



We continually update our skills and knowledge so that we stay current with the best practices that can help you and your dog.

cheerfuldogs chronicles

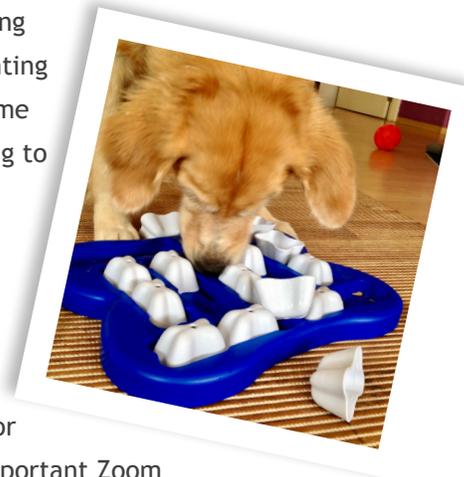
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Issue 47

Living With Dogs: Will Work For Food

Does your dog wolf down meals in mere seconds? Then both of you are missing out. For dogs, eating should be work. First of all because searching and hunting for food is natural for canines whose ancestors spent the majority of their time this way. And second of all – and here’s the major benefit to you – switching to a work-to-eat strategy keeps your dog wonderfully occupied during your absences or while you’re trying to focus at home. That means he won’t be splitting apart the couch cushions, or getting into the rubbish bin, or barking up a storm at the birds outside the window, driving you and your neighbours crazy.

Instead of just serving up your dog’s meals, try feeding him in treat puzzles or Kongs that he gets when you’re not home or when you have a particularly important Zoom meeting to attend. This way, your dog will spend half his day retrieving his food and the other half sleeping off the mental effort. The result? A calmer, more content dog and a less chaotic household.



The key to a successful work-to-eat programme is to start simple and only



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Dog quotes

“A dog can snap you out of any kind of bad mood that you’re in faster than you can think of.” - Jill Abramson



... work for food

gradually increase the level of difficulty. You can go low-tech by hiding your dog’s food under a laundry basket or cardboard box, or inside an empty cereal box. Or you can use interactive food toys like treat balls, Kongs, or lick mats.

Kongs in particular are great because you can easily make the food retrieval task more difficult – and more rewarding – by varying the type of stuffing and the tightness of the layers. An easy Kong might contain dry food and chicken bits plugged by peanut butter or wet food. An advanced Kong might be a many-layered masterpiece that includes dog biscuits, wet food, and your dog’s favourite super treats.



Healthy Dog: Flea-Fi-Fo-Fum!

The most common type of flea that affects dogs in Singapore is the Cat Flea (*Ctenocephalides felis*). For such miniscule creatures, fleas can cause great misery. The relentless itching and subsequent discomfort, hot spots, and sores are bad enough, but some dogs suffer allergic reactions or anaemia from an infestation. Fleas also serve as intermediate hosts for tapeworms that can infect your dog. Telling a beginning flea attack from normal self-grooming in a dog can be tricky, so the best policy is to check every few weeks as a matter of course. Look for fleas behind your dog’s ears, around the head and neck, and in his “armpits.” Alternatively, run a flea comb through his coat, drop some hair on a white paper towel, and add water. Red or rust-coloured stains on the towel indicate fleas.

Prevention, of course, is key. This is all the more important because once fleas become established in your home, they’re difficult to eradicate. Flea prevention treatments come in topical, oral, injectable, and natural form. A good rule of thumb is to use the least toxic, simplest product needed, but be sure to ask your veterinarian what is right for your dog.



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Website: cheerfuldogswalking.com
Tel: 9630 3884
Email: cheerfuldogswalking@gmail.com

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