

# 8 Genius Ways to Keep Your Dog Active, Because They're Going Stir-Crazy, Too

Your pooch will have fun while burning off energy at home.

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Humans aren't the only ones practicing social distancing due to COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019). Our dogs are also having to stay inside much more, now that communities are asked to stay at home and [even shelter in place](#). However, there are plenty of ways to get your pup moving without leaving your house. We found a few pooch-approved games to play with your four-legged friend, including a clean-up activity that owners will enjoy just as much as their pets. Make sure you give your pup some time to learn these games, as some require [basic commands](#) they might be learning for the first time. (Maybe you can teach an old dog new tricks!)

## 1. Agility Course

It would be nice to buy a fancy agility course, but not everyone has the money or space for it. But that doesn't mean you're out of options. You can get creative by making a DIY obstacle course with everyday objects such as old pillows, blankets, and stools.

Clear out your [living room](#) so that your dog can run and jump without getting hurt or damaging any valuables. You'll want to walk your dog through the course a few times, but once they have the hang of it, you can stand at the end of the course and call them. If your dog is a quick learner, have fun mixing up the path and adding more hurdles. Here are a few ideas for your at-home agility course:

- Old blankets, towels, and pillows to jump over
- Hula-hoop ([\\$25.53 for six, Walmart](#)), to jump through

- Large, open-ended box that your dog can crawl through
- Basket and a few toys that your dog must place inside
- Kitchen chair or stool to jump on
- Pole on two boxes to leap over
- [Ball, for \\$4.99 at PetCo](#), or [Frisbee, for \\$11.49 at Walmart](#), to catch

## 2. Magic Cups

You'll want to find an open space with a hardwood floor (or a similar surface) to play magic cups. Instruct your dog to "sit" and "lie down" while you set up the game.

Gather three large cups and a tennis ball. Place the tennis ball under one of the cups and then shuffle all three cups in front of your canine companion. Then, tell him to "find it." You might have to help your pup find the ball the first few times until he gets the hang of it. When he finds the ball, reward him with praise and a treat.

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## 3. Hide and Seek

Hide and seek is an excellent game for the entire family, and that includes your pup. All you need is your dog's favorite toy or treats. Have your dog sit and stay in one room while you hide in another. Once you're settled, call your canine. When they find you, reward them with the toy or treat.

## 4. "Easter Egg" Hunt

It doesn't need to be Easter to play an egg-hunt inspired game. Stuff your dog's favorite treats inside of a treat-holding toy and hide it in your house or backyard. Make sure your pooch is in another room, so your hiding spot stays secret. Then, have your canine come into the living room or backyard and watch him hunt the treasure down.

## 5. Round Robin

This is another fun game for the whole family. Have each person grab a handful of treats and then sit down around the living room. Take turns calling your dog's name. Each time they come, reward them with a treat and praise. When your pooch has become an expert at the game indoors, take them outside where you can spread out even further from each other.

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## 6. Stair Sprints

To play this game, you'll need a stairwell and a ball. Start at the bottom of the stairs and command your pup to "sit" and "stay." Throw the ball to the top of the stairs and then say, "Go!" Let your pup dash up the stairs as fast they can, but have them return down the stairs at a slower pace to avoid injury. This game is an excellent energy burner, but it's only for dogs who are more than a year old. (Younger dogs have developing joints and are at risk for long-term injury.)

## 7. The Muffin Tin Game

The muffin tin game is a household favorite, and for a good reason. It's simple to set up and perfect for dogs of all ages. You'll need a muffin tin (a [12-muffin tin, for \\$16.99 at Bed Bath & Beyond](#), works best since there are more chances to play) and a ball to fit in each hole. Standard tennis balls work great. You'll also need treats or smelly food. Cut the treats into small pieces and place them at the bottom of the muffin cups. Then hide the treats by putting the tennis balls on top of each one. Once you have the game set up, place the entire tin on the floor, and encourage your pup to check it out. The goal of the game is for your dog to remove the ball, so they can get to the treat. One of the challenges of this game is for the dog to remember where they've found a treat and where they haven't, especially if they roll a ball from one hole to another. Your canine might need help on the first few rounds to get the hang of it, but don't make it too easy for them. When they've found all of the treats, feel free to play it again. If you only use small treats, you can play the game a couple of times a week without upsetting his diet.

## 8. Cleanup

Cleanup time is way more fun when your dog can help. You'll need to train your dog to understand the command, "put it away." Teach your pooch to pick up a toy, carry it to a basket, and drop it inside. To play the game, scatter a bunch of toys in a small area, point to one, and say, "put it away." Repeat until your dog has deposited all of the toys in the basket, giving them treats along the way. Increase the difficulty by spreading out the toys or even hiding them. Pretty soon, you'll have a canine cleaning companion!

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