

Games

Experiencing the interaction given by your dog through play is an absolute joy and should be maximized to its potential. It is a great way to get to know your dog.

There are many different games that you can play, and of course each dog will have their favourite. Your imagination is the limit to the endless number of games you can invent and play, but here are a few to get you started.

Tug-o-war

There are many flexible and durable toys on the market well designed and suited for this purpose. Remember though that the leader in a group should win more time than he loses.

Frisbee

The flying Frisbee is an easy handler sport and tiring canine sport. Purpose made canine Frisbees are best as the children's toy equivalent can be hard for dogs to pick up.

Kong(ing)

The Kong is an odd shaped ball, made from durable rubber that when thrown will land almost anywhere. This will provide endless hours of retrieving fun.

Tennis ball

An old faithful. Make sure that your dog is no danger of getting the ball lodged in his throat, "Oh yes....and should you indulge in this sport and your dog sees a child playing with a similar ball in the street as you're walking passed.....don't be too ready to tell your dog off when he makes a lunge for it, because that what you've taught him to do !"

.N.B Never throw sticks for dogs, because they do stick into the ground and can cause serious injuries to running dogs, and at least splinters in the mouth.

Hide and seek

On your own, or with a helper. One of you hides in the house and ask the dog to find you. A reward at the end will create motivation for the next time. Similarly this game can be played by hiding the dog's favourite toys. Food

filled toys will assist with the detection. Multiple toys will increase the likelihood of success and therefore motivation to participate.

Food filled toys

There are several purpose made, 'food fill able' toys available, which provide great stimulation for the dogs. They are a toy they can play with alone, and I have found that the dog will need a brief lesson or demonstration in how to achieve a reward before the dogs start doing it themselves, but when they've got it, boy have they got it.

A smoked sterilized bone will provide hours of occupation for your dog for minimal cost. They are hollowed beef shinbones, sterilized and then smoked to add interest and flavour for the dogs. They are also a great way to descale teeth. After a while these bones will lose their taste, so to replenish them, filling them with, cheese (*low-fat of course*), a smearing of jam, peanut butter or marmite etc. regenerates the interest. Because the bones are hollow they are easily rinsed out at the end of the day.

The Kong can make an ideal, robust toy to be filled. Shape biscuits 'pop' into the large opening nicely and the dog has to work hard to get them out. Similarly a smearing of a desirable spread has the same effect. Once again the Kong is easily rinsed through. And for a Hot summers day, smear a helping of peanut butter on the inside of the Kong covering the small hole, fill with water, wrap tinfoil around the Kong and support upside down in the freezer. Allow to set, remove the foil and a ready-made *COOL* toy for a hot summers day.

SEARCH AND RESCUE !

For some dogs, the everyday mundane routines we have, are no where near stimulating enough for them and this can lead to problems both in and out of the house.

Setting time aside and providing them with quality, stimulating time through play and games, we can begin to transform their lives and characters into fuller and richer ones.

Imagination is the only restriction upon the games you can play with your dog.

Here is a game to get you started:

- Use a large cardboard box – the bigger the better - and fill it with crunched up newspaper.

- Throw or place your dog's favourite toy or treats into the box. Scatter several treats amongst the papers to provide frequent rewards.
- Encourage your dog to jump into the box. Try using an encouraging voice or familiar command such as "FIND IT" to encourage the initial jumping in.
- If your dog cannot, or shows a reluctance to jump in, then have the cardboard box lay on its side, to make the game easier.

Your dog will have hours of fun delving beneath the scrunched up newspapers in search of that ever-elusive 'FOOD'

Buster – Cubes / Balls

These food - treat balls and cubes are ideal pacification toys. They are filled with the dog's favourite treats and then the dog has to manoeuvre the toy in a particular way to make the food drop out of the receptacle.