BRACKEN & BONE

# The Enrichment Recipe Guide

## Recipe Ideas and Games for Your Treat Wheel



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# Welcome

A practical guide for getting the most out of your Treat Wheel puzzle feeder.

Your Treat Wheel has just arrived, and this guide is here to help you and your dog get the most from it from day one. It is written for any UK dog owner, whether your dog has never seen a puzzle feeder before or has tried one that was too easy or too hard.

Inside you will find a simple way to introduce the toy, recipe ideas for filling the three drums, a four-week plan that builds the challenge gradually, rainy-day game ideas, cleaning guidance, and straightforward fixes for the most common sticking points.

There is no need to rush through it. Work at your own dog's pace, keep sessions short and supervised, and treat this as a reference you can come back to whenever you want to try something new. Always supervise your dog while they use the Treat Wheel.

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# 1. Getting Started: Setting Up for Success

How to position and introduce the Treat Wheel so your dog's first encounter with it goes well.

## Choosing the Right Spot

The Treat Wheel has a base with raised bumps underneath to help it grip the floor, but this only works properly on a firm, flat surface. A kitchen floor, hallway, or a low-pile rug are all good choices. Avoid thick carpet, where the bumps can sink in unevenly, and avoid smooth tiles or laminate near rugs where the base can still shift if your dog noses it with enthusiasm.

Give the toy its own space, away from table legs, stairs, or anything it could knock into if it moves slightly during play. A little room around it means your dog can approach from any angle without feeling boxed in, and you can supervise comfortably from nearby.

- Flat, firm floors help the grip bumps underneath
- Keep the area clear of furniture edges and stairs
- Leave enough space for your dog to circle the toy
- Always supervise your dog around the Treat Wheel

## Introducing it at the Right Moment

Timing matters more than people expect. Choose a moment when your dog is a little hungry but not ravenous, and when the house is reasonably quiet. A dog that has just eaten a full meal, or one that is distracted by visitors or another pet, is less likely to engage properly with something new.

Keep the very first introduction low-key. There is no need for a big build-up. Simply bring the toy into the room, let your dog sniff it in its own time, and resist the urge to pick it up and shake it at them. Confidence builds faster when the dog is allowed to approach in their own way.

## Understanding How the Drums Work

The Treat Wheel has three clear spinning drums that open for filling. Your dog noses or paws at a drum to spin it, and as it turns, food drops out into the tray underneath. Because the drums are clear, your dog can see the food inside, which helps them understand there is something worth working for.

Before asking your dog to do anything, it helps to understand this mechanism yourself. Open a drum, fill it, and spin it gently by hand so you know how much force moves it and how the food falls. This means you can demonstrate it clearly in the next session.

**Step by step**

**1. Choose a stable spot —** Place the base on a flat, non-slip surface such as a kitchen floor or low-pile

rug, away from stairs or furniture edges, so the raised bumps underneath can do their job.

**2. Learn the mechanism yourself first —** Open one drum, fill it with a few pieces of your dog's usual kibble, and spin it gently by hand so you understand how much movement it takes before you demonstrate it to your dog.

**3. Show your dog how it works —** With your dog nearby but not pushed forward, spin a drum at their eye level so they see and hear the kibble move inside.

**4. Prepare a small amount of kibble —** Set aside a little of your dog's usual daily kibble, ready for the first proper session, rather than introducing anything new on day one.

# 2. The First Session: Building Confidence

A gentle, low-pressure way to get your dog interacting with the Treat Wheel for the first time.

## Start With Just One Drum

For the very first proper session, only fill one of the three drums, and only part-fill it. The goal is for your dog to succeed quickly and easily, not to test them. An empty tray with one easy drum gives a clear, achievable task.

Place the toy down and step back slightly. Some dogs will investigate straight away, others will hang back and watch. Both are normal reactions to something new, and there is no need to hurry either kind of dog.

## Show, Don't Push

If your dog seems unsure, use your own hand to nudge the drum gently so a piece of kibble falls into the tray. Let them see this happen and let them eat the piece that drops. This shows them, without any pressure, that interacting with the drum produces a reward.

Avoid lifting your dog's paw to the drum or forcing contact. Dogs build confidence through their own actions, not through being guided by hand. If they watch for a minute or two before trying it themselves, that is still progress.

- Nudge the drum yourself the first few times to demonstrate
- Let your dog choose when to investigate further
- Never force paws or nose onto the toy
- Praise when they make contact with the drum

## Knowing When to Stop

Keep this first session short, no more than a few minutes. It is far better to end while your dog is still interested than to let the session run on until they lose focus or walk away. A short, successful first go sets up every session that follows.

Watch your dog closely throughout. If they seem unbothered by the toy, simply put it away and try again later or the next day, perhaps with a slightly longer period without food beforehand. Always supervise this kind of play from start to finish.

**Step by step**

**1. Fill one drum only, and only part-fill it —** Use a small amount of your dog's usual kibble in a single drum, leaving the other two empty for this first go.

**2. Place the toy down —** Set the Treat Wheel in the spot you chose, then step back slightly so your dog can approach in their own time.

**3. Nudge the drum to demonstrate —** Use your hand to spin the filled drum a little so a piece drops into the tray, showing your dog what the toy does.

**4. Let your dog take over —** Once they understand a piece has appeared, allow them to investigate and nose or paw at the drum themselves.

**5. End the session on a high note —** Stop after a few minutes while your dog is still engaged, rather than waiting for them to lose interest.

# 3. Recipe Ideas for Every Drum

Simple, dog-safe filling ideas to keep each session interesting across the three drums.

## The Basic Kibble Fill

The simplest recipe is your dog's usual kibble, used across all three drums at different amounts. This keeps mealtimes familiar while turning them into more of a feeding game than a straight bowl of food. It is also the easiest option to fall back on if you want to keep things simple on a busy day.

Vary the amount in each drum slightly, so one takes a little more effort to empty than the others. This small difference between drums keeps your dog moving between them rather than fixating on just one.

## Adding Plain Chicken and Vegetables

For variety, mix in small pieces of plain cooked chicken with the kibble in one or two of the drums. The different scent and texture gives your dog something new to investigate, even if the overall amount of food is the same as usual.

Plain carrot or cucumber pieces work well too, chopped smaller than the drum's exit opening so they fall through cleanly rather than getting stuck. These firmer textures take a bit more effort to dislodge than loose kibble, which can help keep a confident dog occupied for longer.

- Chop carrot or cucumber smaller than the drum opening
- Mix small pieces of plain cooked chicken through kibble for scent variety
- Keep portions within your dog's normal daily amount
- Keep fillings dry and loose so the drums spin freely

## Layering for Variety

Once your dog is used to the toy, try giving each drum a different combination rather than the same mix throughout. One drum of plain kibble, one of kibble with chicken, and one with a few vegetable pieces gives three different experiences in a single session.

This layering approach is a simple way to keep a confident dog interested without increasing the overall amount of food. It also lets you see which textures and scents your dog finds most engaging, which is useful information for planning future sessions.

**Step by step**

**1. Start with a plain kibble fill —** Use your dog's usual kibble in all three drums to begin with, so the recipe itself is not a new variable.

**2. Chop firm pieces to size —** Cut plain carrot or cucumber into pieces smaller than the drum's exit opening so they can fall through freely.

**3. Mix in chicken for scent variety —** Add small pieces of plain cooked chicken through the kibble in one

or two drums to change the smell and texture.

**4. Give each drum something different —** Fill the three drums with different combinations of kibble, chicken, and vegetable pieces rather than an identical mix throughout.

# 4. Advancing the Challenge

How to gradually make the game more demanding once your dog has the basics down.

## Moving to All Three Drums

Once your dog reliably works one or two drums with confidence, you can begin filling all three for every session. This is a natural next step rather than a big jump, since the mechanism is the same, there is simply more for your dog to work through.

Fill all three fairly generously at first when you make this change, so the increase in difficulty comes from having more to do, not from each drum being harder to empty. You can adjust the fill level once you see how your dog manages the extra drum.

## Increasing the Effort Required

The Treat Wheel is listed as level two of three, which means it sits in the middle in terms of challenge. You can nudge the difficulty up within that level by using firmer pieces, such as larger carrot or cucumber chunks, which take more spinning force to dislodge than loose kibble.

Another way to add challenge is to fill the drums a little more fully, so your dog has to spin them several times rather than once or twice to empty them. Small changes like these keep the game interesting without moving outside what the toy is designed for.

- Use larger carrot or cucumber pieces for more resistance
- Fill drums more fully so more spins are needed to empty them
- Change which drum has the firmer pieces each session
- Always supervise so you can judge when enough is enough

## Watching How Your Dog Copes

As you increase the challenge, keep an eye on how your dog responds. A dog that is enjoying the extra effort will keep returning to the toy, nosing and pawing at the drums steadily. A dog that is finding it too much may paw at it briefly, then walk away, or start trying to tip or push the whole toy rather than spin the drums.

If you see the second kind of response, it is a sign to ease back, not to push on. Drop back to a slightly easier fill or fewer drums for a session or two before trying the harder version again.

**Step by step**

**1. Fill all three drums —** Once one or two drums are easy for your dog, begin using all three together, filled fairly generously to start with.

**2. Introduce firmer pieces —** Swap in larger carrot or cucumber chunks in place of some kibble, so more spinning force is needed to release them.

**3. Fill drums more fully over time —** Gradually increase how full each drum is, so more spins are needed to empty it completely.

**4. Watch for continued success —** Check that your dog is still spinning the drums rather than pawing at the base or walking away, and ease back if needed.

# 5. Rainy-Day Play: Indoors and Occupied

Simple ways to use the Treat Wheel indoors on days when outdoor time is limited.

## Setting Up an Indoor Space

On a wet day, choose a clear patch of floor indoors, such as a kitchen or hallway, where the Treat Wheel can sit undisturbed for the length of a session. A consistent spot helps your dog recognise it as the place where this game happens.

Keep the area free of trailing cables, rugs with loose edges, or anything breakable within reach, since your dog's attention will be on the drums rather than their surroundings. A tray or mat underneath can catch any pieces that roll free of the toy's own tray.

## Rotating With Other Activities

The Treat Wheel works well as one part of a wider indoor routine rather than the only thing on offer. Alternate it with a short training game, some gentle fetch in a hallway, or simply time with a favourite toy, so your dog has a mix of things to do across a longer indoor day.

Using the Treat Wheel for one part of your dog's usual feeding routine, rather than for every meal, also helps keep it feeling like something a little different rather than routine background noise.

- Use the Treat Wheel for part of a feeding routine, not every meal
- Alternate with other activities across a long indoor day
- Keep the play area clear of trailing cables or loose rugs
- Always supervise, even on a familiar indoor day

## Using It While You Are Busy at Home

If you are working from home or otherwise occupied nearby, the Treat Wheel can give your dog something to do within sight of you. Set it up in the room you are in so you can glance over regularly, fill it with a session's worth of food, and let your dog work through it.

**Step by step**

**1. Clear a floor space —** Select a spot away from cables, rugs, and breakables for the Treat Wheel to sit during play.

**2. Use a tray or mat —** Place a tray or mat under the toy to catch any pieces of kibble that tumble out during the game.

**3. Vary the routine —** Include the Treat Wheel in your day as one of several activities rather than the only thing available.

**4. Keep sessions supervised —** Ensure you are close enough to keep an eye on your dog while they play, even if you are working nearby.

# 6. Cleaning and Maintenance

Practical advice for keeping the Treat Wheel clean and in good working order.

## Taking It Apart

The Treat Wheel comes apart for cleaning, which makes it straightforward to keep on top of. After a session, detach the three drums from the base so you can clean each part properly rather than just wiping over the outside.

Doing this regularly, rather than only when it looks obviously dirty, means food residue has less chance to build up inside the drums where it is harder to see.

## Washing and Drying

Wash the drums, tray, and base in warm, soapy water, paying attention to the inside of each drum and the opening where food drops through. A small brush or an old toothbrush can help you reach into grooves and corners that a cloth might miss.

Rinse everything well so no soap residue is left behind, then dry each part completely before putting the toy back together. Leaving any part damp, particularly inside the drums, gives food residue more chance to stick next time you fill it.

- Detach the drums from the base before washing
- Use warm, soapy water and a small brush for grooves
- Rinse thoroughly to remove all soap residue
- Dry every part fully before reassembling

## Checking the Base and Grip

While you have the toy apart, take a moment to check the underside of the base. The raised bumps there are what help it grip the floor, so keeping them clean and free of built-up grime helps the base sit properly during play.

It is also worth giving the whole toy a quick visual check each time you clean it, looking for any changes in the drums or base. If anything looks different from when it was new, it is worth keeping a closer eye on that part during the next session.

**Step by step**

**1. Detach the drums from the base —** Take the three drums off the base so each part can be cleaned properly rather than wiped over as a whole.

**2. Wash each part in warm, soapy water —** Clean the drums, tray, and base individually, using a small brush to reach into grooves and the drum openings.

**3. Rinse thoroughly —** Rinse every part well so no soap is left behind before drying.

**4. Dry completely before reassembling —** Leave all parts to dry fully, then put the Treat Wheel back together ready for the next session.

**5. Check the base and drums visually —** Look over the raised grip bumps underneath and the drums themselves each time you clean, to keep an eye on general condition.

# 7. Troubleshooting Your Daily Game

Straightforward solutions to help you get the most out of your puzzle feeder.

## When the Game Gets Too Easy

If your dog is emptying the Treat Wheel very quickly, the usual cause is loose, small kibble that falls out with barely any spinning. The fix is to change what is going into the drums rather than the toy itself: use fewer, larger pieces, mix in firmer plain carrot or cucumber pieces, or fill the drums more fully so more spins are needed to clear them.

You can also move up through the chapters in this guide at your dog's own pace, from one drum through to all three, rather than staying on the easiest setup indefinitely.

## When Interest Fades

A dog that stops returning to the toy after a few sessions may simply have mastered the current setup, or the food on offer may not feel worth the effort compared with how they normally eat. Refreshing the recipe, by swapping in plain cooked chicken or vegetable pieces instead of plain kibble, often brings interest back.

Changing which drum has the more interesting filling, or moving the toy to a different spot in the room, can also make a familiar object feel new again.

## When Your Dog Seems Frustrated

Some dogs will paw or nose at the drums briefly, then back away repeatedly, which can be a sign the current setup is harder than they are ready for. If you see this, drop back a step: remove one drum, use an easier fill of loose kibble, or return to the single-drum setup from chapter two for a session or two.

Always supervise closely during this kind of session, and if your dog seems to disengage entirely, simply end the session and try an easier version next time rather than persisting.

## Other Common Questions

If your dog tries to paw or chew at the base itself rather than the drums, it is often because the puzzle currently feels too hard, so they are looking for another way in. Make the drums easier for a session or two, and keep an eye on the base for any damage, removing the toy if you see signs of wear.

If the drums feel stiff or hard to spin, they are very likely packed too tightly. Take some food out and try again with a lighter fill, checking that the drum moves freely before adding more.

**Step by step**

**1. Adjust the size of the food used —** Swap loose kibble for larger pieces or firmer plain carrot or cucumber chunks to change how much effort each drum takes.

**2. Remove a drum if needed —** If your dog seems overwhelmed, take one drum's worth of challenge

away by leaving it empty for a session.

**3. Refresh the recipe —** Swap in plain cooked chicken or vegetable pieces in place of plain kibble to bring back interest in a familiar toy.

**4. Check the fill level if drums feel stiff —** Remove some food and try again with a lighter fill so the drum can move freely.

**5. Supervise every session —** Stay nearby throughout play, and remove the toy from use if you notice any damage to the drums or base.

# Your 4-week plan

Move on only when your dog is confident at the current stage. Every dog goes at their own pace.

| Week | Focus | What to do | Session | Watch for |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Week 1 | Building familiarity | One drum only, with plain kibble | 3–5 minutes | Your dog approaching and investigating |
| Week 2 | Increasing engagement | Two drums with kibble | 5–8 minutes | Steady spinning of the drums |
| Week 3 | Adding variety | Three drums with kibble and small chicken pieces | 8–10 minutes | Interest in all three drums |
| Week 4 | Developing the challenge | Three drums with kibble, chicken and firm veg chunks | 10–15 minutes | Independent play |

## Safe food list

Use part of your dog's daily food allowance for these, and check with your vet if your dog has a special diet.

**Good fillings**

Your dog's usual kibble

Plain cooked chicken (no seasoning, no bones)

Plain carrot or cucumber pieces

**Never use, at any time, for any dog**

Chocolate, in any form

Grapes and raisins

Onions and garlic

Anything containing xylitol (often in sugar-free gum, some peanut butters and some sweets)

# When it goes wrong

Quick fixes for the five most common sticking points.

## My dog solves it too fast

**Why it happens:** The kibble pieces are too loose or small, so they fall out with minimal spinning.

**What to do:** Use larger pieces, mix in firmer plain carrot or cucumber chunks, or fill the drums more fully so more spins are needed to clear them.

**Next time:** Build up gradually through the chapters in this guide, moving from one drum to three rather than staying on the easiest fill.

## My dog loses interest

**Why it happens:** The reward feels too low, or your dog has mastered the current level.

**What to do:** Refresh the recipe with plain cooked chicken or vegetable pieces instead of plain kibble, and try moving the toy to a different spot in the room.

**Next time:** Rotate recipes regularly rather than using the same filling every session, and vary which drum holds the more interesting food.

## My dog gets frustrated

**Why it happens:** The puzzle is currently too difficult for their experience with the toy.

**What to do:** Drop back a step: remove one drum, use a looser kibble fill, or return to the single-drum setup for a session or two before trying again.

**Next time:** Increase difficulty gradually, watching how your dog copes at each stage before moving on.

## My dog tries to chew the base

**Why it happens:** Your dog is looking for another way to the food because the puzzle feels too hard.

**What to do:** Make the drums easier for a session or two with a looser kibble fill, and supervise closely, removing the toy if you see signs of wear.

**Next time:** Keep the challenge matched to your dog's current level, and supervise every session so you can step in early.

## The drums are hard to spin

**Why it happens:** The drums are packed too tightly with food.

**What to do:** Remove some of the food and try again with a lighter fill, checking the drum spins freely before building the amount back up.

**Next time:** Fill drums gradually and test the spin by hand before each session, especially when trying a new recipe.

Thank you for choosing the Treat Wheel. Keep sessions short, fun and supervised, and your dog can enjoy their feeding game for a long time. Store it safely when not in use.

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