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Let's look at Dog Puzzles:

3 Reasons to Get Your Dog a Puzzle Toy

If you were under the impression that puzzle toys are only meant for humans, then your dog is likely missing out on tons of fun! For those dogs that are too smart for their own good, giving them interactive dog puzzles is a great way to challenge and strengthen their mental capabilities.

What are dog puzzle toys?

Similar to human puzzles, [dog puzzles](#) are meant to stimulate your pup's intellect and incorporate problem-solving into her daily routine. These [dog toys](#) and games take on various forms, ranging from simple hide-and-seek, to interacting with everyday objects, such as lifting blocks, turning discs, sliding bricks or retrieving food from interactive dog bowls—all of which are meant to challenge your dog mentally and cater to her innate love for play.

How do puzzle toys benefit dogs?

Many owners underestimate the importance of mental activation for dogs, either because they don't have time for it, or find it difficult to come up with ideas of how they can challenge their pup on a day-to-day basis. Understanding the value behind dog puzzles and dog games can help your furry friend lead a happier and healthier lifestyle.

1. Correcting behavioral issues. The biggest benefit behind dog puzzle toys is their ability to successfully cure boredom, which in turn helps tame dogs with abundant sources of energy and avoids the development of behavioral issues in your pup later. We asked Nina Ottosson, the designer and CEO of the Swedish-based puzzle toy line Outward Hound, to share with us her thoughts on giving interactive pet games and puzzles to dogs. Her philosophy is that “dogs have four legs and one head, and all five need activity in different ways, every day.” By incorporating dog puzzles and dog games into your dog's daily routine, “you can efficiently train your pup to behave, instead of letting her create her own fun,” explains Ottosson. When a dog is bored, she becomes hyperactive and distracted, which manifests itself in bad behavior such as not listening, running around, chewing, barking, digging, etc. You can treat your pup to countless dog games of fun hide-and-seek with the [Outward Hound Hide A Squirrel Puzzle Dog Toy](#).

2. Bonding with the owner. Your pup can use dog puzzle games for solo play, but also to interact with his human and build a stronger relationship with you. Ottosson explains, “The purpose of these puzzle games is to play together with the dog, so the owner can activate the dog in an easy and fun way at home.” This helps the owner and the dog

bond and build a stronger relationship, which is rooted in successful training and obedience.

3. Training. The benefit of using dog puzzle games to train dogs may seem obvious from the previously mentioned information, but the fact is that it is much easier to train a “tired dog” than it is to train a “bored dog.” By this, Ottosson means that a dog who has had a decent load of mental activation from pet games is more susceptible to learning how to behave than a dog who can’t focus on anything.

How can you incorporate puzzle toys into your dog’s routine?

Though every dog has different needs for mental stimulation, Ottosson recommends that your pup play at least 15-30 minutes a day with puzzle toys. An easy way to add this to your routine is to let your dog work for her food by hiding the treats in different puzzle toys and games.

The beauty of dog puzzle games is that they can be introduced to any dog no matter their age, physical activity level or health situation! For puppies, it is important to start with games that are simple, short, and that require lots of interaction with the owner as well as positive feedback and praise. For senior or injured dogs, you can reduce the strain of games by letting them work with their nose as opposed to having to move around their paws. Ottosson says, “It can be challenging to keep an injured dog still for several weeks, but the games are a great activity that lets the dog get an outlet of energy.”

Dog puzzle games can also help underweight dogs with curbed appetites, since they are more likely to eat food from a puzzle feeder instead of a simple bowl. The [Nina Ottosson Dog MixMax Puzzle Plastic Interactive Dog Toy](#) requires your pup to think about how to move the domes to release treats or kibble, which keeps him engaged and mentally stimulated.

To find more information and options, Google: Dog Puzzles.