



Make Your Dog's Toys – New Again!

If you think your dog's attention span for new toys is measured in minutes, you're right. On average, dogs lose interest in a new toy after 2-3 minutes of play. Of course some toys become "favorites", but too many of them end up under the couch or off in a corner, forgotten.

There are ways to bring these forgotten toys back to life, and make them "like new" to your pup.

- Introduce a new smell to the toys by rolling them in the grass or in dried leaves. You can also sprinkle them with certain scents, which are safe for your dog. Spices like cinnamon, ginger, green tea, parsley and basil are all appropriate for your dog. Stay far away from spices like cocoa, nutmeg, paprika and salt. When in doubt, you can always ask your veterinarian for suggestions.
- To boost interest, you can also add just a dab of peanut butter to a toy. Don't put too much, or your dog might think it's a snack! You can also put a toy in a large zip lock bag with a handful of smelly dog treats. After a day or so your dog will be able to smell the treat on the toy, even when it's removed from the bag, which is sure to make it more interesting!
- The opposite tactic also works! As long as a toy is washable, drop it in the dishwasher or washing machine. Simply cleaning it to remove the smells it has absorbed, will make it appear as a new toy to your pup.
- Choose a toy you know your dog likes and put it away where they can't see or smell it. Bring it out only at certain times, for instance, when you sit down to watch TV at night. Let them have a nighttime-playtime with the toy. Tuck it away again, when playtime is over. By not having this toy accessible all day long, it will be that much more enticing!
- A similar idea is known to all parents of two-legged kids. Simply do not make available to your dog all the toys you have given them! Divide the toys between various rooms and tuck at least one-third of them away. Every other week or so, rotate the toys to different rooms and put away a new group!
- A final idea will get you really involved! A toy will be much more interesting if it's dangling from your hand, or you're playing keep-away with it! So engage your dog in some fun playtime and get active with their toys yourself. They are sure to join in!

Dogs, in the end, are very much like four-footed kids. They enjoy the novelty of something new, and sometimes the packaging is just much more interesting! Research has shown that once a dog is completely familiar with the look or smell of something, they move on to something more stimulating. Let's outsmart these pooches, helping them to see, and smell, their old toys in a new light!