

DOG TRAINING

What are Good Mental Exercises for Dogs?

Dogs and puppies have an abundance of energy with a never-ending desire to expand their minds and interact with their pack. Here's a quick list of how to keep your dog mentally exercised:

1. Exercise. Lots of exercise. If you can incorporate exercise with another activity such as playing "find the ball," or doing some agility exercises, then that's even better.
2. Brain teaser toys. There are several cool toys that actually challenge your dog's mind. For example, one of the more popular ones is the "Buster Cube," a plastic cube that releases a pellet of food, every third or fourth time the Cube is rolled over.
3. Small rituals done at the same time of day, every day. For example: feeding time, grooming, walks, "cookie" time, car trips around town, etc.
4. Dogs like to work. Teach your dog to bring in the newspaper, carry mail back from the mailbox or to walk with you when you take the trash out.
5. Do obedience training with your dog. Obedience training requires your dog to use his brain and think. Knowing that he will be praised for making the right decision and corrected for making the wrong decision (and allowed the opportunity to make the right decision again) instills a sense of responsibility in your dog and demands that he use his noggin. Remember: dogs are bred to work. They've been blessed with super-human instincts and drives, and they need an outlet for those drives.
6. Teach the dog to find a toy that you've hidden. Put the dog in a sit/stay, then hide the article. Return and send the dog away to find it.
7. Teach the "Go Get (named toy)". I put all three in the hallway and repeatedly send him to bring



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back the one toy I've chosen.

8. The Shell Game. Here's what you'll need: three small, identical buckets, cans, or cups; kibble or doggie cookies; a leash and training collar; and one hungry puppy. Here's what you do:
 - A. Place your dog in a down-stay five feet from area where you'll set up the game.
 - B. Next, place the three buckets side-by-side with the mouth on the ground (upside down). Leave about one foot of space between each bucket.
 - C. Put a doggie cookie under one of the buckets. Now, return to your dog and give him your "release" command.
 - D. Walk him over to the buckets and say, "Where's the cookie?" and encourage him to smell the buckets. When he gets excited about the bucket with the cookie under it praise him lavishly!
 - E. Then, knock the bucket over and let him get the cookie.

Repeat this process by hiding the cookie under a different bucket. Once your dog starts to get the hang of the game you can add more complexity by spacing the buckets further apart. You may also add more buckets. I like to teach a dog to give an active indication when he finds the bucket with the cookie... such as scratching the side of the bucket or barking. You can also teach your dog to "sit" next to the bucket with the cookie. Initially you'll find that your dog will likely go back to the previous bucket that hid the cookie. Don't lift the bucket up until he finds the one that contains the cookie.



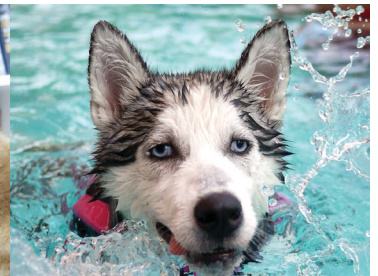
Dog Training & Behavior



Puppy Obedience & Socialization Training



Therapy Dog Training



Dog & Puppy Boarding & Kenneling

