

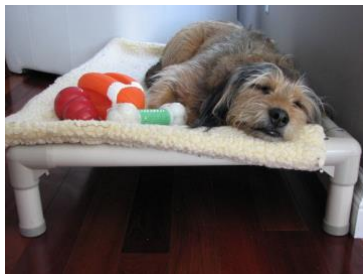
## Enrichment Protocol for Shelter Dogs

Enrichment refers to providing mental, physical and social stimulation. Allowing animals to think, learn, explore, and socialize goes a long way to keeping them behaviorally healthy in the shelter.

Each shelter dog should be provided with enrichment every day. Enrichment should not be considered “extra” that is provided when there is time. Daily enrichment is part of the humane care of confined companion animals.

### **Environmental Enrichment**

All dogs should have a comfortable place to rest inside their cage.



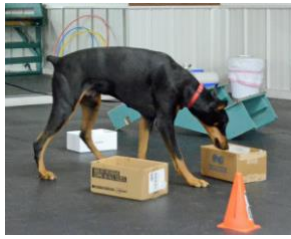
### **Sensory Enrichment**

#### *Olfactory Stimulation*

Dogs have an amazing sense of smell and this sense should be stimulated daily.

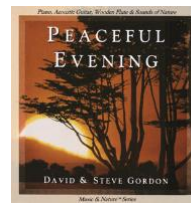
- Introduce novel scents into the environment (spray scent in the air, peel an orange, etc.) or a pinch of dried spice (cinnamon, cumin, nutmeg, ginger) or a drop of liquid extract (vanilla, almond, banana, etc.) can be dispensed on the floor or the walls of their kennel.
- Allow dogs to sniff things when on walks.
- Hide treats for the dogs to find (“find it” games, Nosework, and “tracking” games).





### ***Auditory Stimulation***

Research shows that some forms of music can be soothing to animals. Classical music, new age music and music designed for stress reduction (Through A Dog's Ear) should be played at a low volume in the kennels during daytime hours. Recordings of books on tape can also be played. The music should be turned off at night as all animals require quiet to sleep.



### ***Visual Stimulation***

This sense is stimulated a lot in the shelter environment – in fact sometimes too much. Dogs who become over stimulated or agitated by the sight of other dogs should be moved to a less stimulating cage or a visual barrier should be hung on their cage door.

Other visually stimulating things can be placed outside the dog runs such as perpetual motion toys or mobiles to provide them with something interesting to look at.

### ***Tactile Stimulation***

Many dogs respond positively to tactile stimulation (petting, brushing, and massage) from humans. Along with the tactile stimulation comes social interaction and this practice helps to ensure that these social animals receive the daily human attention they need. Make sure to identify the kind of touch the dog prefers. For example, some dogs like their belly scratched while others find it intimidating.

### ***Taste Stimulation***

Dogs should be given novel food treats daily to stimulate their taste buds.

## Stimulating Species Typical Behavior

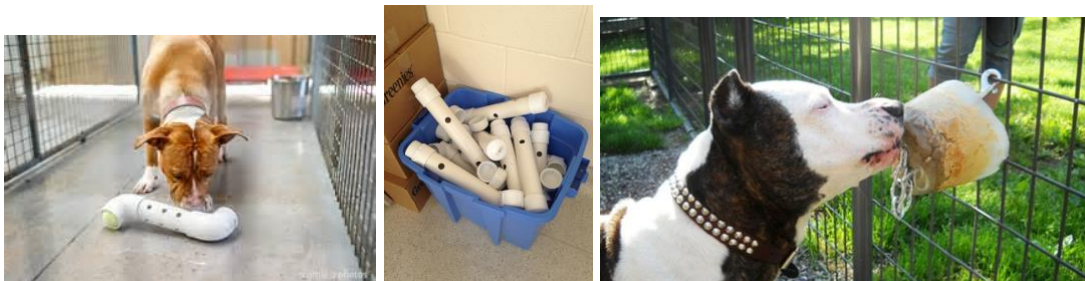
Chewing and digging are normal dog behaviors that can be stimulated by providing safe chew items and a digging pit in the play yard.

## Mental Stimulation

All animals need mental stimulation to stay behaviorally healthy in the shelter. Mental stimulation occurs during all of the above practices, but additional stimulation should be provided. Below are some additional ideas.

### *Food Gathering enrichment*

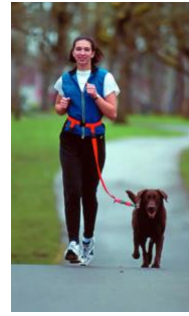
Present food/treats inside a Kong, feeder ball, PVC pipe feeder, or empty container of any kind so that the dog must work to get the food out. Food frozen in ice blocks works well too.



## Physical Stimulation

All dogs require exercise to remain healthy. Dogs should be walked on a leash as well as provided aerobic exercise in the form of:

1. Running/jogging with a human
2. Playing a game of fetch
3. Playing a game of tug (with rules)
4. Agility



## Social Stimulation

Dogs are social animals and as such should be provided with opportunities for social interaction with humans and other dogs if appropriate.

Those individuals who appear to be dog friendly should be allowed time with another dog for socialization and play. First introduce the dogs on leash and if all goes well – remove the leashes and supervise the session. If the dogs appear to enjoy each other’s company and are playing well, they should be placed together for a short time each day.

