



Does your dog need enrichment?

Do you come home to find holes dug in your garden, your furniture destroyed, or complaints from a neighbour about barking? Maybe your dog needs something to do while you are away.

One major cause for destructive behaviour (digging and chewing) in the home is the dog having nothing to do with all his energy while you are gone. The more opportunities a dog has to practice being destructive, the harder and longer it will take to reverse the process. So start now by enriching your dog's environment.

Behavioural or environmental enrichment means any activity, item of interest or change in the environment that enhances the quality of your dog's day. Providing enrichment ensures your dog will have less time to be bored or engage in destructive behaviours. It is easy and does not have to be expensive, as you will see.

Provide your dog with a minimum of three different enrichment items per day. An important word of warning though – supervise your dog at all times when introducing new items to ensure they cannot be chewed up or swallowed. Choose appropriate items for the chewing level of your dog. Here is a list of enrichment items you can leave out for your dog when you leave the home. All items on the list can be hidden around the yard.

Cardboard boxes Use any size box but remove staples and sticky tape. Put treats, bone, raw egg, kibble or biscuits inside the box and close the box so dog has to break it open to earn the rewards.

Treat balls Buy from any pet shop. There is a massive variety available. Begin with the ball on easy setting



until your dog has learnt how to get treats out and then make it harder. Put part of daily kibble ration, treats, or broken up biscuits inside the ball. This is also a great way to amuse your dog indoors during bad weather or when recovering from injury.

Kongs Buy one or two and stuff with treats, kibble or cheese. Get black Kongs for destructive chewers. Make it more challenging by topping off with crisscrossed biscuits, peanut butter or low fat cream cheese. Prepare and freeze for hot days.



Raw egg Hide whole eggs in boxes.

Bones Again these can be hidden on their own or inside boxes. Bones must be fed raw. Never leave bones unsupervised with dogs that gulp their food i.e. swallow without chewing.

Chicken wings, drumsticks and necks Use wings and drumsticks to signal to your dog that you're going out. Hide the necks around the yard. Chicken must be fed raw. Hide in boxes or cardboard milk cartons.

Plastic bottles Use the PET type, as they are tough and not brittle.

Put biscuits, kibble and treats inside the bottles but remove and discard lids before using.

Tetra paks These are great to fill with treats and kibble. They are quite tough so your dog has to work fairly hard to get food out.

Huge variety of toys Squeaky toys, plush toys, and rope toys. There is a huge variety out there.



Rotate toys 2-3 times per week and provide seven toys at a time. Have enough toys that your dog only has the same toy once per month. He will think it is a new toy.

Pine cones Stuff with kibble and treats.



Dried meat treats Kangaroo jerky, pig ears, trotters – there is a huge variety of chew treats available from pet stores. They can provide hours of chewing and can also be hidden in boxes.

Iceblocks In Summer, keep your dog busy with an iceblock. Make iceblocks out of liquids like diluted pet milk, sandwich tuna, or meat stock. Freeze in ice cream containers or Kongs and remember, the bigger they are, the longer they last. This is also a great way to keep your dog cool.

More information and resources at www.apdt.org.au