

Story Summary

Ah, let's settle in and begin this story with a cuddly little puppy on the cover, shall we? Sure it's going to be a sweet and heartwarming tale, one where the dog definitely does not die at the end.

Okay, here we go.

Our dog narrator is born in a ditch. He lives in the wild until he is captured by some humans who keep a bunch of dogs in a pen somewhere. Our dog is basically a canine *Oliver Twist* taken to a puppy orphanage. There, the woman in charge names him Toby and occasionally gives him a pat behind the ears. He barks and wags his tail, which is dog speak for Thank you, ma'am, may I have another? He doesn't get another, because animal control arrives, says the people have too many dogs in poor conditions, and takes the dogs all away to gas them.

Whoa. Okay, at least the dog doesn't die at the end. He dies at the very beginning.

The dog is soon reincarnated as a different dog, but with all his memories from his first brief life intact. This time, he is born to a dog breeder. He has food and water, but he doesn't want to be in a cage. So he escapes, opening the cage door and running away. A nice man picks up the dog to take him home with him. He puts him in his truck but leaves the dog there when he stops for an unknown reason.

The dog sits in the truck with the windows up. The day gets hotter, and hotter, and hotter. Could this little puppy's life be even shorter than the first one's? A rock flies through the window. A woman has smashed the glass to rescue the puppy. She takes the dog home and gives him to her son, Ethan, who names the dog Bailey. They become the best friends, romping and playing like there's no tomorrow. Ethan nicknames Bailey "doodle dog," which is a nice way to say "stupid dog." They ride on sleds and go-karts together and swim and go fishing. Ethan makes a toy for Bailey to play with called "the flip." It's just like Timmy and Lassie, except that Ethan doesn't fall down any wells. Bailey, on the other paw, gets himself into more danger than James Bond. A neighborhood troublemaker—and by troublemaker, we mean serial killer in training—named Todd dog-naps Bailey and appears to have the intention of harming the dog in some way. Bailey escapes and learns to stay away from Todd. But Todd won't stay away from him.

As Ethan grows older, he learns to drive, meets a girl named Hannah, and joins the football team. Todd tries to convince Hannah that Ethan is seeing another girl, but she doesn't believe him. When Ethan finds out that Todd lied, he confronts Todd, telling him that he's a weird loser who doesn't have any friends. (True.) Todd can't handle the truth, so he burns Ethan's house down.

Seriously. Todd sets Ethan's house on fire. Bailey sees Todd doing it and bites him, but it's too late. The house is ablaze, and Ethan must jump from the second story to save himself. His leg is badly injured, which leaves him unable to play football again. He loses his football scholarship, and his life changes forever. Bitter and depressed, he pushes Hannah away by being jealous of every able-bodied guy she happens to be within a two-mile radius of.

Soon Ethan goes off to college, leaving his beloved dog behind. Bailey is confused and lonely without his boy. Ethan's grandparents are nice and caring, but it just isn't the same. Within a year or two, Bailey is old and sick. The family decides to have him put down, and Ethan shows up just in time to say goodbye to his "doodle dog." Bailey is happy fulfilling his purpose of bringing happiness to this one human boy.

Yeah, well, the dog wakes up in yet another doggy body, this time as a female. She is confused, and not just at the change in sex: she thought she had fulfilled her purpose. Why has she been reborn? She is soon adopted by Jakob, a cop, who names her Ellie and trains her to be a K-9 cop. Call her Rin Tin Tina. Jakob is bitter and lonely after the death of his wife, and he is a workaholic as a result. Ellie's job is to sniff out missing people. She finds a kidnapped girl, but the kidnapper shoots Jakob. He almost dies, and he is forced into retirement. Ellie's care is transferred to Maya, a rookie cop who trains hard to be the best master for Ellie.

Maya and Ellie travel to Latin America after an earthquake to find survivors. Ellie rescues someone trapped in rubble, but she injures her nose in the process. Unable to smell as a result, she can no longer do her job.

In retirement, Ellie is taken to schools to teach the importance of not getting lost. Stay put, kids, because the dog can't find you anymore. One of the girls at the school is Jakob's daughter, and Ellie is happy to see that Jakob has found a family. Ellie performs one last miraculous rescue when a kid—who clearly didn't listen to Maya's speech—goes missing.

Maya finds a family, too. A dude named Al proposes to her, she says yes, they move in together, and Maya gets pregnant. By this time, Ellie is pretty old, and she passes away, satisfied she has fulfilled her purpose of saving lives.

She's in for a rude awakening when she is reborn, again. Once again a male dog, the pup is really confused this time. Why can't he be free? Why is he eternally reborn? What purpose has he left unfulfilled?

The dog is bought from a breeder by a man who gives the dog to his girlfriend. She keeps the dog in a grungy apartment, where she often forgets to feed him and rarely takes him out for walks. She's not supposed to have dogs in her apartment, anyway, so she gives the dog to her mother and stepfather. The stepfather abandons the dog in the woods.

Now he's back where he started, many lives ago, as a homeless drifter on four legs. Soon, he picks up a familiar scent. No, it's not the scent of existential despair; it's the scent of Ethan, his boy. The dog tracks the scent and finds Ethan living on the family farm they used to visit so many years ago. He's not a boy anymore, but a wrinkly old man. Ethan feeds the dog but doesn't let him in the house. Soon, remembering his beloved dog Bailey, Ethan agrees to take the dog in. He names him Buddy, which gets no points for originality, but it's sweet. However, Ethan is still bitter, old, and lonely. Buddy can't do anything about the old part, but he feels like it's his purpose to take care of the bitter and lonely stuff.

At a dog park, Buddy meets a dog who smells like Hannah, Ethan's childhood sweetheart. Buddy follows the dog home. Turns out the dog's owner is Hannah's daughter, who lives with Hannah. Hannah reads Buddy's collar and learns he belongs to Ethan, her first love. She calls Ethan. As both of them are now old and single, they rekindle their old romance and fall in love. Ethan has a family, and Buddy is content. But one afternoon, when no one is around, Ethan has an aneurysm and starts to die. Hallucinating, he not incorrectly thinks Buddy is Bailey, and he remembers playing with his favorite "doodle dog."

To give Ethan a final pleasant memory of his childhood, Buddy retrieves the flip toy from the closet. Ethan throws it out the window, and Buddy fetches it. When he returns, he keeps Ethan company as Ethan breathes his final breaths. Buddy resolves to do everything he can to support Ethan's family as they grieve. His purpose continues.

Labrador Retriever

Originating from the coast of Newfoundland in Canada, this good-natured family favorite was trained to haul in fishing nets from the icy waters of the North Atlantic. Strong swimmers, athletic and with a fantastic sense of smell, their talents were recognized as a perfect fit as gundogs when they arrived in England in the early 19th century.

These days, Labs are one of the most commonly used working dogs, with a wide range of roles. Hunting, tracking, detection, disability-assistance and therapy work are just some of the areas they excel in, with Labs being the most popular breed for guide dogs worldwide. They are also a wonderful companion dog and great around children. The fun begins from the very start: chocolate, black and yellows puppies can all come from the same litter! ("Labs are like a box of chocolates....", anyone? Sorry!).

While we here at CDK9 Raw adore seeing our pack members demolish our food, there's just one word of caution; given the opportunity, Labs just won't stop! It's important to keep an eye on quantities because they are at risk of becoming overweight. Use our raw food calculator to make sure and give them a fishy treat now and again to bring them back to their roots!

Staffordshire Bull Terriers

We're delighted to see the Staffy come in so high on the Aussies' favourites list! For too long, this breed has been terribly misunderstood and misrepresented. Before the mid-1800s, bloodsports such as bull baiting and bear baiting were popular. The Bull Terrier, as a fearless, tough and intensely loyal breed, was seen as ideal for such activities.

More recently, they've had a bad rep due to their use as so-called 'Pitbulls' in dogfighting. But what people are finally realizing (especially you, Australia!) is that these are human afflictions, not canine. They're just eager to please their owners- some of whom have turned this desire to their own negative ends. To quote Cesar Milan, "In the 70s they blamed Dobermans, in the 80s they blamed German Shepherds, in the 90s they blamed Rottweilers. Now they blame the Pit Bull. When will they blame the humans?"

In reality, the Staffy is friendly, enthusiastic and very affectionate - they make a really great companion dog and who can resist that classic Staffy smile! We know that many of the CDK9 Raw

pack are Staffordshire Bull Terriers and that their loving and responsible owners are instrumental in helping change perceptions about this breed- we salute you!

French Bulldog

In at number 3 is the distinctive Frenchie, small in stature but with a big personality! This fun-loving breed is happiest when in close and regular contact with their humans and can suffer from separation anxiety if left alone for too long. Their exercise needs are minimal - although a short daily walk is recommended, making them a good fit for apartment dwellers. As they can be prone to heat stroke, care must be taken while exercising in hot and humid weather- early mornings and late evenings are best in Summer.

The Frenchie is renowned for their patience and affection towards their owners and are particularly tolerant of children. Did you know that the French Bulldog flirted with extinction in the post - World War 1 era and were considered an extremely rare breed? Thankfully, they made it and we still have all that awesome cuteness today. Grace a Dieu! (Even though they're not actually French...sssshhh!)

German Shepherd

Bred for their intelligence, the GSD consistently ranks near the top of the charts of the cleverest dogs. This makes them one of the favoured breeds for working around the world. They are often first choice for police and military work, as well as protection, disability assistance and search & rescue. Their exceptional trainability and obedience makes the German Shepherd one of the most versatile dogs around, excelling whatever the task.

Of course, this drive to work means that the GSD needs to be kept active or else they can become mischievous. Good exercise and a consistent, challenging training routine will keep them physically and mentally stimulated, allowing you to reap the benefits of an adoring companion around the house.

The GSD can be aloof and suspicious of strangers (making them a great kind of guard dog) so it's important that they're socialized around people and other animals from early puppy-hood.

Border Collie

As the name suggests, this breed was developed on the English/Scottish border around 350 years ago. Widely regarded as the most intelligent of all dogs, they made their reputation as brilliant herders of livestock, particularly sheep. Their low-key approach, independence and intelligence makes them ideal for coaxing herds without causing stress to the animals. The behaviours they exhibit while doing so, such as stalking and crouching, are modified predatory instincts and actually very similar to how a wolf would approach its prey. This is the main reason they can herd with such precision.

Of course, this drive to work means that the GSD needs to be kept active or else they can become mischievous. Good exercise and a consistent, challenging training routine will keep them physically and mentally stimulated, allowing you to reap the benefits of an adoring companion around the house. The Border Collie is a high-energy dog and capable of solving complex tasks

independently. As such, they require lots of training from an early age to keep them stimulated and out of trouble! They pick up on inconsistency very quickly and can become easily bored. Once they have a strong and attentive owner, they are a joy to be around and will amaze with their cleverness.

'Chaser' the Border Collie is known as the 'world's smartest dog'. Raised by a university professor, Chaser is said to have the largest vocabulary of any dog, knowing over 1000 nouns, and the largest tested memory of any non-human animal! She's not known as the Canine Einstein for nothing!

Golden Retriever

In at number 6 on the list is the Golden Retriever, traditionally a gundog beloved for their ability to retrieve game undamaged during hunting parties. They are smart, affectionate and good-natured and are one of those dogs that absolutely loves water! We don't know about you, but we think there's something so life-affirming at seeing the unbridled joy of a water dog in action! They have a water-repellent double coat that sheds, so a brush once a week is a good idea.

The Golden Retriever remains enthusiastically puppy-like well into adulthood and is always up for adventure. Trustworthy around everyone, they are as honest a dog as you're likely to find. They're eager to please their owners and relatively easy to train, making them adaptable to almost any circumstance. Forgiving of inexperienced dog-owners, the Golden Retriever is a great first family dog. Their lust for life is wonderful to behold, but it's important to instil good manners via obedience training from a young age. Once that's done correctly, there's really little else to worry about. A brisk daily walk and some games of fetch will ensure that your Golden Retriever sees you as number 1 in their world.

Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Bred as a companion dog, this 'toy' breed nonetheless retains the sporty nature of their spaniel ancestors. If they're not cuddled up beside you receiving pats, they're equally as happy out flushing birds from bushes, tracking squirrels and even chasing butterflies! King Charles owners will attest to their enthusiastic and playful nature, with them often being described as 'King of the tail-wagers'! Adaptable to apartment dwelling, they still need quite a bit of exercise to keep them content. A daily walk and some indoor 'fetch' games will suffice. They are also very dependent on human companionship so shouldn't be left alone for too long. Separation anxiety in the King Charles can result in excessive whining, barking and destructive chewing. If socialized with other pets from an early age, they will be equally happy with an animal buddy around. Soft-tempered and eager to please, they respond well to training and are great around children. And, of course, those large expressive eyes would lighten even the darkest of moods!

The King Charles is predisposed to some serious health conditions - potential hereditary weaknesses of the heart, liver, kidneys and blood circulatory system. As such, a high carbohydrate diet (kibble) is a particularly bad idea for this breed as it won't give them sufficient preventative nutrition. We recommend you feed this royal canine with raw!

American Staffordshire Terrier

Larger and heavier than their English cousins, the Amstaff emerged as a separate breed in the US and was first recognized by the AKC in 1898. Subjected to the same misconceptions and poor ownership as the Staffy, the Amstaff's bigger size contributed to an unwarranted reputation as an intimidating fighting dog. Nothing could be further from the truth! Revised by the AKC in 1969 to their current name, generations of responsible breeding have created an Amstaff who is people-oriented and thrives as part of the family. Intensely loyal, they will protect their family from any threat but are otherwise low in aggression. Fun-loving and affectionate, the Amstaff loves snuggling up to its humans and snoozing away the hot days in the shade. They are strong-willed and can be boisterous so require a firm and patient owner who can deliver lots of training.

Perhaps, best-suited to more confident and experienced dog-owners, a good training routine and enough exercise will result in one of the most loving dogs imaginable. Care should be taken around unfamiliar animals as the Amstaff may perceive them as a threat to their family. Early socialisation is key. As with their English cousins, we salute all those responsible owners who have ensured their reputation has improved so much that they're now in the Top 10!

Miniature Schnauzer

Originating in Germany, the Miniature Schnauzer came to be when the standard variety was bred with smaller dogs to create a breed that was skilled at hunting rats on farms. These are a spirited little dog who are alert and active, with a great degree of curiosity. Very independent, they can vary greatly from individual to individual so it can be difficult to predict your puppy's personality! Some exhibit high-energy, terrier-like traits while others can be much calmer. However, they will all have that distinctive appearance, with long leg hair, bushy eyebrows and an impressive moustache! Maybe that's what gives them their confidence as they've no problem swaggering up to a much bigger dog and standing their ground - sometimes getting themselves into trouble! A keen watchdog, they will alert you to any unfamiliar visitors and are generally suspicious of strangers.

Their intelligence means that they can be easily trained but bear in mind they can also be extremely stubborn, sometimes pretending not to hear you! Let these guys get away with something once and they're likely to remember it forever, making it difficult to change the behaviour. However, their favourite thing is spending time with their owner so, provided you keep them mentally stimulated and give them a moderate amount of exercise, they're a fantastic companion and guaranteed to make you laugh!

Rottweiler

Another breed once considered among the 'bad boys', the Rottie has an impressive physical stature that belies a heart of gold. With a heritage said to include guarding the livestock of the Roman legions and driving cattle to market, they are a powerful and athletic specimen. For this reason, they have often been chosen to portray vicious attack dogs in movies and on TV, contributing to some people's negative perception of them. In reality, they are calm,

good-natured and devoted to their family. They can be aloof with strangers, waiting to make sure that there is no threat to their family before making friends. If a threat is posed, their fierce loyalty will ensure their fearless protection but a well-raised Rottweiler is never aggressive without reason. It's important to start training and socialisation early, as they can be a dominant dog who assumes they're the master of the house! However, firm and consistent training routines will develop a physical beast of a dog who's just a beauty at heart. They respond best to positive reinforcement - harsh discipline can result in them losing respect for their human as pack leader.

Rotties should get plenty of physical exercise to burn up their energy and satisfy their drive to work. They're chewers so, if bored, their powerful jaws can reduce household items to rubble in minutes! Did you know? Despite their media portrayal, Rottweilers are steadily gaining a reputation as an excellent dog for use in therapy work.

Tips on Feeding Your Dogs

When it comes to feeding your dog, there are some decisions you need to make. Proper nutrition is one of your dog's basic needs, and it's about more than just the brand of dog food. Check out the answers to some basic questions many dog owners have about feeding.

What Type of Dog Food is Best for My Dog ?

Because there are so many commercial dog food brands available, choosing a dog food can be quite overwhelming. All commercial diets with the AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials) label are considered "complete and balanced" for dogs. This means that the diet sustains life and meets a dog's basic nutritional needs. However, not all dog foods are created equal. Many experts agree that the quality of ingredients plays a major role in a dog's health and well-being.

Choosing Commercial Diets: To compare foods and determine which is best for your dog, talk to your veterinarian first. Ask for input from dog professionals and even other dog owners. Do your own research on sites like DogFoodAdvisor.com. When in doubt, ask your vet for a referral to a veterinary nutritionist. Remember that opinions on canine nutrition tend to vary greatly.

Choosing Home-Prepared Diets: Rather than choosing a commercial diet, some owners opt to go for homemade diets. If you try this option, make sure you work with your veterinarian to create a complete and balanced diet that is customized for your dog's needs. To begin developing a home-prepared diet for your dog, check out Balancelt.com and/or PetDiets.com. Failure to feed a complete and balanced diet can lead to major health problems for your dog.

How Much Food Should I Feed My Dog ?

The amount of food to feed your dog depends on a few factors:

Your dog's age (puppy vs. adult)

Your dog's body condition

Your dog's activity level

The calorie and nutrient content of the diet

A dog food calculator can tell you approximately how many calories per day your dog needs. Talk to your vet about your dog's body condition and ideal weight.

How Often Does My Dog Need to Eat ?

Most experts agree that twice-daily feeding is best for most adult dogs. Once-a-day is a long time for a dog to go between meals. Puppies should be fed 3-6 times per day (small puppies need food more often to prevent low blood sugar). Talk to your vet about an appropriate feeding schedule for your dog.

What Type of Dog Bowl Is Best ?

Experts recommend avoiding plastic bowls for a dog's food and water. This is because your dog can develop an allergic reaction or sensitivity, resulting in a rash or type of acne on the chin and face. Not only is the plastic a potential irritant, but the bowl may harbor bacteria or other microbes that affect your dog. Plastic bowls are harder to keep clean because of microscopic nooks and crannies where germs can live. It's best to use metal or ceramic bowls for dog food and water.

What About Dog Treats ?

There are plenty of options for yummy dog treats and dog chews. Make sure to choose safe options for your dog. Also, remember that treats and chews are supplements to your dog's diet and should never make up more than about 10% of your dog's daily caloric intake.

What Foods Should I Avoid Feeding ?

Most dogs love food and will eat just about anything they can find. Avoid the following harmful or even toxic foods for dogs:

Chocolate ;Grapes/Raisins; Onions; Pits and seeds from fruits/vegetables; Alcoholic drinks or foods; Caffeinated drinks or foods; Macadamia nuts; Yeast dough; Xylitol (found in sugar-free or reduced-sugar gum and candy); Moldy or rotten food; Fatty foods; Salty foods; Bones, antlers and animal hooves. More details, please see Food that never feed your dog.

What Human Foods are Safe for Dogs ?

While people food should generally be avoided, there are some that you can safely feed as treats or with meals to make dog food more palatable. Unseasoned lean meats and certain plain fruits and vegetables are healthy for dogs. Opt for whole, unprocessed foods low in fat, salt, and sugar. Feed small portions as treats, remembering the rule about treats making up no more than 10% of your dog's daily intake. Here are some healthy options for dogs:

Chicken; Turkey; Beef; Carrots; Green beans; Sweet potatoes; Apples; Bananas; Peanut butter; Carob; Plain yogurt, especially Greek.

Core and Non-core Vaccinations

There are two types of vaccinations: Core and Non-core. Veterinarians recommend core vaccinations to battle such diseases as rabies and canine distemper. These ailments are extremely infectious and can pose a threat to a dog's life. Not only do core vaccinations protect the animals, but they also protect humans. Non-core vaccinations include those for kennel cough (Bordetella), Lyme disease, parainfluenza, among others. Non-core vaccinations are only administered on an

"as needed basis."

Core Vaccination

Core vaccines are recommended for all pets with an unknown vaccination history, as they protect against diseases that infect dogs or cats of all life stages and lifestyles. The diseases involved have high rates of infection, pose a threat to the pet's life, and/or are a danger to human health; in general, vaccination results in relatively good protection from the disease(s).

Here are some especially for dogs :

Canine distemper—a highly contagious, potentially fatal viral disease that can affect the respiratory and nervous systems;

Leptospirosis—a bacterial disease that is contracted through contact with contaminated urine and can cause liver and kidney failure. Can also be transmitted to people;

Canine parvovirus—a highly contagious, potentially fatal gastrointestinal disease;

and Adenovirus (hepatitis)—a viral disease that can affect multiple organ systems including the liver and kidneys and can be fatal.

Non-core Vaccination

Non-core vaccines are optional vaccines that should be considered in light of the exposure risk of the animal (i.e., based on geographic distribution and the pet's lifestyle). Several of the diseases involved are often self-limiting or respond readily to treatment.

Here are some especially for dogs :

Canine parainfluenza virus—a highly contagious respiratory virus and is one of the most common pathogens of infectious tracheobronchitis;

Canine influenza virus (CIV)—a highly contagious virus known to cause kennel cough;

Leptospira spp—a bacterial disease that affects humans and animals. Without treatment, can lead to kidney damage, liver failure, respiratory distress, and even death

What should a dog owner do ?

Here are some suggestions:

Make sure your dog and puppies (especially those with a tenuous vaccination history) are vaccinated for all core diseases, including canine parvovirus, canine distemper, rabies and canine adenovirus.

Puppies should receive a single dose of rabies vaccine either at 12 weeks of age, or 3 months. If you have an adult dog without any vaccination records, they should also get a rabies shot. All dogs should then get a booster one year later, and then every 3 years.

As far as non-core vaccines go, the vets at UC Davis recommend that you consider such things as where you live and the exposure your pet faces. For example, Stone says, if you live in a high-risk environment for Lyme disease, vaccinate your dog. The same holds true for Bordetella. If your dog is not going to be kenneled, a vaccination is not necessary.

In the end, most animals need only their core vaccinations, and then boosters every three years thereafter. You should talk to your vet and decide whether and when a vaccination is needed. The days of treating all dogs as a monolith are long gone. Each pooch is different and should be treated as such. Learn more, please visit [Vaccination Guidelines for Dogs and Cats](#).

Basic Dog Grooming: 5 Important Canine Needs

Dog grooming is one of your dog's basic needs and an important part of dog ownership. Just like people, dogs need physical maintenance to look and feel their best. Fortunately, dogs do not need to bathe as often as people, but you do need to learn how much grooming your dog actually needs and keep it on a schedule. Generally, a dog's grooming needs depend on the breed and hair type. If your dog has a skin, ear or nail condition, follow your veterinarian's instructions regarding grooming your dog. It is also important to use the appropriate grooming tools.

1. Hair Brushing

Most dogs enjoy being brushed – regularly brushing them will strengthen your bond with your dog while helping them maintain a healthy coat. A dog's brushing needs depend on their hair type. Choose the right brush and follow these minimum guidelines:

Long-haired dogs usually require daily brushing to prevent matting and tangling of hair.

Medium-haired dogs may be prone to matting and tangles and should be brushed at least weekly.

Short-haired dogs can typically go a few weeks in-between brushing.

2. Nail Trimming

Nail trims are often hated by dogs and owners alike. Most dogs dislike even having their paws handled and know how much it hurts when nails are cut too short. Dog owners are often uncomfortable with the process for fear of hurting their dogs.

Dogs will develop an aversion to nail trimming once they experience pain from it. The best way to avoid this is to learn how to trim nails correctly and exercise caution. Ideally, a veterinary technician, vet or groomer should teach you how to trim your dog's nails. Most dogs need monthly nail trims, but your dog may need more or less depending on the rate of growth.

An alternative to nail trimming is the use of a rotary tool to file down nails. Consider the Pedicure Grooming Tool for this task.

3. Bathing

Bath time does not mean fun to most dogs and owners. It may bring forth an image of a wet dog running from the tub, dripping all over the house. Bathing does not have to be this way if your dog can get used to it. He may not like the bath, but he'll be easier to manage. Learn how to bathe your dog properly and make the experience as positive as you can for you and your dog.

Most dogs only need to be bathed when they seem dirty or itchy. Many people like to bathe their dogs monthly, but bathing as often as once a week is not considered harmful. Always use a soap-free shampoo that is intended for dogs. Depending on the condition of your dog's skin and coat, your veterinarian may recommend a specific shampoo. In this case, be sure to follow your veterinarian's instructions about bathing.

4. Ear Care

Your dog's ears can be a haven for bacteria and yeast if not kept clean. Some dogs can go their whole lives without ear problems, and the only routine ear cleaning needed is during the monthly bath. Other dogs have chronic ear disease and require multiple cleanings a day.

Ear problems can often be traced back to genetics. Dogs with floppy ears or long hair tend to be predisposed to ear problems because the ear canal simply does not have as much air exposure. Many ear problems are a sign of allergies. If your dog has excess debris or foul odor in his ears, your veterinarian will likely prescribe special ear cleaners and medications. If your dog's ears are relatively healthy, you can help keep them that way with proper ear care.

5. Haircuts

Dogs with continuously growing hair, such as the Poodle or Shih Tzu, typically need their hair cut every 2-4 weeks depending on the breed of the dog and the style of the cut. This task is often best left to professional groomers, though many dog owners are able to learn some basic maintenance haircuts. If you are interested in learning professional dog grooming skills, consider dog grooming school.

Dog Behaviours Facial Expression

Eyes

A dog's eyes, like a human's, are capable of conveying a multitude of meanings and emotions. Here are common eye expressions:

Soft Eye Contact

This is a dog who is social, confident and friendly. The eyes are round or almond-shaped and soft, with the pupils dilated appropriately for available lighting (small pupils if light is bright, large if light is dim). Often accompanied by affiliative (distance decreasing) behavior such as a relaxed tail wag, and body curved or even wiggling.

Hard Eye Contact

This is a hard, direct stare which, if you are good at reading dogs, gives you the chills. It is not friendly. The eyes are piercing, and there is often little or no body movement. Accompanying body language is usually assertive – dog is standing tall and forward, tail erect and still or wagging stiffly. May be part of a pre-aggression “freeze” where the dog goes completely still. If this warning is ignored, the dog is likely to bite.

Squinty Eyes

This is a sign of appeasement, which is often a good thing, if it is simply the dog's nature to be appeasing. However, appeasement can also be a signal for fear, which is not such a good thing. If the dog is squinting and approaching, it's a friendly, social expression, and it is probably safe to interact with him. If the dog is squinting with his body posture back and lowered, it is likely fear. If you approach he may feel threatened, and bite.

Avoiding Eye Contact

While the human species prizes direct eye contact as a measure of someone's character and honesty, in the dog world, direct eye contact can be perceived as a threat. Often, unless a dog has been strongly reinforced for making and keeping eye contact, he will look away when you look at him. It's a deference behavior – his way of saying he doesn't have any desire to challenge you. He's doing his best to be polite and non-confrontational.

Whale Eye

This is a dog trainer term for when a dog shows the whites of his eyes. While it is often a warning sign and precursor to a bite, it really just means the dog is looking sideways while his nose is

pointing forward. It is often seen with resource guarding because the dog is keeping his nose pointed at the valuable resource while watching you to gauge how much of a threat you are. Again, the rest of the dog's body language is key to knowing when whale eye is an aggression signal and when it is not. If the body is relatively still and forward, it's aggression. If other body signals indicate relaxation and play, then it is likely not aggression.

Ears

Ears Relaxed

For a prick-eared dog, the ears are still up and forward, but not hard forward, and may even swivel to the side. For a drop-eared dog, the ears are hanging flat against the side of the face instead of pulled forward. Relaxed ears generally mean a relaxed dog.

Ears Pulled Back

Regardless of ear style, ears that are pinned back against the head can mean one of several things. It can be happy appeasement, fear, or stress. As with the squinty eyes, the rest of the dog's body language will give you clear clues as to which it is for the dog in front of you, and you can adjust your own interaction with the dog accordingly.

Mouth

Relaxed Mouth

Your dog's mouth, when relaxed should be closed, or slightly open. If closed and relaxed, the skin around the mouth will be wrinkle-free, with possible exceptions for the wrinkly and brachycephalic (short-faced) breeds.

Panting

A dog can pant for several reasons. He may have just been exerting himself, and is panting to cool off. He may be overheated, in which case emergency cooling measures are called for to prevent heat stroke or even death. Or he may be stressed.

Again, evaluating the rest of his body language, as well as knowing what activities he's been recently engaged in and taking into account the ambient temperature, will help you determine which panting is happening. Also, acute stress and distress panting is often very fast and shallow, as opposed to relaxed panting which is often slower and deeper.

Tense Mouth

If your dog's mouth is relaxed and open, and he slowly closes it, his body goes still, and there are lines around his mouth, he is not happy. Use caution, especially if his body also goes still. This is often part of the freeze sequence that is the precursor to a bite.

Licking

Sometimes dogs lick to greet. Sometimes dogs do appeasement licking. Sometimes dogs lick their lips to get the last bits of flavor from the last tasty thing they ate. Sometimes dogs lick themselves persistently because of allergies or some other medical issue, or because of a canine compulsive disorder. And sometimes dogs lick their lips because they are stressed. Sometimes canine professionals have a tendency to overreact and call any lip-licking stress licking. It's not necessarily. It might be. Let the rest of the dog's body language help you decide if it is or it isn't.

Yawning

Sometimes dogs yawn because they are tired. Sometimes dogs yawn because yawning is contagious. Sometimes dogs yawn because they are stressed. Again, look at the whole dog – and

then decide.

Snarl

As clumsy as some people are at reading canine body language, this one is pretty hard to miss. When the lips curl up and all those shiny white fangs are exposed, the message is usually pretty clear. The snarl is usually accompanied by very hard eyes, while the ears may be pricked hard forward or pinned back, depending on whether the dog is being offensively or defensively aggressive.

Facial Muscles

Submissive Grin

Often mistaken for a snarl, the submissive or appeasement grin is a bit of a mystery in canine communication. It is only seen very rarely in dog-dog interactions, but is not uncommon for dogs with soft, appeasing personalities to offer to humans. One theory is that the dogs are actually mimicking human smiles! At any rate, it's a lovely behavior that can get dogs in trouble because people think they are being aggressive when they most certainly aren't. If you're not sure, quickly check the rest of the dog's body language to clues as to which it really is. I say "quickly" because if it really is a snarl, prompt evasive action may be required on your part.

Lack of Brow Lines (calm)

A calm, relaxed dog's brow is as smooth as a baby's bottom (again, with those wrinkly-dog exceptions). On the contrary, it will look like frown.

Mouth Lines

You can also see tension in the lines around your dog's mouth. A relaxed dog's lips are flat and wrinkle-free.

Dog Behaviours Body Languages

Tails

Tucked under:

Submissive/appeasing, deferent, or fearful

Low and still:

Calm, relaxed

Low to medium carriage, gently waving:

Relaxed, friendly

Low to medium carriage, fast wag:

Submissive/appeasing or happy, friendly

High carriage, still/vibrating or fast wag:

Tension, arousal, excitement; could be play arousal or aggression arousal

Hairs

Piloerection:

Also known as "raised hackles," this is simply a sign of arousal. While it can indicate aggression, dogs may also show piloerection when they are fearful, uncertain, or engaged in excited play.

Body Posture

Behind vertical, lowered; hackles may be raised:

Could be submissive and/or appeasing or fearful

Vertical, full height:

Confident, relaxed

Ahead of vertical, standing tall; hackles may be raised:

Assertive, alert, excitement, arousal; could be play arousal or aggressive arousal

Shoulders lowered, hindquarters elevated:

A play bow is a clear invitation to play; the dog is sending a message that behavior that might otherwise look like aggression is intended in play.

Tips for human behaviour

Your ability to communicate appropriately back to your dog is every bit as important as your ability to read her communications. Making direct eye contact, bending forward from the waist, and reaching over the top of the head are some of the most common body language mistakes humans make with dogs.

Here are more appropriate ways to communicate your friendly intentions to the dog in front of you:

Eye Contact

In our culture, direct eye contact is admired. Someone who doesn't look you in the eye is perceived as shifty, untruthful, or weak. Though there are other cultures where this is not true, in this part of the world, we humans regard making direct eye contact as the right and honorable way to greet other sentient beings.

In a dog's world, however, direct eye contact is a challenge or a threat, while looking away is a sign of deference, appeasement, or respect. If you make direct eye contact with a dog and see signs of appeasement, fear, deference, or defensive or offensive aggression, you know this is a dog who is not comfortable with direct eye contact. Experienced handlers approach dogs with soft eye contact or without making eye contact at all.

When approaching a dog you don't know, or if your own dog seems wary of you when you approach her, try looking off to the side or over her head instead of directly into her eyes. If she seems comfortable, try making brief, soft eye contact and see how she reacts. If her body language stays soft and she continues to approach you, she is probably comfortable with at least some eye contact. Take it slow.

Hands

What's the first thing you're likely to do when you're introduced to a human stranger? Reach out boldly and shake hands with a firm grip. What's the first thing many humans are likely to do when they meet a dog? Reach out boldly and pat her on top of the head. Non-dog-savvy humans, that is. Many dogs hate being patted on top of the head, although some tolerate it; only a small minority may actually enjoy it.

If you want to make a good impression on the canines you meet, you might do best not to reach out at all. Rather, allow the dog to offer the first contact with you.

If you must reach toward a dog, offer your open hand, palm up, below her chin level, and let her reach forward to sniff. If she invites closer contact, try scratching gently under her chin or behind

her ear – most dogs love that. Watch her response; she may not like touch, or she may not yet be ready for that much intimacy from a stranger. If she pulls away or shows signs of fear, appeasement, avoidance, or aggression, respect her message and stop trying to touch her.

Hugs

Even in the world of humans, you'd be offended if someone you didn't know walked up and wrapped arms around you in an intimate hug. Lots of dogs are equally offended, even by hugs from someone they know well. Sure, there are dogs who invite hugs and snuggles, but they are the exception, not the rule.

Never try to hug a dog you don't know (and don't let your children do it, either!).

If you are in the habit of hugging (or allowing your children to hug) your own dog, video some hugs in action and take a good hard look at her body language. If your dog leans into the hugs with a relaxed body and soft expression, you're on solid ground. In contrast, if you see your dog ducking, looking away, leaning away, tensing up, or offering other avoidance signals, you might want to rethink your hugging program.

Body Orientation

Remember that approach for greeting another human and shaking her hand? You probably stood tall and offered a full-frontal presentation at the same time; we humans would think it quite weird if someone crouched and/or sidled up to us to say hello.

However, to a dog, a face-front direct approach along with direct eye contact screams, "Threat!" Equally offensive to many dogs is the human habit of bending or hovering over a dog. If you watch a dog professional making the acquaintance of a new canine friend, you are likely to see her kneel sideways while avoiding eye contact, either keeping her hands close to her body or offering an open hand low to the ground.

Take your lead from professional trainers and handlers. The more wary of you the dog appears, the more important it is for you to turn sideways and make yourself small and non-threatening. Of course, if you're greeting an enthusiastic Labrador Retriever who is happily trying to body-slam you at the end of his leash, you're probably safe to stand up and face front. But, still, no hugs, head-pats, or hovering, please.

Movement

Dogs, especially dogs who aren't completely comfortable with humans, are very sensitive to our movement. Fast, sudden, and erratic movements can be alarming, especially if they are combined with direct eye contact and inappropriate hand-reaching. Slow, calm movement – or in some case no movement at all – is a better approach with a dog you don't know.

Demeanor

Now here's the tricky part. Often, when humans are trying to avoid eye contact, move slowly, speak softly, turn sideways, and control the movement of their hands, they end up looking tense and awkward. Or just plain weird. And that can be very alarming to a dog who isn't sure about the approaching human – or humans in general.

To avoid this, video yourself with your own dog while you train yourself to control your eye contact, hands, and body postures. Practice until you can act natural while doing all the approach

and greeting behaviors that feel very unnatural. Then ask your friends if you can try it with their dogs. Get really good at it before you try it with random dogs you meet in public. And always remember to ask the dog's owner first for permission to greet – and respect their wishes if they hesitate or say no.

5 Essential Commands You Can Teach Your Dog

Having a trained dog isn't the same as having a balanced dog, but if your dog knows a few basic commands, it can be helpful when tackling problem behaviors — existing ones or those that may develop in the future.

So where do you start with dog obedience training? You could take a class, but it's not necessary; you can do it yourself. In fact, with the right attitude, it can be fun for both you and your dog!

Sit

This is one of the easiest dog obedience commands to teach, so it's a good one to start with.

1. Hold a treat close to your dog's nose.
2. Move your hand up, allowing his head to follow the treat and causing his bottom to lower.
3. Once he's in sitting position, say "Sit," give him the treat, and share affection.

Repeat this sequence a few times every day until your dog has it mastered. Then ask your dog to sit. before mealtime, when leaving for walks, and during other situations where you'd like him calm and seated.

Come

This command can help keep a dog out of trouble, bringing him back to you if you lose grip on the leash or accidentally leave the front door open.

1. Put a leash and collar on your dog.
2. Go down to his level and say, "Come," while gently pulling on the leash.
3. When he gets to you, reward him with affection and a treat.

Once he's mastered it with the leash, remove it — and practice the command in a safe, enclosed area.

Down

This can be one of the more difficult commands in dog obedience training. Why? Because the position is a submissive posture. You can help by keeping training positive and relaxed, particularly with fearful or anxious dogs.

1. Find a particularly good smelling treat, and hold it in your closed fist.
2. Hold your hand up to your dog's snout. When he sniffs it, move your hand to the floor, so he follows.
3. Then slide your hand along the ground in front of him to encourage his body to follow his head.
4. Once he's in the down position, say "Down," give him the treat, and share affection.

Repeat it every day. If your dog tries to sit up or lunges toward your hand, say "No" and take your hand away. Don't push him into a down position, and encourage every step your dog takes toward the right position. After all, he's working hard to figure it out!

Stay

Before attempting this one, make sure your dog is an expert at the “Sit” command.

1. First, ask your dog to “Sit.”
2. Then open the palm of your hand in front of you, and say “Stay.”
3. Take a few steps back. Reward him with a treat and affection if he stays.
4. Gradually increase the number of steps you take before giving the treat.
5. Always reward your pup for staying put — even if it’s just for a few seconds.

This is an exercise in self-control for your dog, so don’t be discouraged if it takes a while to master, particularly for puppies and high-energy dogs. After all, they want to be on the move and not just sitting there waiting.

Leave it

This can help keep your dog safe when his curiosity gets the better of him, like if he smells something intriguing but possibly dangerous on the ground! The goal is to teach your pup that he gets something even better for ignoring the other item.

1. Place a treat in both hands.
2. Show him one enclosed fist with the treat inside, and say, “Leave it.”
3. Let him lick, sniff, mouth, paw, and bark to try to get it — and ignore the behaviors.
4. Once he stops trying, give him the treat from the other hand.
5. Repeat until your dog moves away from that first fist when you say, “Leave it.”
6. Next, only give your dog the treat when he moves away from that first fist and also looks up at you.

Once your dog consistently moves away from the first treat and gives you eye contact when you say the command, you’re ready to take it up a notch. For this, use two different treats — one that’s just all right and one that’s a particularly good smelling and tasty favorite for your pup.

1. Say “Leave it,” place the less attractive treat on the floor, and cover it with your hand.
2. Wait until your dog ignores that treat and looks at you. Then remove that treat from the floor, give him the better treat and share affection immediately.
3. Once he’s got it, place the less tasty treat on the floor... but don’t completely cover it with your hand. Instead hold it a little bit above the treat. Over time, gradually move your hand farther and farther away until your hand is about 6 inches above.
4. Now he’s ready to practice with you standing up! Follow the same steps, but if he tries to snatch the less tasty treat, cover it with your foot.

Don’t rush the process. Remember, you’re asking a lot of your dog. If you take it up a notch and he’s really struggling, go back to the previous stage.

* Just these five simple commands can help keep your dog safer and improve your communication with him. It’s well worth the investment of your time and effort. Remember, the process takes time, so only start a dog obedience training session if you’re in the right mindset to practice calm-assertive energy and patience.

Essential Tools You May Need To Train Your Dog

You're all ready to welcome a new puppy or dog into your home — including working with him on his manners. Before he comes home, get your training supplies organized so you're ready to start training on day one.

Here are my essential dog-training tools, plus a few extra items you might want to have in your arsenal. Happy training!

Clicker

A clicker can be used to mark desired behavior, both in response to a cue and when it occurs naturally. Clickers come in a variety of shapes and styles, including handheld ones and those with wrist straps. Some leashes even come with built-in clickers. There are also clicker apps for your smart-phone and clickers designed for training multiple dogs, with different distinct sounds for each pooch.

Target stick

A target stick can be helpful for teaching basic behaviors like walking nicely on leash or complex tricks like spin or bow. Targets vary from a simple, fixed-length stick to something fancier, like a stick with a built-in clicker or one that collapses for easy storage. A serving spoon or wooden spoon can also be an easy DIY target — or you can skip the equipment altogether and teach your dog to touch and follow a hand target.

Treats

Rewards keep your dog interested and motivated. Treat preference will vary depending upon the individual canine, but in general, soft, meaty treats are canine favorites. Treats should be small, around the size of a pencil eraser or a blueberry. Some treats come pre-sized for training while others may be broken apart or cut down to size prior to training.

Portable mat

A portable mat or bed provides a safe space for your dog to settle, no matter where he is. A foldable, washable bed, mat or blanket is easy to transport and ideal for outings. Varieties with a sticky bottom tend to provide greater stability on slick surfaces.

Leashes

Training leashes vary in length, typically between four and six feet. Ideally, the leash is long enough to allow slight slack when your dog stays close to you during walks (rather than being pulled tight all the time). A waist-clip leash enables you to keep your hands free during training sessions. Store your dog's leashes in easy access locations, such as on hooks near the door.

Collar and harness

A flat collar holds your dog's ID tag, which is important if he gets out on his own. While you can also clip a leash to a flat collar, a front-clip harness is a better option for most dogs, since it can help deter pulling and make it easier for you to guide your dog's movement. For difficult-to-control dogs, a head halter can be a useful option. (Note: Corrective collars are not recommended for training.)

Long line

When your dog is ready to practice behaviors like long-distance stays and come when called, a long line is a safe and simple alternative to being off leash. Long lines also allow for exploration during training breaks and extra room to walk out for activities like scent detection. Standard long lines vary from 15 to 30 feet.

Barriers

Crates, pet gates, pet pens and playpens can be useful if you need to contain your dog in a certain area for situations like house training or chewing management. A barrier can also be helpful for keeping your pooch away from problem areas like stairs or the front door.