.

Always consult a qualified dog trainer in case of doubt or to get advice tailored to your dog.