



ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT



All animals need mental as well as physical stimulation. Exercising the mind is as important as exercising the body. However, the physical side, for example, taking dogs for walks, is often emphasised more than mental stimulation. Animals need to exercise the mind. It is not surprising that if pets are confined all day in the back yard, with even their food provided in a bowl so that they don't even think about where the next meal is coming from, that they might "get bored" and think up their own stimulation eg (digging, barking).

Animals that are confined need to be provided with a more stimulating environment, allow them some activity that would be comparable to what they would receive in the wild. It is important to the animal's health and welfare. In the wild, animals would have complex and stimulating environments that provided them with many and often complex choices. Confined animals may get bored because these choices are not available. Hence, they can become destructive or perform socially unacceptable behaviours to provide their own entertainment.

There are many options available to stimulate pets. For dogs, obedience training, off lead exercise, agility training, play, toys such as Kong's (filled with a biscuit and peanut butter mixture), balls, buster cubes (great for feeding your pet a meal), tugg matts rawhide chews, squeaky toys, cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, inner tyre tube hanging from a tree to name a few can provided mental as well as physical exercise.