

Walking Doggos

A game of being barely adequate

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Theme

You've been hired by Walking Doggos, a subsidiary of Good Boyes, Inc. Your job? Walking the goodest doggos every day for minimum wage while their owners are at work. It doesn't matter how many dogs you walk, or how hard you work, you get paid the same no matter what.

So, what does a clever slacker like you do? As little as possible without getting fired.

Players: 2-7

Weight: Medium-light

Length: 15 min

Components

45 Cards (5 pugs numbered 1-5, and 40 non-pugs numbered 1-8 of each breed)

21 Clue/Betting tokens

1 Player Aid

Core Mechanics

Walking Doggos is a trick taking game, where the goal is to take less tricks than your opponents while still at least winning one trick. There are five suits of cards: Great Danes, Labradors, Shiba Inus, Beagles, Corgis, and Pugs ranked by size of the breed. Each suit has a card numbered 1 through 8 representing the number of that breed that needs walked.

Cards are ranked first by breed and then by the number of that breed. For example an 8 Great Dane is higher ranked than a 7 Great Dane, which is higher than an 8 Labrador, which is higher than a 7 Labrador, and so forth.

Players each have a hand of 5 cards held face out, so that only other players can see what cards are being held. Players take turns giving clues to other players as to what cards are in their hand. Once every player has 3 clues, players take turns betting how many tricks they are going to take. Once all players have made their bets, players take turns playing cards face up into a pack of doggos to be walked. The player who played the highest ranked doggo wins the trick. Players get points based on the number of tricks they take compared to what they bet.

The Experience

Walking Doggos creates a trick taking experience like no other game on the market. The combination of not being able to see your own cards, giving the least helpful clues you can think of to your opponents, and playing tricks based on what you think you know about your hand is incredibly fun and surprisingly difficult.

The best part about the game is how it grows and changes as players become more experienced at the game. The first play through always brings smiles to the players' faces as the mechanics begin to click together. Players quickly realize what a good and a bad clue is, and watching the expressions on their faces as they struggle over what truthful fact to tell you about your hand, and pondering what they might be trying to avoid telling you.

As players get better at the game, they start paying more attention to the hands that they can see, and realize they can count cards. The most terrifying moment of the game is when you don't see any of the highest value suit, Great Danes, which means it's either in your hand, or the dead hand. Are you not being told about the danes because the other players don't want you to know, or are they hiding from everyone?

When the trick taking begins, players begin to sweat as they start to unravel what they think they know about their hand. You bet that you'd take a trick, but you're down to your last two cards. Your opponents are holding a Great Dane, but you know you have a five. Is your five the Great Dane that you haven't seen yet, or the beagle? Did someone play the five beagle already? You can't quite remember. Your opponent plays their great dane, a smug smile on their face. Do they think that they can't be beaten? You play the other card, saving your five for the next hand. Everyone plays their last card. You had the five Great Dane afterall. You won your trick, and won the game.

Prototype Status

Walking Doggos is ready to be published. I have spent the last two and a half years polishing the rules and playtesting with a variety of gamers. The game is currently available on The Game Crafter and Drive Thru Cards using free, public domain artwork. It was featured at Geekway to the West 2019 in the Play and Win library and received 164 plays over the 4 day convention. Jamey Stegmaier even featured the game in his favorite game mechanism series on YouTube.

All that is left to do in order to get Walking Doggos into more players' hands, is to do a card redesign with professional illustrations and polish the rules for mass market consumption.

Basic Game Play and Rules (2+ players)

1. Setup

- a. Place the cheat sheet in the center of the table
- b. Separate the 5 pugs numbered 1-5 from the deck and put them by the cheat sheet face down.
- c. Return the non-pug cards with a value greater than 1 more than the number of players to the box.
 - For 2 players, remove cards numbered 4-8, for 3 players remove cards numbered 5-8, etc.
- d. Choose a dealer and shuffle all of the remaining non-pug cards.
- e. Deal out 5 cards face down to each player.
- f. Remaining cards are put in the center of the table and shuffled with the stack of 5 pug cards. This forms the dead hand.
- g. Each player picks up their hand so that the cards are facing outwards, careful to make sure they don't see what is in their own hand.

2. Phase 1 - Clues

- a. Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise players take turns giving another player who has not received 3 clues a clue
 - **The breed of doggos**
 - All cards of the same breed must be pointed out, and can only be used if there are at least two cards of the given breed
 - **The number of doggos**
 - All cards of the same number must be pointed out, and can only be used if there are at least two cards of the given number
 - **The exact breed and number of a single card**
 - A single card is pointed out and the player is informed of both the breed and number of that card
- b. Use the numbered tokens and breed tokens to track the clues that were given to players
- c. Use the brown cubes to track the number of clues given to players
- d. Players cannot be given a clue which matches a clue they were already given.

3. Phase 2 - Trading with the dead hand

- a. Once all players have been given their 3 clues, players take turns optionally deciding whether to trade a card with the dead hand
 - Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player either passes or shuffles one card into the dead hand and draws a new card to replace it.
 - The new card is kept face down until all players have either passed or traded with the dead hand, after which the card is added to the players' hands.

4. Phase 3 - Betting

- a. Once all players have either traded with the dead hand or passed, players take turns betting how many packs they're going to walk.
 - Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player takes a number of cubes equal to the number of packs they think they will be able to walk
 - Players cannot make a bet of 0 or greater than 5

5. Phase 4 - Building and Taking Walking Packs

- a. Once all players have made their bets, players take turns playing cards into a pack.
 - Start with the first player and proceeding clockwise a card is placed face up in the center of the table.
 - Players use the knowledge given to them by clues, as well as what cards are visible in other players' hands, to decide which card to play
- b. Whoever played the highest rank card takes all the face up cards and places them into a face down pile in front of them.
 - Each pack should be kept in a separate pile.
 - Breed supersedes number, and is based on breed size
 - Great Danes > Labradors > Shiba Inus > Beagles > Corgis > Pugs
 - An 8 Great Dane is greater than a 7 Great Dane, which is greater than an 8 Labrador, which is greater than a 7 Labrador, and so forth
- c. The player who won the last pack then picks a card to play to start a new pack.

6. Phase 5 - Scoring

- a. When all cards have been played, the scores are tallied.
 - If a player exceeds the number of packs that they bet, they get one point for each pack above their bet.
 - If a player exactly meets the number of packs that they bet, they get no points.
 - If a player does not meet their bet, they lose one point for each pack they failed to walk.
- b. Players who have a negative score at the end of the game are fired
- c. The winner is the player with the least number of points that has not been fired
- d. In the case of a tie, players count the total numbers of the dogs they walked, and the player who walked the least number of dogs is the winner.

Advanced Game Play - Managerial Training (3+ players)

1. Setup and play phases 1-5 with the following changes
 - a. A number of rounds are played equal to the number of players plus one
 - b. On the second round remove from the deck the highest value of each dog breed.
 - c. Each round after the first the player who had the round's highest score becomes the Manager for the next round. Ties are broken to the current manager's left.
 - d. Instead of being dealt a hand, the manager takes five cards from the dead hand after players exchange with it.
 - e. The Manager can see their own hand, and the rest of the players do not get to see the cards in the Manager's hand.
 - f. The Manager automatically bids 0.
 - g. Scores are kept from round to round
 - i. Players with a negative score, who would normally be fired, have a chance to regain points by doing extra work in future rounds
 - ii. Players with a positive score can get away with slacking off to bring their score back down