



# *Enrich, Engage, Enjoy:* Helping Your Dog Live Their Best Life

## ***The Starter's Guide to Dog Enrichment***

This guide will help you understand why enrichment is important for dogs, and provide you with creative and low-cost ideas to enrich your dog's life to make them happier and healthier!

### **What is Enrichment?**

Enrichment simply means adding mental stimulation into an animal's daily routine. Animals perform a huge range of behaviours every day in order to survive in the wild. As animals have their needs met by humans (like food), some behaviours don't need to be performed daily. However, the need to perform them hasn't necessarily gone away. Think about some of the behaviours your dog does regularly - what might be the purpose?

<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Original Purpose</b>
Barking at Strangers	Alerting humans or other dogs to a threat
Burying Items	Burying food to eat later or hide from other animals
Chasing Squirrels	Hunting prey in order to eat
Chewing on Furniture	Chewing relieves teething pain and keeps teeth healthy
Digging in Blankets	Digging outdoors can expose cool dirt to help regulate temperature
Eating Garbage	Dogs naturally scavenge as part of their diet
Herding	Developed from the first part of chasing prey - stalking
Rolling in Smells	Masking smell during hunting, bringing smells back to family to investigate

Enrichment activities are a way of giving dogs a chance to fulfill the need to perform some of these natural behaviours, but in a safe and appropriate setting. It is the perfect way to engage your dog's mind, alleviate boredom, and reduce unwanted behaviours.

# Why Enrichment?

Enrichment is essential for a dog's overall well-being. It helps to:

- **Stimulate the Mind:** Keeps your dog's brain active and sharp.
- **Reduces Anxiety & Boredom:** Alleviates stress through engaging activities.
- **Enhance Bonding:** Strengthens the relationship between you and your dog.
- **Reduce Problem Behaviours:** provides appropriate outlets for barking, digging, chewing
- **Make Walks More Fun:** Before heading out for a walk, 5-10 minutes of pre-walk enrichment can help manage your dog's excitement, especially if you're working on loose-leash walking.

## Using Enrichment:

*\*Note: you should always supervise your dog when you give enrichment. If they are having trouble figuring out what to do - help them! They'll be master puzzle solvers in no time.*

### Food and Scent Activities:

- Hide bits of kibble or treats around the house or in the backyard for your dog to find. You can hide treats underneath containers so your dog has to figure out how to flip them over and access the food.
- Use a snuffle mat or a box filled with recycling materials to create a fun scent game.
- Scatter kibble or treats on an old towel. Roll it up and let your dog unwrap it! Once your dog understands the game, you can make it more challenging by tying it in a knot.

### Interactive Toys:

- Offer a frozen meal from a Toppl, Rumbi, Kong, or slow feeder bowl. Simply fill the toy with kibble, water, or broth, seal with a tasty spread like peanut butter, and freeze.
- Layer wet food, kibble and a few tasty treats in an ice cube mold. Fill with water, then pop it out for your dog to lick at.

### Training Sessions:

- Make a list of all the tricks your dog knows. Put them onto pieces of paper and randomly pick 3 each day to practice! You can also put the list into an online random generator if you

don't want to use paper.

- Suitcase Game - Place an open suitcase in front of you. Give your dog a treat each time they look, move or interact with the suitcase.
- Practice one day of the Relaxation Protocol to help your dog maintain calmness.

### **Fetch with a Twist:**

- Incorporate simple training commands during a game of fetch. Ask your dog for a behaviour before throwing the toy to add a mental challenge.
- Sit on a carpeted floor with your legs extended. Toss a treat in one direction, and let your dog chase it. When they look up, toss a treat in the other direction, so your dog has to go over your legs to chase it. Repeat until your treats are gone.

## **Recommended Food Toys and Recipes**

Explore a variety of food toys to keep your dog entertained:

- Food toys: [Toppl](#), [Rumbl](#), [Kong](#), [lick mats](#), [slow feeder bowl](#), [snuffle mat](#)
- Food toy [recipes](#)

### **Simple Food Toy Recipe**

1. **Ingredients:** Kibble, water or broth, peanut butter or cream cheese.
2. **Preparation:** Fill the toy with kibble, add water or broth, seal with a spread, and freeze.
  - Tip for enrichment water: boil meat to use as treats (eg. chicken heart) then save the water to use in frozen enrichments. Tuna is another great low-fat treat. Save the water from the tuna can for dog enrichment activities!

## **Join Our Community**

For more useful dog tips and tricks, join our community on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#). We'll keep you posted via our mailing list on upcoming classes or other training opportunities. To get in touch, email us at [hello@mosaicdogs.com](mailto:hello@mosaicdogs.com) or at [mosaicdogs.com](http://mosaicdogs.com).

We hope this guide inspires you to incorporate more enrichment activities into your dog's daily routine. Happy training!