



Dog Enrichment at Home

There are many different ways to enrich a dog in the comfort of your own home. Some dogs are too energetic, reactive, anxious, or aggressive to enjoy public spaces and often need more mental and physical stimulation to keep them happy and healthy. Here are some ideas on how you can help them.

EASY ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- Dog puzzles, frozen stuffed Kongs, lick mats, and snuffle mats are easily set up and can be found almost anywhere.
- Roll your dogs' meal and treats in a large towel to unroll as they eat. Tie the towel in a knot for more of a challenge.
- On nice days, try throwing their food and treats in the backyard for mealtimes. This is a fan favorite for high drive and food motivated dogs!

SCENT WORK

- **Which hand has the treat?**
 - » Hide both hands behind your back and put a treat in one hand
 - » Show your dog both hands
 - » When your dog sniffs the hand with the treat, open that hand and reward them with the treat
 - » Repeat until they are no longer interested
- **Which cup has the treat under it?**
 - » Use two cups to start
 - » When your dog smells the correct cup with the treat, lift the cup and reward them with the treat
 - » Make it harder by adding one extra cup at a time
 - » You can also allow your dog to flip the cup with their nose to get the treat
- **Hunting in the house! (personal favorite)**
 - » Put your dog outside, in a room, or the kennel as you hide the food
 - » Using bowls, plates, or shoe boxes, put a treat of any kind (smelly treats are better) in each one
 - » Hide as many as you want around a room or the house
 - » Allow your dog to hunt, roam, and sniff about with little guidance
 - » You can make this as easy or hard as desired based on the dogs' maturity, interest in the game, and places you have available to hide the food

OBSTACLE COURSE

Try these for a dog who has a little too much energy to match. Exposure to new activities boosts confidence while mentally and physically challenging dogs.

- **Things to jump over - you can use many other items, be creative.**
 - » Hurdles/Cavaletti's can be found online
 - » Lay down brooms or mops to use the handles as hurdles
 - » Small stools
 - » Wood planks
- **Things to crawl through or under**
 - » Tunnels
 - » Between chair legs
 - » Hurdles that are tall enough to crawl under

- **New textures/unbalanced things to step or stand on**
 - » Platforms to jump on/off
 - » Yoga balance disks
 - » Small stuffed pillows/stacked pillows
 - » Logs
 - » Stools

TRAINING

Training itself is a form of enrichment. It allows for bonding time between you and your dog. Enrich with training, rather than replacing training.

- Trick training is often more enriching than obedience for both people and dogs.
- Impulse control training is great for mental focus for excited and reactive dogs.
 - » Encourage your dog to “wait” for some time as you put a treat on the floor.
 - » Use a “release word” like ok, release, break, or free to eat the treat.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Provide traction for active activities. Grass, rugs, yoga mats, carpets, etc.
- Set up an obstacle course in the hallway for easy repetitions. Toss a treat to the other side, allow your dog to get the treat, call them back, and repeat.
- Provide enrichment during mealtimes. Dogs are more willing to work and stay interested if they are hungry.
- Vary the enrichments to prevent boredom.
- Increase the value of treats if they are not interested.
- For difficult to walk dogs, use the first half or your walk time for enrichment/training and the second half for walking. This often increases focus, allows for shorter, more successful walks, and tires a dog quicker just walking.