

Psychological Wellness with KONG® Solutions

Starting out as wild pack animals some 6 million years ago, the divergence from wolf ancestor to dog occurred more than 35,000 years ago followed by domestication occurring around 20,000 years ago. Today dogs have evolved to fulfil the role of companion and family pet, however instincts that developed in the wild can still lead to problem behaviours in the home. KONG® can provide solutions to improve the psychological wellness of your much loved pet.

Rubbish bin raiding, dinner begging and furniture chewing are all outgrowths of basic instincts and are often considered behaviour problems. Truth be told that this is just proof that a dog is just being a dog. 90% of dog owners consider their pets family members. In order to keep them well adjusted and happy, dogs need to play!

What is Behaviour Management?

It is a systematic approach to change an animal's reaction to a situation, a person, a thing, an animal, etc. An overall program that uses tools to change how the animal thinks, feel and acts.

The KONG® Solution wheel is an overall message designed to isolate the individual areas where KONG® can provide part of the solution, focusing on KONG® not just as a dog toy but a tool that can be used in a number of behaviour management programs.



“ The solution to unwanted behaviours is to change or manage what motivates a dog to do them. ”

KONG® SOLUTIONS



Chewing

Without an acceptable outlet for the natural instinct to chew, many dogs turn to destructive chewing in the home.

- KONG® toys are made from durable rubber in a variety of formulas and provide dogs an appropriate way to fulfill chewing instincts.
- Chewing a KONG® keeps jaws strong and teeth clean.
- Prevention is key—teaching dogs acceptable chewing behaviors with KONG® helps avoid destructive chewing from the start.



Teething

Like humans, dogs have two sets of teeth in their lives. The 28 baby teeth erupt through the gums, sometimes causing teething pain.

- Chewing soft rubber helps to alleviate teething pain.
- KONG® Puppy rubber toys are designed for growing teeth and jaws. These toys help promote the entry of growing teeth, while establishing healthy chewing habits.
- When the new adult teeth are fully set at about 9 months, dogs should move to a KONG® Classic or KONG® Extreme based on their chewing style.



Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety occurs in the first 20 minutes after you leave a dog alone.

- A simple solution is to help the dog develop a positive association between being left alone and good things, like a treat-stuffed KONG®.
- Stuffing a KONG® toy with a mix of wet and dry ingredients creates a challenge that typically lasts 20 minutes, engaging dogs during the time when anxiety is at its peak.
- A KONG® can even be frozen so that getting all the food out takes even longer.



Boredom

To combat boredom, dogs will always find something to do, often this leads to problem behavior.

- Stuffed and frozen KONG® toys extend playtime and create a healthy, long-lasting challenge.
- In addition to extending playtime, working on a stuffed KONG® mentally stimulates dogs, beating boredom and keeping the mind.



Digging & Barking

Digging and barking are typically outgrowths of boredom or fear.

- Creating good behaviours starts with productive play, which allows dogs to expend excess energy.
- Throwing a KONG® toy, elicits an unpredictable bounce that ensures no two games are ever the same, keeping dogs engaged and excited for more.
- A stuffed KONG® is also helpful for dogs left outside to play. Directing their energy toward something positive, like working for the food inside the toy, diminishes bad behaviors.



Crate Training

Crates provide a sense of security for dogs and also aid in house-training. To successfully crate train a dog, it's critical to create a positive association with the crate.

- Start a dog's crate training by stuffing a KONG® toy with a favorite treat.
- Let the dog see and smell the stuffed toy, then place the KONG® in the back of the crate leaving the door open.
- As the dog chews on the KONG® inside the crate, they begin to feel more comfortable and create a positive association with the crate. Repeat this until the dog is happy to settle in the crate on their own.



Weight Management

Weight management is an important part of dogs' overall health; it's estimated that 35 percent of dogs are overweight or obese.

- Feeding a dog from the KONG® Classic or Wobbler will not only slow their eating, but provide a satisfying mental and physical challenge.
- Like walking, play has countless benefits for dogs. The erratic bounce of the KONG® Classic can make games of fetch new and exciting each time, keeping dogs engaged in healthy physical activity.

The versatile KONG® toy is the all-round performer that can be used to redirect behaviour, provide entertainment, offer interactive play and facilitate the human animal bond whilst allowing dogs to expend excess energy.



Article supplied by Rachael James on behalf of KONG® Company Pty Ltd