

Environmental Enrichment

or **Boredom Busting**

Boredom is the biggest cause of destructiveness in dogs. We need to provide and encourage our dogs to do what we deem is allowable, yet still fun for him. Otherwise he will amuse himself, and there is a fair chance that some of his choices will be incorrect.

Most dogs think that shoes make great chew toys,
and pot plants have great bits to eat hidden down the bottom.

In the wild

Dogs are social animals that live in a pack.

Dogs spend most of their day looking for food generally following a scent trail

In our backyard

We lock them in on their own while we go to work.

We provide food in a bowl that is usually gone in 5 minutes.

What happens for the rest of the day?? **Boredom!**

Except that rubbish bin was great fun for 3 hours pulling it apart and finding all those lovely smelly food scraps down the bottom.

We need to do something more interesting than just toys scattered around the yard, as hey it gets a bit boring playing with the same toys on your own every day. Try alternating toys, changing them every few days gives them more value. Save his favourite toy for when you leave and when you return take it away again. Do this with a big shin bone too, hours of enjoyment there but when you're home he has you instead.

KONGS – Stuffed of course, try packing them with all different sorts of food, the more ingenious you are at stuffing them the longer your dog will spend trying to get the food out. In summer pour some stock or casserole in and put them in the freezer overnight, doggy iceblocks.

BUSTER CUBES – A great predatory chase toy especially for the working breeds, and when they get lucky (or skillful) there's food in it too.

SCENT TRAILS – With your dog out of sight, trail a piece of cabanossi around your yard for him to sniff out, around boxes, behind bushes etc, leaving the piece there for the reward when he gets to the end of the trail of course. At first don't make this too difficult until he gets the hang of it, especially when you start be careful to not cross your own trail, save this for when he is super at it!

FOOD SCOUTING – Again while he is not looking scatter or hide food around your yard for him to hunt out and eat. To start with make it easy until he has the idea.

DON'T FORGET WITH FOOD GAMES THAT WHAT GOES INTO THE GAME DOESN'T GO INTO THE BOWL, OR YOU'LL END UP WITH A VERY FAT DOG.

DIGGING – Build your dog a sandpit in an acceptable place, bury some bones there and some dog toys for him to find. Bury some items with different scents, too, nose exercise.

TELEVISION – If he's not a barker build a viewing platform, so he can sit and watch the world go past outside. Make sure it's not a platform to escape though!

TIMING – A long walk and his main meal just before you leave should have him in siesta mode at least for the first few hours.

AND DON'T FORGET THAT 10 MINUTES TRAINING = 30 MINUTES EXERCISE