

Rainy Day Game Cards

Indoor games for the days nobody wants to go outside.

01**Which hand****ZERO-SETUP GAMES**

Treat in one closed fist, both offered, your dog nose-touches the right one. You can play this from the sofa without putting your tea down. Good for impulse control, and one of the few games that works just as well for an old or sore dog.

02**Hide and seek****ZERO-SETUP GAMES**

Ask for a wait, go hide somewhere in the house, call once. They find you. It rehearses recall, uses scent and problem-solving, and the payoff – finding you – is more motivating than most food games.

Watch: you

03**Kibble scatter****ZERO-SETUP GAMES**

Throw a handful of their dinner across a rug and let them Hoover it up. Thirty seconds of effort, ten minutes of nose-down foraging. Use a rug rather than a hard floor so they aren't scrabbling.

04**Ready, steady, go****ZERO-SETUP GAMES**

Build anticipation while they hold a sit, then release them to a tossed treat on a cue word. This trains the off-switch under excitement, which is the exact skill most dogs lack on a frustrating indoor day.

05**Trick stacking****ZERO-SETUP GAMES**

Spin, bow, back-up, crawl, paws-up, chin rest – taught one at a time, then chained. Back-up and crawl in particular build core strength and body awareness, and it all reads as play rather than training.

06**Muffin-tin puzzle****GAMES FROM YOUR RECYCLING**

Treats in the cups, tennis balls on top. This is the first puzzle most dogs ever solve, and it scales – add more balls, or move to a twenty-four cup tin.

...9 more.

07

Towel roll

GAMES FROM YOUR RECYCLING

Scatter kibble along a bath towel, roll it up, hand it over. A free snuffle mat that takes ten seconds to build and works nearly as well.

08

Cardboard tube treat log

GAMES FROM YOUR RECYCLING

Treats inside a kitchen roll tube, ends folded in. For a dog who solves it instantly, nest a smaller tube inside a bigger one. Free, endlessly repeatable, and it teaches persistence.

09

Box bonanza

GAMES FROM YOUR RECYCLING

A cardboard box loosely packed with crumpled paper, empty tubes and hidden treats. Licensed destruction, which satisfies a real instinct that most house dogs never get to use. Supervise it — some dogs swallow cardboard rather than just shredding it.

10

Lidded containers

GAMES FROM YOUR RECYCLING

Treats in a Tupperware with the lid balanced on top, or nested containers to work through. Teaches a nose-and-paw strategy. Nothing small enough to swallow.

11

Three-cup shell game

PROPER THINKING GAMES

Treat under one of three upturned cups, shuffle, let them indicate which. Unlike most "puzzles," this one genuinely requires tracking rather than sniffing, and you can make it properly hard.

12

Scent discrimination

PROPER THINKING GAMES

Put a drop of a single scent — birch, clove, peppermint — on a cotton swab, pair it with food a few times, then hide it in one of six boxes. This is the on-ramp to actual nosework, and it's the one activity on this page with real mood research behind it. It also works completely unchanged for a blind or deaf dog.

...3 more.

13

Named-toy retrieval

PROPER THINKING GAMES

Teach one toy's name properly, then a second, then send them to fetch by name from a pile. A project you can run five minutes a day for months.

14

A hundred things to do with a box

PROPER THINKING GAMES

Put a plain box down and mark-and-reward every new thing your dog does with it. Nose it, paw it, step in it, pick it up. Mentally the hardest game here, because they have to keep inventing rather than repeating.

Watch: new

15

Two-mat shuttle

GETTING THEM MOVING INDOORS

A mat at each end of the hallway. Send them to one, reward, send them back. A hallway becomes a sprint lane and you get a stationing cue out of it. Non-slip mats only – a dog skidding to a stop on hardwood is how soft-tissue injuries happen.

your own

your own

your own