

**Mom, I'm bored...**

Dogs are a lot like children. If you don't give them something fun to do, they will make their own fun—and often not in ways you approve of.

Give your dog plenty of physical and mental exercise, and you get a happier, healthier, better-behaved dog. Well-exercised dogs bark less, chew less, sleep more, and rest easier if left home alone. They are also much less likely to rummage through the trash or attack the couch cushions.

Leash walks are great brainteasers because of all the sensory information dogs get from them, but they don't count as aerobic exercise. Your dog needs to run, swim, or do something else that gets his heart pumping for at least 30 minutes every day.

**Workouts for the body:**

Chasing a ball or Frisbee. Swimming. Playing tug. Active play with other dogs. Off-leash romps or hikes. And if life is too busy, consider hiring a dog walker, or, if your dog enjoys the company of other dogs, send him to doggie day care.

**Workouts for the brain:**

**Work to eat.** Biologically speaking, your dog is not supposed to have a bowl of kibble plunked down in front of him. He is a hunter by nature, meant to work for his keep. Mimic this by serving your dog's food in a Kong or treat ball. Your dog will spend the first part of the day figuring out how to get at his food and the rest of it recovering from the mental effort. Perfect!

**Toys galore.** Toys are a great way to engage your dog's brain. Dogs have distinctly individual toy preferences, depending on the day, time, and situation. Do some detective work and find out what truly tickles your dog. The best toys have a purpose. They deliver food, present a challenge, squeak, or make themselves interesting in some other way.