



## Mental and Physical Stimulation

For your dog's overall wellbeing, it is important to consider their specific mental and physical needs. Training is not enough, and walks around the block are not enough to satisfy your dog. Breed, history, stamina, aptitude, and lifestyle should all be factored in when selecting activities.

### Mental Stimulation

Mental stimulation is all about curating and creating situations in which your dog can exercise their brain! Proper mental stimulation and enrichment incorporates a variety of activities to satisfy your dog's natural needs!

What "work" does your dog do? What breed(s) are involved? Does your dog show behavior conflict based on this (or lack thereof)

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- Is your dog a big sniffer? (Scent work, snuffle mats, leisure walks)
- Does your dog seek affection and interaction? (Play training, tricks, massage, grooming)
- Do they like to use their paws? (Puzzle toys, food stuffed toys, talking buttons)
- Does your dog's brain need to be challenged? (Name items, sequencing, teach new skills)

What are easy ways can you increase or improve mental stimulation on a daily basis?

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### Physical Exercise

Physical exercise is important, but it shouldn't be the same thing every day. Dogs benefit from a variety of physical activities including: walks, recall or leash training, play, fetch, tricks, conditioning and body awareness exercises ... if your dog is moving and using their body, they are getting physical activity!

Excessive physical exercise can be a problem too - your dog may become over stimulated, over tired, or develop compulsive tendencies. In addition, the attempt of "tiring them out" many result in building stamina rather than satisfying their needs. Not every pet benefits from being conditioned like an athlete!

Instead of attempting to drain the dog, try varying your physical exercises while also incorporating mental aspects to your activities. It will tire them out more than running a marathon!

**Stimulation for Behavior Issues**

A lack of appropriate stimulation is a huge contributing factor in many behavior cases. Dogs that are reactive may be extra on edge because their mental and physical needs are not met. Dogs with fear issues may lack safe exposure to novel enrichment. Dogs with separation anxiety may need something to focus on when alone. Dogs with compulsions often are exacerbated with redundant activity. Factoring in your dog's overall and specific behavioral needs will allow you to incorporate physical and mental activities to help alleviate some of the conflict and stress.

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