

Mental enrichment for your dogs

Enrichment activities play a crucial role in enhancing the overall well-being of dogs by providing mental stimulation, physical exercise, and emotional satisfaction. Here are some specific benefits of popular enrichment activities for dogs:

- **Variety and Novelty:** Enrichment activities introduce variety and novelty into a dog's routine, preventing monotony and boredom. Dogs thrive on new experiences and challenges, contributing to their emotional well-being.
- **Sniffing and foraging activities:** release dopamine into the brain (the happy brain chemical!).
- **Reduction of Anxiety and Stress:** Engaging activities like these can help reduce anxiety and stress in dogs. The mental and physical challenges presented by enrichment activities serve as a positive outlet for excess energy and can be particularly beneficial for dogs that suffer from separation anxiety.
- **Prevention of Destructive Behaviour:** Dogs left alone without mental stimulation may resort to destructive behaviours. Enrichment activities provide an outlet for their energy, reducing the likelihood of destructive chewing or digging.
- **Training Opportunities:** Many enrichment activities can be incorporated into training routines, reinforcing positive behaviours and strengthening the bond between dogs and their owners.
- **Portion Control with Scatter Feeding:** Scatter feeding allows for portion control by spreading the food throughout the environment. This not only encourages physical activity but also helps in managing a healthy weight.

💡 Pro Tip: toys should be introduced to your dog slowly and not cause too much frustration. Always start with something simple and not all dogs will like all puzzles. Since they are for your dog's enjoyment, the toys should not be too difficult and your dog will decide which games they like.

Start with easy food toys and games and modify as needed. A dog who might be sound sensitive will not want a toy that creates a lot of noise

Scatter Feeding

Sprinkling your dog's kibble or treats around the yard or inside the house encourages them to use their sense of smell and problem-solving skills to find their food. This engages their mind and prevents boredom.

This can also be useful to redirect your dog's when they are getting too aroused, as well as it being a calming/distracting measure

It also has the added benefit of often distracting your dog from reacting to something in the nearby environment, which helps prevention of rehearsing an unwanted behaviour like chasing the cat.



The Magic Treat Sprinkle! ✨🐾

- Grab a small handful of tiny treats—the smaller, the better!
- Now, make a fist around them and get ready for some treat magic.
- Hold your hand about a metre above the ground, palm facing down, and then—woosh!—open your fingers suddenly to let the treats scatter far and wide! ✨
- Your dog's job? Sniff, snuffle, and search for every last crumb! This fun little game encourages them to use their nose and focus, which is great for calming them down when they're feeling a bit excitable.
- Pro tip: Teach this when things are quiet so your dog learns the game properly. Then, when they need a little help settling, they'll know exactly what to do—nose down, sniffing mode ON!
- And remember, the more tiny treats, the longer the snuffle time—which means more fun and more reward for your pup!

Snuffle Mats

These mats have hiding spots where you can hide treats or kibble. Dogs use their noses to search for the hidden goodies, promoting mental stimulation and providing a satisfying and challenging activity.



Another option to snuffle mats – use an old towel - You can roll a towel/ soft mat up and as you roll it up – put a few treats in the centre – teach your dog how to unroll the mat!

- Lay a towel out flat on the floor or table top
- sprinkle your dog's dry kibble over the towel, then holding the towel in the centre gently twist your wrist – just as though you were opening a jar – the towel will twist around and look like a 'chelsea bun' OR a long tube
- your dog will enjoy snuffling through the folds to discover the kibble.



Keeping Your Dog Happy with Engaging Toys!

There are so many fantastic food-stuffable toys out there—so take some time to find the perfect fit for you and your dog!

One of the most well-known and trusted brands is KONG 🦴 (shoutout to the KONG Company for creating these awesome enrichment toys!). They come in all sizes—from teeny-tiny to extra-large—so there's one for every pup, whether they're a Chihuahua or a Great Dane!

💡 Supervision Tip: When introducing a KONG for the first time, always keep an eye on your dog to make sure they're using it safely. Most dogs will enjoy chewing and licking at it rather than trying to destroy it, making it one of the safest activity toys for solo play!

How to Make a KONG Even More Fun!

Stuff your dog's KONG with yummy treats, peanut butter, or even their regular food, then freeze it 🧊. This turns snack time into a long-lasting challenge that keeps them busy, encourages natural chewing, and can even help support good oral health!

The KONG Wobbler – Meal Time, but Make It Fun!

Looking for another way to keep your pup entertained? Try the KONG Wobbler! Unlike the classic rubber KONG, this one is a hard plastic food dispenser that wobbles and rolls as your dog plays with it. It's a fantastic way to turn mealtime into a game, keeping your dog engaged, moving, and mentally stimulated while they work for their food. Some dogs even prefer eating their entire dry food ration from it!

1. Tantalizer: Place a little morsel of freeze-dried liver, peanut butter, or cheese into the little hole on top.
2. Dessert: Fill approximately one-third of the cavity with doggie treats, such as biscuits, marrow bites, etc.
3. Main course: Fill the last two-thirds with canned food or food roll-mixed with nuggets.
4. Appetizer: Leave a nice tidbit sticking out of the opening. The "easy pickins'" will provide an immediate pay-off and entice your dog to "get serious" about the job.



Final Thought: Whether it's a classic KONG or a fun Wobbler, these toys help prevent boredom, encourage problem-solving, and make life more exciting for your dog—all while being super easy for you to use!



Brain Games for Brilliant Dogs!

Does your dog have endless energy? Looking for a way to keep their mind busy while they eat? Puzzle toys are a fantastic way to replace the traditional food bowl with something far more exciting! Many dogs love the challenge and quickly adapt to working for their meals.

DIY Puzzle Fun!

You don't have to break the bank to keep your dog's brain engaged—get creative and make your own puzzle toys at home! Try these easy ideas:

- ◆ Plastic Bottle Feeder – Take an empty plastic bottle, cut small holes in the sides, and add a handful of kibble. Your dog will have to roll it around to get the food out!
- ◆ Muffin Tin Challenge – Smear some wet food in a muffin tray and cover the cups with tennis balls or paper cups—your pup will have to remove them to get to the goodies.
- ◆ Egg Carton Surprise – Use a cardboard egg box, pop treats into the compartments, and close the lid. Your dog will have to figure out how to get their reward!



Top Brands for Puzzle Toys!

If you're looking for professionally designed puzzles, some of the best brands include:

- ✓ Nina Ottosson by Outward Hound – Known for their interactive designs, these puzzles are available from retailers like Takealot and specialist pet stores.
- ✓ A variety of engaging games with different difficulty levels can be found on various online platforms

💡 Final Thought: Giving your dog a puzzle to solve not only keeps them busy but also builds confidence, reduces boredom, and provides them with a rewarding challenge. Happy puzzling!



Level 1 Easy	
Level 2 Intermediate	
Level 3 Advanced	



Chewing

Providing opportunities for dogs to chew is highly beneficial for their overall health and well-being. Chewing is a natural behavior for dogs that serves various important purposes. Firstly, it promotes good dental health by reducing plaque and tartar buildup on their teeth and gums, ultimately preventing dental issues such as periodontal disease.

Additionally, chewing provides mental stimulation and helps alleviate stress and anxiety, serving as a natural outlet for dogs to cope with their emotions. By offering appropriate chew toys, owners can redirect their dog's chewing behavior away from destructive habits like chewing on furniture or shoes.

Moreover, chewing helps puppies during the teething phase by soothing sore gums and facilitating the development of strong jaw muscles.

Engaging in chewing activities also satisfies dogs' natural instincts and provides physical exercise, contributing to their overall happiness and contentment. Therefore, providing ample opportunities for dogs to chew not only supports their physical health but also enhances their mental and emotional well-being, fostering a happy and fulfilled canine companion.

Chews That Are Safe & Delicious for Your Dog!

Skip the supermarket rawhide! **🚫** Many rawhide products are heavily processed with bleaches and chemicals that aren't great for your dog's health. Instead, treat your pup to natural, healthier alternatives that are both safe and satisfying!

Better, Safer Chew Options! ✨

Look out for natural chews like:

- Jerky flats – A tasty, protein-packed snack!
- Ostrich or beef sinews – Long-lasting and great for dental health.
- Tripe sticks – Packed with flavour and easy to digest!
- Achilles tendons – A chewy, high-protein option.
- Bully sticks (pizzle sticks) – A favourite for strong chewers!
- Boredom busters – Specially designed chews to keep dogs busy.

These nutritious and natural chews can be found at specialist pet stores, vet shops, or online. There are so many options to explore—find what your dog loves best!

💡 Pro Tip: Most of these chews can be enjoyed in one sitting, but if they're too big, you can cut them into smaller pieces for a more manageable snack. Happy chewing!



Licking

Providing opportunities for dogs to lick, such as using a lickimat, offers numerous benefits for their mental and physical well-being.

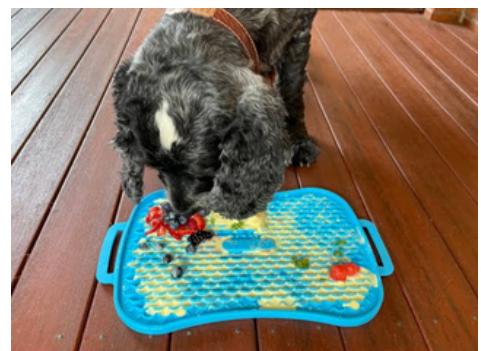
Licking is a natural behavior for dogs that triggers the release of endorphins, which can have a calming and soothing effect, similar to the comfort derived from a mother's nurturing lick.

Using a lickimat can serve as a form of enrichment, providing mental stimulation and alleviating boredom. It also encourages dogs to engage in slow, repetitive licking, which can help reduce stress and anxiety.

Additionally, licking can aid in promoting oral hygiene by stimulating saliva production, which contains enzymes that help break down food particles and bacteria in the mouth.

Lickimats can be particularly beneficial for dogs who experience separation anxiety or those undergoing stressful situations such as vet visits or grooming sessions, as the act of licking can help them feel more relaxed and secure.

Overall, incorporating opportunities for dogs to lick, whether through a lickimat or other suitable methods, can enhance their overall quality of life by providing comfort, mental stimulation, and stress relief. Lickimats:



Lick, Lick, Hooray!

Looking for a way to keep your dog entertained, relaxed, and busy while you get things done? Enter Lickimats and silicone feeding mats—a simple but brilliant way to turn snack time into a soothing activity!

Lickimat Magic!

Lickimats now come in all kinds of fun and functional designs, each with their own perks:

- ◆ Classic Lickimat – A simple flat mat where you can spread yoghurt, peanut butter, or wet food for your dog to slowly enjoy.
- ◆ Lickimat Wobble – A bowl-shaped mat that moves around, making it more of a challenge!
- ◆ Lickimat Splash – This version has a suction cup, perfect for sticking to walls and tiles—great for bath time distractions!
- ◆ Lickimat UFO – A genius choice for runny foods like broth or blended treats because it keeps everything contained, even on vertical surfaces!

DIY Licki-Fun!

No Lickimat? No problem! Try using:

- ◆ Silicone baking mats – Spread food over the grooves for a similar effect.
- ◆ Silicone ice cube trays – Perfect for freezing treats like bone broth, blended fruit, or yoghurt for a long-lasting snack.
- ◆ Shallow plates with textured surfaces – Just as fun and effective!

Safety First!

Always supervise your dog the first few times they use a Lickimat or silicone feeder. While they are designed to be safe, some dogs may try to chew them instead of licking!

 **Pro Tip:** Freeze your Lickimat treats for an extra-long-lasting challenge—especially great on hot days! 

So, whether you need a way to keep your pup occupied while you groom them, or just want to add a little enrichment to mealtime, Lickimats are a fantastic addition to your dog's routine. Happy licking!



Toys, Games & Frozen Treats – Keep Your Dog Engaged & Happy!



The Magic of a Toy Box!

Give your pup their very own toy box! Just like kids, dogs love variety, and rotating their toys every few days keeps them exciting and new.

● **Special Playtime Toys:** Keep a few special toys just for interactive games with you! These are for tug, fetch, or other playtime activities—once the game is over, put them away until next time. This keeps your dog excited for playtime and helps strengthen your bond!



Cool Off with Frozen Fun!

On hot days, swap out bones and chews for homemade frozen treat blocks! 

How to Make Frozen Goodies:

- 勺 Grab an empty yoghurt tub (or any plastic container).
- kup Fill it with water or diluted chicken/beef stock.
- 🍪 Toss in tasty treats like:
 - Blue Berries or banana
 - Small bits of cheese 🧀 (just a little!)
 - Liver treats
 - Favourite chew toy

Freeze overnight, pop it out in the morning, and watch your dog have cool, tasty fun while staying busy!



Hide & Seek – The Nose Knows!

Put your dog's amazing nose to work with this super simple scent game!

- 📝 Step 1: Place 4-5 plastic plant cups upside down in a row.
- 🐕 Step 2: Distract your dog while you hide a super yummy treat under one of them.
- 👉 Step 3: Use a pointed finger or a verbal cue to tell them to "Go find it!"

Once they master this, make it more challenging by hiding treats in trickier spots around the house or garden. Dogs LOVE this game!