



Fun ‘N’ Games with Fido

One of the most common causes of behavioural problems in dogs is a lack of sufficient mental and physical stimulation. When an optimal amount is regularly being provided, your dog will naturally be calmer, more relaxed and likely to behave appropriately.

There are obvious health benefits to providing our dogs *and* ourselves with such exercise, yet a lot of people nowadays can hardly find the time to provide for the needs of their families, never mind their dogs. These games will actually help to maximize the time you do have and will also keep them out of trouble until your next round of play.

1) **Bubbles.** Exercising your dog with bubbles is probably the easiest and certainly one of the most fun games you can play together. Simply dip the stick and blow! Your dog will go crazy jumping up and running after the bubbles. Peanut butter scented bubbles for dogs can be purchased at some local pet stores.

2) **Go Fish.** Make a fishing rod out of a 2’ – 3’ long stick, 3’ – 4’ of industrial strength string, and a toy or piece of material, such as a ripped up stuffed toy. Tie the toy to one end of the string and the stick to the other. Hold the stick in your hand and drag the toy along the ground directly in front of your dog’s nose trying to encourage him to chase it. Initially, make it easy for your dog to catch the toy, but as he improves, make it harder by giving it quick tugs anytime he gets close to it, dragging it faster along the ground away from him and tossing it up into the air so he has to leap up to try and get it.

3) **Doggy Pinata.** A great game for dogs that spend time in a pen or dog run when alone, such as at a boarding facility, or just to play out in your backyard. Puncture a few holes, more if you want to make it easier, in the bottom of a clean, empty paint can (these can be purchased inexpensively from a hardware or paint store). Fill the can up with your dog’s dinner or some favourite treats that will fit through the holes then cover the top with the lid. Using a bungee cord (to make the can bounce when the dog hits it), hang the can a few inches above your dogs head from a rafter or tree branch. He then has to ‘hit’ or ‘bump’ the can to get the food out. A great way to make him work for his dinner!

4) **Stuffed Kong* Hide & Seek.** Definitely a more fun and interactive way for your dog to have dinner! This game is perfect for when you are away from home for any length of time, especially for dogs with minor separation issues or those that are noisy or destructive when alone, or for puppies being left in a crate as it will give them something productive and appropriate to focus on.

First, stuff the Kongs with food. The more Kongs the better. Then, hide them in easy to find places around your house or yard, leaving them semi-visible to your dog. Once hidden, give

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your dog a cue to “Find it.” As he catches on to this cue start making the hiding spots more challenging, eventually putting your dog out of sight while you hide them. If you are going out, tell him to “Find it” just before you leave.

Kong Stuffing Ideas:

- a) Moisten your dog’s food with warm water until it becomes soft. In the narrow end of the Kong, seal the hole with a bit of peanut butter and then stuff a few meaty treats, such as Rollover, Natural Balance or freeze dried liver into it (the smell of these will keep your dog working at the toy). Stuff the rest of the Kong with the moistened dog food (canned or raw food can also be used), packing it as tightly as you can. It can be hidden like this or placed in the freezer overnight and given to your dog frozen.
- b) Stuff the bottom hole as above. Pour in a mixture of dry dog food and plain, no fat yogurt, using enough that, when frozen, the kibble will stick together. Place in the freezer overnight.
- c) Fill the bottom hole as above. Next, put in a Kong Stuff n’ Snap (a Kong shaped cookie) or any cookie that can’t easily fall through the opening at the top, filling the rest of the space with dry food and a bit of peanut butter or cheese whiz to keep it inside.

See what kind of Kong stuffing creations you can come up with, but always ensure that your dogs’ dinner is appropriately adjusted by the amount of food fed from them each day.

**A Kong is a beehive shaped, hollow rubber toy. All Kong Co. products can be purchased at your local pet store.*