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## Will Work for Food.

*by Angi Lenz, APDT, AHT*

**In nature, dogs had to work to get their food. They spent about 80 % of their day hunting for themselves and the rest of their pack. Hunting is physically and mentally stimulating as well as extremely challenging. The “hunt” becomes their job and when they succeeded at their job they received their “pay check“ ... a big full meal. Now think of your dog... you give him some dry kibble in a bowl and its gone in about 2 minutes... not much of a job! When we deprive our dogs of natural drives it can result in serious behavioral issues including: excessive barking, destructive chewing, digging, soiling in the house, aggression, and separation anxiety.**

### **Giving your dog a job can prevent mischief at home**

Prevention is always the best cure for any behavioral problems. The top reasons for inappropriate behavior in dogs is due to lack of mental stimulation and basic training. You can help you dog by:

- 1) enrolling them in a positive reward based obedience class
- 2) Feed them routinely from chew toys (like KONG) NO MORE FOOD BOWL
- 3) Once they master the KONG, begin to hide the toy to teach your dog to Hunt (put him to work )

Toys like Kong’s or Puzzle type toys are made to be very durable. They can bounce unpredictably and this helps lure dogs in to a good game of chase. The toys are hollow, made for stuffing of your pets food and treats. Once your pet masters the art of the KONG, you can get very creative in hiding places.

### **Ideas for Stuffing:**

Mix you dogs regular kibble with a bit of canned food, peanut butter, yogurt, or soft fruit like bananas. This is to help the food stick together. Then take your KONG and put a wad of peanut butter or other yummy soft treat in the smaller end. Depending on your dogs dietary needs you can get pretty creative here! Then continue to stuff the KONG with the kibble mixture. This helps make the food more difficult to get out. Consider putting Greenie or other Chewy to act as a big reward when they get to the middle.

### **As your dog succeed more and more in their “work” make the job more challenging:**

Pack the stuffing more tightly, wedge biscuit inside the cavity, under the rim to secure them

**FREEZE IT:** Take your KONG and put a wad of peanut butter or other yummy soft treat in the smaller end. After stuffing Top off with a cap (wide end) of peanut butter or cream cheese fill with their favorite foods

**Cheese it:** Turn the KONG upside down and put in a few cheese pieces and food nuggets. Microwave until cheese melts. Let cool to a safe temperature.

By feeding you dog from a chew toy is not only gives them a job but it teaches your dog to settle. And anyone who has raised a puppy KNOWS.... An extra 40 minutes of peace and quiet is a rarity

### **Very Important - No Dog Toy is Indestructible**

Supervise your dog's use of Kong's until you are confident they can be used safely without supervision.

### **Clean and Inspect KONGS Frequently**

Look for cracks, separations and/or missing pieces. Flex your dry Kong and inspect it from all angles. Loose pieces larger than a food nugget can be harmful if swallowed. Worn and damaged Kongs must be replaced immediately.

### **Your Dog's Safety is Your Responsibility**

If you think your dog has swallowed a toy fragment (for example: If the toy was damaged and you cannot find every piece larger than a food nugget), promptly inform your veterinarian.

### **Sizing**

Proper Kong sizing is determined by your dog's size and chewing temperament. Size Up - If your dog destroys a Kong in a short period of time, try a larger Kong and/or a Black Kong. Red Kongs - Very Strong, Very Bouncy Black Kongs - Extra Hard, For Power Chewers Multiple dogs - Only provide Kongs sized for the largest and/or most tenacious chewer in the house. Jawrobics™ - Regular use of Kong will strengthen your dog's jaw muscles. Eventually you may need to size up or switch to Black Kongs.

## **Prevention is the Best Cure for Behavioral Problems.**

Important Behavioral Tips:

- 1) Is your dog healthy? - Schedule an exam with your veterinarian to be sure.
- 2) A proper diet is important. - Consult your veterinarian, trainer or breeder.
- 3) Enroll your dog in basic training classes. - Ask your veterinarian for a referral.
- 4) Provide Kongs for physical and mental stimulation.

### **Dogs Need KONGS!**

Kongs are widely used for therapy and prevention of boredom, separation anxiety and other behavioral issues. Regular use of Kongs can also improve oral health. Their unpredictable bounce lures most dogs into a game of chase, catch and chew. The hollow center can be filled with food and treats. A dab of peanut butter spread around the inside is very effective. For more stuffing ideas, send for a complimentary copy of "Recipe for the Perfect Dog".

### **Put Your Dog To WORK!**

Providing food and/or treat stuffed Kongs for your dogs can keep them contentedly busy (working) and out of trouble for long periods of time. Add more stuffed Kongs to increase their work time. Note - Adjust bowl feeding as necessary to maintain a healthy diet.

## Kong Recipes:

### Frozen Jerky Pops:

Peanut butter

Bouillon

Jerky Strips

Water

Appropriate KONG toy

Smear a small amount of peanut butter over small hole in your KONG toy. Fill with cool water and add a pinch of bouillon. Place a Jerky Stick inside KONG toy and freeze. This can also be put (once frozen) in a children's size swimming pool for a fun day of fishing for your pet.

- by Terry Ryan

### Aunt Jeannie's Archeology KONG (for advanced dogs)

Fill your KONG toy (the larger the better!) in layers and pack as tightly as possible. LAYER ONE (deepest): KONG Stuff'N Beef and Liver treats. LAYER TWO: KONG Stuff'N Tail Mix or dry dog kibble, Cheerios, sugar-free, salt-free peanut butter, dried banana chips, apples and apricots. LAYER THREE: carrot sticks, turkey or leftover ravioli or tortellini. The last item inserted should be an apricot or piece of ravioli, presenting a smooth "finish" under the main opening. - by Jean Donaldson

### Percy's Favorite

Fill small kong hole with Natural Balance Soft Dog Food. Put in a few yogurt coated kibble then a Greenie in the center and fill the remaining space with kibble/yogurt mixture. Cap off with more natural Balance and freeze. -By Angela Lenz

### Frosty Paws

Mix one part yogurt, one part shredded carrot and one part mashed bananas in a food processor, until creamy. First plug small hole of the kong, turn kong upside down and set into a small dish so the kong site upright. Fill kong to top with mixture. Let stand in freezer for 4 hours. Enjoy!

### Ah, The Power of Cheese

Layer your dogs regular kibble (like lasagna) with tiny cubes of cheddar cheese. Kibble, Cheese, Kibble, Cheese as so on. Cover opening with one more tid bit of cheese. Pop into the microwave for 15 seconds. Allow the cheese to cool and harden again- now that is has coated the kibble. Enjoy!

### Something Seems Fishy

Great Product: Whole Food Toppers, dehydrated wild caught salmon (available at PetStop) Loosely stuff Kong with salmon. Turn Kong upside down resting it in a cup. Fill with hot water. Let sit 10 minutes. The salmon will re-hydrate and fill all the spaces in the Kong... Enjoy

