

One of the Most Endearing Ways Your Dog Shows You His Trust

There are at least seven reasons why dogs do this, with trust being just one of them. Dog trainers have other opinions as to why it happens. No matter the reason your pet may do it, it's entertaining and heartwarming to watch.

Reviewed by [Dr. Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Some dog trainers believe dogs may present you with a favorite toy as a way to please you — the leader of their social unit
- A dog may race to grab a toy because he's got so much energy and excitement, and he needs to expend it somewhere
- One of the simplest reasons why your dog brings you a toy is because he wants you to interact with him, play or attract your attention
- When your dog brings you a toy, he's revealing his trust in you
- If your dog drops a toy at your feet, consider it a compliment and reward your dog with a smile, a scratch, and a game or two

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One of the most endearing parts of pet ownership is coming home to your dog, who probably waits to greet you at the door. Along with a wagging tail and smile, some dogs also come ready with a toy in their mouth. Carrying around a favorite toy is a pastime many dogs enjoy — for comfort, entertainment or to satisfy their drive for prey — but if your dog brings his toy directly to you, it could be for another reason entirely.

Some dog trainers believe dogs may present you with a favorite toy as a way to please you — the leader of their social unit. Ages ago, dogs may have offered food or prey to their leaders as an offering of sorts, and your domestic canine buddy may retain some of this primal instinct to offer his toy to you.¹

Your positive reaction and petting only serves to reinforce the behavior, which is why your dog may present you with a toy virtually every time you come in the front door. Why else might your dog bring you his toys?

Top Reasons Dogs Bring You Their Toys

- **They're excited** — Your arrival is an exciting time for your dog, especially if you've been gone for a few hours. He may race to grab a toy because he has so much energy and excitement, and he needs to expend it somewhere.

Chewing a toy is a good outlet for that energy. In fact, if your dog tends to exhibit unwanted behaviors to

greet you, such as jumping, barking, or licking, offering a toy may distract your dog with an appropriate object to lick and chew.² Soon, he may learn to pick up a toy when he hears you coming, stopping the problem entirely.

- **You taught them to** — When you see your dog, do you reach for a toy to start a game of fetch or tug-of-war? This may have become a routine your dog now expects, so he brings the toy to you to get the game started.
- **They're proud of their toys** — Some dogs may arrive with a toy in their mouth and a playful grin, but pull away if you try to grab it. Your dog could be trying to show off his toy or enjoy the game of keep-away that ensues.
- **They want to play** — One of the simplest reasons why your dog brings you a toy is because he wants you to interact with him, play or attract your attention. When you oblige, you're confirming that this is a great way to get the attention and playtime he craves.
- **They trust you** — When your dog brings you a toy, he's revealing his trust in you. If he drops it at your feet, consider it a compliment and reward your dog with a smile, a scratch, and a game or two.
- **They love you** — Your dog's toys may be his most prized possessions. When he offers them to you as the head of his social unit, it's a sign of affection that reveals his love for you.
- **It's comforting** — For some dogs, carrying around a toy is like carrying a security blanket. If your dog is one of those who adores having a toy in his mouth, it may be coincidence that when you walk in the room, and he runs over, he just so happens to have a toy in his mouth too. While herding dogs and retrievers are most known for their love of carrying around toys, any breed may do it.

Why Some Dogs Hoard Toys

An extension of bringing their owners toys is another peculiar behavior: toy hoarding. This again traces back to your dog's ancestors, who may have hoarded food by burying it in order to come back and eat it if they couldn't find a meal. Some dogs continue this behavior in the modern day by hiding toys between couch cushions or in laundry baskets (some dogs may also hide away treats, socks or other items they find around your home). As noted by the American Kennel Club:³

“Hoarding behavior in dogs is an instinctive behavior that originated during the time when their ancestors did not have regular meals appear magically, at least twice a day. They were lucky if they ate every few days, and if there was a jackpot of more food than could be eaten at once, these dog ancestors would sometimes take some food and bury it in a safe place for later.”

If your dog hoards toys here and there, there's no need to worry, but if the behavior turns obsessive or he starts to aggressively guard his stash, you'll need to intervene. You may be able to curb the behavior just by putting out one or two toys at a time. You can also consult with a veterinary behaviorist to help you determine what's causing your pet's behavior and how best to handle it.

As far as bringing you toys is concerned, however, this is a natural behavior that many dogs — and their owners — enjoy, and there's no need to stop it.

Sources and References

¹ Patch February 17, 2011

² [PetMD December 3, 2025](#)

³ [American Kennel Club January 19, 2019](#)
