

17 Stimulating Jobs For Every Kind of Dog



A Working Dog Is A Happy Dog

Work feels good. It challenges our minds and bodies. It stimulates us. And sometimes we even get paid for it.

Dogs have so much in common with humans. Why wouldn't they want meaningful work as well?

What are the benefits of giving your dog a job?

- Stimulating a dog's mind will make him less likely to misbehave.
- Working dogs are less likely to get fat.
- Having a job will increase your dog's confidence and lower her anxiety.
- Working with your dog will strengthen your bond.

Are you convinced your dog needs a job?

Good. Here are some ideas for stimulating jobs to give your dog.

A Job For Every Kind Of Dog

I'm not suited to accounting. If I add a string of numbers ten times I'll come up with ten different results.

And my golden retriever, Honey, would make a terrible guard dog. Unless of course, you *want* your guard dog to bring a squeaky toy to a burglar while wagging her tail.



My best impersonation of a guard dog. Don't I look fierce?

So that's why I've tagged each job with a suggestion of what kind of dog might enjoy that work. But give your dog a chance to surprise you. Because your dog who shows his herding tendencies every time a bike goes by on a walk might just be waiting to show you his inner retriever.

With apologies to the AKC Working Dogs group here's my list of the types of jobs our dogs like to do:

- Herding (H) - moving living creatures and vehicles where the dog wants them to go. When your dog barks at running kids in the playground or chases tires of moving cars she's showing her herding tendencies.

- Sniffing (S) - using the nose to gather information. If your dog is constantly sniffing the ground or the air, you've got a sniffer in the house.
- Retrieving (R) - returning objects to their person. A dog who loves his ball is probably a retriever at heart.
- Companion (C) - just showing love. While it's easy to argue that all dogs are companions, some have that special touch that makes them great friends and potential therapy dogs.
- Guarding (G) - protecting the household from all threats, from mail carriers to cheeky squirrels. Your barking dog might make you crazy, but he's just doing his job.
- Pulling (P) - just what it sounds like, pulling. Whether a cart, a sled, or a person on the end of the leash, pullers just gotta pull.
- Rescuing (RS) - finding people or animals in trouble and bringing them to safety. If your dog brings you baby bunnies, you must have a rescuer.

Which jobs do you think your dog would most enjoy? Try a few from my list and see what job your dog is made to do.



I think my best job is to nurse my hedgehog.

Awesome Jobs For Dogs

1. Nosework (S) - Once your dog learns how to use his nose to search, you'll have hundreds of possibilities for work and fun.

2. Hide and Seek (RS) - If your dog is trustworthy off leash, wait until she's occupied with a smell and duck behind a tree. If she doesn't come looking for you right away, make a sound. The side benefit of this job is that it will reinforce your dog's recall.

Or do it in the house by hiding in a closet or behind a door.

3. Toss and Run (R) - Get your dog interested in a toy or ball by making a big fuss over it with loud, happy sounds. Toss it away and as soon as your dog grabs the object, take off running away so he feels compelled to chase you.

4. Chase (H) - Find a beautiful manicured lawn inhabited by hundreds of Canada geese (golf courses are a good bet). Release your herder using a long line if not safe off-leash.

If you live in a middle Atlantic state where Canada geese have become a scourge, you'll find yourself very popular with groundskeepers. And your dog will love her job.

5. Doga (C) - Your companion wants to be with you. That makes him a natural to join your yoga practice.

6. Tug (P) - Does your puller like to play tug? Sit on a towel while she grabs a soft tug in her mouth. Hold on tight while she pulls you across the floor.

The side benefit of your dog doing this job is that you won't have to dust mop your floors.

7. Speak (G) - Catch your dog before he notices something that usually causes him to bark. Perhaps when you hear the UPS truck drive up or know that the local school will be letting out soon.

Give the cue "speak" as the activity that excites your dog's guarding instincts begins. After a few barks, bring out an especially stinky treat or favorite toy and say "enough," "thank you" or whatever cue you prefer while putting treat under your dog's nose. When he stops barking to grab the treat, click or say "yes" and give him the treat.

Soon you should be able to cue him to "speak" on cue as well as stop barking on cue.

8. Find It (S, R, G) - While the dog is out of the room take her favorite toy and hide it somewhere in the room partly hidden. Tell your dog to find the toy.

If she doesn't understand, squeak the toy to draw her attention. As she gets better, make the hides tougher.

9. Puppy In The Middle (H, R, C) - Arrange several people in a large room. One at a time, each person should call the dog. When he comes, make sure you treat and pet him for coming.

As your dog gets better at this, take the game outdoors and have the people stand farther apart. You'll be amazed at how much your dog's recall improves.

10. Rescue Me (RS) - Crawl under the covers and yell to your dog, "Help me, help me." See how long it takes her to find you and join you under the covers.

11. Chase The Squirrels (H, G) - When you see squirrels on your walk, run with your dog to chase them to the trees.

Tip: don't do this if you live in the city. Your dog might pull you into the street.

12. Put Your Toys Away (R) - Make sure your dog is watching when you put his toy into a box while saying "clean up." Repeat it a few times before giving the toy to your dog and repeating the cue in front of the box.

Feel free to help by moving the box close to the dog to set her up by success while she's learning.

13. Follow Along (S, P) - Fill your pocket or bait bag with tiny, smelly treats (I use popcorn). While you're walking, occasionally toss treats behind you for your dog to find.

A side benefit is that this job may lessen your dog's pulling on walks.

14. Skatejoring (P) - Let your pulling dog use his gifts by pulling you on skates.

BTW, the maker of this video has since upgraded his dog to a sled harness, a much safer option than attaching a standard leash to your dog's neck collar.

15. Clean The Floor (S) - Pour your dog's kibble under the dining room table. They'll use their nose to find every morsel hiding under the table and chair legs.

Do not try this if you feed your dog raw organ meat. It's just disgusting.

16. Lifeguard (RS, P) - Sit in shallow water in a warm lake or stream. Encourage your dog to pull you to shore using the soft tug toy you're holding.



I'll be your lifeguard. But only if you don't go any deeper than my ankles.

17. Lapwarmer (C) - It's September and winter is on its way. Good thing you have a cuddly dog to keep your lap warm while you're reading or watching television.

Information is from <http://www.somethingwagging.com>