

# Canine Cabin Fever

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## Indoor Activities for the Rainy-Day Dog

Rainy weather can make you and your dog a little stir crazy. When you can't provide your dog with physical activity, coming up with some games and activities that work your dog's mind and senses can give you both a little relief.

**Indoor Workout:** If your dog loves a good game of fetch, consider yourself lucky. This game can keep your dog occupied for a long time. If you live in a house with stairs, play fetch up and down the stairs for an added workout.

**Hide and Seek:** A good hide-and-seek game will not only entertain your dog, but is an excellent exercise for building reliable recalls. If your dog knows "Wait," ask them to wait in another room while you go hide (if not, have someone hold your dog).

When you call your dog to you, he will love the mental stimulation as he searches for you. Don't forget to reward him with a treat or a good play session!

**Training and Tricks:** You can also work on obedience commands or even teach your dog some new tricks. Having short training sessions several times throughout the day on basic obedience and manners can really help strengthen behaviors and help work the mind. There are several ways to teach dogs tricks using positive reinforcement. You and your dog can be as creative as you'd like by coming up with your own tricks, but if you need some ideas on new tricks, try the books listed below at [www.dogwise.com](http://www.dogwise.com). Almost all of these books have different "obedience" skills you can teach your dog, as well as fun tricks:

1. Dog Tricks for Dummies by Sarah Hodgson
2. Dog Tricks Step by Step by Mary Ann Zeigenfuse & Jan Walker
3. Andrea Arden's Little Book of Dog Tricks by Andrea Arden



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**Puzzle Toys:** Pet supply manufacturers are now making interactive puzzle toys for dogs. Also known as work-to-eat toys, these puzzles provide enrichment and are sometimes recommended to help with behavior concerns such as destructive chewing, separation related behaviors, puppy chewing, and barking. Every dog that spends time alone at home would benefit from having something fun to help pass the time. Toys like the Buster Cube, a large plastic die with inner chambers made for holding kibble, can keep your dog entertained while they tip and turn the cube with their nose and paws trying to release the treats. You will probably have to spend some time teaching your dog how it works, but then you can adjust the difficulty level, which means it will occupy your dog for longer and longer periods of time. A web search for “interactive dog toys” produces enough results to keep your dog entertained until the sunny weather returns.

**Find It!** Treasure hunting games, or “scent games,” can be a great mental enrichment for your dog. Make it easy at first by tossing treats and asking your dog to “Find It” until he learns the cue. Once your dog gets the hang of this game, start making it more difficult to find the treats, bones or treat-dispensing toys. Don’t just hide them on the floor—hide them on windowsills, chairs and door knobs! We don’t recommend hiding treats on tabletops and counters, unless you want your dog to consider these areas fair game. Mental activity requires quite a bit of energy and can keep your dog busy and happy!

