

CANINE ENRICHMENT & CORONAVIRUS

Globally, coronavirus (COVID-19) has created enormous upheaval for everyone. A large majority of people across the world are now working remotely from home, their kids are home from school, businesses are closing, small businesses are hurting, markets are crashing, borders are closing and there is a great sense of uncertainty and panic buying. Oh, and toilet paper has become the new gold rush.

Family devastated when pet chews up life savings



There's so much to emotionally process and manage right now. Our emotions also affect our dogs through emotional contagion, which is where one person's emotions affect another person or sentient being, like your dog. Dogs can read the emotions on our faces and can even smell changes in our body chemistry. That's why if you're sad or sick your dog tries to reassure you as they can see it and smell it.

During this challenging time, you still need to work and carry on as best as you can. While you're at home make sure that you spend time away from your dog by going for a walk on your own or do things like check on your neighbours to make sure they're ok, so this doesn't pre-empt separation distress or anxiety when you go back to work or your kids go back to school, and your dog is unable to cope being alone.

That being said, what to do when you're doing conference calls, video calls, or trying to get your work done and your puppy or dog thinks this is the best time to catch your attention and play!



Instead of shouting NO which teaches your dog nothing, provide them with enrichment to keep them busy while you're busy. Or if your children are at home, then these steps will provide them with something for them to do that will be productive, help for child-dog safety, is rewarding and lots of fun for them and the family dog.

What is Enrichment?

Enrichment is a trendy and oft thrown about word, but what does it really mean??

Enrichment is to provide species specific appropriate challenges, opportunities and stimulation.

Why is this important?

“Mental exercise tires a dog physically more than physical exercise does.”

~Dr. Ian Dunbar



[mightydoggraphics.com/The Dog Guy 2017 \(c\)](http://mightydoggraphics.com/The Dog Guy 2017 (c))

Dogs rely on routine to provide them with reassurance and calmness, so your enrichment should not be random acts.

Every day you should include:

- Calming dog music like RelaxMyDog or Through a Dog's Ear
- Rotate your dog's toys by keeping them in a non-accessible location so that old becomes new and exciting again
- Physical activity like a sniffari walk, practice loose leash walking, OR dog parkour, agility or training games (if your dog is over 1.5 years old to protect growth plates)
- Ditch the Bowl (*mentioned below*)

You can easily create your own enrichment schedule so while you work, your dog is also working to chew or lick a KONG which is relaxing for dogs to do or to tear apart their own scavenger hunt. This schedule can keep you and your dog in a routine that will continue even when you go back to work

Example of an enrichment schedule:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Paper bag treats and toilet paper roll fiesta	Multiple puzzle toys placed around the house	Scavenger hunt	Christmas Crackers and KONG frenzy	Muffin Tin Game	Hole-e ball enrichment	Scent work

Change and adapt this schedule to meet your own needs. Check out the list of canine enrichment resources listed at the end of this Free ebook for more information and ideas.

One thing you can do is prepare ahead of time and store your KONGs or enrichment in your fridge or freezer so you can plop one.

Check out this link to learn how to effectively store or freeze stuffed KONGs

<https://smartdoguniversity.com/organized-dog-trainer-efficiently-store-freeze-stuffed-kongs/>

According to The Shape of Enrichment there are five categories of enrichment;

Food- ways of problem solving for food like puzzle feeders, Ditch the Bowl (mentioned below) or snuffle mats (links of how to make your own snuffle mat are in the resource section)

Sensory- stimulating all parts of your dog's senses like bubbles, TV programmes, audio recordings, scent work, scatter feeds in grass or in snow, Sprinkles (look in the resource section for the link to Sprinkles)

Environmental - novel items, rotating toys, using boxes or new items that your dog has to manipulate as they problem solve or create experiences with like the DIY Scavenger Hunt (mentioned below)

Cognitive- puzzle feeders, novel items or foods like the training business DogMinded who lets their dogs try different veggies to see what they like or egg cardboard box enrichment (listed below)

Social- puppy playdates with other dogs in your backyard or positive reinforcement force-free training with you (for more information about private session 1-to-1 training or remote training send us an email)

ENRICHMENT SHOULD NEVER BE FRUSTRATING OR FEARFUL

If enrichment is frustrating or fearful then that is the opposite of what it should be as these emotions increase stress AND do not decrease stress, which is the goal of enrichment.

For safety reasons there should not be any staples, tape, safety hazards of any kind or unclean boxes or items used.

Always supervise your dog during enrichment sessions. If your dog tries to ingest other items, always have reward stations nearby so you can use the cue Trade or Drop It to get it out of your dog's mouth.



ENRICHMENT STEPS

DITCH THE BOWL

When you have a young puppy, a high-energy dog or need to work from home, every moment is a moment to reinforce and every meal is an opportunity for mental and physical stimulation.

- **Use KONGs or stuffable toys** when you're gone to teach them how to rest stuffed with their food some fun treats and healthy snacks. Repetitive licking and chewing is very calming and is a way your dog calms themselves down, so it is very important to use these tools, but especially for a puppy who is teething! You're helping them relieve the pain of their teeth falling out
- **Scatter feeding or snuffle mats-** the world is full of DIY natural snuffle mats! Use grass or snow and toss a handful of food out there and let your dog sniff. This is really helpful on walks when you're getting frustrated with your dog. Snuffle mats are a great tool inside
- **Slow feeder bowls-** would you want to eat your food in less than a minute? It's not healthy. Let's avoid bloat or other issues and help your dog slow down when they're

eating. You can also line the inside of the bowl with peanut butter or yogurt or an iced treat if your dog is teething

- **Frozen dog treats-** freeze chicken broth (no bones), yogurt plus water, peanut butter plus water, make your dog a frozen smoothie!

DIY DOG SCAVENGER HUNT

A scavenger hunt can be done both indoors and outdoors. It is an especially fun game for rainy days. Always keep it simple the first few times so your dog learns and is not overwhelmed. Once you have everything together, put everything into a basket, so it is simple for you to disperse the items around inside or outside for the hunt.

More advanced hunts can be outside.

If inside, have 1 person walk your dog and then another person create the hunt or keep your dog occupied in a room via training or perhaps outside in the yard!

Always be careful to not let your dog get frustrated

Beginner: create a scavenger hunt trail

Intermediate: create a wider distanced trail with boxes or treat filled toys in different situations but very easy to find and not very highly elevated. Have 1-2

Advanced: put boxes into boxes and all items are multi-layered

Supplies

- Toilet paper
- Toilet paper rolls
- Paper
- Paper towels/toilet paper
- Cardboard boxes of various sizes
- Paper cups
- Paper bowls
- Snuffle mat
- Dog's own toys
- A KONG
- A dog tunnel
- Towel

Steps

1. Once you have everything together, start to prepare
2. Get about 10 or more sheets of paper that you no longer use.

3. Put 2-3-5 treats (depending on your dog), roll them up in paper then put into toilet paper rolls and also into small boxes. For more advanced scavenger hunts you can put the rolls into small boxes and then the small boxes into bigger boxes
4. Use the cups to create stacks or circles with randomly placed treats
5. Put the snuffle mat along the scavenger trail, sprinkled with kibble
6. Line a KONG with peanut butter
7. Hide different foods under random paper bowls placed in boxes
8. Put treats in a dog tunnel for your dog to go through
9. Make everything in an easy to find line/treat trail
10. Then advance it

KONG ENRICHMENT

Kongs are great fun and a phenomenal source of enrichment to your dog. If your dog has never had a frozen KONG this might be frustrating for them, so always start for a few weeks by adding a bit of water and their food to the KONG and then add more food and then add some frozen food. Always make it fun and never make it frustrating

Steps- No freezing recipe

1. Put some of your dog's daily kibble or food into a bowl
2. Add some water so it does not cover the kibble
3. Soak for 30 minutes
4. Add some unsoaked dry food, treats or dog food to add texture and crunch
5. Add some meat like chicken to act as a motivator
6. Add some carrot
7. Mix it up
8. Fill the kongs
9. Give to your dog immediately or keep in the refrigerator and give to your dog while you eat

Frozen Kong- Iceberg/busy bucket

Steps

1. Line your kongs with smear-type food like peanut butter or pumpkin. Add all your kongs into a bucket, put some treats or kibble or even your dog's food in it.
2. Add a towel
3. Add their toys
4. Add water or chicken broth
5. Freeze
6. Serve the next day



HOLE-E BALL

This ball is a great opportunity for many different kinds of enrichment for so many different species! Many people have this ball but do not know how to use it. Let's see a few ideas how!

Make it into a snuffle ball!



Add paper for lots of fun



Use carrots, sweet potato, a boiled egg, apple slices, bully sticks or more to make a crunchy treat



Add your dog's toys and some food like kibble or a bully treat to make a novel enrichment item

Add a KONG



Add Stuffed Toilet Paper Rolls



NOVEL/NEW ITEM ENRICHMENT

Dogs are introduced to novel items every day, some of which can be much scarier to them than they are to us. For example, some people might love to vacuum but some dogs might be petrified of the noise! Let's help your dog learn that these novel items are fun and interesting by transforming them into a novel item enrichment game. Your dog may chew or make these items a bit smelly, so bear that in mind.

Steps

1. Put your dog in the yard for a small scatter feed
2. Lay out across 1 room the following; a snuffle mat, open-ended umbrella (up-right with the handle pointing up), boxes, a dog tunnel, a towel, different substrates like blankets, cushions or odd things for their feet- layer these to make it like a pyramid or blocks, your dog's crate, ball pit, something to jump over, brooms, cones, tubes, your old t-shirts, boxes stacked up onto each other- be inventive.
3. Do not use a stuffed dog or anything that looks like a dog as that is maybe used for behaviour modification, not for enrichment purposes unless your dog loves their stuffie dog. But do use stuffies!
4. Drop kibble and different valued treats over everything
5. Let your dog in and no need to add a cue
6. Supervise your dog. If they're scared of any objects remove it and introduce it during training. The point of this is that your dog interacts with things to create positive association and does not have any fearful or negative associations.
7. You can even add a jungle gym if you want.



EMPTY CARDBOARD BOXES

Dogs love empty cardboard egg boxes! Put some of their kibble in there and let them eat out of that! To make it harder, wrap the fold in paper you were going to recycle. Or add more egg cardboard cartons and let your dog go to work!



TREAT TRAIL

This fun game teaches your dog self-control and how to use their noses over gradual distances, progressing from short fun trails to longer, more difficult trails and up to nose work.

Steps

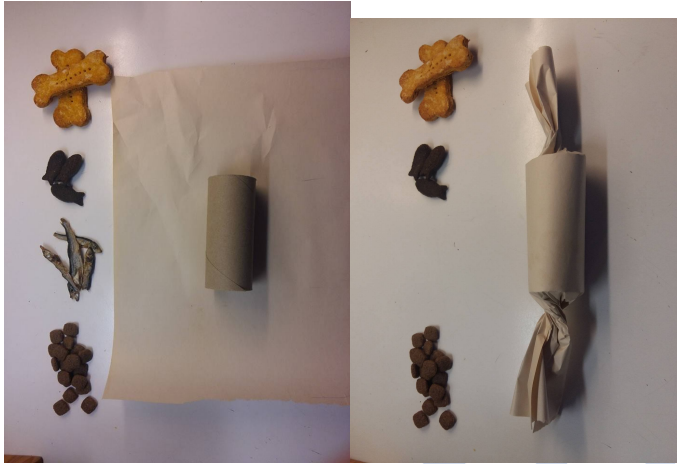
1. Cue your dog to sit/down and stay (down and stays are much easier for puppy growth plates). If your dog hasn't mastered the down/stay work on that first and get this ready while they're in the yard
2. Make a very small treat trail
3. Say "OK" as a release cue and your dog will happily eat the treat trail
4. Once your dog understands the game leave a longer distance between each treat
5. Repeat
6. Once your dog fully understands the game gradually make a long, complex trail in a wide space
7. Be creative- draw your name, your dog's name or shapes
8. You can "up" the game and make it more into scent work by using flowerpots or cardboard boxes and randomly putting different treats and toys under the pots.



BUSY BOXES

Collect empty toilet paper rolls, cereal boxes, pasta boxes and other old boxes and layer them one inside the other. In between each box, place tasty treats and kibble. Some dogs really enjoy shredding items while others are nice and gently. Busy boxes are cheap and easy enrichment that you can upcycle and your dogs can enjoy.

CHRISTMAS CRACKER



Supplies Needed:

- Toilet paper rolls
- Paper/newspaper
- Different treats

Steps

1. Get a (non-stained) toilet roll and used paper 3 times the length of the roll.
2. Choose your filling from a variety of your dog's favourite treats
3. Fill the roll, then roll the toilet roll in the paper and twist the ends.
4. Give to your dog
5. Enjoy!

TOILET PAPER ROLLS

For questions or to learn more about my animal welfare & dog training business contact me at ruby@welfare4animals.org 13



DIY Dog Boredom Buster



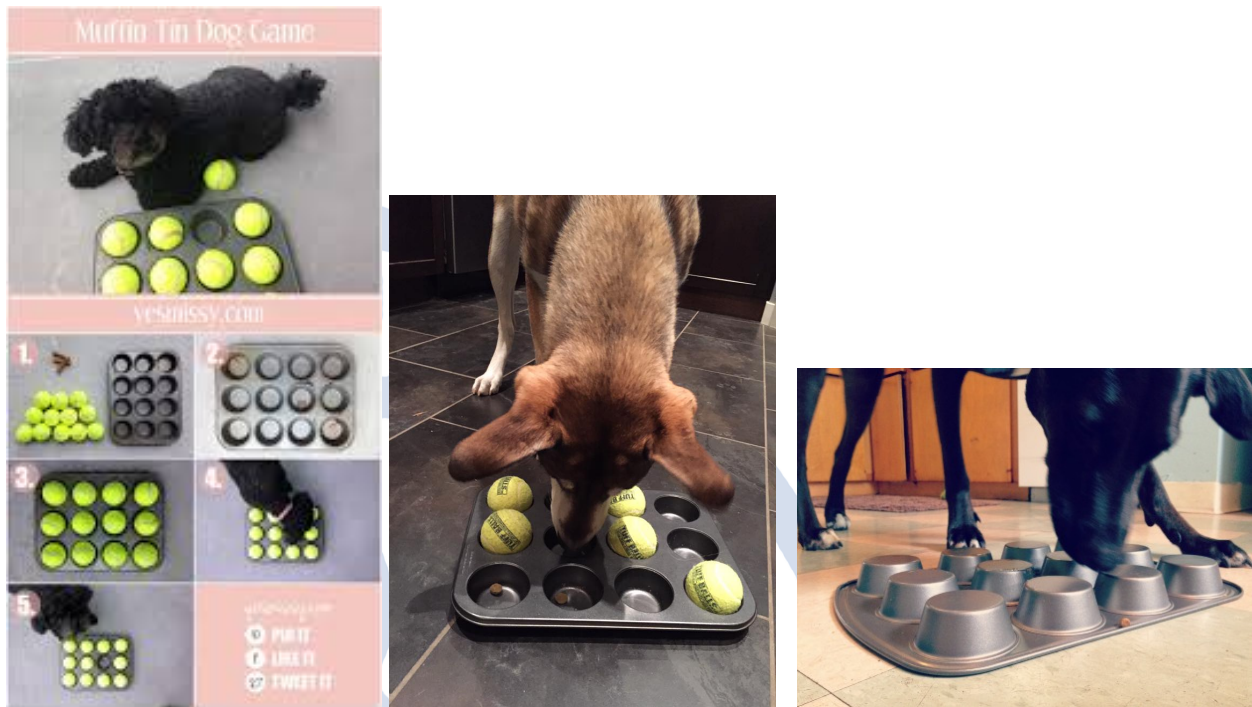
Supplies Needed:

- Toilet paper rolls
- Treats

Steps

1. Get a toilet roll
2. Fill it with your dog's favourite treats and to make it great, include applesauce or peanut butter on the inside. Or use your cat's favourite treats to make a rattle sound, which they love.
3. Fold both sides of the toilet roll (if this is too hard for your pet, only fold 1 side)
4. Give to your dog or cat

MUFFIN TIN PUZZLE GAME



Supplies Needed

- Muffin tin
- Old used tennis balls or paper or toys (*I prefer to not use tennis balls as some dogs have chewed into them and swallowed bits causing foreign body obstruction and requiring vet visits, so instead use paper or their own toys*)
- Kibble or treats

Steps

1. Keep the tin upright and divide kibble between cups. Add difficulty by covering each section with toys or unwanted paper

Another option is to turn a muffin tin upside down and spread kibble between the bumps in the muffin tin. Your dog will have to nudge the food around from all different angles. The top of the tin is flat, so they can't easily flip it over. This is good for larger dogs, but for smaller dogs try a smaller muffin tin.

ABOUT WELFARE FOR ANIMALS

Learn more about Welfare For Animals work, courses, Sniffari dog walk packages and blogs by checking us out at: www.welfare4animals.org OR email us at the email listed in the Footer for more information on 1-to-1 dog training or remote dog training.

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/WelfareForAnimals/>

Instagram: [@welfareforanimalsdogtraining](https://www.instagram.com/welfareforanimalsdogtraining)

Resources for you to learn more about Canine Enrichment

Food your dog can and can't eat

<https://www.dogstrust.ie/whats-happening/blog/can-my-dog-eat-that>

<https://www.battersea.org.uk/pet-advice/dog-care-advice/toxic-food-dogs>

<https://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/can-dogs-eat-apples>

Canine Enrichment Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/canineenrichment/>

Canine and puppy enrichment ideas, recipes and things you can stuff into a KONG

<https://www.puppleaks.com/canine-enrichment/>

KONG (and other stuffables recipes)

<https://www.kongcompany.com/recipes>

<http://barkthink.com/get-stuffed-over-50-ways-to-fill-your-kong/>

and check out @bindisbucketlist and @whatsinmykong on Instagram for loads of great ideas.

ANIED Ireland 100 Days of Enrichment

<https://aniedireland.wordpress.com/100daysofenrichment/>

Maddie's Fund Shelter Enrichment for Cats and Dogs

<https://sheltermedicine.vetmed.ufl.edu/shelter-services/tools-tips-fact-sheets/shelter-enrichment-resources/>

SPCA Kids Education How To Make A Snuffle Ball

[https://kids.spcaeducation.org.nz/UserFiles/spcakidseducation/File/Super%20Simple%20Snuffle%20Ball\(1\).pdf](https://kids.spcaeducation.org.nz/UserFiles/spcakidseducation/File/Super%20Simple%20Snuffle%20Ball(1).pdf)

Note: DogsTrust, RSPCA, BCSPCA, and your local rescue charity (might) have loads of kid resources for dogs and dog enrichment and are worth a quick google search!

Sprinkles <https://www.dog-games.co.uk/sprinkles-tm/>

How to make your own snuffle mat

<https://streetwisedogs.wordpress.com/2020/01/31/how-to-make-a-snuffle-mat/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJQY08LPfts>



Welfare For Animals