



BEATING BOREDOM



Identifying Boredom

Your dog may be suffering from boredom if he shows any of the following behaviours:

- Depressed
- Looking sad and laying about
- Destructive
- Disobedient and naughty
- Hyperactive



Like people, dogs can become bored and this can lead to unwanted and antisocial behaviour.

When you take a dog into your family he becomes part of your family. He shouldn't be left alone for long periods or this can lead to boredom. A dog needs both physical and emotional stimulation. It's not enough to take him for a walk once or twice a day. He also needs stimulation in the home. A dog benefits greatly from companionship of another dog. Some breeds, like Collies & Terriers just need to be kept busy.

Characteristics of a Bored Dog

- Become destructive in a bid to amuse himself
- Attention seeking, barking, chasing his tail, licking himself, pacing
- Become depressed

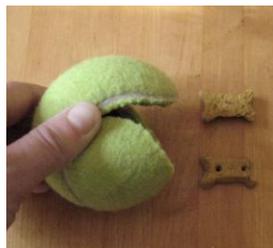
How to Prevent Boredom - At Home

A dog, in the wild, would be a natural scavenger. He would spend most of his time looking for food and this would keep his mind and body active. Domesticated dogs are usually fed at a fixed time and place each day, he doesn't have to find his food and doesn't have to travel far to get it. It's up to you to provide your dog with enough mental stimulation and exercise to ensure he doesn't get bored. When a dog scavenges for his food his reward is finding the food and this makes him happy. This is why giving a dog treats when training works, he succeeds, he's rewarded, he's happy.

You can stimulate your dog with food by hiding treats and letting him find them. Treats can be hidden inside or outside the house, under or behind things. He will have great fun searching around trying to find his rewards. It's not advisable to do this when your dog is hungry as he could become frustrated and show aggression.

You could use an upturned container and put it over his treat. He will pick up the scent and search out his treat.

There are dog toys available on the market that can be filled with treats or dried food and the dog has to work to get the treats out. You can devise your own using a tennis ball, make a slit and put in it treats inside.



You can fill a box or container with old rags or paper and hide treats within. Once his highly sensitive nose picks up the scent he will have great fun digging away until he gets his treats.

You could try setting a scent trail for him to follow. Use something like an old sock with some of his food in it. Let him smell the sock then, without him seeing you, drag it along the ground and hide it behind something. Don't make the trail too long to start with. You could put a treat along the trail to keep his interest. As he gets used to following the trail you can lengthen it.

It's great to watch how your dog works out how to get his rewards but don't allow him to become too frustrated, it should be fun for him.

Lots of dogs like to dig and bury things. To avoid him digging up your garden you could provide him with his own sandpit. He will have great fun digging and dogs are such fun to watch.



Your dog should always have things he can chew on as this will help avoid him chewing on your furniture! There is a large variety on the market: - Dog chews, Synthetic bones, Dental sticks, Hide bones.

How to Prevent Boredom - Away from Home

Taking your dog for a nice long walk is a good way for you both to get some exercise. It is also essential to your dog's physical and mental health.

Provided it is safe to do so and you are confident he will come back to you when called, let your dog to have a good run off his lead. This will allow him to sniff and explore and also meet other dogs.

When you are out with your dog it's a good idea to have a few treats with you. When you call your dog back and he responds reward him.

If you are with someone else you could play hide and seek with him. One distracts while the other hides. Reward him when he finds you and give him lots of praise. Keep him interested with play and he will want to stay with you and be less likely to run off.

Take a favourite toy with you or a ball and play with him. He will love to run and be active. This is much more beneficial to him than just a walk on a lead.

If you have a friend with a dog you could arrange to walk them together. Your dog will enjoy the companionship and interaction of another dog and love to run and play together.



If you are planning a long walk with your dog its advisable to take some water for your dog and remember your doggy poo bags!