

Activities to Entertain your Convalescing Dog

Keeping your dog on the road to recovery is your goal, but young or active dogs can get bored and distressed with a sudden downshift in their normal activity routine. They need alternative outlets that will engage their brains and expend some of their energy, yet keep them safe from reinjuring themselves. Choose activities that encouraging quiet, small-movements, helping to keep your dog calm but busy.

Instead of feeding your dog from a bowl, **put his kibble in a puzzle toy** so he uses his brain to figure out how to free the kibble. Try the Kong Wobbler, Planet Dog Orbee-Tuff Snoop Dog Toy, or the Nina Ottosson Dog Pyramid Interactive Puzzle. He has to push these toys around on the ground with his nose so the activity is low impact but entertaining.

Give your dog **long-lasting chew toys** like a frozen, stuffed Kong (find recipes: kongcompany.com/recipes) or a bully stick. You can also give him a plush, squeaky toy to chew on – just make sure he won't rip apart and ingest it! Rotate toys out every couple of days to prevent boredom. Be sure to supervise your dog until you know what he'll do with different types of toys. If you notice any resource guarding behavior, please contact us immediately so we can help you stay safe.

Have him **use his nose to sniff out treats**. Try using two or three boxes that differ in size, and put a treat into each one. Leave the boxes open or loosely covered at first and then work up to closing the boxes or not putting a treat in every box. You can also use upside down paper cups to hide treats for him to find. If he has a front leg that is healing, just make sure he isn't engaging that limb more than he should.

If your veterinarian gives you the okay, you could **give him an almost empty yogurt container or the end of a peanut butter jar to lick clean**. Don't give your dog peanut butter that has **xylitol** in it, since xylitol is poisonous for dogs. Be sure to supervise.

Play calming music or dog-centric videos that your dog can watch from his crate, like:

- PAWS-itively Peaceful Pooch: A Relaxing Video for Your Dog
- DVD For Dogs : While You Are Gone
- Through a Dog's Ear - throughadogsear.com

Use **aromatherapy and/or flower essences**. Try formulas that promote calm behavior and stress relief, like:

- Aromadog's **Chill Out** and **Chill Out PowerTube** - silkroad oils.com
- Bach Flower Essences' **Rescue Remedy** - available at [OHS's Best Friends' Corner](#).

Adaptil is a synthetic pheromone that mimics the pheromone mother dogs emit after giving birth to help their puppies feel calm and secure. Available at [OHS's Best Friends' Corner](#).

Create a calm environment when you take your dog outside to potty. You don't want him to mistake this as his opportunity to let loose and start jumping around! Be sure to keep him on a short leash when you take him outside. The surprise appearance of a cat or squirrel, or a loud noise could cause him to startle or try to chase and re-injure himself. Depending on his original injury, this might take less movement than you'd think.

Make his crate comfortable by providing non-slip mats or rugs under his bed in the crate so he won't slide around. Some dogs like to burrow under blankets too. Non slip mats around your home may be helpful too.

Stay in close contact with your veterinarian and contact us for additional tips.