

## Choosing the Right Toy

Toys play a very important role in your pet's life.

- **They keep them active.** Pets that engage in regular active play are very unlikely to become overweight. Regular exercise keeps your pet in top condition and in the very best of health.
- **They keep them mentally stimulated.** Play helps to prevent your pet from getting bored. Different types of toy challenge your pet and keep them mentally engaged. Stimulating play also helps to prevent your pet developing behavioural problems.
- **They help them learn and practice life skills.** Hunting skills may not be as vital to house pets as they are to animals in the wild – but these skills are all natural instincts that are important for your pet to practice. Playing with toys can help them to hone these skills and exercise their natural instincts.

Pets all have their own personalities, and this will determine which toys they'll enjoy playing with most. Some pets retain the natural playfulness of kittens and puppies all their lives, while others will need a bit more encouragement to get moving! Whatever your pet's personality, experiment with different toy types to find the one that works for them.

Variety is also important. If your pet plays with one toy, or one type of toy, all the time, it's likely that they'll get bored of it. Try to introduce different models, and think about keeping them in rotation. This will mean that your pet retains their excitement for their toys, and that play always feels like a new experience.

### Toys to help you play with your pet

It's very important for you to set aside time to play with your pet. Playing together can help your pet to retain their inquisitive nature, and to stay active. This can also be an excellent for relationship building.

There is lots of choice available for this type of toy. Traditional choices include balls and frisbees, and these are brilliant if you have a lot of space to play in. If you have a smaller animal such as a cat or little dog, you may want to consider rod and laser toys. These can challenge your pet, and make sure they get their daily exercise!

### Puzzle Toys

Nosy and inquisitive pets love puzzle toys. These are also good for pets that spend time on their own, as they can be played with independently. Not only do these sorts of toys get your pet out of bed, they also challenge him mentally. Cats especially are often very clever, and it's important to give them the opportunity to use their brain.

### Chew Toys

This type of toy is particularly popular with dogs. Many dog owners rely on chew toys to stop their dog from chewing other household items. Some dogs do like to chew, and a well designed toy of this sort can get them playing and keep them away from their owner's shoes!

### Treat Dispensing Toys

Some pets become less playful as they get older. In these cases, you might need to provide an extra incentive to get them excited. Treat dispensing and treat holding toys are ideal for this. These types

of toys often take the form of puzzle or chew toys, but have the added bonus of treats! They use 'Treat Meters' and 'Treat Trappers' to randomly release treats or dry food as they're played with. Many of these toys are designed to be re-fillable and adjustable: if you think your pet is finding it too easy, or too difficult, to release treats, you can adjust them.

When it comes to choosing the right toy for your pet, experiment with different types to find a toy that suits your pet's personality.