

# Chews Instead of Shoes!

## My Go-To List for Mental Stimulation “Chewies”

Before you run out and buy a trunk full of chews, here’s the reality check:

**There are no 100% safe chews.**

Yep. Not a single one. That’s why these two rules matter so much.

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### Rule #1 – Know Thy Dog

Never leave your dog unattended with any chew that can be consumed over time—whether it’s a bully stick, a moose antler, or even a Kong.

Sure, *my* dogs are fine with Kongs. But I’ve trained some serious chew monsters who could pulverize a “Black Extreme” Kong like it was a marshmallow. Know your dog’s chewing style and monitor accordingly.

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### Rule #2 – Quality Over Everything

When buying chews, always look for those made in the U.S. Skip the highly processed stuff—like bright white shank bones—and hard pass on rawhide.

Why? Rawhide is chemically processed, poorly digested, and a swallowed chunk can lead to surgery... or worse.

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## Stuffed Kongs

My number one, most-used, can't-live-without tool for keeping dogs mentally engaged.

Watch Chewy for sales—sometimes they run a “Buy 1, get the second half off.”

Kong’s website is full of stuffing tutorials that go *way* beyond peanut butter. Trust me, there’s an art to it if you want your dog to *work* for it:

[Kong’s How-To Guide →](#)

[Kong Cuisine Recipes →](#)

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## West Paw Toys

West Paw has been in my life for over a decade—and they're still kicking. These toys are easy to stuff, freeze well, and go right in the dishwasher.

They also have awesome enrichment ideas on their website.

[Shop West Paw Toppl →](#)

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## Moose Antlers

Want something longer-lasting than a bully stick? Try a moose antler paddle. Softer than deer antlers but still tough enough to give your dog a satisfying chew.

Just watch the size. When it shrinks down to a choking hazard—time to retire it.

[Four Paws Gourmet Moose Antlers →](#)

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## Bully Sticks

Costco sometimes carries **Cadet Brand** bully sticks—when they do, I stock up.

Check your local pet specialty stores, like **Bon ApAtreat** here in Des Moines, for variety and quality. Some options are even low-odor (*praise be!*).

And don't forget a **bully stick holder**—super important to prevent your dog from choking on the last chunk. I use both **Agelux** and **Chewise** holders.

(Garth, aka #thefamousgarth, can Houdini his way out of Agelux but not Chewise.)

[Shop Chewise Holders + Use Code CHEWISETAWNYA10 →](#)

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## Woof Pupsicle

These newbies are a game-changer, especially for travel. Easy to stuff, easy to clean, and the freezer trays fit perfectly in small RV or van freezers.

[Shop Woof Pupsicle Starter Kit →](#)

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 **Proceed With Caution...**

## Smoked Bones

If you're going to offer a real bone, make sure it's not overcooked or dry. I buy smoked bones from **Barkley's Bistro** because the marrow is still intact—and my dogs go *nuts* for them.

But remember: these are special occasion treats, and I watch like a hawk when they're chewing. [Shop Barkley's Smoked Bones →](#)

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## Snuffle Mats

Snuffle mats are fun and engaging—until they're empty. Labs in particular (hi, mine!) might think the fabric *itself* is a tasty snack.

Use only under supervision. Bonus: you can DIY or grab one on Etsy.

[Snuffle Mat on Etsy →](#)

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## A Final Woof

Chews are more than just tasty distractions—they're powerful tools for enrichment, boredom-busting, and peace-of-mind (*especially when you need 10 minutes to drink your coffee in peace*).

Choose wisely, monitor closely, and most importantly—**know thy dog**.