

Food enrichment is a great interactive activity for dogs that can help decrease the arousal and stress levels in the shelter or home environment by providing dogs an outlet to use their senses and give them the opportunity to work for food. Although dogs get out for walks and exercise it is equally important that they have opportunities of mental stimulation, an easy way this can be achieved is through food enrichment. This activity can help dogs associate their environment with something interesting by using their nose to sniff out treats or their meal.

What do the dogs learn?

Food enrichment activities will teach dogs to:

- Work for their food for mental stimulation, it can help keep dogs occupied with a fun game while you are not present or during crate training.
- Develop gross motor skills through manipulating objects.
- Enjoy the thrill of using their nose to sniff out hidden treats.
- To encourage and stimulate their senses.

What is a Frozen Treats?

Frozen treats are easy to make and can be used in hiding games or simply as an alternative treat for your dog. They can be made in varying shape moulds including silicon baking moulds and small tubs. This food enrichment is great in summer to keep dogs cool in the hot weather.

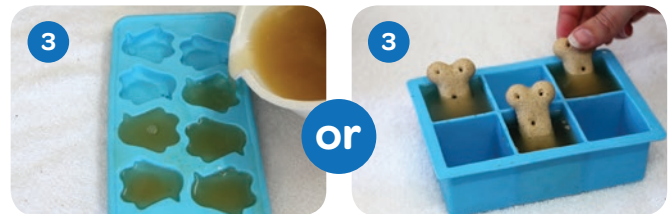
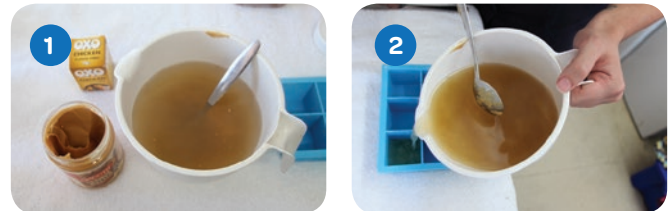


How to Prepare Frozen Treats

Ensure the mould you are going to use has been thoroughly cleaned before preparing the meal. Frozen treats can be made with various dog friendly foods, however our most common recipe is:

Method

1. Mix Chicken or Beef Stock with peanut butter and hot water.
2. Place chicken stock or wet food in different moulds and place biscuits on top.
3. Cover, Date and Freeze
4. Sweet option: Plain yoghurt, blueberries and banana.



Carrying out food enrichment

You can make your treats using a mix of different wet food and biscuits or stock, so get creative and see what your dog prefers. Once frozen, pop the frozen treat out of the mould. Once the dog is calm, ask for a "sit", place the treat on the floor and monitor the dog. If they become frustrated or uninterested you may like to try a different food enrichment activity.

Tip: ensure the floor area is an easy cleanable surface as this food enrichment can make a little mess!



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What is a Kong?

A Kong is a Rubber food dispensing toy, it comes in various sizes and rubber strengths for all types and sizes of dogs.



Read label to ensure it is appropriate for your dog. Kongs are very useful to occupy busy minds and are a lot of fun for them!

How to Prepare a Kong

Ensure it has been thoroughly cleaned and all left over food has been removed from the inside the Kong from previous use. Kongs can be stuffed with various dog friendly foods this is our most common recipes

Adult dogs:

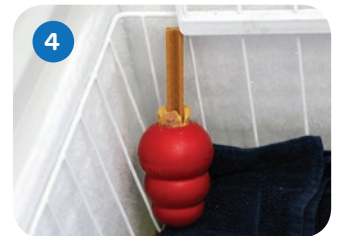
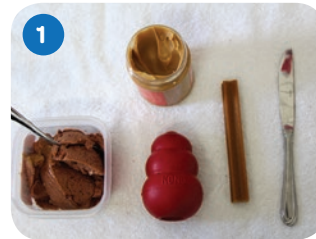
Stuff the Kong using adult kibble and adult wet food.

Puppies:

Stuff the kong for puppies using puppy wet food and puppy kibble.

Optional:

- Place a “stick” type treat in the end of the Kong to create a popsicle style treat.
- Place Kong’s into the freezer to use the following day. Ensure you use them within 3 days of making.



- Tip: Do not use Gravy based wet food as the gravy leaks out before it gets a chance to freeze!
- Peanut butter is a great base as it tastes great and holds the kibble together.

Carrying out food enrichment

Once the dog is calm ask for a “sit”, place the Kong down on the floor and monitor the dog for the first few minutes. If the dog becomes frustrated or uninterested you may like to try a different food enrichment activity or you may need to encourage them to start.

Once the dog has finished eating the Kong remove the toy for cleaning. If you leave the Kong out the dog may start to lose interest or become destructive while trying to get more food even though it’s not there! Thoroughly rinse out any leftover food followed by a thorough clean. Once Kong is dry you can re-stuff and freeze for the following day.

Tip: have a few Kongs in the freezer so that you can rotate them out and your dog isn’t having to wait for Kongs to freeze to have fun!



The Nose game activity is a great interactive activity for dogs that can help decrease the arousal and stress levels in the shelter or home environment by providing the dogs an outlet to use their senses and give them the opportunity to work for food. Although dogs get out for walks and exercise it is equally important that they have opportunities of mental stimulation, an easy way this can be achieved is through food enrichment. This activity can help dogs associate their environment with something interesting by using their nose to sniff out treats or their meal.

What do the dogs learn?

The Nose game activity will teach dogs to:

- Work for their food for mental stimulation.
- Develop gross motor skills through manipulating objects.
- Enjoy the thrill of using their nose to sniff out hidden treats.
- To encourage and stimulate their senses.

What is Nose Games?

This activity is really simple and stimulating, all it requires is a room, some objects, tasty treats and the dog! This activity starts by hiding treats in plain view so your dog can find them. Then you can advance from hiding them in, behind or on objects while the dog in the room to them becoming more of an expert by hiding the treats while the dog is outside of the room.



How do you do it?

1. Place the objects randomly throughout the room. Get the dog into a calm sit on lead with handler. Helper places treat in front of any of the objects. Be sure that the dog sees you doing this. Over dramatize the placement of the treat if you have to. Start off just placing 1 treat.
2. Helper to step back from objects, handler with dog to say "find it" and let the dog explore till they do. Once they find the treat mark this behaviour with the "click" from a clicker or verbal praise "YES!" followed by calm patting and praise "good dog".
3. Start building from one treat up to multiple ones as the dog progresses through the steps.
4. To make things more challenging for the dog, place treats behind or on top of the objects.
5. You can also remove the animal from sight while you hide the treats before bringing them back in and asking them to find it.

What will you need?

- Objects or items like – cardboard boxes, puzzle mats plastic cups
- Tasty treats
- You may need 2 people, one to handle the dog and the other to hide the treats.
- Longline if working in a big area.
- Clicker (optional)



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What do the dogs learn?

The Pass the parcel activity will teach shelter dogs to:

- Work for their food for mental stimulation
- Develop gross motor skills through manipulating objects.
- Enjoy the thrill of using their nose to sniff out hidden treats.
- To encourage and stimulate their senses.

What is pass the parcel?

This activity is really simple and stimulating. It's where a dog can channel their destructive tendencies on something acceptable. This activity is just like at a child's birthday party, pass the parcel is the same concept, Goodies hidden inside wrapping paper or box.

What will you need?

- Sturdy cardboard box and newspaper
- Tasty treats
- Toys

How do you make the parcel?

1. Use a Sturdy cardboard box, remove any staples or cello tape that may cause harm if swallowed, place bits of tasty treats on the inside of the box along with crumpled up newspaper and a selection of soft or hard toys.
2. Wrap the box using newspaper!
3. Make sure you hide treats in the wrapping so they can use their senses to dig it out.



How do you carry out the activity?

Once the dog is calm ask for a "sit", place the parcel down on the floor and monitor the dog for the first few minutes. If the dog becomes frustrated or uninterested you may like to try a different enrichment activity or you may need to encourage them to start. You can do this by encouraging the dog to open the parcel by nudging the box or slightly ripping at one corner.

It's ok if they make a mess, it is part of the fun!

Once the dog has thoroughly investigated the parcel and eaten all the treats, it's time for clean up!



Read and relax is a great bonding activity for dogs and people, this can help decrease the arousal and stress levels in the shelter or home environment by providing a calm atmosphere. Although dogs get out for walks and exercise it is equally important that they have opportunities to learn self-soothing, an easy way this can be achieved is through human interaction enrichment. This activity can help dogs to self soothe to be calm while having a person present.

What do the dogs learn?

The Read and Relax activity will teach dogs to:

- Lower their stress levels in kennel and home environments.
- Enjoy the presence of a human without having to be the centre of attention.
- To become accustomed to quiet time.

What will you need?

- A sturdy chair to sit on
- Appropriate books to read from
- Yourself!

How do you do it?

Choose a suitable place to do this activity, somewhere calm with minimal distraction. Place the chair up against a wall along with a dog bed beside it.

After an initial calm greeting, encourage the dog to sit in the bed using the cue “Bed”, Praise the dog verbally or by touch when the dog goes to his/her bed.

Once the dog is relaxed, sit on the chair and begin reading out loud to the dog with a conversational/expressive voice.

If the dog is coming over to you for a sniff or nuzzle, encourage the dog back to its bed and use the cue “Bed”. Praise the dog verbally or by touch when the dog goes to his/her bed

You should spend at least 15 minutes for this activity to give the dog the opportunity to settle and have a good amount of calm time. Use your judgement on this – if it has taken the dog a long time to settle you may like to stay for a little while longer so that the dog has a reasonable amount of quiet time.



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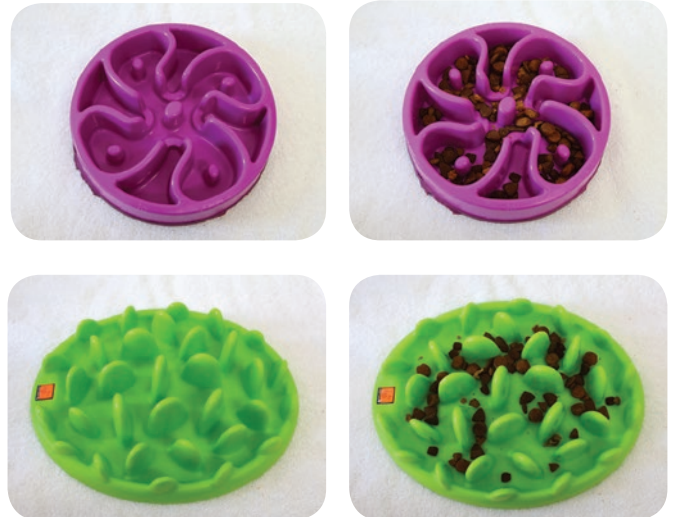
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What is a Slow feeder?

A Slow feeder is a bowl that is specifically designed to prevent dogs from gulping their meals. They are typically have ridges or other barriers that break up the bowls surface area, which prevents the dog being able to inhale their food in quick gulps. With the design of the bowls the dog is having to work to reach their food which slows down their eating as well as providing mental stimulation.



How to Prepare Slow feeders

Ensure it has been thoroughly cleaned and all left over food has been removed from the slow feeder from previous use. Slow feeders can be filled with various dog friendly foods, fillings or their daily meal but a good way to start is to scatter dry kibble throughout the slow feeder and add a small amount of wet food to encourage the dog to start eating/licking at the food.

Carrying out food enrichment

Once the dog is calm ask for a “sit”, place the Slow feeder down on the floor and monitor the dog for the first few minutes. If the dog becomes frustrated or uninterested you may like to try a different food enrichment activity or you may need to encourage them to start.

Once the dog has finished eating remove the Slow feeder for cleaning. If you leave the slow feeder out the dog may start to lose interest or become destructive while trying to get more food even though it’s not there! Thoroughly rinse out any leftover food followed by a thorough clean.

Tip: Ensure your slow feeder bowl has non-slip grips underneath and is specially designed to prevent it from sliding across the floor, or the dog from being able to pick it up or toss it around!

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What is a TV dinner?

These are frozen whole meals. They can be made in various moulds such as ice cream containers, silicon baking moulds or small buckets/tubs. This food enrichment is great in summer to keep dogs cool in the hot sunny weather. Adding water dilutes the nutritional value of the Kibble and wet food. Increase feeding amount slightly to compensate for the dilution.

How to Prepare TV Dinners

Ensure the mould has been thoroughly cleaned before preparing the meal. TV dinners can be filled with various dog friendly foods this is our most common recipe

- Place appropriate amount of dry kibble into a mould.



- Add a small amount of wet (canned food) and then water (e.g.. 2 cups dry food + a couple of table spoons of wet food + 2 cups water (for medium - large sized dog).
- Mix thoroughly.
- Cover, Date and Freeze
- Tip: gravy based wet food is the best to use. Instead of water you can also use chicken or beef stock



Carrying out food enrichment

Pop the frozen TV dinner out of its mould, once the dog is calm ask for a “sit”, place the block down on the floor and monitor the dog for the first few minutes. If the dog becomes frustrated or uninterested you may like to try a different food enrichment activity or you may need to encourage them to start.

Tip: ensure the floor area is an easy cleanable surface as this food enrichment can make some mess!

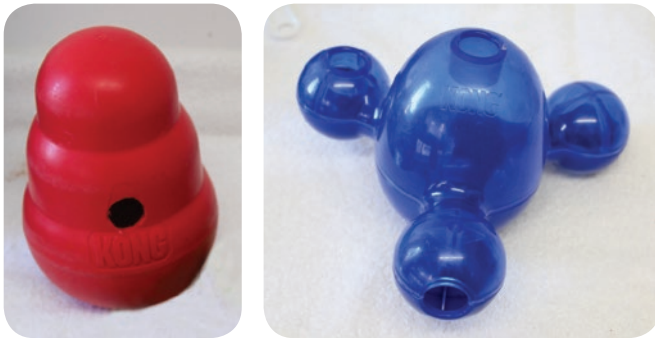


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What is a Wobbler or puzzle toy?

Wobblers and puzzle toys can come in a wide range of designs and sizes. These are fantastic toys that are designed to encourage the dog to work for their food by manipulating the object. Dogs use their feet or nose to move, flick or flip the object to reveal the food from the inside. These are a great boredom buster for those extra smart dogs!



How to Prepare a Wobbler or puzzle toy

Adult dogs:

For adults use Adult Kibble

Puppies:

For puppies use Puppy Kibble.

Tip: Don't use wet food as it won't come out of the Wobbler or puzzle toy, can frustrate the dog and can be extremely hard to clean out thoroughly!



Carrying out food enrichment

Once the dog is calm ask for a "sit", place the wobbler or puzzle toy down on the floor and monitor the dog for the first few minutes. If the dog becomes frustrated or uninterested you may like to try a different food enrichment activity or you may need to encourage them to start by batting around the object to reveal the food.

Once the dog has finished eating remove the toy for cleaning. If you leave the toy out the dog may start to lose interest or become destructive to try and get more food even though it's not there! Thoroughly rinse out any leftover food followed by a thorough clean. Once the toy is dry you can re-use for the next meal.

Tip: Have a few different Puzzle toys and swap out with each meal to keep your dog interested and enthusiastic.

