

Nose Work 101

Are looking for a new activity to spend time with your Russian Toy, which uses your dog's natural talents and is entertaining and stimulating? If so, nose work, or canine scent training may be just for you! Nose work is a unique dog sport that is an accessible alternative to dog sports like agility and obedience. The best thing is, virtually any dog, regardless of age, breed, or size, can do nose work training at home!

Canine scent training, or nose work, is a dog sport that allows a dog to use their amazing noses to detect different scents in different scenarios. In a nutshell, it teaches dogs to detect various odors in the form of essential oils, and then indicate to you that they have detected the smell. Nose work can be done just for fun, but it is also a competitive sport. Associations like the American Kennel Club (AKC), the United Kennel Club (UKC), the National Association of Canine Scent Work (NACSW), the United States Canine Scent Sports (USCSS), and now most recently the Australian Shepherd Club of America (ASCA), all offer Nose/Scent Work trials.

I love nose work! I spend a lot of time and money doing it, and for good reasons! A lot of my dogs have gone through training for nose work, although not all of them are competing or have started competing yet. I also have put several through training that will never compete. It is a particularly valuable tool for building confidence and for socializing in my dogs. Currently I have two dogs who have competed their Scent Work Master (SWM) level title in AKC and are competing at the Detective level now. One is an All-American Pom mix named Willie and the other is my Russian Toy Tino (CH Forevr Torilan Valentino Iz Pinnacle CM FDC CAA FCAT2 SWM SHDM RATN CGCA CGCU). I have two other Russian Toys who are competing in Advanced level nose work with AKC, Chevy (GCH CH Pinnacle's Heartbeat of America SWN SHDN) and Cinnamon (GCH CH Florida Sunshine Alfa Romeo BCAT SWN SHDN). What I haven't listed are the titles these dogs have earned in UKC and NACSW, also.

Below I am going to list 5 reasons why nose work is good for dogs, but before I do that, I want to state how awesome it is for PEOPLE! I have known so many people who can't do other dog sports anymore because of their own disabilities. I am one of those people! I love agility but can't do it anymore. But I can do nose work with my dog! And my dog finds nose work much more enjoyable than obedience! have seen people in wheelchairs and walkers doing nose work. Folks who can't run anymore or have physical limitations will enjoy the adaptability of showing in nose work with their dogs. It is still challenging and there is a need to develop skills and a working relationship with your dog, but you can do that despite your own physical limitations!

5 Reasons Why Nose Work Training Is Good for Dogs

Have you ever noticed that sniffing just may be the most favorite pastime of your dog? It is one of the most important things you can let them do on walks, in your yard, and in your home. So here are five reasons why nose work is just the thing for you and your Russian Toy to do together.

1. It's Great Canine Enrichment

It's a game they were born to be great at! A dog discovers and understands the world by way of their nose. Have you noticed they smell every mailbox on their walks? They inhale the scent of the treats stuffed into those Kongs? Starting in the neonate period, using their nose engages their mind in a very stimulating and enriching way. Learning to recognize and find new smells gives your dog a unique and super rewarding challenge.

2. It Builds Your Relationship with Your Dog

Taking part in nose work with your canine BFF is an excellent way to grow your relationship, learning alongside each other in a positive way. When your dog gets to take part in an activity that encourages them to be a dog, and you reinforce them for it, there is nothing better for confidence and trust building. Plus, by understanding what your dog wants to smell, or doesn't, and when or where they want to smell, you can gain a better understanding of their emotional well-being.

3. Your Dog Feels Happy and Confident

Your dog wants to smell – they love to smell. In nose work, you are reinforcing them on top of them reinforcing themselves! It is a fun, engaging time with you! It doesn't require your dog to be an obedience champion. Instead, it encourages your pup to make their own choices, achieving automatic reinforcement. This in turn builds your dog's critical thinking skills, patience, and confidence.

4. It's Easy to Begin and Easy on the Wallet

It doesn't take much to get started in this fun activity. Initially, you don't even need any scent work equipment. You just need your dog, something to smell, and boom, done! You can set up scents in your home or in your backyard. Grab some treats or your dog's delicious dinner and go for it. Of all the ways to enrich your dog's life, nose work is one of the simplest and cheapest to start.

Of course, as your dog gets better and better at discovering all the amazing scents you leave for them to find, you can invest in nose work kits or take classes dedicated to building the skill.

5. Any Dog Can Do It

All dogs love to use their exceptional snouts, so nose work is for any dog, of any age, and of any breed. Your canine pal doesn't have to possess any other quality other than just loving to follow their nose. But of course, there are some dogs that might find this particular sport to be THE.BEST.THING.EVER.

I have seen dogs that are blind, deaf, have amputations, in wheel carts due to paralysis, etc., compete. Nearly ANY dog can compete in Nose Work!

Now that you have heard some facts about nose work, I hope I have piqued your interest, and you will investigate it more for you and your Russian Toy friend. It truly is one of the best ways to have fun with your dog!