

Choosing the Right Toy for Your Dog



The holiday season is a great time of year to restock the doggie toy box. But before you fill up, be sure to toss out anything that is torn or broken and could cause a health hazard if chewed and swallowed.

Dogs not only love but need three distinct types of toys to keep them both mentally and physically stimulated. These types of toys are action, distraction and comfort.

Action Toys

Action toys are anything that you can throw or roll that will instantly put your dog into “fetch mode,” running to retrieve it and bringing it back to you with barking instructions to do it all over again. Hard rubber balls and flying discs rank highly in this category. Many hard [rubber toys intertwined with rope](#) or other durable materials that also have a bounce in them will also fit into this section. There are lots of toys such as [ball launchers](#) that allow you to send that ball farther than you can throw it.

Distraction Toys

These toys are usually made from very durable non-toxic rubber materials. A popular toy in this category is one that can be stuffed with treats or tidbits of your dog’s favorite biscuits or a dollop of peanut butter. These toys are real [brainteasers](#) and thus mentally stimulating because your dog has to figure out how to remove the edible delights — designed to keep dogs busy for hours! There is also a huge selection of [puzzle toys](#)

offering different degrees of difficulty that also put your dog to the test and keep him involved and thus distracted, especially when he is home alone.

Comfort Toys

[Soft plush toys](#) are a doggie essential. For many dogs, they provide a level of comfort and they love to cuddle up with them and snooze. For others, they are considered prey toys and they will enjoy shaking and attempting to subdue them. For many pet parents who really don't like cleaning up mounds of disemboweled stuffing, there are also wonderful toys called flatties or "road kill" which are packed with squeakers inside their plush exteriors but they are stuffing free. Another option are plush [toys with calming drops](#) to help keep dogs calm and relaxed.

It's a really great idea to stock up on all three kinds of toys. [Treats for the distraction toys](#) make great stocking stuffers, too.

If your dog really enjoys a particular toy you bought over the holiday season, head back to the store after the holidays when the sales are in full force and stuck up on firm favorites.

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