



Pawsitive Experience
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Indoor Games to Play with Your Dog (To Exercise their Body and Mind)

We have all experienced cabin fever during long Bend winters. Dogs do too if they don't enough exercise.

Below are four indoor games you can play with your dog to give them both mental and physical stimulation.

Stairs Recalls: This game only works if you have carpeted stairs. Have one member of the family at the top of the stairs and another at the bottom. Call your dog back and forth. If they are a beginner obedience dog, reward them every time, if a seasoned dog, you can occasionally reward to keep them "in the game." Kids love playing this game with their dog, so get them involved. If you want to tire your kids out too, have them run up and down the stairs with your dog.

Fetch: This is a great game to play with your dog inside or out. To teach fetch to beginner dogs, I have found it to work best down a narrow hallway with all doors shut so there is no other place for the dog to go. At first, just throw it six inches have them pick up the toy and then say drop, and put a treat near their mouth. When they drop it, reward. Do this for a few days. Gradually increase the distance you throw the toy.

Hide and Seek: This game is also referred to as search and rescue. Have one person hold on to your dog while the other one hides. Then the person in hiding calls the dog and the dog is released to find them. Make the hiding easy at first and then gradually make it harder. I have been playing this game so long it is hard to hide where my dogs won't find me. I never have treats on me so they find me by my scent, not the food in my pocket, which could be valuable if we ever do get separated on an off leash hike. You can add another lesson to this game by having the person who is holding the dog say "go find Meredith." Later, stop having the hiding person call have the holder just say "go find Meredith," and you've taught your dog to go search for a person. If your dog has a good "stay" you can use that so one person doesn't have to hold them.

Find the Toy: This can keep a dog busy for hours. Stuff Kong toys with their dinner and some peanut butter. Tell them to go find the toy. At first you will have to show them how to search for toys but pretty soon they will be pros at it. Teach them when they finish one Kong toy there are more hidden around the house. This is a great game to play as you leave the house for the day. It prevents separation anxiety and destructive

chewing because of boredom. **This is not a game to play in a multiple dog household. It can cause fights (and weight gain) if the dogs don't find an equal number of toys.**

Use your imagination and come up with your own indoor games.

Meredith Gage

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