

Lilypads (a Leslie McDevitt Control Unleashed game)

Objective: Dog moves from mat to mat.

Why:

This a great game to help a dog move through space and work on confidence with distance behaviors. Obviously, your dog should be fluent at going to his mat before using this game. You can play this game either with a cue or just using the mats and your body position as a context cue (basically “offered”). It functions either way for our purposes.

This is a fun game to move a dog through space leapfrog-style. For example, Nai’a worries a lot about certain kinds of floors, and if there is linoleum to cross before getting to the matted training area, I can place her mats out so she moves from one mat to the next to get across the space without feeling pushed or anxious (or at least a lot less anxious).

I usually play this game with 2 mats, but if you have more mats handy... go for it.

To train this behavior:

1. Starting with the mats close together, stand near one mat and reinforce.
2. Move to the next mat and wait for the dog to target it and reinforce there.
3. Move back to the original mat. Reinforce when the dog targets that one.
4. Repeat going from mat to mat with a rhythm. When the dog is anticipating going to the next mat, even before you have moved, you know he feels good about it.
5. You can vary this by increasing the distance between mats.

<https://youtu.be/ScB65j3uwLY>