

Stimulation

Dogs need mental stimulation. They often create their own stimulation if we don't find a way to satisfy their needs. Sometimes their solutions to their boredom can be very distressing for us. Your dog might even decide to tear up a three hundred-dollar spa cover like one of my student's dogs did.

If your dog is destructive while you are gone, there is nothing you can do about it after it has happened. It will do no good to punish him. You'll only hurt the relationship you have with your dog. Many dogs dig and chew and because they are left alone. However, you can prevent this destructiveness with planning and teaching.

You can create a stimulating environment for your dog even when you're not at home. It can be fun. It will, however, take a little planning. Here are few suggestions to provide challenges for him.

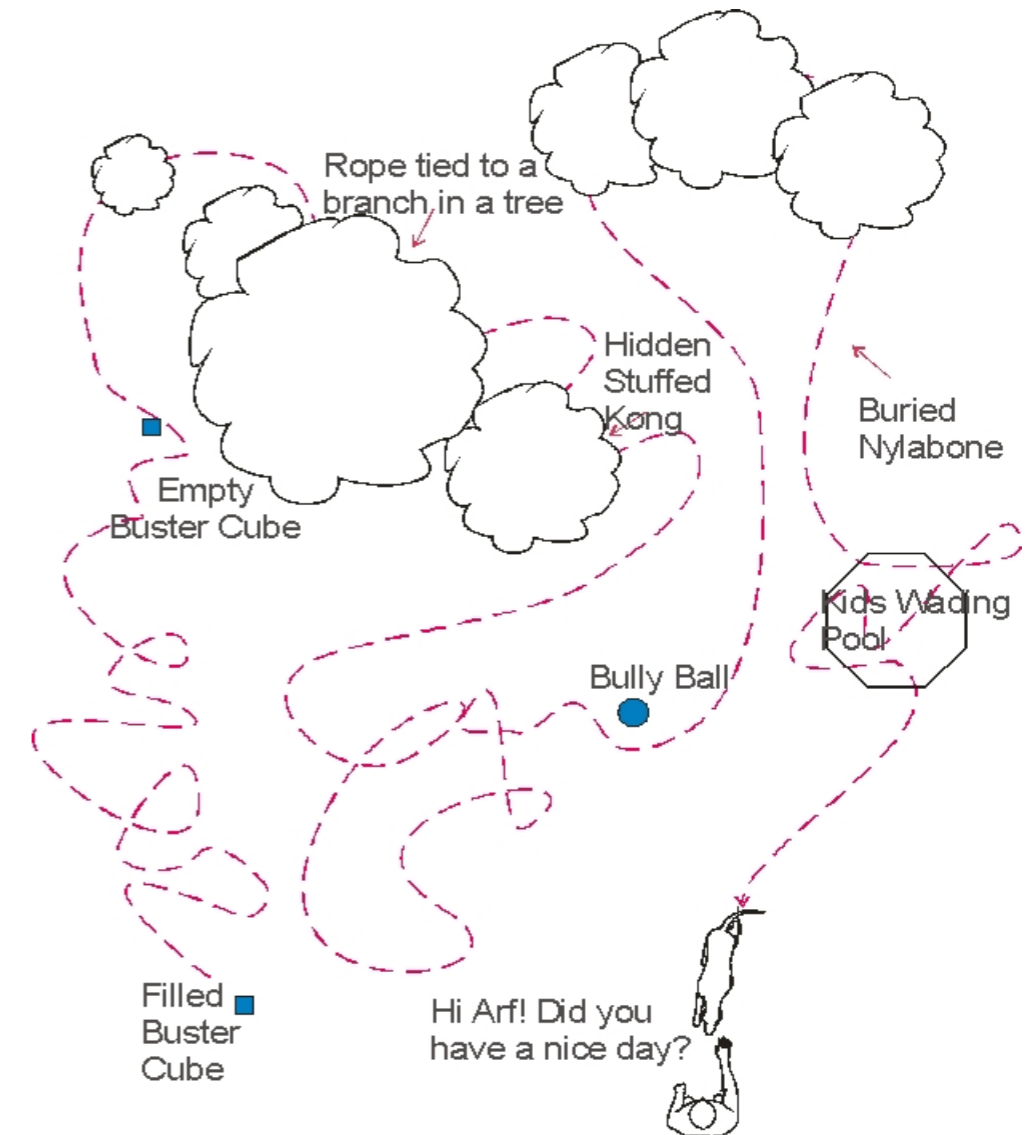
1. Hiding Food. Before leaving, distribute his meal in several hiding places. Children can help hide the food.

2. Stuffed Kongs. A Kong is a rubber dog toy that most dogs cannot chew up (see page 162). It's hollow and you can put a variety of really great food in it. You can stuff Kongs with cheese (melt it in the Kong in the microwave), peanut butter, bread, dog cookies, or just about anything that you can think of. Just make your dog work hard to get the food out. The Kong comes with instructions.

3. Buster Cubes. This is another toy that keeps dogs busy (see page 164). You load this with treats or kibble and let your dog get it out. It also comes with instructions for use.

4. Outside Toys. If your dog is an outside dog, you can rig up ropes in trees for him to tug on. Give him large indestructible toys for him to push around, kid's wading pools to splash in, or just about anything that gives him an outlet for his energy.

For more information on toys, see pages 162-165.



Uses:

Reducing
behavior
problems

Reducing
barking

Reducing
damage

Creating fun
for your dog