

So much more to do then just walking



Simple, easy activities you can do with your dogs to bring joy in their lives

Search for treats

Concentration building and fun

What is it?

Treat search is a very easy sniffing game for your dog that you can do at any time and any place.



How do I set it up?

Take some small treats and throw them around.
+/- 5 meters in front of you and 5 to 10 meters wide.
This can be indoor or outdoor, any safe sniffing place you like.

How do I do it?

Just let the dog go search/sniff for the treats and do nothing but wait until he/she is finished.

It's that easy and your dog will love it !!



What are the benefits of it?

Nose work is a calming activity for dogs and it improves their mental health.
It builds up concentration and when frequently done, they will get much better at it.
Nose work is FUN !!

Remarks:

Do not point out the treats for your dog, let him/her sniff for it.
If they want a little break and then go back at it, let them. It is completely their choice.
A healthy dog should be able to sniff 15 minutes or more during a treat search,
do not be surprised if the time is much less in the beginning.



The enriched environment

Develop your dog's curiosity

What is it?

An enriched environment is a stress free mental stimulation activity.

It allows your dog to explore, be curious and use all their senses.

It is a very powerful tool to help dogs cope with life by learning curiosity at their own pace.

How do I set it up?

Just place some random objects on the ground that your dog can sniff, step and even chew on. Try to look for objects that can stimulate the 5 senses.

For example:

- Used clothing
- Old carpet/mattress
- A hard brush
- Used teabags in a cup of water
- A little step
- A box with paper shreds in it

...

The list is endless.



How do I do it?

After you set up your environment, let your dog go exploring.

It can be easier if the dog is on a leash, but it's not necessary.

Do nothing and let them explore at their own pace, just wait until he/she is finished.

What are the benefits of it?

- It is mentally challenging for your dog.
- It develops and maintains curiosity
- You learn your dog to cope with new experiences in their life at their own pace.
- You can observe if the dog has any physical issues when exploring.
- It develops brain cells.

Remarks:

You do not have to set up an environment, around us there are many natural environments you can use for exploring.

Never push them in doing things, let them make the choice.



Surprise Tree

Concentration building and fun

What is it?

A surprise tree is like a Christmas tree with edible presents in for dogs. It is a fun activity that you can set up at home, during walks, inside or outside, ... Everywhere you like.

How do I set it up?

Look for a tree with low branches, the trunk of a large tree, a wooden fence, a statue, ... and hang/put small pieces of meat or treats in it. You can also smear pate on it which will stick more easily to your tree.

With a bit of imagination and creativity, you can make a lot of fun "surprise trees" for your dog.

Hang/put the treats from the bottom up to places that are a bit higher but still easy accessible for the dog.

How do I do it?

After you set up your surprise tree, let your dog go sniff (on or off leash). Do nothing and wait until your dog is finished.

What are the benefits of it?

- Sniffing is calming for dogs.
 - It builds up concentration.
 - You can observe if your dog has medical issues.
- For example: if the dog won't go for the higher treats, check if he/she has no back or neck problems.
- It's fun !!

Remarks:

This is an easy activity that you can set up during your daily walks. Give your dog the proper time to sniff and explore.



Brain games

100 games for dogs

What is it?

Brain training games where your dog has to perform an action in order to get the treats hidden inside the game. You can purchase games or make them yourself.
Ideal activity for bad weather days.

How do I set it up?

This can be different for the type of games your dog is going to play. With most of the games you have to put some small treats in it that your dog will have to search for. There are a lot of different stores where you can purchase games and numerous books/magazines & webpages where you can find information on how to make them yourself.

How do I do it?

Brain games are not something you let your dog play on his/her own. You have to set it up, let your dog figure it out and possible even help him to figure it out. Some of these games can be challenging. You have to start slow and be patient with them. Do not expect your dog to completely figure it out after the first try. You'll notice after some game sessions, that your dog will get better in, it and figure out different games more easily.

What are the benefits of it?

- Brain and concentration training for your dog.
- It's fun and you play it together.



Remarks:

- Start easy, many games have a difficulty grading.
- Brain training is very exhaustive and can be stressful for dogs.
- Use short sessions (10-15 min) with breaks in between.
- Once your dog has figured out the game and it has become a habit, it's not brain training anymore but it will remain fun!



Easy Tracking game

The power of the nose

What is it?

A simple tracking game you can do on your walks.
Dogs love to take up a scent and start tracking.
Every dog can do it no matter the breed.

How do I set it up?

Take a piece of clothing that you wear and that you can drop during the walk.
(for example scarf, hat, glove,...)

On your walks look for places where you can circle back to the same position.
(In the beginning a circle of 30 – 40 meters is enough.)

How do I do it?

On your walk, during the part where you can circle back,
drop the item that you want to track somewhere in the middle.

Circle around and at the start of the track give your dog something to smell of you
and ask him/her to search for the dropped item.

You know the way, but follow your dog and the track his tacking.
You can help them by standing still if they are going in the wrong direction.

When they lost the scent or are a bit confused, let them sniff the clothing again
and restart tracking.

When you find the dropped object, praise your dog and give him some very nice treats as a
reward. In the beginning it can be possible that your dog hasn't figure out what is expected
from him/her. Be patient and consistent and always give a nice reward when the object is re-
trieved.

What are the benefits of it?

Dogs love to track and it builds up concentration.
Tracking is exhaustive for dogs, but calming at the same time.
It's fun and a nice activity during your daily walk.

Remarks:

Don't overdo it and keep it simple for your dog, especially in the beginning.
Remember, it is a game not a competition.

After some practice you can add distance or other challenges during the track.

If you and your dog get a taste for tracking, you can start with other tracking exercises.
A whole new world will open for you both.





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