

## CANINE CABIN FEVER

### INDOOR ACTIVITIES FOR THE RAINY-DAY DOG

**R**ainy weather can make you and your dog a little stir-crazy. When you can't provide your dog with physical activity, coming up with some games and activities that work your dog's mind and senses can give you both a little relief.

If your dog loves a good game of fetch, consider yourself lucky. This game can keep your dog occupied for a long time. If you live in a house with stairs, play fetch up and down the stairs for an added workout.

A good hide-and-seek game will not only entertain your dog, but is an excellent exercise for building reliable recalls. If your dog knows "Wait," ask them to wait in another room while you go hide (if not, have someone hold your dog). Then call your dog to you. When they find you, give them a treat and/or a good play session! Make it fun!

You can also work on obedience commands or even teach your dog some new tricks. Just a few minutes a day will do.

If you need some ideas on new tricks, try these books from [www.dogwise.com](http://www.dogwise.com):

- Dog Tricks for Dummies by Sarah Hodgson
- Dog Tricks Step by Step by Mary Ann Zeigenfuse & Jan Walker
- Andrea Arden's Little Book of Dog Tricks

Almost all of these books have different "obedience" skills you can teach your dog, as well as fun tricks.

Pet supply manufacturers are now making interactive toys



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for dogs. Toys like the Buster Cube, a large plastic die with inner chambers made for holding kibble, can keep your dog entertained while they tip and turn the cube with their nose and paws trying to release the treats. You will probably have to spend some time teaching your dog how it works, but then you can adjust the difficulty level, which means it will occupy your dog for longer and longer periods of time. A web search for "interactive dog toys" produces enough results to keep your dog entertained until the sunny weather returns.

You can also teach "scent games." Hide treats, bones, or toys in various parts of the house and/or yard and tell the dog to "Find It!" Make it easy at first. Once your dog gets the hang of this game, start making it more difficult to find the treats – don't just hide them on the floor, hide them on window sills, chairs and door knobs! We don't recommend hiding treats on tabletops and counters, unless you want your dog to consider these areas fair game.

Mental activity requires quite a bit of energy and can keep your dog busy and happy!

-Lisa Mullinax and Kelly Ryan



Giving your dog's mind a good workout can not only burn off that cabin fever energy, but can also keep your dog young.

A report published in the January issue of *Neurobiology of Aging* found that a diet rich in antioxidants combined with a stimulating environment slowed the canine aging process.