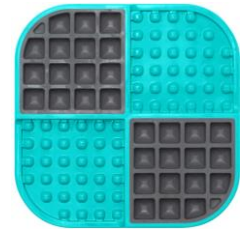


# Calming tools for my Dogs

We all want a calm and relaxed dog right? A happy dog, one who can chill out when we need them too and not bark at things outside our home. The great news is that we can create a calm(er) dog, but you will have to put in a little time and effort to achieve your goal. Your trainer will work with you to help your dog to feel relaxed and happier with the world around them. We take a holistic approach to your dog's behaviour modification program. Every part of your dogs life needs to be assessed and changes made to ensure your dog's needs are being met. We need to make sure your dog is getting quality species appropriate nutrition, holistic health care/wellness program, enrichment to engage the mind and body, exercise to relieve stress/meet their physical needs and relaxing/calming activities to reduce stress along with quality sleep every day.

Check out these ideas for calming activities for your dog. Use as many as you like each day to really help your dog to chill out and rest. Many will need your supervision or participation.

**Lickimats** - Perfect for smearing your dogs breakfast or dinner onto. They come in a huge variety of textures and even shapes. Buy several and use daily to slow your dog down when eating. Make and freeze smears for warm days.



**Snuffle Mats** - Buy one or make them yourself. They come in a whole range of colors, sizes and shapes. Hide dry treats in the mats and watch your dog use their nose to find all the food. Sniffing is a great calming activity. Research has shown that when dogs sniff their heart rate decreases.

**Go Slow feeders** Just like the snuffle mats, Go Slow feeding bowls come in a huge variety of sizes and patterns. Each one is designed to slow down your dogs eating. Makes the food or treats last longer = calmer, happier dog.



**Puzzle feeders** Nina Ottoson has a huge range of puzzle feeders for dogs.



These are great for brain games. Hide food in the puzzle and watch your dog solve how to lift, push or pull pieces to get to the food.



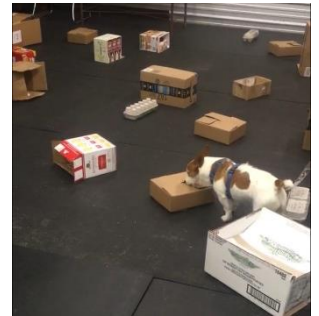
**Food dispensing toys** There is a massive range of these toys on the market. Start with easy ones until your dog has mastered them and then build up to more challenging ones. Kong has a large range, scour the pet stores and online to find the best ones for your dog. Build up a large collection as these are perfect for use when you go out. My dogs get 6 – 8 food dispensing toys every time I go to work.

**Scatter feeds** Doesn't matter if you live in an apartment, a house or have a grassy yard, scatter feeding can be done on any surface although grass certainly works the best as the food disappears into the lawn and your dog can then use that amazing sense of smell to locate every little bit. Sniffing is a great way to calm your dog as it slows that heart rate. Check out this study and



what they found out about sniffing, eating grass and shaking off <http://www.dogfieldstudy.com/en/pulse-study/at-the-heart-of-the-walk>

**Box Games** Save up all of your cardboard boxes large and small, scatter them, stack them, make them interesting and then plant food in them for your dog to find. They can destroy your box tower or tip toe through the maze of boxes. Make it fun and interesting – play indoors or out in the yard. Mix it up, add new boxes and other interesting items as your dog gets the hang of it. Another great way for your dog to engage in a sniffing/calming game.



**Long lasting chews** There are many to choose from so you will need to see which ones your own dog loves to chew on. Some favorites are goat horns, deer antlers (only use for younger dogs as these are rock hard and could crack teeth of older dogs), cow hooves, tracheas, tendons, bully sticks and even pine cones with food laded between the leaves of the cone. Scour the pet stores and search online. Some of our favorite online sources are:

Gully road <https://www.gullyroad.com.au/product-category/chews-treats/?v=3a1ed7090bfa>

Loyalty pet treats <https://loyaltypettreats.com.au/>



**Calming Music** Play this while your dog is engaging in their calming activities. This music has been scientifically designed and studied. The music soothes the dogs nervous system so is a great way to calm your household. Initially play the music while your dog is resting to create that relaxing association and then one that association has formed, play it as part of your calming strategy for your dog. Great also for home alone time.

