

SOUTH COAST VET CARE ~ TALKING ANIMALS

ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT

Environmental Enrichment means anything that will enrich your dog's environment. Most pet dogs lead very un-stimulated lives and consequently may become destructive – chewing furniture, plants, digging holes, in your garden, pulling the washing off the line, barking excessively etc. Dogs are programmed to work – they need and want a job. A busy dog tends to be a happy one. There are many ideas in this handout, which you can use to keep your dog busy, However, your imagination is the limit. The only criteria should be that you cause no harm to your dog or to others. Have fun with your dog!!.

Please note that the following are suggestions only and may not be suitable for all dogs.

Food related games and toys

Nothing in life is free: Have your dog work for food. It can be as simple as a sit or as complicated as running an agility course. This includes treats; handouts while you are preparing your own meal. Putting his bowl down in front of him etc.

Buster Cubes/Treat Bails: If you feed your dog dry food, then you could feed it in a Buster Cube or treat ball. A Buster cube is a square-shaped ball which you fill with kibble and the dog has to roll it around on the floor to get the kibble out. You can adjust the holes that the kibble comes out of, so as your dog gets better at getting the food out, make the holes smaller. You can also fill with cubed fruit & vegetables e.g diced carrot, apple.

Aussie Dog Home Alone – Available from www.aussiedog.com.au.” For the dog that destroys anything – the washing, the plants, barking, or just wants to have fun!. For the dog that requires a food stimulus to make it play, place a small amount of food in the bail, making a fuss so the dog can see what you are doing. In the dog's attempt to reach the food by pulling the grip. Food will fall around the dog and it will release its grip to get the food. The assembly will spring back above its head”.

Kongs: Kongs are meant to be stuffed!. You can be conventional and stuff them with peanut butter or cream cheese, or you can be creative and feed your dog's dinner in the Kong and then hide it. Tie kongs to keep them anchored in places. Stuff and freeze(it will take your dog longer to get the frozen stuffing out). Use a plug of whitebread, peanut paste or a dried liver treat at the small top opening. Fill the kong with with blended fresh fruit or beef or chicken stock with meaty pieces or kibble and freeze. You can place the frozen kong into an old margarine container (or other plastic container), wrap in several layers of old rags with complicated knots, and then hide. You need to work up to this one- hide and show your dog, so he/she knows the game; initially make the wrapping not too complicated, etc..

Hide them in the house under the couch cushions, behind the doors, under beds or hide them outside – if it's not a problem even bury them.

Scattering: Throw your dog's food out on the lawn. This way he must hunt for his dinner. If you have more than one dog, be sure that they are both getting enough food.

Hiding/freezing: You can hide food around your house or garden in different locations. Take a small pile of food and hide it under the couch cushion, behind the bathroom door, under your kids pile of dirty clothes etc. Just remember where you hid the food in case your dog cannot find it!.

You can **wrap** food in a towel, rags or material and then place it in an ice cream container and hide so that the dog gets better at using his nose.

Freeze some water in an empty margarine container or ice container, into which you have put something the dog really loves – a chunk of meat, chicken wings, a whole carrot, etc. Leave the dog with an ice block. Diluted stock could be used in stead of water.

You can place treats in ice cubes and place them to float in a large container.

Other:

Pizza Deliver (tip it into back yard) – be aware that onions are toxic to dogs.

Provide a variety of raw meaty bones and marrowbones. Give a pigs ear or sheep's ear or a dried bone (Never give any cooked bones to your dog as they can splinter).

Pinata – get a milk carton arid insert a small hole/sand fill with treats and suspend.

Car tyres hanging from tree (or on ground with food in them).

