

THE KEY TO A HAPPY and healthy dog is regular enrichment which allows them to engage in normal behaviors, such as playing, chasing, smelling, chewing, and scavenging. By allowing your dog to engage in these behaviors, you allow them to be physically, emotionally, and mentally satisfied. Dogs who don't receive stimulation tend to find ways to enrich themselves, resulting in unwanted behaviors that sometimes result in them being surrendered to a shelter.



The following are fun do it yourself projects suggested by the ASPCA. Please ensure that you are always closely and actively supervising your dog while using a do it yourself item. If your dog attempts to ingest an item, remove it immediately from their mouth. These are just the suggestions from the ASPCA website, check out the resource section for even more ideas to further enriching the life of your four-legged friend!

FOOD ENRICHMENT

Making mealtime fun, challenging and interactive is a great way to satisfy your dog's innate instincts and curiosities. Every meal is an opportunity for enrichment, and food puzzles are a great way to slow down your dog's eating and provide mental stimulation. You can easily make the following puzzles with household items!

MUFFIN TIN PUZZLE:

What You'll Need:

Muffin tin, tennis balls and/or other toys, dog or puppy kibble

How To:

Distribute kibble in multiple tins, place toys on top of kibble and watch them search for the kibble.

BOX PUZZLE:

What You'll Need:

Three boxes that can nest in each other, high-value "smelly" treat(s)

How To:

Place treat(s) inside smallest box; fold top of box, watch them seek out the treat.

PAPER ROLL PUZZLE:

What You'll Need:

Toilet paper or paper towel roll, treats

How To:

Fold one end of the roll, place treat(s) inside, fold the other end of the roll.

SNUFFLE MAT:

What You'll Need:

High-pile bathroom mat, or fleece strips tied to a rubber mat, dog or puppy kibble

How To:

Place and hide kibble throughout mat.1.

ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT

Keeping the inside of your home stimulating and fun will help decrease boredom and decrease potential behavioral issues. Get creative! Take a look at the following in-home activities you can offer your dog to promote appropriate behaviors.

INDOOR AGILITY COURSE:

What You'll Need:

Various pieces of furniture/household items, high-value treats

How To:

Using furniture, make a course and reward your dog when they do what they are supposed to do such as go under something or get on top of something. This is not intended to be a fast-paced course, remember you are inside.

MAKE YOUR OWN FLIRT POLE:

What You'll Need:

1" diameter PVC pipe or broom handle, rope, dog toy

How To:

Tie the toy to the rope and the rope to the pipe or broom handle, move around to create a game of chase and catch.

SCENT GAMES/ FIND IT:

Whether you're playing indoor scent games or you're out on a walk, it's incredibly important to allow your dog to use their nose. Sniffing can be stimulating and calming and allows your dog to gather information on their environment. You can help them sniff things out in fun, interesting ways!

What You'll Need:

High-value treats

How To:

Say “find it” and toss a treat close to your dog. When your dog gets the treat praise your dog. After you dog starts to get the game slowly start making it hard. Once dogs learn the game you can begin hiding treats for your do to find. Or take a walk at your dog’s pace allowing your dog to stop, sniff and take in the scents.

RESOURCES

Canine DIY Enrichment | ASPCA

<https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/dog-care/canine-diy-enrichment>

Enrichment Recipes | ASPCA

<https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/dog-care/enrichment-recipes>

Dog Enrichment: Toys, Games and DIY Ideas | preventivevet.com

<https://www.preventivevet.com/dogs/dog-enrichment-toys-games-and-more>

21 Simple Tricks to Make Your Dog Happier, Smarter, and Less Bored Every Day |

The Dog People by rover.com

<https://www.rover.com/blog/dog-enrichment-z/>

