

CANINE ENRICHMENT

Providing your dog with mental and physical stimulation is critical for her behavioral health. A “boring” environment can contribute to behavior problems such as destruction, barking, escaping, anxiety, arousal, hyperactivity, obsessive/compulsive behaviors and depression. By providing your dog with enrichment, you can help relieve that boredom and stress, which will make a major difference in her life.

WHAT IS ENRICHMENT?

Enrichment is an ongoing process for providing positive and productive everyday life experiences for your dog. Enrichment encourages your dog’s natural behaviors by providing different experiences for her senses. Enrichment improves your bond with your dog, keeps senior dogs and dogs with limited mobility engaged, tires your dog out, keeps life interesting, builds her confidence and gives your dog the *right* thing to do.

ENRICHMENT SCHEDULE

Daily enrichment doesn’t have to be a complicated, time-consuming or expensive. Most enrichment items can be made from items you have laying around your house. Create a weekly schedule that outlines each day’s enrichment activities. Try to include activities from all four types of enrichment each day. While your dog’s general routine will stay the same, rotating enrichment activities will help keep boredom at bay.

SOCIAL ENRICHMENT

Social enrichment encompasses interaction with people and other animals, particularly other dogs. If your dog does get uncomfortable with unfamiliar people or animals, you can easily fulfill her social enrichment needs with sessions of interactive play and petting.

PHYSICAL ENRICHMENT

Physical enrichment provides opportunities for aerobic exercise. Most dogs need at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise a day. Aerobic exercise keeps your dog’s heart and lungs healthy, prevents obesity and lowers the risk of arthritis and other orthopedic issues. Be sure to check in with your veterinarian *prior* to beginning an exercise routine, as each dog’s needs are different.

SENSORY ENRICHMENT

Enriching your dog’s senses includes activities to stimulate her scent, sight, touch and hearing. Sensory enrichment provides your dog with opportunities to use her natural skills and behaviors.

NUTRITIONAL ENRICHMENT

The easiest way to provide your dog with nutritional enrichment is to have her work for her meals instead of feeding her out of a bowl. There are a variety of pre-made food puzzles you can purchase at local pet suppliers, or you can easily make your own with items around the house.

Visit www.azhumane.org for a list of enrichment activities.

