

KNUCKLEBONES



The single best dental exercise for dogs, from small to large, is a KNUCKLEBONE. It's the "knee" of a cow. You can get them from Target and Walmart (even Amazon.com) for under ten bucks. The big round parts (condyles) encourage chewing with the back teeth. Then, when the dogs burrow into the marrow they work their front teeth very effectively.

Some precautions. First, when you unwrap the bone you should use a paring knife to cut away the "big pieces" of baked fat and sinew. (See johnsonvet.com/knucklebone for a video) Those fatty parts can create digestive upset. You don't have to be "thorough" but at least knock off the big chunks.

The dogs only require 30 minutes three times a week to get results. Or, you can drop the bone on the floor and let them wear them out. If you let them wear the bone out, you should take it away when it seems "thin" or breakable.

- Using real bones for dental exercise risks blunting the teeth over the years. For me, and my dog "Ajax" it's worth it based on a lifetime of prevailing hard and healthy gums.
- If 100 dogs got a knucklebone, one dog would chip a tooth. So there's a risk. However, anything hard enough to be good for teeth has the same risk, bone or not.
- When the bone has been cleaned off, if interest in it wanes, people can pack peanut-butter-and-crushed-dog-food-paste down in the top, marrow cavity.
- Sometimes any beef bone can cause certain dogs to have a diarrhea on 'bone day'. Only you know your dog well enough to speculate on that.
- Dogs will fight over bones.
- Dogs that have GI upset from a knucklebone can be limited to 30 minutes 3x weekly and have less trouble.
- Other beef bones (I don't endorse pig bones) like Soup bones, or Marrow bones work pretty well.