



## MIND STIMULATION GAMES

### *Some fun games to play with your dog*

These games can help calm hyperactive dogs or they can be used in the short term while other forms of exercise are difficult or impossible, such as when your dog is on crate rest after injury or operation.

But they are not an excuse for not walking your dog - nothing replaces adequate daily sniff walks.

- 1) Scent trails - Lay a short trail with bits of food for your dog to follow. End it with a small pile. You can use treats but its best to use part of your dog's daily food ration.
- 2) Stuffed Kongs, food cubes - Feeding part of your dog's daily food ration in a Kong or food cube makes your dog work more for its food.
- 3) Scatter food in the garden, or on the patio or deck for your dog to find.
- 4) Snuffle mats – these can be bought, or use a long pile mat or rug. Scatter your dog's food across it and watch him spend many happy minutes finding the goodies.
- 5) Hide and seek 1 – hide small amounts of food in small plastic containers or bottles – your dog has to seek them out then wait for you to come to open the container or bottle so he can have the food. Or play “Guess which” by hiding food under one of several similar containers for him to find.
- 6) Hide and seek 2 – you hide your dog's favourite toy in whatever ingenious places you can find! (e.g. under cushions or flowerpots, under the sofa, in the watering can etc, etc) Play a game with him with the toy when he finds it. Start with letting him see you hide it and gradually move to hiding it without him seeing. (Advanced: hide two different toys and teach him to find the one you want on cue – “find teddy” or “find ball”
- 7) Make home made puzzle toys:
  - a. Get a muffin tin and put a small piece of food in each section, then put a tennis ball on top of each one. Let your dog work out how to get the food.
  - b. Use a plastic bottle. Cut a foil centre cardboard tube into sections to fit roughly into the jar. Cut small holes in the side and top of the bottle. Fill with some kibble in and around the tubes and let your dog roll it around to get the food which falls out of the holes.

For dogs who are allowed more movement:

- 8) Two toy retrieve – have two of your dog's favourite toys. Throw one for him to retrieve then when he has brought it back, immediately throw the other one. For dogs that won't bring the first back, throw the second at a different angle – this exercise helps encourage your dog to bring things back.
- 9) Food circuit – call the dog then lure him around your back with food, when he gets round, immediately throw the food in front of you for him to get. This exercise also improves your recall.