



The Magic of Bones & Chew Toys

Bones

Beef Marrow Bones - Dogs love the natural flavor of beef marrow bones. They'll eat the marrow from inside the bones and then chew on the rest. Buy at any supermarket in the meat department and keep frozen until ready to use. Boil for 5 minutes, let cool down, and serve.

Beef Knuckle Bones - A natural knuckle bone that has residue of meat left on the surface. You can also get in the meat department from your local supermarket. Dogs love them and it will provide hours of entertainment. Boil for 5 minutes, let cool and serve.

Ham Bones - Sold at supermarkets and pet stores both raw and already cooked. Will provide hours of entertainment for your dog. Boil for 5 minutes, let cool and serve.

Cow Legs - Huge natural bones that can satisfy the most voracious chewer. Great for pits, rotties, doxies, german shepherds and other powerful breeds. Buy at your local supermarket. Will provide hours of entertainment for your dog. Boil for 5 minutes, let cool and serve

Bully Sticks - Comes in all different widths and lengths sold in most pet stores. Your dog will love to chew on his bully stick whenever you leave the house. A great natural stress reliever.

Greenies - Your dog will love the great taste of these healthy treats. Comes in all different sizes. Only buy the new and improved digestible formula Greenies.

Chew Toys

KONG® - Made of Ultra-Flex, puncture resistant, natural rubber. The hollow center can be stuffed with food or treats to keep your dog busy. Kong toys are unmatched for resilience, durability and bounce. Nontoxic. Most people use cream cheese, peanut butter, or yogurt to "glue" food into the Kong.

Big Kahuna® - Constructed of heavy-duty materials and a protected squeaker designed to withstand rigorous play. Perfect for the park or pool – it floats!

Buster Cube® - Stimulates your dog with food, fun & puzzle. Appeals to dogs' foraging instincts, dog is rewarded with food or treats. Easy to clean & fill made of high impact plastic.

Molecule Ball® - Keeps your dog mentally stimulated, physically active and very happy. Reduces boredom and destructive behavior. Treats come out in a controlled manner rather than all at once. It is easy to clean and refill. Durable & soft, it won't damage carpets, wood floors or furniture.

Stuffing chew toys

Stuffing chew toys is another wonderful thing we can do for our dogs. By stuffing hollow toys with the dogs' daily ration, we help them to settle down quietly with an exciting project and develop a strong preference for those toys (so that, when they are bored at home, they will chew on the toy rather than the sofa or shoes).

***There are limitless ways to stuff a chew toy, experiment and find what works best for you!**

- a. Get a hollow toy made of a natural product, like bone or rubber.
- b. Soak a portion of the dog's daily ration overnight, so that it expands and becomes mushy.
- c. Smear honey around the inside of the toy. This makes the toy even more delicious, and also acts as an antibacterial agent.
- d. Fill the chew toy just shy of the end with soaked kibble.
- e. Seal the end(s) of the toy with some wet dog food or peanut butter.

Once the dog has gotten very good at chewing the toy, you can begin freezing it: Not only does it take the dog longer to get all of the food out (giving the dog a longer period of calm, engaged activity), but the cold is very soothing on the teeth and gums.

Isn't it mean/teasing the dog to make it so hard to get her food?

On the contrary, it's much kinder than giving him/her all her food at once in a bowl. In the wild, much of an animal's time is taken up with finding food. If you give an animal food in a bowl, his/her activity for the morning and evening lasts a minute or two, and s/he has nothing to do for the rest of the day. Giving food in a chew toy gives your dog an activity that is engaging but calming, and keeps him/her quietly busy for quite some time. Dogs that are bored who eat out of bowls quickly gobble their food and then entertain themselves by barking, pacing, whining or through destructive activities. Dogs who eat out of stuffed chew toys settle down happily for twenty or forty minutes for a good chew, and then, relaxed and sleepy, take a nap.

Chew toys stuffed with food are obviously the most alluring objects around to chew on, and the dogs quickly develop a strong preference for those toys. When they need a chew during the day, while you are absent, they'll seek out their chew toys rather than the myriad inappropriate objects they could chew on in the house. (Of course, a new dog should never be given the run of the house until s/he is fully trained).

Dog Toys: You Need Them!

For dogs and other animal companions, toys are not a luxury, but a necessity. Toys help fight boredom in dogs left alone, and toys can even help prevent some problem behaviors from developing. Although cats can be pretty picky when it comes to enjoying particular toys—ignoring a \$10 catnip mouse and marveling over a piece of crumpled newsprint—dogs are often more than willing to "play" with any object they can get their paws on. That means you'll need to be particularly careful when monitoring your dog's playtime to prevent any "unscheduled" activities.

"Safe" Toys

Many factors contribute to the safety or danger of a toy, and a number of them depend upon your dog's size, activity level, and preferences. Another factor to be considered is the environment in which your dog spends his time. Although we can't guarantee your dog's enthusiasm or his safety with any specific toy, we can offer the following guidelines:

Be Cautious

The things that are usually most attractive to dogs are often the very things that are the most dangerous. Dog-proof your home by removing string, ribbon, rubber bands, children's toys, pantyhose, and anything else that could be ingested.

Toys should be appropriate for your dog's size. Balls and other toys that are too small can easily be swallowed or become lodged in your dog's throat.

Avoid or alter any toys that aren't "dog-proof" by removing ribbons, strings, eyes, or other parts that could be chewed and/or ingested. Discard toys that start to break into pieces or have pieces torn off.

Ask your veterinarian about which rawhide toys are safe and which aren't. Unless your veterinarian says otherwise, "chewies" like hooves, pig's ears, and rawhides should only be played with under your supervision. Very hard rubber toys are safer and last longer.

Take note of any toy that contains a "squeaker" buried in its center. Your dog may feel that he must find and destroy the source of the squeaking, and he could ingest it—in which case squeaking objects should also be used under your supervision.

Check labels for child safety. Look for stuffed toys that are labeled as safe for children under three years of age and that don't contain any dangerous fillings. Problem fillings include things like nutshells and polystyrene beads, but even "safe" stuffings aren't truly digestible. Remember that soft toys are not indestructible, but some are sturdier than others. Soft toys should be machine washable.

Toys We Recommend

Active Toys:

- Very hard rubber toys, such as Kong®-type products and Nylabone®-type products, are available in a variety of shapes and sizes and are fun for chewing and for carrying around.
- "Rope" toys are usually available in a "bone" shape with knotted ends but you **MUST** keep an eye out for any that could be chewed through, and discard them.
- Tennis balls make great dog toys, but also keep an eye out for any that could be chewed through, and discard them.

Distraction Toys:

- Kong-type toys, especially when filled with broken-up treats—or, even better, a mixture of broken-up treats and peanut butter—can keep a puppy or dog busy for hours. Only by chewing diligently can your dog get to the treats, and then only in small bits. Double-check with your veterinarian about whether or not you should give peanut butter to your dog. Be sure to choose a Kong-type toy of appropriate size for your dog.
- "Busy-box" toys are large rubber cubes with hiding places for treats. Only by moving the cube around with his nose, mouth, and paws can your dog get to the goodies.

Comfort Toys:

- Soft stuffed toys are good for several purposes, but aren't appropriate for all dogs. For some dogs, the stuffed toy should be small enough to carry around. For dogs who want to shake or "kill" the toy, the toy should be the size that "prey" would be for that size dog (mouse-size, rabbit-size, or duck-size).
- Dirty laundry, such as an old t-shirt, pillowcase, towel, or blanket, can be very comforting to a dog, especially if the item smells like you! Be forewarned that the item could be destroyed by industrious fluffing, carrying, and nosing.

Get the Most Out of Toys

- Rotate your dog's toys weekly by making only a few toys available at a time. Keep a variety of types easily accessible. If your dog has a favorite, like a soft "baby," you may want to leave it out all the time.
- Provide toys that offer variety—at least one toy to carry, one to "kill," one to roll, and one to "baby."
- "Hide and Seek" is a fun game for dogs to play. "Found" toys are often much more attractive than a toy which is obviously introduced. Making an interactive game out of finding toys or treats is a good "rainy-day" activity for your dog, using up energy without the need for a lot of space.
- Many of your dog's toys should be interactive. Interactive play is very important for your dog because he needs active "people time"—and such play also enhances the bond between you and your pet. By focusing on a specific task—such as repeatedly returning a ball, Kong, or Frisbee®, or playing "hide-and-seeK" with treats or toys—your dog can expel pent-up mental and physical energy in a limited amount of time and space. This greatly reduces stress due to confinement, isolation, and boredom. For young, high-energy, and untrained dogs, interactive play also offers an opportunity for socialization and helps them learn about appropriate and inappropriate behavior, such as jumping up or being mouthy.