

What is Treibball?: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBJ9DVp9dyM>  
**Steps to teaching Treibball**

(As seen in this video: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFpH\\_WLC4qs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFpH_WLC4qs))

This new sport involves 8 large balls, two goal posts and your dog (& you). Dogs are only allowed to move the balls with their nose or body (no feet or teeth). The balls should be at least shoulder or head high to the dog.

Treibball rules:

The playing field is the size of half a soccer ball field (55 yards/165 feet) and a regular goal width (8 yards/24 feet wide) but it could also be a hobby sized goal (smaller). At the start, the eight colored gym balls are arranged in a triangle shape (similar to billiard). The dog's task is to push the balls into the goal as fast as possible. To make it more challenging, the dog has to drive the balls in a given sequence. For example, first the blue, then the red, etc. are to be driven into the goal. The handler may only move within a given radius around the goal and can direct his dog with whistles and commands from there. Penalty time is due for yelling at the dog or otherwise putting pressure on the dog. Adding narrow passes/bottle necks and water ditches add degrees of difficulty to the task "but that is for the already advanced. What matters at the beginning is that the dog learns how to push the ball to the right, left, forward, and backward." Dog that gets all the balls into the goal with the fastest time wins.

Teach each skill separately, then add them together...

1. **Teach a nose target to your hand** – To get a stronger push, teach the dog to target on a door and close it. This also teaches them that they can make things move with their nose. This is a very important step if your dog tends to bite the ball or paw at it. You can add a small piece of tape to teach the dog to touch only the tape (this allows you to direct the dog where to touch).
2. **Add cue-** When the dog is consistently pushing the door with enough force to close it, add the cue “push” (or the cue of your choice to mean push it). Make sure your dog is NOT using his/her paw or teeth at all before you add the cue. If needed, practice with other objects that move (knock over a book), or use multiple doors (cabinets, drawers, doors, etc.) to get the dog to generalize the “push” behavior without any paw action.
3. **Teach “go around”** – You can work on this new skill while you are working on steps 1 and 2. Use any stationary object (Chair, ottoman, stool, vacuum cleaner, etc.) and teach the dog to circle it. Be sure to work on getting the dog to go around it from both sides (both directions). This doesn't need to get put on cue. You may be able to skip this step and go directly to step 4.
4. **Teach a half-circle of an object** – Since you want the dog to go to the far side and start pushing, you'll need to stop using the “go around” signal and teach the dog that you only want them to go to the back side and stop. If your dog has a “wait” or “stop” cue, you can use that as they circle. Or you can start very close to the object and you can click when the dog is halfway around and then reward at the halfway point (even if the dog has to come back to that point at first). After enough repetition, the dog will learn to just go halfway and wait for the reward to get delivered. You want the dog to reach the half-way

point and turn to face you. It's helpful if this behavior (go out to the object and position it between you and me) is put on cue so you can use it later with the ball. You could call it "far side" or whatever cue you wish. The first half of this video is a good example of where to deliver the reward. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec9U\\_Kq7ysQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec9U_Kq7ysQ) By teaching this with wide objects that are not the ball (Chair, ottoman, stool, vacuum cleaner, etc.), you can get the behavior generalized before you introduce the ball.

**5. Add the "push" behavior to the ball** – You'll brace the ball between your legs and click only for nose pushes. Be sure dog is pushing on the side of the ball that is farthest from you (not the sides).

- a. At first, any nose contact gets clicked.
- b. Then click for any touch that was stronger than the last few.
- c. Then click for low pushes (you can help the dog with this by adding a piece of tape on the ball if you used the tape in step 1).

**6. Roll the ball** – Hold the ball a little in front of you and let it roll a few inches when the dog pushes it. This lets the dog see that a nose push moves the ball. Practice facing different directions so the dog is pushing the ball toward different walls of the room, but always pushing it toward you. Don't worry about how high/low the dog is putting his/her nose right now or that pushes are very light. The next step will help the dog get the nose lower and push harder. If the dog starts to bark at any of the steps of this training, immediately take a break and let the dog calm down. Barking means the end of the fun. It won't take long for the dog to figure out that the way to keep playing the game is to be quiet. You may need to keep yourself low-key to prevent the dog from getting overly excited.

**7. Brace the ball**- Use a small rolled towel to keep the ball from rolling around on its own and also to require the dog to push harder to move it. By putting the ball in the towel, you can move farther away from it and the dog has to push lower to lift the ball out of the towel. Use the toss of a treat to properly position the dog on the far side of the ball so the push sends the ball rolling to you. Or use the "half-circle" cue if the dog has a good understanding of that cue and you worked on it using the ball (separately from the pushing practice) using the steps in step 4 above. Then give the "push" cue when the dog is in the proper position.

**8. Push the ball farther** – Now add some distance to step 6. You can do this step before step 7 if you choose, but step 7 should help the dog properly position his/her nose lower. You'll have the ball loose in front of you, dog on the far side of the ball, cue push and back up a step or two. Click the nose contact/push and reward by tossing the treat behind the dog. Stop the ball and repeat. You may find the dog prefers to move the ball with his/her chest or shoulders. That is ok as long as the ball is consistently moving toward you and the dog is not contacting the ball with a foot. Moving the ball toward you is an important part of this step, so be sure the dog understands that before progressing.

**9. Get a ball out of the corner** – In the sport, the dog may not have the luxury of choosing which ball to get next (handler or judge's choice). This means the dog has to be

able to get one ball away from the others. A ball might also get stuck in other ways and its helpful if the dog understands how to fix that situation instead of just standing and barking at it or trying to paw at it. Start with the ball near the corner, but not completely in the corner. Cue the dog to do the half-circle and push it from the corner side. Gradually position the ball closer and closer to the corner till the dog is shoving his/her way behind it.

**10. Add more distance and multiple pushes** – This builds on step 8. Instead of clicking for the first push, wait for two pushes toward you. Then 3 pushes. Mix up the number of pushes needed and the distance the dog has to push the ball so the dog never knows if it will only need 1 push or multiple. Be sure the ball is always moving toward you, even if you change direction as you back-up. If needed, you can use the “half-circle” position cue as a reminder of where the dog should be (on the far side of the ball from your position) but if you find yourself using that reminder too much, you have progressed too far too fast. Go back and practice the foundation skills.

**11.** Start over with the above steps in a new environment and/or on a new surface. Each time you work in a new place or on a new surface, start from the beginning steps. It will likely only take a few repetitions of each step, so you’ll be able to go through the steps quickly. If you skip the foundation steps and the dog starts to struggle, you may not know which foundation step to go back to. Having the dog practice successfully with the foundation steps never hurts.

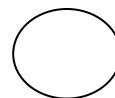
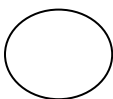
**12. Add more distance to the send out** – Gradually add to the distance the dog has to go to get to the ball. You should be able to stand still and send the dog to the far side of the ball and have the dog push the ball to you with as little side to side rolling as possible. Build this distance slowly, making sure the dog is successful and doesn’t get frustrated.

**13. Add a target goal-** In the sport, the dog will need to get the balls between two goal posts (24’ apart). So add in some barriers that signify the spacing of the goal posts. Start with the ball close to the goal and gradually build distance again. Depending on the obstacles in your training area and what you select as the goal, your dog might need to practice getting the ball out of a corner or away from a barrier as well.

Not in the video...

**14. Add another ball** – Now work with two balls. At first, position them far apart with you directly between them. Direct the dog to fetch one and then fetch the other to you. Re-position the balls far apart again and now move slightly off the line between the two balls, but still between them. Dog will start next to your side.

You

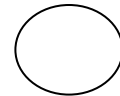
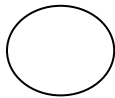


Send the dog to get one and then the other. Add a directional cue (arm signal and/or verbal cue). If you chose to use a verbal “right/left” cue system, keep in mind that those cues are always from the dog’s perspective. So if the dog is facing you, his “right” is your left.

Gradually increase your distance from the balls. Once the dog can get the balls you indicate from the full distance, you can start to move the balls closer together. This is where the dog really needs to understand your directional cues so you can properly indicate which ball he should fetch. Some people teach their dogs to “go out” to the far side of all the balls so they can indicate which one the dog should get. Having a strong “leave it” cue as well as a “yes, that’s the one!” cue can help you direct the dog to select the proper ball.

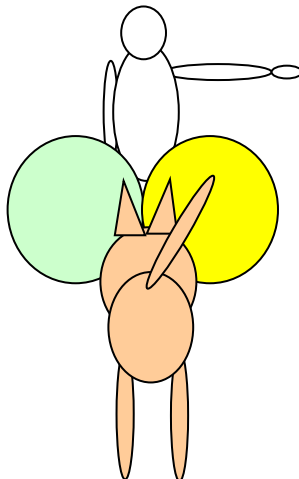
It may help the dog understand by starting the dog on the far side of the balls and indicating with your arm signals which ball you want him to get.

You



Dog

As the dog gets a better understanding of the directional arm signals, you can then use them when the balls start to get much closer. The training information for the Directional Control badge may help with this. Eventually, holding your arm to the side might indicate a particular ball even though two balls are right next to each other.



15. **Add more balls** - When the dog is successfully able to fetch two balls as indicated, add a third. As the dog gets a better understanding of the directional and discrimination cues, add more balls. Start with them far apart and gradually move them closer together.

You can practice your directional cues by setting the balls in the following pattern and selecting which ball you want the dog to get.

You/goal

