



 Absolute Dogs.

# DITCH THE BOWL

POUR VALUE INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BANK ACCOUNT  
INSTEAD OF A BOWL

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## Pour value into the **RELATIONSHIP BANK ACCOUNT** instead of a bowl

Our dogs wake up every morning with a big pot of value for that day – i.e. food. We can decide where and how that pot of value is divided and feed our dog as and when we want to around our busy lifestyle.

By playing games we pour all that value into the **RELATIONSHIP BANK ACCOUNT** instead of a bowl. The benefits are HUGE and it really is massive for long-term relationship investment with your dog. It is probably the biggest change you could make to boost your overall relationship because you become the centre of everything fun. Some tips on how to start that transition of ditching the food bowl, as well as some fun feeding ideas to follow!



### Start that transition of ditching the food bowl...

1. Initially get your dog to chase the food in your hand – get them pursuing that food, targeting it and trying to get it
2. Then try bowling the food away from your dog and get them to chase after it
3. Restrain them – throw the piece of food ahead, get them interested and then send them to go get it

Now that you are having fun, and your dog is happy being fed from you rather than the bowl, there are LOADS of different ways to feed your dog. Here are a few examples:

# HAND EARN TRAINING / OUT ON WALKS:

Earning food from the hand is super cool for promoting **ORIENTATION** to us and **PROXIMITY**.

You have already learnt some awesome games for this - orientation game and magic hand to name just a couple! So use the food to play and teach the concepts and skills that you are working on, such as loose leash walking.

Now we can already hear you say **"But I feed raw!"**  
Don't worry because there is always a solution...

- Treat dispenser
- Squeeze tube
- Chunks of raw cut into smaller pieces
- Scoop minced raw into a small spoon and feed from that
- Roll into little meatballs (or use a mould) and refreeze



“ Earning food from the hand is super cool for promoting **ORIENTATION** to us and **PROXIMITY** ”



# CHEWS

Similar to the stuffed toys, chews are another great long lasting treat and also help with calmness protocol. There are so many natural chews out there, but here are some ideas:

Natutripe pressed tripe bones



Antlers (choose your source / style / size carefully though as they can chip teeth)



Ears (raw or dehydrated rabbit / lamb / cow / pig)



Bull pizzles (aka Bully sticks), available in various lengths, girths and styles including braided!



Paddy whacks (dehydrated or raw)



Puffed jerky



Fish skin braids / knots (cubes and strips are fab for teeth cleaning but won't last long)



Appropriately sized RAW bones (chicken / duck / turkey / lamb necks, chicken / duck / turkey wings, poultry carcasses, ribs)



Plain / stuffed hooves



# STUFFED TOYS

**These promote calm and are great for bringing arousal levels back down, whether that is after a 'reactivity episode' when out walking in the park; or after being at an agility training session.**

They are also a great way to add value to boundary games and for those occasions when you have a lot going on around the house. For example, you have tradesmen: pop the dog on a boundary and give them a stuffed toy and allow them to chill. There are a few simple steps you should follow when introducing stuffed toys to your dog.

- 1.** Start by allowing your dog to eat out of an open ended hoof (or something similar) – this is simple and your dog will easily succeed!
- 2.** Then make it a little bit more challenging by freezing slightly (remember the longer you freeze, the more challenging it becomes).
- 3.** Once your dog has mastered the above with progressive levels of difficulty, start on

something which has a more complicated shape to interact with. But, whilst making the shape harder, you should make the filling easier so that the dog isn't worked too hard.

- 4.** Now you are getting amazing results! Gradually up the challenge by using different fillings or start to freeze for a little longer each time.

By following these simple steps you are teaching your dog how to successfully finish eating those long lasting rewards. This will build up your dog's tolerance to frustration and ensure they don't give up. AWESOME!

You will find many forms of stuffed toys in the shops and on the internet so find something that works for you and your dog.

Kongs are a popular brand but there are other options including mats where you can spread your dog's favourite treat over the surface and give them a long lasting game where they have to lick every last bit of food out with their tongue (remember repetitive licking is also very soothing for your dog).



“  
**Stuffed Toys - great for bringing arousal levels back down**  
”

# SNUFFLE MATS / SCATTER FEEDING

This is a low arousal activity and great calming protocol.  
It is a great way to occupy the brain as they search for the food.

## SCATTER FEEDING

When you first introduce this game you want them to have a huge amount of success in finding the food so make sure that some of the food is easy to find and keep that REINFORCEMENT HIGH.

Not only can you do this in your house / garden, but scatter feeding is awesome when out and about on walks.

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# SLOW FEEDER / PUZZLE BOWLS

Many people use slow feeder bowls to stop their dogs from gulping down their food (due to the risks of choking, vomiting, food bloat, etc.). Whilst this is true, we can see that some of you may be a little confused about why we have written about this in a 'Ditch the bowl' eBook?

**Well, the answer to that is simple: Because they are a GAME.**

They are great for giving your dog something to do – they are a challenge, and when randomly given to your dog, they simply love them!

There are some AMAZING ones out there, so search around for one that your dog will enjoy. Below are just a few that we found from a google search....



Fetch - Northmate Green Slow Feeder

Rosewood SloDog Slow Feeder Orange



Outward Hound Fun Feeder Slow Bowl Flower Design



Fetch - Outward Hound Fun Feeder Slow Bowl Drop Design



All products found at: [fetch.co.uk](https://www.fetch.co.uk)

# INTERACTIVE / PUZZLE TOYS:

These are SUPER COOL – your dog has to problem solve in order to get the food. They can do this by licking, digging, etc.

These toys aid cognitive development, keep your dog stimulated and are a great mental workout. But ultimately, we find that our dogs simply LOVE them. The shops and internet are full of toys that you can buy, for example:

[www.k9connectables.com](http://www.k9connectables.com)  
[www.petsafe.net/busybuddy](http://www.petsafe.net/busybuddy)  
[www.nina-ottosson.com](http://www.nina-ottosson.com)  
[www.aikiou.com](http://www.aikiou.com)

BUT, you really don't have to spend loads of money on them. We love it when our students are inventive and create their own.

On one of our Facebook groups recently, we saw someone fill a shoebox with empty toilet rolls and hide the treats in them. The dog seriously loved trying to find them all.

We've also seen people use muffin tins & tennis balls; rotating bottles; balls in a paddling pool, etc. As well as being great for problem solving, they are also great for building your dog's confidence.

We would love for you to be INVENTIVE and see what you come up with!



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# TRAINING TREAT IDEAS

Whilst it's best to use your dog's dinner as much as possible, it is good to have a variety – all of different value for different situations. Remember at all times to be mindful of your dog's tolerances but remember there are lots of different food groups available to you to keep the variety. There are far too many options to list here, but to get you thinking...



## VEGETABLES

- Carrots
- Broccoli
- Parsnips
- Pumpkins
- Kale
- Runner Beans
- Spinach
- etc...



## FRUITS

- Coconut
- Apple
- Pineapple
- Strawberries
- Oranges
- Bananas
- Kiwi
- etc...



## MEAT

- Chicken
- Beef
- Liver
- Lamb
- Duck
- Turkey
- Ham
- etc...



## HERBS & SEEDS

- Tumeric
- Aloe Vera
- Ginger
- Cinnamon
- Parsley
- etc...



## DAIRY

- Oils and Milks
- Coconut oil
- Cheese
- Goats milk
- Eggs
- etc...

## THINGS FROM THE KITCHEN CUPBOARDS

- Tinned Fish
- Oats
- All Bran
- etc...

“ It is good to have a variety, all of different value for different situations ”

# FROZEN DOG TREATS

So, on those really hot summer days, an ice lolly can be a welcome treat for us humans right? Well here's the thing, our dogs love frozen treats too!

Many of us have thrown our dog an ice cube on a hot day, but why not be more adventurous and have some frozen treats prepared in your freezer, ready for those occasions. There is just so much VARIETY on things you can freeze, including:

- Vegetables & Fruit
- Chicken & Beef broth
- Fruit juices (ensure low in sugar!)
- Yogurts

Go and give it a try  
**YOUR DOG WILL LOVE IT!**



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# DON'T BE DAUNTED!

**Sometimes the thought of changing our dogs feeding regime can seem a huge undertaking (especially those with multiple dogs) like with everything try it in achievable chunks, that fit your life. Can you do 1 bowl a week? With each dog? Just their breakfast? Or just their evening meals?**

Mix it up to suit you it's not an all or nothing game but a way of changing how you and your dog view food times. You'll find the more you try the easier and more addictive it gets. Busy week at work don't sweat it this is the time to use the chews as part of their meals and you can dip in and out of the games. The great thing is it's so much fun and so easy to do that just two minutes a meal can bring about huge changes in your dogs.

Worried your dog will resent earning their food? Don't be! We don't consider it earning our dogs are not working for us more we are playing together - feeding for most species has a social aspect so take your dog out for a meal! Dogs love to interact and

becoming part of their meal times is an amazing way to bond and bring joy to the relationship. Dogs are driven to work for their food they actively seek ways to get it (hunting, stalking, chasing) we often prevent many of these behaviours so it's hugely rewarding for our dogs when we replace them with an alternative way to work for their meals. How cool is that?

**BY DITCHING THE BOWL WE ARE ENRICHING THEIR LIVES !!**





**Absolute Dogs<sup>®</sup>**

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