



## Toys For Dogs

Dogs love toys and often don't care what it is. This means they will often grab anything within reach and either destroy it or swallow something that could be dangerous. Dog proof your house and keep your dogs safe.

Toys are not a luxury for our dogs, but a necessity. They fight boredom and provide chewing opportunities. Interactive play with you provides an outlet for built up energy and tones muscles. Playtime can help to prevent some behavior problems. A tired dog is much less likely to get into trouble!

### **Types of toys**

Different types of toys provide different kinds of stimulation to your dog. A variety works best and it helps to rotate toys. Put some away and change them every week. This way your dog gets "new toys" regularly.

### **Chew toys**



Chew toys top the list for most dogs. Choose ones that are the right size for your dog and are hard enough to avoid destruction.

Hard rubber toys work well. Dental chews are another option. They have the added benefit

that they are specifically designed to improve your dog's oral health.

Dental chews and rawhides are made to be eaten. Give ones that are large enough for your dog and watch him. Some have been known to cause choking or blockage problems, especially if they swallow them rather than chew.

If you have more than one dog, it's best to separate them. They can each relax and concentrate on chewing. They will be less likely to gulp the chew down to keep the other dog away.

### **Ropes and dog toys**

Rope toys usually have knotted ends that some dogs like to chew. Watch to make sure your dog is not shredding them.



You can also play tug-of-war with them. This is great sport for many dogs and involves active play and energy as they pull away from you. Avoid a tug-of-war game if your dog tends to get aggressive with it.

Commercial dog toys are often made of plastic, vinyl, or latex. Large dogs can destroy some of these in minutes. It's important you watch your dog and remove chewed off pieces promptly.

Some dogs love the squeakers that are inside some of these toys. They aren't satisfied until they have found and eliminated the source of the squeak! Again, caution is needed so they don't remove and swallow the squeaker.

Some dogs like stuffed toys. Some want to carry them around so they must be light.



Others like to “kill” them and shake them to death. Buy an appropriate size for the size of your dog. If the stuffing is coming

out or appendages have come off, it’s time to buy a new one.

### **Food toys**

There are two types. One holds kibble or treats and your dog has to try to figure out how to get the food by rolling it around or solving a puzzle. The other is a hard toy that you stuff with food or peanut butter and your dog has to spend time licking the food out.



Both types involve some mental stimulation and keep your dog busy for a while. The ones you stuff are often good choices when you leave your dog alone for several hours.

This is also an option for making your dog work for his food, especially if he needs to slim down a little.

You can also play hide-and-seek with these toys. This gets your dog moving a little more and allows him to use his hunting skills.

### ***The thrill of the chase***

Most dogs love to chase things. Find out if they prefer balls, flying disks or something else. You can often

spend hours throwing something and having your dog bring it back. You may need to teach your dog to come back with the object and to drop it for you.

Laser pointers can work inside. Dogs chase the bright light as if it’s some kind of new prey. Be cautious so you don’t shine the light into your dog’s eyes or anyone else’s.

This kind of play will really tire your dog out. This is ideal if you have a high-energy breed. Daily playtime is critical for these dogs.

### ***Precautions***

Always buy toys made for dogs and avoid anything small enough to swallow. Remove any ribbons, strings, yarn, or threads from toys. These can all be potentially deadly.

Don’t allow your dog to chew on tennis balls. Playing fetch and retrieving them is fine. However, if they chew on it, the fabric surface tends to wear away the teeth.

Although ice is not usually considered a toy, some dogs like to chew on it. That is a bad idea. Ice is too hard and can break teeth.

If toys are left outside, some will deteriorate from the weather. Check them over and discard the worn out ones.

### ***Summary***

Another dog is often the best toy you can get for your dog. Dogs are social creatures and love to play together. Dog parks serve the same function. It’s important to play with your dog on a regular basis as well. This keeps him in good shape and helps you bond with your dog. He’ll love you for it!