

Your Smart Dog

Cool Stuff for Dogs (and their people)

June 2007

What's Cool and Where to Get It

If you're like me, you like to buy things for your dog. One of my favorite pastimes is shopping for my dogs. I travel to dog-related conferences several times a year and it's just *heaven* -- all kinds of toys and fun stuff for the dogs. There are some new products on the market these days, and I thought you might like to hear about a few that my dogs really seem to enjoy. This month's newsletter will bring you up to speed on some neat dog toys that will keep your dog out of your hair, out of trouble, and some that are even educational!

Kong Time

This is the coolest thing since sliced bread! All dogs love Kongs, so imagine having an automatic Kong-dispenser! Your dogs can have four Kongs delivered automatically (one at a time) throughout the day while you're gone. Keeps them busy, entertained, and makes me feel a lot better about leaving them for long stretches.



If you have multiple dogs, you'll need to separate them so they can't get each other's Kongs. I have four dogs and each one has their own room in which the Kong-Time is stationed. I have a dog that needs to

be crated when I'm away and I've even found a way for her to enjoy the Kong Time as well: She is in a soft-sided crate (Noz-to-Noz, to be specific). The roof of the crate unzips, so I have opened it enough that the Kongs can slip through the small opening in the top.

Chuck-It

Have a ball-crazy dog? Or a dog with a ton of energy (and you really don't feel like running a 5K just to tire him out?) You need to try the Chuck-It! With the Chuckit!, you can throw that ball out of the ballpark over and over again. Use it in the park, in your backyard, or anywhere there is plenty of room. With a little practice you can consistently throw the ball 100 to 140 feet. It comes in four different sizes.



Tug-A-Jug

Another great toy that can also serve as your dog's food bowl! Many moons ago, when our dogs lived in the wild, their dinner wasn't





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presented to them in a shiny, clean bowl – they had to work to find food. Today, dogs live a much cushier life, and are less active, both mentally and physically. A fit dog (both mentally and physically) is easier to live with. If you tire a dog out, he's less likely to have extra energy to chew, steal, or destroy your belongings. To give your dog some variety in his everyday routine, try feeding him from the Tug-A-Jug once a week. Let him work for his dinner – instead of 30 seconds of scarfing down dinner, watch as he works both his mind and his body to get to his dinner.

Hide A Squirrel (or Bird or Bee) Plush Toys

Fun, interactive toys for you and your dog. The Hide-A-Squirrel is a plush toy with three squeaker toys that "hide" inside the main toy. There are several holes on the outside of the toy your dog can use to get at the hidden treasure inside. This is a toy that challenges and develops your dog's intelligence and puzzle solving skills. We think this toy should only be used when you are there to watch and help. A frustrated dog might chew on the toys and ruin them. You don't want that. You should be there to help your dog learn how to properly use the toy and replace the squeak toys once they have been removed. Always pick up when playtime is over. Replacement squirrels are only available in the regular size.



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Canine Heritage DNA Test

Not a toy, but something fascinating for those of us who live with mixed breeds and wonder what "mix" makes up our canine friend. The Canine Heritage™ product uses state-of-the-art SNP-based DNA technology to genetically identify breed characteristics and certify 38 potential breeds.

MMI Genomics, Inc.'s DNA CheekSwab kits are provided for DNA collection and can be returned by regular US mail - no special handling is required. The swabbing procedure is completely non-invasive. No blood, hair or tissue need be extracted. Swabbing is done easily and comfortably by the pet owner, avoiding the trauma and expense of other sampling methods.

Be aware that only 38 breeds have been identified to date. We wanted to have Nemo's DNA tested, but neither of the most obvious breeds (Great Dane and Coonhound) have been identified, so the test would be worthless for us right now. We hope they continue to add more breeds to the database.

For more information, visit Metamorphix, Inc.

Where to Shop

There are lots of good dog specialty stores on the web. Check out the ones below before buying to see who has the best prices on the toys, as well as shipping.



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SitStay – www.sitstay.com

Jeffers Pet – www.jefferspet.com (great price on Kong Time!)

White Dog Bone – www.whitedogbone.com

Karen Pryor's Clickertraining --

<http://www.clickertraining.com/store>

There are many, many more interesting and educational toys and products out there for you and your dog. I'll start making notes as I shop and will bring you a "Volume 2" later in the year.

Let me know if your dog has a favorite cool dog toy! Enjoy the summer and stay cool!

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Helping good dogs become great dogs.

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