

# The Bark

Canine Updates & Information from Falconbridge Animal Hospital & Village Veterinary Hospital  
March 2013

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## Indoor Play With Your Dog

It's too rainy to be outside.....it's too cold to be outside.....what's a dog to do? When the humans do get home there is a whole repertoire of games to play.



There are several ways to burn off the energy your dog has been storing up for you. If you have a treadmill, you can teach your dog to walk/run on the treadmill either with you or alone. If you have stairs, there are stair races (always with treats for the winner). And

of course there are the old standbys; tug-ropes and fetch (halls might be best for these).

For lower energy games we can choose from various forms of hide-n-seek: toy finding, food pile finding and person finding. Again success in finding yields a treat!

Calm "games" can include grooming, maybe the best way to spend time with our furry companions while maintaining good hygiene. This also teaches them to let us handle their feet, ears, and any other parts that might need doctoring someday, all while making them feel loved. You can also try "the shell game." Hide a piece of food under one of three bowls or cloths and see how many tries it takes to find it. This can also be done with a muffin pan, using tennis balls to cover the cups.

A car ride to visit a pet store, the vet (for a play date only) or just to see the neighborhood is often just what a house bound pup could use.

If you have other games that your dog enjoys indoors, please share them with us on Facebook!

## Home Alone: When The Parents Are Away. . . What's A Dog To Do?

Do you ever feel guilty for leaving your canine friends alone all day while you are at work? Do you wonder what they do to occupy their time? Here are some tips on keeping your dog stimulated and safe.

Dogs are very food driven so one great treat for them (they will love you forever) is filling a Kong with peanut butter or cream cheese to give them as you head out in the morning. Bonus—freeze it overnight and it will last longer!

For toy motivated pups you can keep a stocked toy box for them to explore, and change out the items periodically to keep them interested. Always remember to throw away any damaged toys to avoid pets eating anything that they shouldn't!

Visual stimulation can also go a long way to keeping our furry friends occupied; consider leaving the blinds open so that your dog can



watch the birds and squirrels play and who is making noise and walking up and down the sidewalk. Bonus—you get to see your dog's excitement when you pull into the driveway!

**Remember to consider each pet's individual health with any changes you make in their lifestyle. Always take it slow with new exercise routines to minimize aches and pains the next day. Don't forget, if you add treats to your pets routine, reduce the regular food so that you don't pack on the pounds by accident.**

# The Mew

Feline Updates & Information from Falconbridge Animal Hospital & Village Veterinary Hospital  
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## The Cats Will Play

Ever come home to find part of your house has been TP'd (toilet papered)? Many of our cats spend a large part of the day home while their humans are out working or at school. Keeping your cat entertained while you are gone as well as while you are home will help keep them happy. Left to their own devices, cats can and will make their own entertainment, and it may not be something we like them doing.

Having multiple bird or squirrel feeders can add a lot of activity to your cat's day. Place them so that each feeder is seen from a different window. Your cat will need to travel from room to room to monitor the outdoor activity. This is a great way to keep cats busy when you are not home. The only effort required from you is to regularly clean the feeders and refill them with seed.

Another way to provide cat entertainment is by having scratching posts or trees and other climbing surfaces in your home. The scratching posts provide a medium for your cat to sharpen and maintain her claws.



The climbing surfaces provide a means of exercise as well as a variety of resting places. In smaller homes and apartments, these vertical spaces will increase your cat's territory. In multiple cat homes this can enhance the harmony of the group. In addition to cat trees, furniture and bookshelves can be arranged so that cats can traverse around a room without getting down on the floor.

For more ideas on keeping your cats busy in your home, please visit our cat blog, The Litter Box, at [www.FalconbridgeAnimal.com/The-Litter-Box](http://www.FalconbridgeAnimal.com/The-Litter-Box). The blog includes tips on rotating toys to keep them interesting, playing with your cats, and clicker training.

## Kitten Class

On Tuesday, March 12, we will be holding Kitten Class at 6:00 p.m. at our Falconbridge location. The class will be about 1 hour long. It is for people who have recently adopted a kitten or are considering adopting a kitten. The class objective is to provide kitten parents and potential kitten parents with the basic information and tools to get off to a good start.

The class will cover nutrition basics, litter box considerations, appropriate scratching, play behaviors, grooming, preventative care, and traveling in the car. The class is for humans only. Older children are welcome if they will be participating in the care of the kitten and are accompanied by a parent. Our hope is the class will enable you to form a lasting bond with your new feline so that you may enjoy a happy and healthy cat.

**If you would like to reserve your spot or have questions about the class, please call us at 919-403-5591.**