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## ENRICHING the DOG'S LIFE and ENVIRONMENT

Dogs are just like us. They crave activities and mental stimulation on a DAILY basis. Unfortunately, due to our own busy schedules, many dogs' lives are devoid of activities that are essential for their physical and mental health. *They are simply bored out of their skulls!*

Here are some ideas to help:

- Daily exercise and play means dog is less likely to get into troublesome behaviors.
  - Retrieving, playtime with other friendly dogs in a safely fenced area (or possibly daycare visits), long walks with plenty of time to sniff and explore, hide and seek, swimming
- Food puzzles – dog works at the puzzle to gain access to the food trapped inside
  - Some are designed for soft/sticky food, and promote licking (like a Kong)
  - Some hold dry treats and kibble, and promote active manipulation to get food to drop out (like those pictured below). If your dog likes his regular dry dog food, you can have him earn his meals from toys like these, instead of just placing a boring bowl of food down at mealtime.



- Scatter dry food over a large area of floor or yard and let dog gleefully scavenge for his meal! (*Do not do this if there are safety concerns with a dog who guards food.*)
- Offer a *variety* of safe, enjoyable toys and chews
- For dogs who like to dig, create a doggie sandbox in one corner of the yard. Bury special toys and treats under the surface.
- Buy a preformed plastic kiddie pool for his bathing enjoyment! Toss some toys and treats into the water so he has to go fishing for them.
- For outdoor fun in the sun, make a frozen popsicle. Freeze some low-sodium chicken broth and treats in a plastic container, then pop the frozen treat out of the container for his slurping enjoyment.
- Teach your dog the “treasure hunt” game. Hide special toys, treats and food puzzles around the house or yard. Start easy, then gradually makes the hides more challenging.
- Consider getting involved in some type of structured dog sport, like nosework, agility, flyball, frisbee, lure coursing, obedience, freestyle, etc.