

Genius Dog Newsletter

GENIUS DOG TRAINING

"Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole." Roger Caras

How to Choose the Right Dog Toy

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Okay, I must admit my dogs probably have more toys than the average dog (see photo below). Full disclosure, this isn't all of them.



But in my own defense, I am a professional dog trainer and providing my clients with recommendations on pet products, including toys, is very important. Trying out new toys is one aspect of the job both Wylie and Sydney can agree on; however, sharing is a whole different matter. Notice how I have two of almost every toy. By the way, just like with kids, that doesn't always help.

So here are some things to remember when selecting a toy for your pet.

Use caution when using household items as dog toys. Some items may not be able to withstand your puppy's sharp teeth or the powerful jaws of your adult dog. Pieces could potentially break off allowing them to become a choking

hazard or blockage in their digestive system. Some items may also contain hazardous materials (e.g., lead paint) that could be toxic to your pet.

Also, refrain from giving your puppy or dog old clothing (e.g., rolled up socks) or shoes as a toy. Your pet may not be able to distinguish your old worn out socks with a new pair you just took out of the dryer and tossed in the laundry basket.

So here we are at the pet store. What are some of the things you should consider before making your purchase?

- Get the appropriate size toy. If you have more than one dog, purchase the size most appropriate for the largest dog.
- Select the proper type of toy for your dog's age, weight & chewing strength.
- Color probably doesn't matter. Dogs are not colorblind; however, they do not see colors the same way that humans do. I prefer bright colors so I can find the toy more easily, not the dog.
- What does the toy look and feel like? If you have young children at home or

just never got rid of your stuffed animal collection, be careful not to get any plush dog toys that may resemble a child's toy.

"Is this a child's toy or a dog toy (see answer below)?"



- Interactive, rubber dog toys (such as KONG and PetSafe Busy Buddy) are great for teething puppies and adult dogs alike. These toys are durable, great for mental stimulation, and most of them are dishwasher safe (top rack only).



Hint: You don't always have to use brand specific treats for these type of toys. You can put almost anything in them that your puppy or dog likes, even their regular kibble.

Answer: Dog Toy

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- Quality counts. Some dog toys actually come with a guarantee. For example, West Paw design offers a free one-time replacement or refund per shape for their Zogoflex dog toys.



- Not all flying discs (a.k.a. Frisbees) are created equal or meant for dogs. I found this out the hard way when Wylie cut his mouth on one many years ago. The brand and model I prefer is Hyperflite Jawz disc. Their website is www.hyperflite.com.



Now that you bought out the entire store, here are some additional tips:

- Sort your dog's toys into two or three groups, depending on how many toys you have to work with. Every couple of weeks, switch the toys.
- Supervise your dog's use of any toy until you are confident they can be used safely without supervision. Check the toy often for cracks or missing pieces.

If damaged, remove toy and replace with a new one.

CONTEST

1. Take a look at the first photo on the front of this newsletter (pile of dog toys).
2. How many KONG brand toys are in the photo? The first three (3) newsletter subscribers to respond correctly will receive a FREE 4 oz. bag of BLUE bits Tempting Turkey Recipe Training Treats.
3. Send your guess to info@geniusdogtraining.com. Good Luck!