



SWAP NOT STEAL

When our dogs take something, they should not have, it is easy to panic and try to snatch or **steal** the item back.

This is actually counter intuitive. By snatching items off our dogs, we teach them the item is actually something high value, something they want! That can cause them to be more protective in the future and lead to issues with resource guarding.

If we get up and chase them round the house to get the slipper back that they have stolen, what we are actually doing is teaching them that by stealing things we will run around after them – a great game for all pups! As this is fun, and gets them your attention and interaction, they are then more



likely to **steal** things in the future.

Sound Familiar?



Instead, the best thing to do when your dog takes something they should not have, is to get something of high value – a treat if one is nearby, or a toy. Make the thing you have the most exciting thing in the world. For a toy, wiggle it around on the floor, put on your best squeaky dog voice and proclaim “oh my! What have I got!?”

You may even want to pretend to eat the high value treat!

Dogs are naturally inquisitive; they will wonder why what you have is so interesting and come over to see what you have.

At this point, place the exciting treat on the floor near them. When they go to eat it, they should naturally open their mouth and the item they previously stole will drop out. Hey presto! You have it back, and without having to have run laps of the garden!

Doing a **swap** like this, is always worth while when you need to take something off your dog – then you are associated with exciting treats and toys, rather than the evil person who ruins their fun when they approach!

Think of it this way, if you were eating a pizza in a restaurant and a total stranger came up and took a slice then walked away, the next time they came over you'd be anxious and watching out for them **stealing** your pizza!

If however they came over and offered you a free pudding off the menu, or £10 for the slice of pizza, you'd probably be much more likely to give up the slice of pizza and be happier the next time you saw them!

If you are having this problem I would also recommend looking at the “**Leave it**” hand out.

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