



Dog Toys

Visit any pet store and you will find hundreds of dog toys of different sizes, shapes, and materials. It is important to pick age and size appropriate toys for your dog or puppy. There are four main categories of toys, (food toys, interactive toys, chew toys, and comfort toys) so determine the purpose of a new toy and what your dog likes and needs, before making a purchase.

Food toys

- **Kongs** – Every dog deserves a kong! These pyramid-shaped, rubber toys may look boring at first glance but the appeal of a kong is all in the stuffing! This hollow toy can be stuffed with your dog’s kibble, peanut butter, cheese whiz, cream cheese, canned food, etc. for a long-lasting and engaging treat. Freeze your stuffed kongs to increase the difficulty. Kongs come in a variety of sizes and strengths so keep that in mind when choosing the perfect kong for your dog.
- **Kibble/Puzzle toys** – Food from a bowl is boring and a lost training opportunity. Dogs have an instinct to hunt and search for their food and many dogs enjoy working to get their food out of a toy. Feeding toys come in all shapes and sizes to allow for varying degrees of difficulty and meal sizes. Try the Kibble Nibble for dogs who eat up to two cups of food per meal, or the Star Spinner puzzle for super smart cats and dogs! When you first introduce your dog to a new food toy you may need to demonstrate how it works. You want to praise her for trying to get to the food and use higher value food items (treats vs. kibble) at first. As with any toy, supervise your dog to ensure she can’t chew the toy apart. Many affordable puzzle and kibble toys are available in our Re-Tail store at the shelter.
- **Homemade food toys** – Keep your dog guessing with a variety of homemade food toys! Cardboard boxes, paper bags, and soda bottles make great food toys. Save the plush toys that have been de-stuffed and re-stuff them with kibble and treats! Be creative and try something new every day! Always supervise your dog with homemade food toys to prevent ingestion of foreign materials.

Interactive Toys

- **Fetch toys** – Fetch is a fantastic way to exercise your dog without wearing yourself out. There are many variations to this classic game and there are different toys designed for water and land. Almost any toy can be used for fetch and this is a wonderful way for people of all ages to interact with a dog.

- **Tug toys** – Tug-of-war is another classic dog game that can be played using a variety of toys. It is best to use longer toys to safely play this game. It is important to establish ground rules with tug games and teach your dog to release a toy on cue. Immediately end the game if your dog becomes too excited or if her teeth ever touch your skin or clothes.

Toys for chewing

- **Rawhides** – There are so many different rawhide products that it can be hard to know which is right for your dog! There are a few general rules in selecting a rawhide. Choose a rawhide that is bigger than you think necessary (to prevent swallowing), one that becomes supple when chewed as opposed to splintering, and one designed to match your dog's jaw strength. Always supervise your dog with a rawhide and speak with your veterinarian to determine what type of rawhide is best for your dog.
- **Real bones/antlers** – Real bones or shed antlers can provide endless hours of chewing pleasure. Chewing on a hard bone or antler can also help to remove tartar from your dog's teeth. Many dogs can chew a rawhide in minutes but a bone will last hours. It is important to supervise your dog to ensure that she will not try to swallow these items whole. Some real hollow bones can be used to stuff peanut butter or canned food to create an even better treat.
- **Nylabones** – Nylabones can certainly be the best bang for your buck. These sturdy, hard, plastic chews can last for months! They have the added benefit of not giving off strange smells or turning into a soggy mess when chewed. Make sure to choose a Nylabone appropriate for your dog's age as there are many varieties available.

Toys for Comfort

- **Plush Toys** – Some dogs like a security blanket in the form of a soft toy. Puppies in particular often appreciate a comfy plush toy to sleep with. Some adult dogs will groom a plush toy as if it were a living animal. Social interaction is a must for dogs of any age, but a plush companion can make bedtime or alone time a little easier. You can even try storing a soft toy in your laundry bin for a few days. This will increase its appeal because it will smell like you.

We Can Help! The Training and Behavior Department at the Humane Society of Western Montana has a variety of resources available to help you and your pets live in harmony! The Humane Society has several dog trainers and a behaviorist on staff to provide affordable group and private training lessons and free behavior consultations.

- Contact Jean, our Behaviorist for a free pet behavior consultation by emailing behavior@myhswm.org or calling the Behavior Helpline at (406) 549-9295.
- Contact Mariah, a Certified Professional Dog Trainer, to inquire about private lessons or a group training class. Email outreach@myhswm.org or call (406) 549-HSWM.
- Check out our website at www.myhswm.org for a complete listing of dog classes, rates and additional information.