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Backyard Fun for Your Dog!

The principles outlined in this handout are intended as a general guide only and should be applied under the supervision of an Accredited CGC™ Instructor. This is not a program for aggressive dogs. If your dog has shown aggressive behaviour toward you, your family, or other people, you should speak with the Instructor listed at the top of this handout.



Environmental Enrichment

With our busy lifestyles, many dogs can spend hours each day left to their own devices, sometimes leading to social and behavioural problems. As we learn more about animals it is increasingly apparent that mental health is of enormous importance to their wellbeing and lifestyle. The following is a list of suggestions to provide Environmental Enrichment for those times when your dog (let's call him "Deefer") is left home alone. As dogs are social animals it is vitally important that you spend quality time with Deefer each day, so these ideas should be used in addition to your normal family interaction and an exercise regime appropriate for Deefer. You should take great care to ensure that there is no danger to Deefer or others in any of these activities.

Toys and More Toys

There are many great toys on the market that are designed to keep Deefer occupied; individual dogs will have different preferences. Deefer will very quickly get bored with the same old toy so put out a few at a time and **ROTATE** them daily.

Tour Guide

Take Deefer for a ride in the car when making those short trips such as dropping the kids off at school or going to the post office. It offers him a change of scenery. Even better if you stop at the park on the way home and give Deefer a quick run. **NB.** *Remember the dangers of leaving dogs in hot cars.*



Iceblocks

Place some suitable scraps of food into an ice-cream container or kong, fill with water and freeze. You could even freeze a knotted rope into it so it could be hung somewhere or maybe bury it - as the ice melts the interest is renewed as treats come to the surface. Try making ice blocks with chicken stock - a cool idea for the hot weather!

Window or Viewing Platform

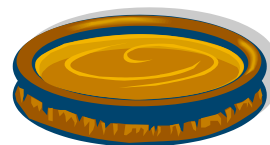
There are some dogs in this world, as with some people, who just love to know what's going. If Deefer is one of these help him out by placing peepholes in the fence or providing a raised viewing platform. If he is highly excited by movement this may not be an appropriate activity.

A Digging Pit/Sand Pit

Some dogs love to dig. If Deefer is one of these, provide an area where he can dig and reinforce this natural behaviour. Choose an area that is hidden by shrubs so he can dig to his heart's content and you need not have an unsightly hole in the centre of the lawn. Children's clam shell pools can be used as a sandpit (or pool) where you bury bones, treats and toys.

A Wading Pool

Some dogs adore water so why not encourage it. You can purchase shallow moulded plastic children's pools (Clams) quite cheaply or alternatively make your own pond. Ensure that Deefer can easily get out of the pond and that it is just paddling depth, then drop some toys or treats, even vegetables such as carrot pieces or whole apples which will float and encourage him to play. An alternative would be to drop the same floating goodies or toys in Deefer's water bucket.



The Kong

You may be familiar with the Kong, a marvelous piece of equipment available from good pet product suppliers which can be stuffed with food and left for Deefer to work on during the day. Be aware with multiple dogs that using food games may cause some problems. For more information on Kong's and some recipes, check out www.kongcompany.com

The Buster Cube/Treat Ball

The Buster Cube is another great invention available from good pet product suppliers. You can place dry food into the opening and Deefer has to roll the cube around to get the food out again. Some dogs take all day and some take five minutes! Suitable for most breeds, but there are a very few that have the jaw strength and capacity to destroy these. (I have no doubt you already know if Deefer is one of these dogs!) Some dogs need to learn how to use a Buster Cube so a smear of peanut butter or cheese near the opening as well as a cheer squad will help get them going.

Recycle Plastic Bottles

Be sure to remove the bottle top and the plastic ring for Deefer's safety.

Punch some holes in the sides of the bottle, large enough for pieces of dry food to fall through. Fill the empty bottle with dry food for hours of fun.

Swinging tyre

Hanging an old tyre from a tree can be a great way to entertain a boisterous dog. Place toys or treats in the tyre to ensure Deefer is interested and gets some reward for the game. Make sure that the anchor point can take Deefer's



weight as well as the abuse and also that Deeper cannot get caught up in it and become injured.

Check out www.aussiedog.com.au for the "Home Alone", a robust interactive dog toy.

Recycling Rubbish

Empty milk cartons, cardboard rolls, egg cartons, cereal boxes and even pizza boxes can be used to entertain Deeper. Place some treats in them and let him find the treats and have fun destroying the boxes. The bonus is that you are provided with exercise picking up the pieces afterwards! Be careful though if Deeper likes to ingest foreign materials.

Treasure Hunt

Before you go out to work in the morning or out for dinner at night, instead of giving Deeper his regular dinner in a bowl take a cup of dry food and go out into your backyard and throw it all over the grass. That should keep him busy for a little while. Also try hiding his stuffed Kongs and bones so when you go off to work he is busy hunting for his food.

Recycled Marrow Bone



Next time you get marrowbones from your local butcher ask him to cut the ends off.

When Deeper is tired of chewing on that old marrowbone, **don't throw it out because you can recycle it!** Take the hollow middle section and smear peanut butter, cream cheese or sausage mince onto the small end then fill it up with either dry or canned food or a mix of both and cover over the other end with peanut butter, cream cheese or sausage mince. Deeper will LOVE you for recycling his bones.

Dog Walker

If you have a busy schedule then consider the services of a dog walker. Be sure to thoroughly check references, insurance and get details of how many dogs are walked *etc.* As the walker to vary the route to make for more interesting walks.

Deeper's Friends

Maybe Deeper has some friends he could visit once a week, or who could come to visit him. Spending a day with a compatible friend is a great way to enrich Deeper's life and provide some valuable socialization.

Doggy Door

Dogs that have access to inside the house often spend much of their day inside feeling safe and secure and SNOOZING!

More ideas for environmental enrichment:

1. Training session - trick, agility, obedience
2. Dog Sports
3. Doggy Visitors
4. Doggy Day Care
5. Old balls - i.e. football, soccer balls
6. Rope toys
7. Cat food
8. Frisbee

9. Tunnel
10. Hanging Toys
11. Pig Ear/Sheep's Ear
12. TV or Radio on timer
13. Treats in ice-cubes floated in large water container
14. Grass & Herb garden
15. Collections of 'smelly items' from outside environment
16. Rotation of Activities
17. Barrels
18. Scent trails
19. Boomer ball
20. Flying fox on timer
21. Tennis ball 'spewer'
22. Wooden cable reels
23. Taped animal sounds
24. Remote controlled toys (watch for battery access)
25. Timed food dispensers
26. Paper birds in trees
27. Parcel - multi-wrapped
28. Work for food (no food from bowl)
29. Moving furniture around
30. Clam shell - filled with shredded paper for indoors treasure dig
31. Sprinklers on timers for hot days
32. Pizza Delivery (tip it into backyard)
33. Food in rags/material
34. Off leash exercise
35. Companion dog
36. Pinata - milk bottle with small hole filled with treats and suspended
37. Tie kongs to keep them anchored in places
38. Bike tyres cut up (wire removed) with food smeared in them

NB. Some of these ideas may not suit your situation and may cause more problems - be sensible when choosing the best options for your dog.

For more information on Canine Good Citizen™ training for your dog, contact the Instructor listed on the front page of this handout.

For more information on the Delta Society go to www.deltasocietyaustralia.com.au

Look for the other Handouts in the Delta "Help!" series:

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|  Help! My Dog Jumps on Me! |  Help! My Puppy Bites! |
|  Help! My Dog Digs! |  Help! How Do I Housetrain My Puppy? |
|  Help! My Dog Barks! |  Help! My Dog Needs Better Manners! |
|  Help! I Have a Demolition Dog! | |

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