

FOOD ENRICHMENT FOR DOGS

WHAT IS ENRICHMENT?

Enrichment is a way to mentally stimulate and enhance your dog's life. It is important that dog's are given the opportunity to display species-specific behaviours such as investigation, olfactory exploration, foraging and problem solving. Exploration is very important for dogs and providing foraging systems that allow dogs to search for, problem solve and investigate ways to access food can help improve your dog's quality of life. Remember that these activities should not cause frustration, this will often result in a dog that gives up or is not interested in problem solving if the puzzle is too hard. Start with simple, easy to access food toys and move up to more advanced puzzles as your dog progresses.

Please supervise your dog with all food puzzle toys.

OUR FAVOURITE FOOD ENRICHMENT TOYS

Here are a few websites you can check out for fun, stimulating toys for your dog



BUSTER CUBE:

<https://www.amazon.com/Kruuse-Buster-Soft-Cube-Feeder/dp/B003XLEM5C>

It's been around forever! The downside is that it can be difficult to clean and only works with hard treats. They have also developed a softer cube that can be easier on the floor and walls.



KONG TOYS:

<https://www.kongcompany.com/>

These are the closest to "indestructible" toys! Your dog will enjoy Kongs stuffed with kibble and treats - [here's how](#). This can be frozen overnight so it takes your pet a little longer to work on it. The Kong Wobbler is also a great treat ball to use for your pet's daily meal times.



WEST PAW:

<https://www.westpaw.com/dogtoys/puzzle#moderateChewers>

These are great for puppies or dogs that can get easily frustrated with more difficult food puzzle toys. The Zogoflex Toppl is particularly easy for puppies to access food from. Great for freezing and easy to wash!



NINA OTTOSSON:

<https://www.nina-ottosson.com/>

Amazing food puzzle toys that range from beginner level to advanced.



SNUFFLE MATS

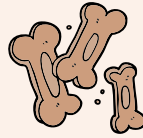
<https://mungosbooks.ca/snuffle-mats/>

These are often easy to make but can also be purchased. Snuffle mats are great and easy way to feed your dog their daily meals. Snuffle mats rely on your dog's olfactory senses to sniff through the fabric to find their favorite treats or kibble.

HOMEMADE ENRICHMENT IDEAS



Get a drink tray like the ones from Tim Horton's and place a treat in the cup holder and a tennis ball on top to hold the treat in. The dog has to get the tennis ball out in order to get the reward. This is a very simple food puzzle to start with. It should not cause frustration and is great for puppies or dogs learning how to forage.



Play "hide and seek" with treats or toys your dog loves. Set up a daily game of hide-n-seek by distributing food on the floor in various areas of the house. Place food or toys under a chair, beside the couch, behind a curtain, or under a light blanket, be inventive. This activity relies on your dog's sense of smell.



Take a cardboard box and place treats in the box. Close the box up and poke holes in it. Your dog may make a big mess shredding the box, but will enjoy destroying the box to get their treats.

Please supervise your dog to ensure they are not ingesting pieces of cardboard.



During the winter months. Take your dog's kibble and scatter it in the snow for breakfast or dinner. This is the ultimate "hide and seek" game. They really must use their nose with all the competing scents outside. If they have difficulty you can hide larger and smellier treats to start.



DIY Food Puzzles: A "food puzzle" is any toy or object that contains food and requires the pet to work to get the food. Puzzles are usually filled with the pet's daily ration of kibble with a few treats to spice up the hunt.

You can cut a hole in a tennis ball or use an empty paper towel roll covered at both ends with duct tape and cut small holes in the tape at each end of the roll, PVC pipe can also have hole drilled in it used as a food puzzle.

Be creative and if you are unsure about the safety of your food puzzle please call the clinic and ask.