



ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT

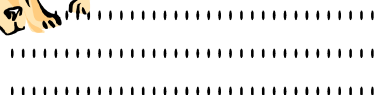
Does your dog chew everything, bark all the time or dig to China? These are normal doggy behaviours that usually send Fido to the pound because his owner doesn't know how to deal with the destruction. Most people try to stop these behaviours all together but that just redirects the dog's energy on to another (usually more annoying) behaviour. Managing these behaviours through proper enrichment can actually help you and Fido come to a happy medium, where they get to be a dog and your house doesn't look like a war zone. Just giving them a handful of toys is not the answer. You need to have a range of toys and activities for your dog that you chop and change to keep them on their toes. The more you stimulate their mind the bigger your chances of preventing/resolving problem behaviours such as separation anxiety, destructive chewing, digging and excessive barking. **If you really want to tire a dog, work its mind more so than its body.** Adopt a "nothing in life is free" policy. Dogs have 24hrs in a day to fill so rather than feed from a bowl, which occupies them for 5 minutes, get them to use their brains to work out how to get food. Here are some ideas to get you started:




 **Training** – Stimulates the mind and body of both dog and owner. It not only teaches your dog how to behave appropriately but also enhances the relationship between canine and human. Training can be anything from a few minutes around the house to obedience, flyball, doggy dancing, tracking or agility (just to name a few K9 activities).



 **Food showers/chicken feed^{NB}** – Gets the dog working for their food by encouraging the use of their keen sense of smell. A food shower is simply grabbing a hand full of dry food and tossing it into the air or sprinkling it like chicken feed ("here chook, chook, chook"). Unless you use harsh chemicals on the ground there is no need to worry about 'hygiene' as such. Dogs chew on rotten old bones that have been buried for months so a bit of grass or dirt on the dry food is not a concern to them. Just make sure you keep up to date with worming and teeth cleaning too.



 **Clam shells (splash pools/digging pit)** – Satisfies the natural instincts of digging and lots of dogs love to splash in water. Having their own digging pit reduces the risk of them digging up gardens and allows for games, such as by burying their toys/bones. You can manage and modify innate behaviour but you can't eliminate it so do yourself and your dog a favour by managing their normal doggy behaviours.



WARNING: limit the depth of water according to the size of the dog. Small dogs and puppies can drown as easily as a small child.



Kongs & Treat balls^{NB}



Great toys to keep your dog occupied for hours. Kongs are made of an extremely tough, virtually indestructible, latex rubber that bounces unpredictably and the hollow centre can be 'stuffed' with food. Treat balls can be purchased from vets/pet stores or home made from plastic (milk) bottles or cardboard (cereal boxes, pizza boxes, toilet rolls). Kongs and treat balls relieve boredom, prevent anxiety problems and promote oral health. They stimulate the dog's mind as Fido determines how to access the food that is inside them. Some ideas for stuffing include chicken necks, peanut butter, vegemite, schmackos or, better still, their normal meals. Freezing them is good too. A fun idea is to use rope to tie the bottle or Kong to a strong support so the toy is at the height of the dog's head. The dog can tug, bounce or wait for the toy to fall to get its reward.



Dogsicles^{NB}

Popsicles for dogs. These are great in summer, to keep your pooch cool, and are an all round yummy alternative to food out of a bowl. You can use balloons (make sure you take the balloon off before giving the treat to your dog), ice cube trays, cups, muffin tins, anything really. Mix up some dry kibble, treats and gravy with a bit of water then pour into your moulds. Once frozen you can pop out the dogsicle for your favourite pooch. Another option is to freeze a chicken wing in the dogsicle so pooch has to wait for the ice to melt or crunch their way through the ice to get to the yummy chicken wing.



Bones/chewy treats^{NB}

Bones and chewy treats are excellent sources of enrichment. Not only can they keep your dog occupied for a long time but they also help to keep teeth clean. Bones also provide a balanced calcium/phosphorus supply, all essential amino acids, essential fatty acids, fat soluble vitamins A, D & E are stored (cooked ⇒ the vitamins are destroyed) and the bone marrow enhances the immune system & supplies copper and iron. Some bones are very fatty though so shop around for the best for your dog.



WARNING: Never feed cooked bones and always feed bones that are suitable for your dog's size and character.

TIP: not everything works for every animal. They all have different personalities and different temperaments, just like humans do, so be creative. If they don't show interest in the toy/activity straight away, don't be disappointed. It doesn't necessarily mean it was a waste of time or money. Alter the toy/activity in some way; make it smelly, tasty, colourful or add texture or make it easier or harder. You may even need to show them what they're supposed to do or maybe they just want to figure it out in their own time.

Warning All activities involving the consumption of food should be accounted for when feeding the dog their daily ration. We don't want any overweight dogs now do we?

THANK YOU

