TOYS FOR YOUR DOG

Part of keeping your dog healthy and happy is providing opportunities for play and mental stimulation.

Types of toys

Dog toys fall into several classes: chase/ retrieve toys, kill toys (those that squeak or can be shaken like a prey object) and pull toys. Since every dog's personality is
different, dogs will have their own favourite toy.

Opinions vary on whether or not to play pull-toy games with your dog at all, with some feeling it increases possessiveness and makes a dog more aggressive.

These toys in fact are good for building confidence for timid dogs, and other dogs just love a game of Tug-Of-War.

You should teach the dog to let go of the object immediately on your command.

When finding toys for your dog, you don't have to go to great expense. Pet shops always have a great variety to choose from depending on your breed of dog. But you can also find everyday items in the home that can provide great entertainment for your dog just by using some imagination.

These are some of the many things dogs like to play with, either with you or on their own, which can be found in pet shops or around the home:

- **Tennis ball**
- **Frisbee**
- **Nylabone chew toy**
- **Rawhide chew toy**
- **Big raw bone**
- **Squeaky toy**
- **Bell inside hollow tough rubber ball**

- **Kong**

Rubber toys, sometimes with rope attached. Great for chasing and chewing. Try using treats or a smear of peanut butter to attract the dog's attention.

- **Tug-Of-War Rope**

These multi-coloured ropes are available in different lengths depending on the size of your dog. They are great for one-on-one games with your dog, or letting two dogs battle it out between themselves in play.

- **Rubber rings**

These long-lasting stretchy toys are available from most pet stores. Great for pull games tug-of-war between two dogs.

- **Basket ball or other large ball** Large balls too big to be punctured with teeth or picked up. These can be pushed along by the dog.

Some dogs even enjoy playing a game of solo soccer.

- **Plastic bottle or jug**

Good to bat around and especially good if you put a handful of dry dog biscuits inside. The dog will quickly learn how to nudge the bottle around so the food falls out a piece or two at a time.

This is a good toy to leave with your dog when you go to work in the morning.

- **Buster cube**

If you don't mind spending $40 these are great toys. You fill the inside of the plastic cube with biscuits and the dog has to paw and nose it around to get the food to come out, one or two pieces at a time.

They love these puzzles! Buster cubes are similar to the plastic bottle but take longer to dispense the contents.

- **Raw egg in its shell**

Great fun to watch a dog figure out how to get into the egg the first few times!

- **Rolled up hessian bag sewn into a snake**

- **Pine cone or coconut**

- **Short length of old fire hose sealed with three tennis balls**

A great retrieving toy for most dog breeds.

When to use certain toys

You may wish to accumulate a large number of toys, but don't let the dog have them all at once. Leave out only a few at a time and rotate them.

Have different toys for inside the house than for outside.

Some toys may be special toys that you bring out when you want to play with the dog – controlling valued objects contributes to your status as pack leader.

Also, try to save a couple of extra special toys to use as rewards in training.

Toys can be used to hold the dog's attention or increase the effort it exerts. You can use them when teaching the dog to look at you by holding a toy near your face, tuning up heeling by holding a toy in your left hand and giving it to the dog after an especially crisp performance, or speeding up the recall by throwing a ball as a reward after the dog comes in.

This information is provided for advice only.

Civic Plaza, 2 Chung Wah Tce
Phone: 08 8935 9977
Fax: 08 8935 9900
Email: palmerston@palmerston.nt.gov.au
Web: www.palmerston.nt.gov.au

CITY OF PALMERSTON