

morley vetcentre

DIGGING

Digging is a very normal dog behaviour and 'growing out of it' will not happen! To address digging issues we need to look at the reasons **WHY** the dog is digging and then **REDIRECT** to an appropriate activity.

Top reasons to DIG:

- Find treasure (old bone, cat poo, manure, pretty much anything stinky!)
- Hide treasure (bone, toy, chew treat—keep away from another dog or to save for later)
- Cool down (soil under the surface is much cooler than the top soil)
- Boredom (excessive digging as nothing else to do)



TREASURE HUNTERS!

For dogs that love to find and hide treasure we can give them several fun alternatives:

Games of fetch, scavenging for scattered treats, hide and seek games with favorite toys, high-value chews, and/or food puzzles to keep him happily occupied. (See more fun activities listed on the next page!)

Create a "digging pit" in one corner of your yard—a kids sand pit or plastic pool works well. Actively teach the dog to target this pit for his digging pleasure. Hide favored toys and/or treats below the surface so his digging efforts in this spot yield high-value reinforcers. Supervise the dog when he is outside, so that you can interrupt unwanted digging in your yard. If you've established a digging pit, redirect his efforts to that specific area.

For dogs that want to save valuable prizes for later access:

Only allow the dog to have these items inside

Or direct him to his digging pit so that his prize can be buried at an approved site.



COOLING DOWN



For dogs that dig to create a cool pit for themselves:

Keep the dog inside where there's a fan or air conditioning during hot weather

Provide physical exercise during the cooler part of the days

Give access to other cool surfaces (tiles, cooling mat etc)

Fill a plastic pool with water so the dog can cool off periodically

Allow cool-pit digging in just one densely shaded area of the yard (this will require your supervision initially, so that you can interrupt your dog if he digs in a taboo area and then redirect him to the proper location. Moistening the ground in that particular location may make it more inviting)

BOREDOM (excessive digging)

Dogs naturally enjoy hunting and foraging for food, it is a big part of being a dog.

Look at reducing the amount of food fed in your dog's food bowl, even better, get rid of the food bowl altogether!

Burn off mental and physical energy by giving your dog a fun job to do!

Use your dog's daily meal and place it in fun and interactive food toys.

Ideas you can use:

1. Stuffed kong (fill with yummy wet food)
2. Treat ball (fill with dry food or treats)
3. Pupsicle (frozen food cube)
4. Food puzzles (dry food hidden inside)
5. Cardboard boxes: cereal boxes, egg cartons (place food inside)
6. Empty plastic bottles (throw away the lid and place a handful of dry food inside)
7. Treasure hunts (hide food around the garden or house and let your dog's nose do the rest!)
8. Snuffle Mat (handmade and available from Morley vet—sprinkle dry food in it)
9. Foobler (timer controlled treat ball)



IMPORTANT RULES - FEEDING THE FUN WAY

1. Supervise when using DIY toys (plastic bottle etc) 99% of dogs will crunch and shake the bottle until all the food is gone, then lose interest in the bottle. 1% of dogs will then decide to try and eat the plastic bottle! Use caution and use other toys instead if your dog shows any sign of trying to chew up and ingest toys! Extreme Kongs (black instead of red) are made from a really strong rubber, great for power chewers. Pupsicles are completely edible so are another great option for the dog that may try to eat other toys!

2. Kong is number one on this list for a reason....it is the BEST dog toy ever! Start with lightly packing food in to the Kong so the game is 'easy', once your dog knows how to use the Kong start to pack the food in firmer. Kongs can also be stuffed and then frozen. Hours of entertainment!!

3. Top KONG stuffings: polony roll (Prime 100 etc), steamed/roasted veges (sweet potato/pumpkin, carrot etc), banana & natural yoghurt, smear of (xylitol free) peanut butter....for lots of recipes check out kongstuffing.com



For further advice please contact us at

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