



# KALMPETS

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## Give A Dog A Job!

For at least 200 years dogs have been carefully bred for specific purposes. This has generated some incredible design feats including dogs with a sense of smell so exquisite that they can detect a single scent molecule, dogs that demonstrate incredible speed and agility and dogs that can be the most dedicated companion. Dogs are now recognised as fully fledged family members and many of the roles fulfilled in the past are now carried out by humans or automated machines. Sensitive alarms have replaced the hyper-vigilant guard dog, rat traps have replaced the heroic Jack Russell terrier and Dalmatians' lack a horse carriage to trot next to.

***Times have changed....many of our dogs have become unemployed and with unemployment comes an increase in training problems and behavioural disease.***

Environmental enrichment strengthens your dog's brain fitness through meaningful 'employment'. Enrichment is aimed at providing positive, independent and self-rewarded activities that meet the individual needs of your dog thereby reducing the amount of time your dog has available to perform undesirable activities. Enrichment can take many forms; Kalmpets shares some ideas below:

### Say 'no' to the food bowl!

There are very few activities dogs can perform **independent** of their humans. Feeding is one of these. If your dog inhales their daily ration in a nanosecond then their one daily job is over in a matter of moments. Feeding enrichment stretches this job over the course of the day presenting food in a way that allows for independent and self-rewarded activity.

***Dogs naturally enjoy foraging for their food. Providing opportunities where they can search for their food stimulates their senses and gives them a productive job to do.***

Kalmpets top feeding enrichment ideas are below (\*\*note: all toys have the potential to become a hazard if ingested, always monitor your dog to ensure they are not ingesting non-food items\*\*)

### Recycle your recyclables:

- **Milk bottles and cartons:** put kibble/biscuits and a few extra tasty treats inside a finished milk carton or bottle. Note: remove the lid and ring off milk bottles.
- **Cardboard boxes:** put kibble/biscuits/treats in the box and seal. Dogs love to use their super sense of smell to locate food inside. Increase the level of difficulty by layering food/treats around boxes of various sizes that are stacked within each other.
- **The humble toilet roll:** smear cream cheese/peanut butter/vegemite/honey inside the toilet roll add a few solid treats, squash the ends of the toilet roll and deliver for a simple enrichment.
- Google DIY dog toys for more ideas.

### Treasure hunts:

- Pushed for time in the mornings? Try scattering your dog's dry food around your yard.
- **Smell strengthening:** create scent trails using a tin of tuna or sardines. Drizzle tinned liquid/oil in a continuous stream around your yard. Place a few 'jackpots' of tuna/sardines at intervals on the trail to give your dog a little motivator to continue the good work.

**Dog Slurpie:** fill empty ice-cream or yoghurt containers with dilute chicken or beef stock, add a few treats and/or toys then freeze. Deliver the frozen block from the container and let the slurping begin!

- **Kong:** Kong has many forms, each offering a different challenge for your dog. Don't let past poor performances with Kong put you off; this toy has endless possibilities. Ask Kalmpets for Kongs 50 ways with Kong handout or search online for limitless ideas.
- **Hanging toys:** aussiedog.com.au has a wonderful durable range of toys designed hang from patios. Some have a treat delivery option which produces a treat when pulled vigorously.
- **Puzzle feeder:** investigate the possibility of puzzle feeders online. Every toy requires a different problem solving strategy to keep your dog's mind in peak health.

## Let your dog follow their nose

A good belt-out run or aerobic activity helps to maintain physical health however the more you walk/run your dog the fitter they become and the more you have to walk/run your dog..... Daily exercise is important but Kalmpets challenges you to focus on content rather than distance when walking your dog. Dogs are 'one big nose on four legs' and they enjoy nothing better than a good sniffing session. Sniffing is energetically expensive leaving your dog both satisfied and exhausted.

### **Sniffing session tips:**

- *Slow it down.* Give your dog time to get all the information they need before moving on.
- *Vary location* regularly and focus on local parks and bushland.

### **Exercise tips:**

- *Include simple behaviours* such as jumping up and off benches, weaving through bollards and coming when called.
- *Down-time.* Take time to sit on the grass together and let your dog roll around and relax.
- *Bring the outside in* by collecting leaves/branches/feathers on your walk to use for enrichment at home.

## At-home dogification

- Add *pet friendly herbs* or pet grass to your garden. Planting in pots on castors allows you to rotate the garden adding variety to your dog's day.
- Use boxes, PVC pipes and sheets to make *obstacle courses* of jumps and tunnels.
- Choose *plants* that naturally grow to provide a den like undergrowth e.g. Australian Myrtle.
- Outdoor tables and children's cubby houses can be transformed to provide *viewing platforms* for dogs that like a view.
- Sand pits are an ideal way to *support a healthy digging habit* without sacrificing the garden. Burying treats and toys in the sandpit will reward digging behaviour in this location and reduce the likelihood of digging elsewhere.