



# ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Dogs' ancestors spent most of their time searching, hunting, and scavenging to get enough to eat. In today's world, dogs often get their meals for free in bowl. This leaves dogs with leftover energy, which can easily lead to behavior problems. You can burn some of that leftover energy and prevent behavior problems by giving your dog opportunities to engage in natural behaviors that dogs love to do, like sniffing, exploring, chasing, playing, and working for their food. Here are some great options for giving your dog the mental and physical exercise they need.

## FOOD DISPENSING TOYS

A variety of interactive puzzle toys can be filled with your dog's kibble or small treats. They are reusable, making them a great investment. Ditch the food bowl and feed your dog all of their meals through puzzle feeders to turn mealtimes into fun enrichment opportunities.

### OUR FAVORITES:

- Kong Wobbler
- Tricky Treat Ball
- Snuffle Mat (can be bought or DIY-ed)

### OTHER OPTIONS:

- Planet Dog Snoop
- PetSafe Tug-A-Jug
- IQ Treat Ball
- Kong Gyro
- Buster Food Cubes
- Nina Ottosson Puzzle Toys

## STUFF-AND-FREEZE FOOD TOYS



Hollow toys such as Kongs can be filled with layers of wet and dry ingredients and then frozen to keep your dog busy for longer. Wet dog food or other soft, dog-safe foods can also be spread onto LickiMats and frozen.

### OUR FAVORITES STUFFING IDEAS:

#### TOYS

- Kong Classic
- West Paw Toppl
- LickiMat



#### SOLID FOODS

- Kibble
- Training Treats
- Dog Biscuits
- Scrambled Egg
- Cooked chicken, ground beef, etc.

#### WET FOODS

- Wet/canned dog food (pate-style)
- Kibble soaked in water until semi-soft
- Peanut Butter (xylitol-free)
- Plain or Greek Yogurt
- Spray Cheese

- Applesauce
- Pumpkin Purée (not pie mix)
- Smashed Banana
- Cream Cheese

### TIPS:

- ▶ **Fill the bottom 1/3rd of each toy with kibble only** to make cleanup easier. Never plug the small second opening on a Kong or Toppl toy for your dog's safety.
- ▶ **Start easy and increase difficulty over time.** First, fill your dog's kong with nothing but loose kibble or treats so that they fall right out. Next time, try mixing in a small amount of wet ingredients. If your dog empties this no problem, then advance to freezing the wet-and-dry mixture next time for an added challenge.
- ▶ **Supervise your dog with all chew toys.** Also, take care that your dog still receives most of their daily calories from a balanced dog food. Ask your veterinarian if you have any concerns about your dog's nutrition.

## FORAGING & SCENT GAMES

Dogs are experts at using their noses. Scent-related activities are fun and mentally stimulating for dogs of all ages and activity levels.

### SCENT WALKS

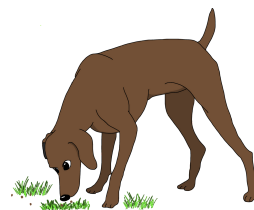
Take regular walks with your dog and let them sniff freely to their heart's content. Visiting new places is extra enriching - so switch up your regular walking route to let your dog explore new smells. Or better yet, hop in the car to let your dog explore smells at pet-friendly stores downtown. or hike a nature trail together.

### HIDE & SEEK

Hide food, treats, or toys while your dog stays (or have a family member hold them). Then tell them "Go find It!". Start out by showing your dog where it is hidden. Then gradually start to give him less help and hide things farther way. You can also have a family member hide holding treats or a tug toy.

### FOOD SCATTER

Scatter kibble or treats out in the yard, or place some on a walk for your dog to find. Or if it's a rainy day, lay an old towel out on the floor, then sprinkle food on top. Roll or fold up the towel and encourage your dog to nose around for food.



## PLAY OPPORTUNITIES

### TUG & FETCH

If your dog loves toys and/or loves to chase after critters, try to incorporate tug and/or fetch into their daily routine. Contact a positive reinforcement trainer if you need help teaching your dog to bring a fetched toy back to you or to play tug appropriately.

### PLAY WITH OTHER DOGS

If your dog is friendly with other dogs, allowing them to socialize with their own species is one of the best energy-burners there is. Play opportunities such as visiting the dog park, a playdate with a friend's dog, or a day at doggie daycare are some of the most effective ways to tire your dog out.

### CHEW TIME

Chewing is a natural behavior for dogs. Providing appropriate chew toys is a great way to keep your pup occupied. Test out different chew toys to find their favorites. Here are some suggestions:

#### CONSUMEABLE CHEWS

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Dental Bones (i.e.  | Yak Chews            |
| Greenies, Whimzees) | Sweet Potato Chews   |
| Bully Sticks        | Dried Fish Skins     |
| Pig Ears            | Rawhide Alternatives |

#### LONG-LASTING CHEW TOYS

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Nylabones | Stuffed Toys for shredding (with supervision) |
| Kong Toys |   |
| Antlers   |   |

### TRAINING IS ENRICHMENT, TOO!

Learning new tricks or obedience skills requires dogs to problem-solve. They are both great forms of mental stimulation. Contact a positive reinforcement trainer for help with training you can do at home, or sign up for a group class on basic obedience, manners, or fun sports like K9 Nosework or Agility.

