

All dogs need some form of daily enrichment, some dogs need more than others. This document is divided into 3 main uses/types of enrichment. Not all of these ideas will work for every dog so a bit of trial-and-error may be necessary. To keep your dog entertained/interested try using a variety of enrichment activities. The following is by no means an exhaustive list but merely a place to start for enrichment activity ideas. Links are included to show examples. We are not affiliated with these products/websites.

I. CRATE TIME / REST TIME

One of the easiest ways to give your pup enrichment is to have them work for their meals. This can happen in a confined area, like a crate, or in a more open space (e.g. kitchen). You may need to help your dog learn how to use the toy/puzzle when you first introduce it.

Kongs –

- Kongs work well both inside and outside a crate.
- Kongs can be lined and/or stuffed with a variety of healthy foods/treats. You can layer different flavors into the kong and “seal” it with a layer of peanut butter or pumpkin. Add in kibble and/or dry, crunchy treats for variety. Experiment a little to find what your pup enjoys. At the end of this document you will find a list of different foods to try.
- To use Kongs for mealtimes you will portion out their kibble and mix it with some pumpkin or wet food. You may need several Kongs in order to provide their full meal. You can give them a partial meal outside the crate (in the morning before you leave for work) and the remainder of their meal via a Kong placed in the crate when you leave.
- FREEZE the Kong overnight to make dogs have to work extra hard for their meal/treat which works to tire them out.

“Dinner-sicles” –

- “Dinner-sicles” work well both inside and outside a crate.
- Same idea as a Kong but you will use a metal food bowl, or silicon/flexible ice cube trays, or small silicone/flexible baking dishes.
- Prepare it the day before. Use kibble and add something wet (canned food, canned pumpkin, low-sodium chicken broth, plain water, or any combination). Place it in the bowl/trays and freeze overnight. When frozen, dump it out of the metal bowl/ice cube trays into a larger bowl (to contain it). You will have a large, or several smaller, frozen blocks of food your dog can lick/crunch and completely consume.

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II. INDOOR ACTIVITIES

Food-dispensing toys/games can be used for treats or mealtimes. NOTE: Some dogs may try to tear up/eat the puzzle toy dispenser or small parts after the treats are gone so these toys are best used while a human is monitoring!

Kong Wobbler/ Petsafe Magic Mushroom/ Starmark Treat-Dispensing Bob

- These are 3 different forms of dispensing meals (kibble) and/or treats. Dogs have to work for their meal, which helps occupy them and tire them out. These are best used **outside the crate** as dogs need room to push the toy around and kibble drops out (harder to do in a crate and more chance of kibble dropping under/outside the crate)
- Make sure you purchase the right size for your dog.

Snuffle Mats (example [here](#)), **Licki Mats** ([example2](#))

You can purchase these or make your own (search the internet for DIY ideas). Instead of the Licki Mat you might try a silicone mini ice cube tray (try Target or Walmart or a discount store). Freezing the Licki Mat/ice cube tray makes it last longer.

There are many other food-puzzle toys available to purchase, and some you can make at home. Search the internet for "canine puzzle toys" for many more ideas.

Indoor Games / Mental Exercise

- Teach commands/tricks (sit, down, recall/come, shake, high-five, turn around/spin, roll-over, touch/target). Learning is a mental exercise.
- Teach/Play games like Scent Work or Targeting

Here are a few examples to try:

- [Tricks/Sports](#)
- [K9 Nose Work](#)
- [Teaching Target/Touch](#)
- [Two fun brain games](#)
- [More fun brain games](#)

III. OUTDOOR ENRICHMENT WALKS

Walking your dog on-leash is enrichment in itself, but some walks can be made more mentally stimulating (to help further tire out your dog.) A few times a week grab some treats or your pup's favorite toy and try one of the following "enrichment walks".

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Long-line walks: When you get to an area that is quiet (can be a grassy field or a no-traffic parking lot) attach a long leash (25' or so) and let your pup sniff/run around with a bit more freedom. You can toss a ball/toy or use this time to work on "recall".

Training Walks: Stop at various intervals along your route and ask for some basic obedience commands (sit, down, shake, etc – whatever your dog has learned inside he/she can practice outside.)

Agility/Obstacle Course Walks: You don't need specific agility equipment, just your imagination and whatever is available outside. A few examples: Use treats to lure your pup to hop onto a bench and walk across it. When he/she gets really good at it, you can ask for repeats and treat at the end. Some dogs will hop on a rock and sit, shake, etc. You can ask your dog to "circle" a pole or a small bush (carefully maneuvering your leash).

Scent Walks: Bring enough small treats or kibble and when you are in a quiet grassy area (no other animals present) toss a handful into the grass and let your pup "find" their treats. (Note: please don't do this exercise if your dog is a "resource guarder".)

***** Quick & Healthy Treats You Can Stuff In Your Dog's KONG *****

Layer flavors in the Kong or mix them up before stuffing. Try different flavors to find what your dog loves. Use a combo of soft and crunchy. Change it up so your dog doesn't get bored and stays motivated to work on the Kong/Puzzle Toy.

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| 1. Kibble | 23. Liver Paste |
| 2. Training treats | 24. Oats, cooked |
| 3. Small Dog Biscuits | 25. Rice, cooked |
| 4. Jerky – torn into small pieces | 26. Applesauce (no sugar) |
| 5. Carrots – small slices | 27. Plain Greek Yogurt (no xylitol) |
| 6. Celery – small slices | 28. Plain Cheerios |
| 7. Peas | 29. Baby food (no onion or garlic) |
| 8. Blueberries | |
| 9. Blackberries | |
| 10. Strawberries – small slices | |
| 11. Apples – cubed and no seeds | |
| 12. Peaches – no pit | |
| 13. Cantaloupe – small cubes | |
| 14. Banana - mashed or small bits | |
| 15. Watermelon – seedless | |
| 16. Cheese - small cubes or grated | |
| 17. Small pieces of chicken, turkey, or beef | |
| 18. Eggs | |
| 19. Peanut Butter | |
| 20. Canned pumpkin puree (no added sugar) | |
| 21. Cooked sweet potato | |
| 22. Cottage cheese | |