

# ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT

FOR ALL DOGS, ALL AGES, ALL BREEDS



DRAINING  
THE  
BRAIN  
CAN  
HELP  
KEEP  
YOU  
SANE

FIND OUT WHAT  
YOUR DOG LIKES  
TO DO AND  
THEN....  
LET THEM DO IT  
IN WAYS THAT  
ARE SAFE AND  
ACCEPTABLE



# ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT

Environmental Enrichment or Mental Stimulation is said to be responsible for solving 80% of behaviour problems.

If we think about what our dogs do all day, they really are just waiting around for us to come home, engage with them, feed them, walk, etc. If left to their own devices, dogs would spend an incredible time hunting for food to survive. We leave our dogs home all day, plunk a bowl of food down and give them no other employment and wonder why they get up to criminal activities? By providing them with creative ways to “hunt” we can fulfill them more thoroughly during our time away and cut down on boredom based problem behaviours. If people spent their money on toys wisely, these are the majority of toys they should be buying. Stuffedies, balls, squeaky toys are all meant to be used interactively with us. Rarely do dogs throw balls for themselves or play tug alone and they shouldn't be chewing on anything other than natural chews, never toys. That is an expensive surgery to retrieve if they swallow. Throw your food dish away and give pup the opportunity to “hunt”.

BUT....Environmental Enrichment is not just about food. It is doing things that are biologically and psychologically essential for maintaining homeostasis. Giving a beagle an opportunity to sniff as long as they want on a walk or in a novel environment. Giving a border collie an opportunity to herd your yoga ball around the yard. Giving a terrier an opportunity to chase, catch, kill (without all the bloodshed of course). Finding out what our dogs are really good at, what they enjoy, and then giving them opportunities to do that goes a long way to creating a well balanced, happy pup.

Training is also a part of environmental enrichment (or should be). If I bring out the clicker, or treats, my dogs line up and get their thinking caps on. Training should be a bonding experience. Never scary or painful. So it should be one of the most fun games you play together. Using play, food and anything else your pup will work for to motivate them to learn the words we are saying to them and put them into action will enhance your enjoyment of each other.

Let's look at some ideas on how to engage your pup in gainful employment rather than criminal activities

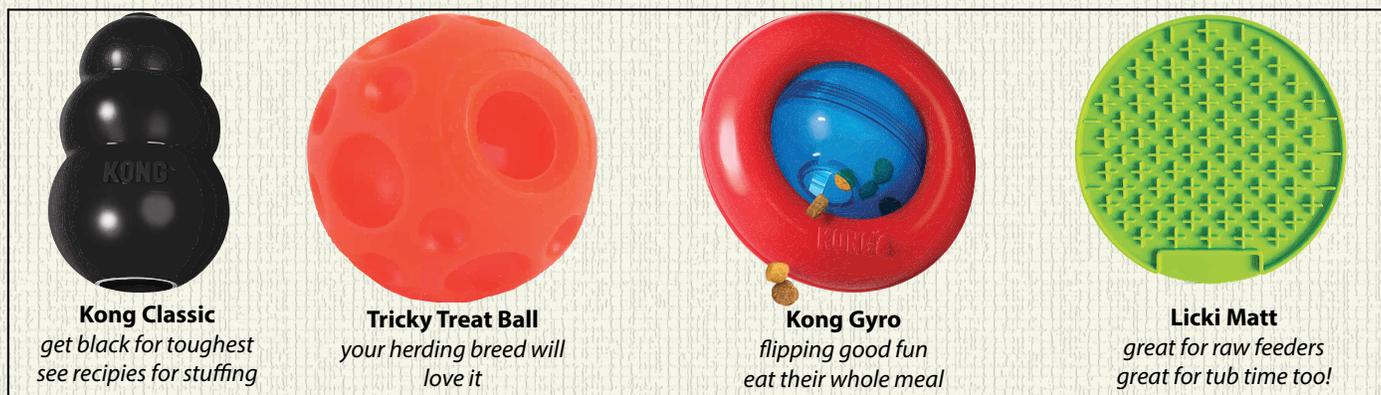
Environmental Enrichment has been shown to be twice as effective as physical exercise at reducing energy.

If you rely on physical exercise for a tired pup, today you need a 20 minute walk to reach energy reduction. Next week 40 minutes. The week after that an hour. Eventually you condition an athlete that needs an unsustainable amount of exercise to be tired and calm.



# STORE BOUGHT TOYS FOR DAILY FEEDING

Having a few options to keep your dog on their toes for twice daily feedings is essential.



There are many store bought toys that can help in this regard as well as many creative solutions we can make at home. By providing our dogs with the opportunity for new and exciting puzzles we can employ them in ways we find more appropriate. Some examples of store bought excellent toys are:

These are all toys to put their meals or snacks in. Depending on what your pups natural inclinations and talents are you can find a toy to match their skills. Kong Classic is pretty much good for any dog. They lick out all the goodness and by the time it is empty your puppy is exhausted. See next page for stuffing recipe ideas, but their food soaked in water and the soggie bits stuffed in work just as well if they love their food. Treat Balls are amazing for herding breeds as they herd them around the house to get their kibble or treats to dispense. Gyro same thing, but with the extra challenge of flipping. Licky Mats are great for raw or wet food pups. Freeze for longevity.



West Paw makes some great toys and they have a chew proof guarantee. They have held up to our toughest chewers and are a little less frustrating so the pup doesn't feel like they need to destroy the toy to get at what's inside. Snuffle mats are something every dog, including the tiniest of baby puppies, enjoys. Put their kibble in, shake it all down into the mat and watch them forage their way to a nap afterwards. Be watchful that the dog does not eat the fabric the first few times to be sure.

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR RECIPES**

# TOY STUFFING RECIPES

Try these out for a bit of novelty for your dog. Healthy ingredients, fresh foods all have nutritional and health benefits.

## **Bahama Mama**

Unsweetened Coconut  
Pineapple  
Coconut Oil  
Steel Cut Oats

## **Pumpkin Pie**

Pure Pumpkin  
Cinnamon  
Honey  
Dog Biscuit

## **The King**

Banana  
Natural Peanut Butter  
Honey  
Steel Cut Oats

## **Left Overs**

Mashed Potato  
Peas  
Kibble

## **Smoothie**

Plain Yogurt or Kefir  
Strawberries  
Honey  
Unsweetened Coconut

## **Cottage Country**

Cottage Cheese  
Cantaloupe  
Blueberries

## **Tripesicle**

Fresh Green Tripe  
Kibble  
Trachea Bits

## **Tuna Surprise**

Brown Rice  
Tuna  
Cheese Shreds

## **Just Peachy**

Yogurt  
Peaches  
Rice Krispies

## **Breakfast of Champs**

Scrambled Eggs  
Bacon  
Cheese shreds

## **Omega Booster**

Sardine Filets  
Yogurt  
Flax Seeds

## **Veggie Mash**

Green Bean Cooked Puree  
Peas Cooked  
Sweet Potato Mash  
Carrot Cooked & Mashed

Start with these recipes just stuffed right in and eventually work up to freezing them as your pup gets better at the toys.

# HOMEMADE HOMERUNS

Stuffable or enrichment toys do not need to be store bought....loads can be made from your recycling bin.



toilet paper rolls in a box. Dog has to remove the roll to get the treats.



Old tshirts or socks or even rags with kibble rolled into them and stuffed into a ball.



egg carton with small packages of kibble inside. First they have to get into the carton, then remove the packages to get the kibble.



Many dogs like empty water bottles. Give them their breakfast in one.



Put kibble in a muffin tin and cover with a ball.

Freeze your dogs favourite treats and toys in a margarine container filled with water with some tuna juice, water w/ blueberries, low sodium broth watered down, etc.



Use your entire recycling bin to give your dog enrichment. Any cardboard box or plastic will do. Milk jugs pop bottles are also great.



Try taking a flattened towel and putting a line of kibble across it, roll the towel to contain the kibble, place another row and roll, place another row and roll until you are left with a towel/kibble burrito.



# The NOSE —

Enrichment doesn't have to be all about the food. Any activity your dog enjoys and finds challenging can be enrichment.

Hide dispensing toys around the house and teach your dog the "find it" game.

1. Toss a treat on the ground and say find it.
  2. Once your dog figures out that find it means there is a treat to be had make it a bit more challenging by tossing it further or onto the couch or their snuffle mat.
  3. Progressively make the game harder until they are hunting all over when they hear the words "find it".
- Take this game out on your walks to create a more challenging leash walk

 Collect objects from your day and bring them home. Put them around the house or backyard and let your dog explore them. A great way to share your day with your dog. Also an amazing activity for older dogs that may not have the mobility they used to.

Bring home different aromatic herbs for your dog to sniff. Lavender, Basil, Parsely, Mint, and flowers like Daisy's and Marigolds are all non toxic, aromatic plants your dogs will love to sniff.

 Take a scent work class in the winter to beat those winter blues and stay out of the cold.

Just because your dog isn't a hound doesn't mean they don't like to sniff. Collecting scents for their catalogue and reference library is exhausting work. Using their olfactory scenses releases dopamine and can counteract stress.



Sniff pits are fun and a good way to tire out a dog. Giving them interesting objects to find in a ball pit or 10" high x 2' wide x 4' length container filled with old plastic bottles can be a great way to hunt for things like bully sticks, hoofs and their favourite toys.



# THE GREAT CHASE

options for dogs that love the chase

frisbee



fetch

You do want to be careful and limit how much jumping and high impact fetching your pup does each day. This can be a contributor to ACL tears and other structural issues.

flirt pole



Jolly Pets Egg

remote control car chase



Be careful to add structural training elements to these games as they can become obsessive. High intensity games can become even dangerous without thinking elements.

# CHOOSE CHEWS...NOT SHOES

Chewing releases endorphins that help calm puppy naturally. Both chewing and licking are a good choice for when you want puppy to rest, need a break or are trying to create a good association with things like the crate.

Your puppy will need to chew. Not only to get their tiny little razor teeth out so adult ones can come in, but for the rest of their lives. Chewing is a very relaxing pasttime and beneficial every single day. The right chew can also do the job of cleaning your dog's teeth so you don't need to brush as often. If you find your puppy chewing on something they should not (furniture, shoes, your underwear, etc.), interrupt them and replace with something appropriate they should be chewing on.



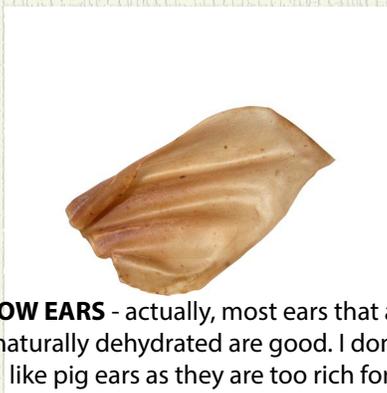
**FISH SKIN** - good omega 3's, but mind the scales.



**BULL TAIL**- a great rawhide alternative that is naturally dehydrated



**BEEF CHEEK ROLLS** - like the bulltails, but a bit harder to get through.



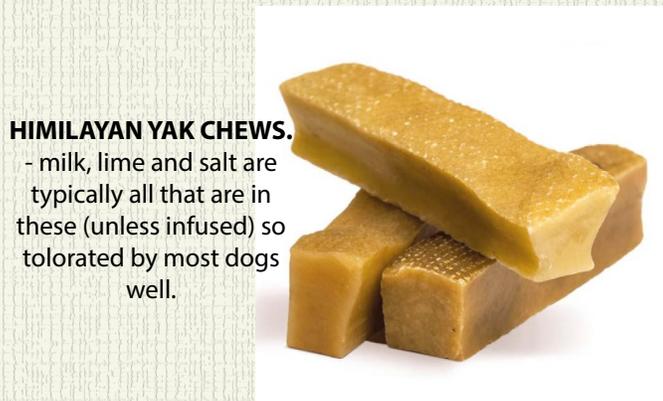
**COW EARS** - actually, most ears that are naturally dehydrated are good. I don't like pig ears as they are too rich for most puppies



**TENDONS & BULLY STICKS**- tendons for puppy teeth, bull sticks for adults.



**WHIMZEES**- highly digestible vegetable chew. NEVER GREENIES.



**HIMALAYAN YAK CHEWS.**  
- milk, lime and salt are typically all that are in these (unless infused) so tolerated by most dogs well.



**COW HOOVES/ TOENAILS**- if you have ever been around when the ferrier is trimming you will know the appeal of these for dogs. Stuff with your favourite from the recipes page.

**RAWHIDE IS NOT AN APPROPRIATE CHEW....EVER**