

Mental Enrichment

Increasing Mental Enrichment

Read over the handouts on Enrichment and Kong Stuffing.

- **TOYS** - Increase the amount of interactive toys your dog has to play with. They cannot have too many toys. You can rotate them to help keep them more interesting. They should have many different styles and options. Toys are a great form of mental stimulation (they trigger, hunting, killing, eating, dissection, and play software in your dog).
 - Food-stuffable toys
 - Food-dispensing toys
 - Stuffers they can rip apart
 - Puzzle Toys (i.e. Nina Ottoson)
 - Homemade toys/puzzle toys (checkout the Canine Enrichment Facebook Page)
 - Antlers/Marrow Bones/Bully Sticks they can chew on
- **MEALS** – Feed all of your dog’s meals in either a food dispensing or food stuffable toy or by scattering throughout the living room. Note: If you use a food-stuffable toy like a Kong, you can freeze them so they take longer. I recommend spending one day a week stuffing 3-7, putting them in the freezer so they are ready to go when you need them. Examples:
 - Planet Orbee Snoop Dog Toy
 - Kong Wobbler
 - Buster Cube
 - Large Traditional Kong
 - West Paws Toppl Large and Small (they fit together)
 - West Paws Qwizl (can be stuffed with a bully stick and wet substrate)
 - Snuffle Mats
- **SEARCH** – Teach your dog to play “Search”. You can play when you are home and are going to be distracted, or when you leave him home alone.
 - Ask your dog to sit-stay and place a treat in plain sight about 5 feet away from your dog, remain by the treat. Release with “Search” and then, after, if necessary with your normal release word. Repeat 5 times.
 - Ask your dog to sit-stay and with your dog watching, place a treat just out of sight, remain by the treat. Release with “Search” and then, after, if necessary with your normal release word. Repeat 5 times.
 - Ask your dog to sit-stay and with your dog watching, place a treat in a harder to find location where they can’t really see where you put it, and stay near the treat. Release



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with “Search” and then, after, if necessary with your normal release word. Repeat 5 times.

- Ask your dog to sit-stay and with your dog watching, place a treat in another room, and stay in the room the treat is in. Release with “Search” and then, after, if necessary with your normal release word. Repeat 5 times.
- Ask your dog to sit-stay and with your dog watching, place a treat in another room, then return to your dog. Release with “Search” and then, after, if necessary with your normal release word. Repeat 5 times.
- Practice with other items like a stuffed Kong, favorite toy, food-dispensing toy or several treats, or with his daily meals.

NOTE: If your dog does not immediately find the treat that is okay. Only help him if he gives up on looking. Do not point directly at treat, just stand near it, or place your foot somewhat near it. The goal is have your dog **searching**.



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