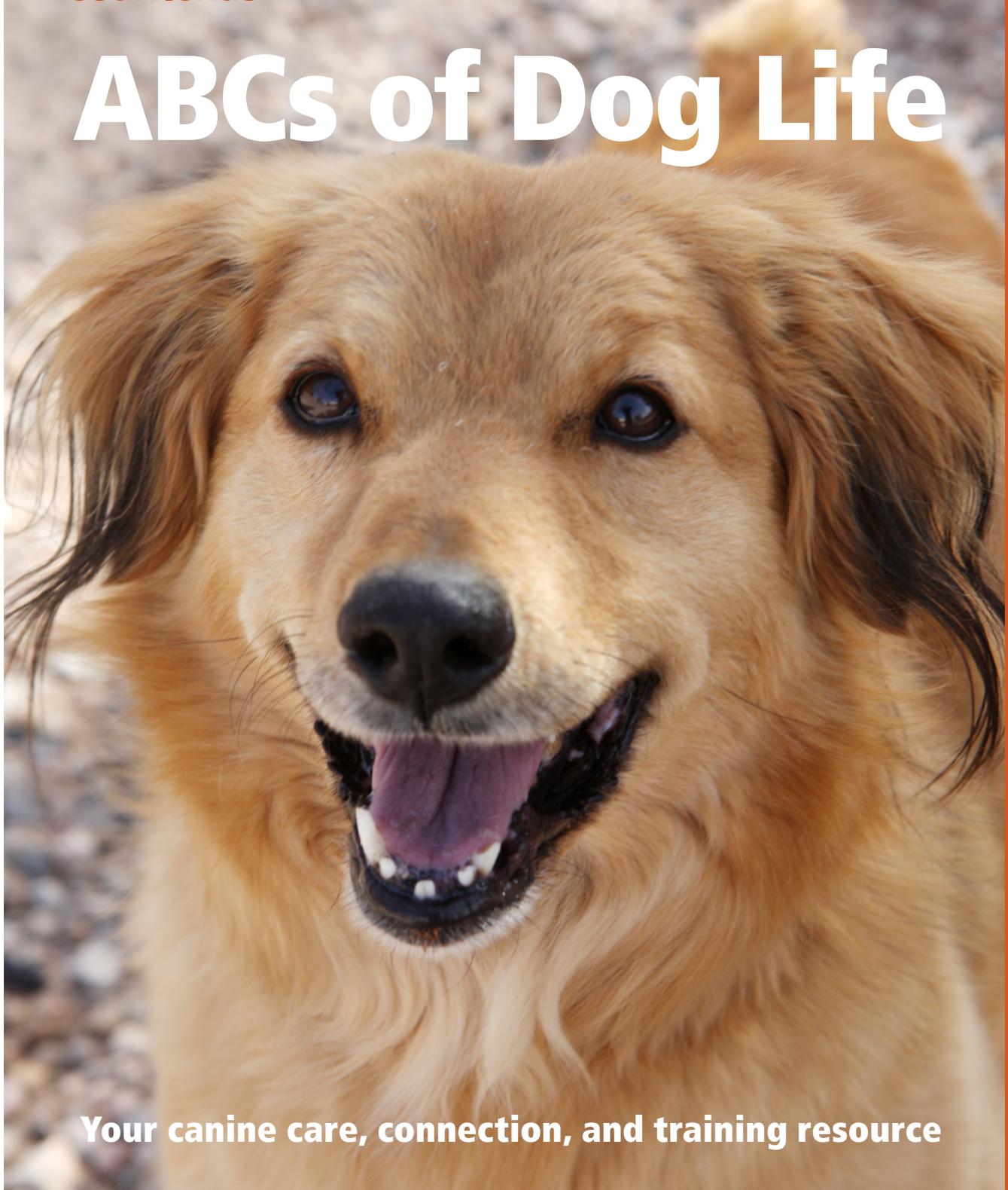


**Best Friends** PET CARE LIBRARY

# ABCs of Dog Life



**Your canine care, connection, and training resource**



**Best Friends**  
ANIMAL SOCIETY



# Best Friends

## ANIMAL SOCIETY

Best Friends Animal Society is the only national animal welfare organization dedicated exclusively to ending the killing of dogs and cats in America's shelters. When Best Friends began in 1984, some 17 million animals died every year in our nation's shelters, simply for not having homes. Today, that number is down to about 4 million. That's incredible progress, but it also means that more than 9,000 wonderful dogs and cats are still losing their lives every day. Together, we can change that.

For 30 years, Best Friends has been running the nation's largest no-kill sanctuary for companion animals and building effective programs all across the country that reduce the number of animals entering shelters and increase the number who find homes. Join us. Together, we can Save Them All®.

Best Friends Animal Society  
5001 Angel Canyon Road  
Kanab, UT 84741  
Phone: 435-644-2001  
Website: [bestfriends.org](http://bestfriends.org)

## About This Manual

The resources in this manual are mostly derived from Best Friends' pet care library, located online at [www.bestfriends.org/theanimals/petcare](http://www.bestfriends.org/theanimals/petcare). The manual is intended to be a guide for all dog lovers who want to know more about the Best Friends way to care for and train dogs.

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**Disclaimer:** Best Friends Animal Society is not responsible for any injuries to anyone using the techniques described in this manual. Any person using the techniques described here does so at his/her own risk.



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## About Sherry Woodard

Most of the resources in this manual were written by Sherry Woodard, Best Friends Animal Society's resident animal behavior consultant. As an expert in animal training, behavior and care, she develops resources, provides consulting services, leads workshops and speaks nationwide to promote animal welfare.

Before coming to Best Friends, Sherry, a nationally certified professional dog trainer, worked with dogs, cats, horses and a variety of other animals. She also worked in veterinary clinics, where she gained valuable experience in companion-animal medical care and dog dentistry.

Sherry came to Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in 1996 as a dog caretaker. Her understanding of animals and insights into their behavior were quickly recognized and, in 1997, she was asked to manage Dogtown, where she oversaw the daily care and medical needs of 600 dogs. As manager, Sherry was responsible for the intake of new dogs to the sanctuary, the placement of dogs in appropriate social groups, dog adoption programs, student and volunteer group visits, the foster care program, supply orders, and all matters relating to personnel. She participated in the design of new buildings and exercise areas in Dogtown that have provided stimulating and comfortable environments for thousands of dogs over the years. Early in 2003, Sherry joined Best Friends' No More Homeless Pets national team.

Today, representatives from humane organizations and shelters across the country seek out Sherry for advice. Sherry assists individuals and shelter and rescue personnel with animal behavior, management and enrichment. She gives workshop presentations on animal care, animal behavior, training and adoptions at national conferences as well as local shelters.

Sherry has been certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CPDT) as a certified professional dog trainer – knowledge assessed (CPDT-KA). In March 2008,



Sherry's Dog Behavior and Handling Workshop was approved for continuing education credit by CPDT.

Sherry has written over 50 animal care, behavior, and training documents for Best Friends Animal Society that are used across the U.S. and by groups in Canada, Romania, China, India and Tbilisi, Georgia. She has created two training CDs with video, a basic and an advanced version. Sherry has also been featured in the National Geographic Channel's TV series called "DogTown," which chronicles the physical and emotional rehabilitation of dogs living at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary.

Sherry developed a canine behavior assessment method to help people learn what dogs need so that they can be placed safely in new homes. Sherry also created a cat assessment program

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for shelter adoption staff and cat rescuers to help them read cats' body language and assess their needs.

Widely regarded as an expert on animal behavior, Sherry has consulted on and assisted with the investigation of animal cases in litigation, testified in cases of cruelty and breed discrimination, and worked with law enforcement on a fatal dog attack case.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Sherry gained on-the-ground leadership experience in disaster response and management of ongoing emergency relief projects when she spent eight months in Tylertown, Mississippi, helping with rescue, assessment and socialization of dogs; supervising staff and volunteers; and working with all types of animals, including exotics.

She has completed 12 FEMA Emergency Management Institute courses. Sherry is a certified first-aid first-responder and an EMT. She has been a whitewater raft guide licensed in the Grand Canyon and has experience as a back-

country guide and with rock climbing and swift-water rescue. She volunteers with local animal control and is a member of the local search and rescue team.

In 2007, Sherry spent six months working with Best Friends' Great Kitty Rescue in Pahrump, Nevada, where 800 cats were discovered living in horrible conditions. To prepare these traumatized kitties for new lives as house cats, she and several colleagues developed a process for socializing fearful cats. As a result, hundreds of cats from the Pahrump compound were adopted into good homes.

Sherry's latest project is Best Friends' Canines with Careers. Sherry is helping rescue groups and shelters that want to start training and placing qualified shelter dogs in loving homes as working dogs. The dog careers vary and could include therapy, assistance, different types of service and detection.

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# **Section 1:** **Training Philosophy**



## **Section 1: Training Philosophy**

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## Human Expectations for Dogs

By Sherry Woodard

What are some expectations we have of dogs?

We expect dogs to be:

- Well-socialized: comfortable with all types of people, places, and things
- Comfortable with all types of handling by all types of people
- Friendly with all other dogs and all other animals
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

It should be fine to:

- Have anyone run toward a dog
- Ride a bike past a dog
- Throw a stick near a dog
- Have children playing – yelling, wrestling, play fighting – near a dog
- Leave a dog tied outside a store while you are shopping
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

But, not all dogs can meet these expectations.

Why not?

- Shy dogs can become more comfortable in some situations, but they may not become comfortable in all types of situations.
- Some dogs are born genetically unstable.

Shy dogs need our help to live in society. You can help these dogs to:

- Have more relaxed relationships with people
- Become more comfortable with handling
- Improve their social skills and manners

Special homes can be found for most dogs who lack good social skills. You can help by:

- Screening potential homes carefully to find the right match



- Counseling the adopters on management and training of their dog, so the dog will have a home for life
- Doing follow-up to create and maintain a relationship with the adopters

Remember: You can make a difference!

# A Dog's Place in a Human Family

By Sherry Woodard

What does your dog expect from you? Most dogs need and want a leader. Dogs are social animals and like being part of a group, but every group must have a leader to prevent chaos. For your dog to feel relaxed, he needs to know that someone is in charge. If you don't take on the role of leader, your dog may feel that he has to fill the position. But, your dog may not be the best leader – he may not make the best decisions for your family!

As your dog's leader, then, you are responsible for managing the following aspects of your dog's life:

**Safety.** You should make sure that your dog is contained – that she doesn't run loose and she's on lead when necessary. You provide her with I.D. on her collar and a registered microchip. You make sure that your home environment is safe for her.

**Social skills.** You must manage his behavior at all times. If your dog has behavior issues such as aggressive tendencies toward other dogs or irritability around small children, work with him and manage his behavior so that he doesn't get into trouble. Well-socialized dogs are able to go many places; they are comfortable in most situations.

**Manners.** Training is among your leadership duties. You must teach your dog basic cues and basic manners. Well-mannered dogs are much more welcome by other humans than badly mannered dogs.

**Medical concerns.** You are responsible for managing your dog's health. He cannot tell you if he is due for vaccines or if he needs to have blood work done because he is getting older.

**Keeping order.** In your home, it is your job to keep your dog from being destructive. If she is getting into the trash when you're not home,



move the trash can or put a lid on it. If she is chewing the children's toys and shoes, teach them to pick things up and put them away, and give the dog some of her own things to chew.

As a kind leader, you will gently teach your dog the things she needs to know to be comfortable in our human world. Don't expect her to somehow magically know how to live in a human family. (She is a dog, after all!) She will love being a valued family member, but she will still be a dog and will look to you for guidance.

# Dog Training: A Glossary of Terms

## The Four Stages of Learning

**Acquisition:** The dog understands that the cue is a request for a behavior, understands what that behavior is, and is able to produce the behavior.

**Fluency:** The dog produces the cued behavior regularly and quickly. He no longer has to struggle to think through what to do when he is asked.

**Generalization:** The dog learns that the cue and the behavior remain the same in a variety of locations, for a variety of people, and in spite of a variety of imprecise cues (for example, the handler may wear different clothes, give the cue from a sitting instead of a standing position, speak the cue loudly or softly).

**Maintenance:** The behavior is practiced frequently enough to prevent a decrease in proficiency or potential extinction. (If the cue isn't practiced, the dog will forget what behavior is expected from the cue.)

**Operant conditioning/learning:** The process by which behavior changes occur related to the outcome of chosen behaviors. Behaviors that result in positive outcomes are likely to increase or remain the same. Behaviors that produce negative or unproductive outcomes are likely to decrease. There are four categories of outcomes that can affect learning: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment, and negative punishment. Positive and negative reinforcement support or strengthen the behavior. Positive and negative punishment discourage or weaken the behavior.

**Classical conditioning:** Associations formed between paired events that are not dependent upon choice. In Pavlov's famous example, the natural salivation that occurs when dogs are presented with food became associated with the

sound of a bell that was rung when food was being served. The result of this pairing was that the sound of the bell produced salivation even when no food was present.

## Reinforcement

**Reinforcement:** In training, reinforcement can be positive or negative. Reinforcement always supports or strengthens a behavior and increases the likelihood of it occurring.

**Positive reinforcement:** In training, "positive" means "added to." If you give a dog a treat when he sits, you have added something reinforcing (the treat) to the outcome of the behavior.

**Negative reinforcement:** In training, "negative" means "removed from" or "taken away." A human example would be if you discovered that pushing a button on your phone stopped the Muzak when you were on hold. Pushing the button would be negative reinforcement because something unpleasant was removed from the situation.

**Premack Principle:** In behavioral psychology, the Premack Principle states that a desirable behavior can be used to reinforce a less desirable one. This is commonly referred to as Grandma's rule: "After you eat your vegetables, you can have ice cream."

**Unconditioned reinforcer:** Also called a primary or natural reinforcer, these are things that are valuable or desired in themselves (e.g., food, water, play, affection). These are not the same for all individuals or even the same individual at all times. Examples: A shy dog may experience an affectionate pat as punishment. After a Thanksgiving meal, we may find the thought of more food unpleasant.

## Section 1: Training Philosophy

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**Conditioned reinforcer:** A neutral stimulus that has become reinforcing by pairing it with a natural or existing reinforcer. The bell in Pavlov's experiment or a whistle in dolphin training are neutral until they become associated with the dog's food and fish, respectively.

### Punishment

Punishment, which can also be positive or negative (meaning that something is added or something is taken away), is a consequence that causes a behavior to be less likely to occur in the future. For punishment to be effective, it must be precisely timed, immediately and consistently presented, and of sufficient intensity relative to the appeal of the behavior and its normal outcome.

**Positive punishment:** The introduction of an unpleasant element as a consequence of an unwanted behavior. Examples: A dog is pulling on the leash and a leash correction (sharp jerk of the leash) is given. A dog nears the edge of the yard and an "invisible fence" causes a shock through his collar.

**Negative punishment:** The removal of a desirable element as a consequence of an unwanted behavior. An example is leaving the area when a dog is being jumpy or mouthy. The desirable element that you are removing is your attention and interaction with the dog.

**Conditioned punisher:** A neutral stimulus that takes on an unpleasant connotation. For example, if you say "time out" right before you put a dog in a time-out (a crate or spare room), the sound of the words alone can become associated in the dog's mind with the consequence and may decrease the behavior.

**Remote punisher:** An unpleasant consequence that can be employed without your presence. Automatic bark collars, flappers on a counter top, and bitter-tasting substances applied to discourage chewing are examples of remote punishers.

### Other Useful Definitions

**Capturing:** Rewarding a behavior that occurs spontaneously. Most training involves behaviors that occur naturally, and we reinforce them to suit our own purposes. Dogs already sit, lie down, wag their tails and raise their paws before we begin to work with them.

**Chaining:** Teaching multiple simple behaviors in sequence to produce a more complicated behavior. One simple example is teaching a dog to ask for a walk by teaching him to hold his leash, then to carry the leash, and then to carry it to the door and sit. A more complicated example would be teaching a dog to run an agility course.

**Counter-conditioning:** A method of changing a response to a "trigger" or stimuli, usually by introducing a positive element into the situation. For example, a dog who lunges at a stranger across a fence can be conditioned to like the approach of a stranger by setting up training sessions in which the stranger tosses a high-value treat to the dog each time he approaches.

**Counter-cueing:** Cueing a well-established behavior that is incompatible with an unwanted behavior. An example is cueing a "sit" when a dog is jumping up. If the "sit" produces a more positive outcome, it can replace the jumping behavior.

**Cue:** Anything that serves as a signal to request a specific behavior. A cue is a way of asking for a response from a dog. (The terms "command" and "order" are misleading because they do not compel a behavior to occur. The dog still has the power to choose his response.)

**Desensitization:** The process of presenting a weak version of a problem stimulus at a level and duration that does not produce a negative reaction and gradually increasing the intensity as the dog's comfort level grows. An example is playing recordings of the sounds of thunderstorms at low volume, to begin desensitizing a dog to thunderstorms.

**Displacement behaviors:** Behaviors that are performed out of their normal context. An anxious dog may yawn, stretch or drink water, even though she is neither tired nor thirsty.

**Ethology:** The study of animal behavior, which includes human behavior. It is often used when referring to natural behaviors in an evolutionary context.

**Extinction:** In operant conditioning, extinction refers to the elimination of a behavior that fails to produce desirable results. Ignoring a behavior such as pawing or jumping can lead to extinction of that behavior. Unlike the biological extinction of a species, however, an “extinct” behavior can reappear if it once again produces successful results.

**Flooding:** In contrast to desensitization, flooding is a behavioral technique that involves exposure to an aversive stimulus at full intensity until habituation occurs (i.e., the animal no longer reacts to the stimulus). There is debate about the use of this technique, but it is not operant conditioning. The subject must endure the aversive stimulus until it is removed; there is no behavior the dog can choose that will make it go away.

**Head halter:** Inspired by the lessons learned with larger, more powerful animals like horses. A head halter can reduce the amount of physical effort required to manage a strong dog. Head halters are sometimes mistaken for muzzles, but they aren’t muzzles. Head halters do not restrict a dog’s ability to bite.

**Jackpot:** Giving a large reward – lots of treats, tons of praise – when there is a breakthrough in training.

**Lure training:** Using a high-value “lure,” such as treats or toys, to produce a behavior that can then be rewarded.

**Physical prompts:** An outmoded technique that involves using physical force to produce a behavior. Examples are pushing a dog down into a sit or reeling in a dog to make him come.

**Shaping:** Similar to chaining, except the “simple behaviors” are small steps toward what is often considered a single behavior. For example, getting a dog to respond to a “down” cue may be shaped by luring and rewarding “head lowering,” then “elbow bending,” then “body on the floor.”

# How to Find a Good Trainer

By Sherry Woodard

A dog trainer can help you discourage unwanted behavior in your pet and encourage desirable behavior. They teach the basics: house-training, crate training, and correcting behaviors like digging, barking, chewing, jumping up on people and pulling on lead. Trainers generally don't have medical knowledge or enough expertise to deal with serious behavior problems, but they are the least expensive option among the behavior professionals.

The trainers at Best Friends have found that dog training built on a positive relationship is the kindest – and also the most effective – method of training. Positive training methods have lasting beneficial effects. When you have a positive relationship with the dog, you have the animal's trust, and he/she wants to spend time with you



and work with you. Training based on punishment or dominance negates any sort of positive relationship you might develop with the animal.

Anyone can claim to be a trainer, so ask questions like the following if you're thinking about hiring someone:

### **How were you trained?**

Look for someone who has had life experience, someone who has been around animals, not just taken classes. Ask about formal training, but keep in mind that many good trainers are self-taught through experience. Also, the best trainers keep themselves well-informed about new training methods and theories.

### **What training methods do you use?**

You want to find a trainer who uses humane training methods – someone who will give you and your pet a positive experience. You don't want a trainer who uses punishment or compulsion training (in which the dog is compelled to perform a behavior and physically corrected for noncompliance).

### **How much experience do you have?**

The trainer should have at least six months of experience. Anything less and the person may not know how to work with problem behavior in a calm, confident manner. Animals can sense a lack of confidence, and the training will be less successful as a result.

### **What types of animals have you trained?**

Some trainers work with a variety of animals and some only work with one type. It's most desirable for the trainer to have had experience working with a wide variety of animals, since you learn something different from training each type of animal.

### **Are you certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers?**

This is the only national certification for pet dog trainers.

### **Can I contact a few of your customers?**

Often the most helpful information comes from those who have used the services of the trainer you are interested in.

While you're talking to the trainer, take note of whether the trainer is patient and clear when explaining the training process and answering your questions. After all, your dog isn't the only one who will be in training. You will be, too, and you'll need to have good communication with the trainer.

We recommend that you visit during one of the trainer's sessions to see the style, techniques and tools being used. If the trainer does anything that you are uncomfortable with, keep looking.

You can find a certified dog trainer through [www. ccpdt.org](http://www ccpdt.org), the website for the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers. You can also find a trainer through the Association of Professional Dog Trainers ([www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com)); choose a trainer who is a professional member of APDT. If there are no trainers in your area, contact one of the trainers listed and ask him/her to recommend someone. If you are told by a trainer that he or she is not qualified for your case, ask for a referral to a behavior counselor or animal behaviorist.

# Recommended Dog Training and Care Resources

By Sherry Woodard

## Books

*Before You Get Your Puppy* by Dr. Ian Dunbar  
Dunbar, a veterinarian and animal behaviorist, covers what he calls the three “developmental deadlines” to meet before you get your puppy: completing your education about puppies, knowing how to assess your prospective puppy’s progress and instituting errorless house-training.

*After You Get Your Puppy* by Dr. Ian Dunbar  
In this book, Dunbar covers the three “developmental deadlines” to meet after you get your puppy: socializing your puppy to people, teaching bite inhibition and continuing socialization in the world at large.

*Pet Behavior Protocols* by Suzanne Hetts  
This book is for veterinary professionals, shelter staff, breeders, trainers, and animal control agents who want to help people find sensible solutions to their pet behavior problems.

*Don't Shoot the Dog! The New Art of Teaching and Training* by Karen Pryor

Pryor clearly explains the underlying principles of behavioral training and uses numerous examples to show how to achieve your training objectives through positive reinforcement. She also has a website on clicker training: [www.clickertraining.com](http://www.clickertraining.com).

*Dogs Are from Neptune* by Jean Donaldson

Donaldson draws from real cases to provide clear, step-by-step advice for troubleshooting dog behavior problems – ranging from obedience stumpers like pulling on lead to serious issues like biting and fighting.

*The Culture Clash* by Jean Donaldson

Donaldson presents a revolutionary new way of understanding the relationship between humans and dogs.

*Outwitting Dogs: Revolutionary Techniques for Dog Training That Work* by Terry Ryan

Ryan draws on her 25 years of hands-on experience to help people understand dogs, train dogs, and solve dog behavior problems using kinder, gentler methods.

*Dog-Friendly Dog Training* by Andrea Arden

This is a great book for beginners.

*Excel-Erated Learning: Explaining How Dogs Learn and How Best to Teach Them* by Pamela Reid

Using a relaxed writing style and numerous examples, psychologist Pamela Reid introduces cutting-edge scientific techniques to use in dog training.

## Periodicals

*The Whole Dog Journal*. This is a monthly guide to natural dog care and training. You can subscribe (and get a free 14-day trial subscription) at [www.whole-dog-journal.com](http://www.whole-dog-journal.com) or call 800-829-9165.

*Your Dog*. This is a monthly 24-page newsletter for dog enthusiasts published by Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine. You can subscribe by calling 800-829-5116. For more information, go to [www.tuftsyourdog.com](http://www.tuftsyourdog.com).

### Videos and DVDs

#### *Unleash Your Dog's Potential: Getting in TTouch with Your Canine Friend*

The TTouch method helps you achieve a relationship with your pet based on appreciation and friendship, rather than on dominance and submission. There are DVDs and books for dog people available at [www.ttouch.com](http://www.ttouch.com) (click on "Online Store").

#### *Puppy Love: Raise Your Dog the Clicker Way with Karen Pryor*

This video shows you how to use a clicker to train your dog. (See also *Don't Shoot the Dog!* by Karen Pryor in the book section.) Available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

#### *Clicker Fun Series with Deborah Jones*

This series of three videos shows you how to use clicker-based methods to change your dog's behavior. Each video comes with a clicker. Available on the Canine Training Systems website, under "Products": [www.caninetrainingsystems.com](http://www.caninetrainingsystems.com).

### Products

#### Controlling Your Dog

The Halti head halter is an effective alternative to the choke collar, enforcing the simple principle that a dog's body will follow where his head leads him. Available at pet supply stores.

The Gentle Leader Headcollar is another product that helps you to control your dog humanely. Available at pet supply stores.

A martingale or limited-slip collar offers greater control without the danger of choking. Available at pet supply stores or at [www.premier.com](http://www.premier.com) or [www.sitstay.com](http://www.sitstay.com).

A front-clip harness is another option. Check out these harnesses: the Halti from the Company of Animals ([www.companyofanimals.us](http://www.companyofanimals.us)), Premier's Easy Walk harness ([www.premier.com](http://www.premier.com)) and the SENSE-ation harness from Softouch Concepts ([www.softouchconcepts.com](http://www.softouchconcepts.com)).

DirectStop citronella spray is a humane way to prevent or stop dog fights. Available at pet supply stores.

Pet Corrector training spray (produced by the Company of Animals) emits a blast of compressed air, which interrupts undesirable behaviors. Reward the dog immediately after the behavior has stopped. Available at pet supply stores.



#### Soothing Your Dog

Dog-appeasing pheromone (DAP) is a spray/plug-in that provides an effective way to control and manage unwanted canine behavior associated with fear and/or stress. Available at Doctors Foster and Smith: [www.drsfostersmith.com](http://www.drsfostersmith.com).

Bach Flower Remedies ([www.bachflower.com](http://www.bachflower.com)) and BlackWing Farms flower essences ([www.blackwingfarms.com](http://www.blackwingfarms.com)) can soothe your dog during times of stress.



*Kongs come in various sizes and designs. Great fun for both you and your dog!*

## Section 1: Training Philosophy

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### Toys

All of the following are available at pet supply stores.

Kongs are durable rubber enrichment toys that can provide you and your dog with hours of fun. For more information, visit their website at [www.kongcompany.com](http://www.kongcompany.com).

Nylabone makes a variety of chew toys and interactive toys for dogs. Check out their products at [www.nylabone.com](http://www.nylabone.com).

Food-dispensing toys are great for mental stimulation. You hide treats in the toy and the dog has to figure out how to get the treats out. Try a Treat Stik ([www.treatstik.com](http://www.treatstik.com)), Busy Dog Ball or Buster Cube (available at pet supply stores such as [www.wag.com](http://www.wag.com) or [www.petSMART.com](http://www.petSMART.com)).

### Cleaning Products

Nature's Miracle and Simple Solution are two products containing natural enzymes that tackle tough stains and odors and remove them permanently. Available at pet supply stores.

OdoBan is an odor eliminator that cleans, disinfects, sanitizes and deodorizes. For more information, go to [www.odoban.com](http://www.odoban.com).



*Treat-dispensing toys can engage the dog's mind as well as his body. Be sure to use a size appropriate to the dog.*

## **Section 2: Getting Started**



## How to Choose a Dog, Part 1

By Sherry Woodard

If you're thinking about getting a dog and you've never had one, please do some research first. Learn about what's involved in having a dog – basic dog care, medical needs, training and behavior. In particular, ask yourself the following:

- Do I have the time to give a dog the love and attention she deserves?
- Can I offer her daily exercise and interaction with people and other dog friends?
- Can I afford the costs of having a dog (food, routine vet care, daycare, boarding, grooming, dog walker, possible additional medical costs, such as medication)?
- Are my emotional expectations realistic? (A dog is not a furry little person.)
- Will she be living in the house as a valued family member? (Dogs should not live outside.)

### Should I get a puppy?

One of the first questions that people ask themselves is whether to get a puppy. Lots of people don't realize that puppies need almost constant attention. Do you have the time or the inclination to raise a puppy? If you're gone for long periods of time, are you willing to pay for day-care or a sitter? Do you have the time to properly train your puppy? All puppies and dogs need to learn how to be well-behaved family members.

To grow into emotionally balanced and safe dogs, puppies must also be socialized. They must be trained to act appropriately in different settings – around children and other animals, on busy city streets, in parks, around people who are strangers.

Other considerations when getting a puppy: Think about how big he'll be and how active

he'll be when he grows up. If you're a couch potato, you may want an older or more sedentary dog.

### Should I get a purebred dog?

The next question people usually ask is whether they should get a purebred dog. If you decide that you want a purebred, please investigate the different breeds carefully before choosing a dog. Dog breeds vary quite a bit in their temperament, the amount of exercise they require, and the amount of care (e.g., grooming) they might need.

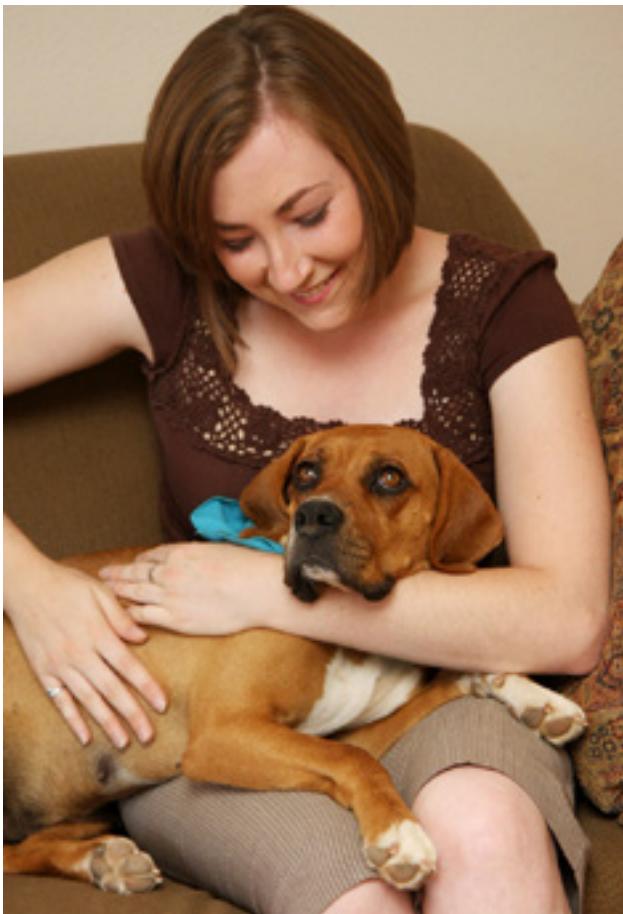
Almost every dog breed was created for a specific purpose – hunting, herding, and guarding are examples. Knowing the characteristics of the breed can help you decide whether a dog of a particular breed will fit into your family's lifestyle. But, keep in mind that some purebred dogs don't have the breed characteristics that are expected in their breed.

Your plain old mutt is actually a much more adaptable dog for the way that most people live today, since most people don't need a dog who excels at hunting or herding! Also, mutts are often healthier animals, because of "hybrid vigor"; many purebred dogs have breed-specific health problems. For example, Labradors often suffer from hip and elbow dysplasia, and Chihuahuas can have heart problems and hypoglycemia.

### Where should I get my dog?

There are many wonderful dogs (including purebreds) at your local shelter. Statistics show that 25 percent of dogs in shelters are purebred animals. When you choose one of these dogs, you often get the added bonus of knowing that you have saved a life.

Please don't buy an animal from a pet store or



from a website. If you do, you will most likely be supporting puppy mills (“factory farms” for dogs). Most pet stores buy from puppy mills and “backyard breeders” – people who are just in it for the money and often don’t care about the health or well-being of the dogs. Many puppy mill breeders sell their dogs over the Internet.

If you decide to purchase a purebred dog from a breeder, do some research and choose a reputable breeder. All dog breeders are not alike – the top-quality breeders work hard to produce genetically healthy, emotionally sound puppies. They have an interest in ensuring that each puppy has a happy life. Good breeders have a return policy if the puppy turns out to be unhealthy; they offer support if you have questions or concerns. Some spay or neuter all their puppies (or co-own them until they are neutered) to ensure that careless breeding will not occur.

Some questions to ask to determine if you are dealing with a responsible breeder:

- Can you visit their facility and see all their dogs? (If so, is the facility clean and airy? Do the dogs seem healthy and happy? Are the dogs very social with you even though you’re a stranger?)
- Are they knowledgeable about the breed they are selling?
- Have they tested their breeding dogs for genetic problems?
- Do they show their dogs? (The best breeders are serious about their breed and want to show quality dogs who exhibit the best of the breed’s standards, and who are healthy and well cared for.)
- Do they belong to breed clubs? (Belonging to breed clubs also shows commitment to the quality of the dogs.)
- Do they breed more than one breed of dog? (If so, breeding for profit may be their main motivation.)

Getting a dog from a breed rescue group is another option to consider if you have decided upon a particular breed. These groups rescue purebred dogs that have been given up, for one reason or another, and find new homes for them. Some breeders also do rescue for their breed. To find a rescue group for the breed you’re interested in, do a search on the Internet (for example, search for “dachshund rescue”).

If you feel that you are ready for a lifetime commitment to a dog, do your homework and ask lots of questions. If you ever have problems with your dog’s health, training or behavior, get professional help from a veterinarian, trainer or behaviorist.

## How to Choose a Dog, Part 2

By Sherry Woodard

So, you've decided that you're going to get a dog. How do you choose a dog who will be a good fit for you and your lifestyle? First, consider what you will want this dog to be doing in daily life. Will the dog be:

- Playing with children?
- Living with cats?
- Living with or playing with other dogs?
- Going to dog parks or doggie daycare?
- Learning to compete in dog sports such as agility or flyball?
- Going running or hiking with you?

Not every dog can or will be appropriate for all of these things. Choose a dog whom you will be ready to learn and grow with.

Before going to meet a potential canine candidate, read "Dog Body Language" (in this section) to help you recognize the dog's comfort level. When you go to meet the dog, take some small, soft chicken treats (not dry biscuits) and a couple of toys. See if the dog takes the treats gently and wants to play with a toy. If the dog doesn't want the treats, he/she may be ill or fearful. Don't be alarmed if the dog doesn't want to play with the toy. It can take a little time for a dog to warm up to the idea of playing, or the dog may not be feeling well.

To find out the dog's comfort level with handling, give a quick little exam. Touch his ears, look at his teeth, lift a paw or two, give him a hug, lift the dog. If the dog is small, you may want to see if he is comfortable being carried. Even large dogs will be lifted if you are helping the dog onto a grooming table or into a tall vehicle. Every dog will need grooming and vet care in the future, and handling by strangers often happens in any public setting.

When you're doing the exam, use caution: Many dogs are fearful about being handled by



strangers. Don't be shy in asking for help. The dog's caregiver or the adoption staff should know something about each dog's behavior. If they can't help you with introductions or with handling the dogs, ask if anyone else can help you. If not, I recommend that you go elsewhere to adopt.

If possible, take your potential new family member out to meet dogs, cats, children and other adults. See how the dog acts on leash. Watching the dog's comfort level overall in public will help you know if this dog is going to enjoy and be safe doing the things you plan to share together. One caveat, though, about the dog's behavior: It may change some once he is home and more comfortable.

Many rescued dogs come with a few challenges – behavioral or physical – that can be easily overcome. Some dogs in need of new homes have disabilities, such as blindness or deafness, or chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes or thyroid issues. Caring for a special-needs pet is often not as daunting as it seems. Dogs with disabilities often surprise their people with how resilient and adaptable they are. Special-needs pets can teach us a lot about compassion, acceptance and perseverance.

If you choose a dog who lacks social skills (and many do), please plan to help this dog become more comfortable in our human world. Many of the resources in this manual describe simple, positive ways to do this. It is important to teach and reward wanted behavior so your dog develops good manners.

In fact, socialization is a lifelong process. All dogs should be socialized throughout their lifetimes to become and stay relaxed and comfortable in different situations. Even if you are not a very social person, you should help your dog to trust some other people, since the more social the dog is, the safer the dog will be in our human world. Most bites happen when a dog is fearful.

Having a great relationship with your dog is based on building a foundation of trust. If you read through the rest of this manual, you can help to set a dog up for great success as a member of your family for life.

Remember, you will be responsible for this dog's behavior wherever he goes and with whomever he meets. Keep him happy, healthy and safe.

## Promises to My Dog

By Sherry Woodard

Bringing a dog into your family causes great joy all around. But, making a commitment to a dog is much like making a commitment to a human being: Both relationships require daily care and nurturing in order to flourish. So, as you embark (no pun intended!) on this new commitment, here are a dozen promises to consider making to your dog:

1. I promise to have realistic expectations of the role my dog will play in my life. I will remember that she is a dog, not a furry little human; she cannot satisfy all my emotional needs.
2. I promise to protect my dog from dangers, such as traffic and other creatures who might want to hurt her.
3. I promise to keep her well dressed with a collar containing up-to-date I.D.
4. I promise to learn kind and gentle training methods so that she can understand what I am trying to say.
5. I promise to be consistent with my training, since dogs feel secure when daily life is predictable, with fair rules and structure.
6. I promise to match her loyalty and patience with my own.
7. I promise that my dog will be part of my family. I will make a commitment to schedule time every day to interact with her so that she will feel loved and will not develop behavior problems from a lack of stimulation and socialization.
8. I promise to seek professional help if my dog develops behavior problems that become unmanageable.
9. I promise that my dog will have opportunities to exercise and honor some of her instincts. She'll have walks and runs outside of her daily territory, so she can sniff and explore.
10. I promise to provide veterinary care for her entire life. I will keep her healthy and watch her weight.
11. I promise that if I move, marry, have a baby, or get divorced, she will continue to share my life, since she is a beloved family member.
12. I promise that if I absolutely must give her up, I will find an appropriate home for her that is as good as or better than my home.



## Preventing Problems from Day One

By Sherry Woodard

Before you bring your new dog home, there are a number of ways that you can prepare for the new addition to your family. First, get the dog an ID tag with your information on it (name, phone number, address).

Before leaving the adoption site, check that your new dog's collar is not too loose. Many dogs in new situations pull out of their collars and run. If your dog pulls out of her collar, she will be loose in a strange area with no contact information. To be extra safe, you might want to purchase a martingale collar (a no-slip collar available at pet supply stores) or a harness to use, in addition to the regular collar, until she has demonstrated that she can handle all the new and startling experiences of a new environment, such as other dogs, city noise, and traffic.

Keep your new dog on lead except in a fenced-in yard or an approved, fenced off-lead area. Always use a leash or lead near traffic, since your dog can be distracted or fearful for just a second and run into the street.

### What does my new dog need?

To be happy and healthy, your dog will need the following:

- Constant access to a bowl of fresh, clean drinking water
- A nutritionally balanced diet
- A safe place to eliminate outside (if she's not being litter-trained)
- Some daily exercise

If she hasn't had any yet, your new dog will also need some training. Investigate the dog trainers in your area and pick out one who uses humane methods. Humane trainers do not use chain or prong collars, nor do they advocate yanking on or lifting the dog by the collar. If you haven't had any experience with the role of leader (i.e.,

this is your first dog), you will also benefit from the training classes. Your dog needs you to be the leader. If you don't function as the leader, your dog will start making decisions on her own, some of which may be inappropriate or dangerous.

Your dog also needs daily, loving interaction with you and a social life. Socialize your dog by bringing him on car rides, letting him be around children and other dogs, taking him to the groomer, shopping with him at pet food stores (some of them let you bring your dog in), and walking him in public places.

Strive for structure and consistency in your dog's daily routine to give him a healthy feeling of stability as a member of the family. The relationship between your family and your new



## Section 2: Getting Started

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family member can be great if you are patient and positive.

You should also select a veterinarian with whom you are comfortable, since you'll need to bring your dog in for regular checkups. Finally, find out what the local dog laws are (such as leash laws) and what the licensing requirements are for dogs in your area.

### Do I need to dog-proof my house?

Before your new dog arrives, you should dog-proof your home in much the same way that you would child-proof your home for a toddler. Look at your home from a dog's eye level. What can he reach? If you don't want him drinking out of the toilet, tell everyone in the household to make sure they put the cover down. If anyone in the house smokes, put ashtrays out of reach, since cigarette butts, if eaten, can lead to nicotine poisoning.

Will his wagging tail inadvertently wreak havoc on your prize possessions? Dog tails have been known to sweep the contents off the top of a coffee table. If you like to keep lit candles around, make sure they are above the dog's reach. Is there anything he can trip on or become tangled in (such as electrical cords)?

### How can I prevent my new dog from chewing up my stuff?

If your new dog has her own toys, she may not be as interested in chewing up human things (though leather shoes are hard to resist). Buy durable rubber or nylon toys that satisfy the dog's urge to chew. Toys that you can stuff treats into (like Kongs and Buster Cubes) should keep her occupied for a good long while. If she starts

chewing one of your personal items, immediately get her interested in a dog toy instead.

### What should I know about making my yard safe?

Do a walkabout of your yard. Is your yard completely fenced in? Are there any spaces or gaps that your new dog or puppy can squeeze through? Is there anything that he can climb on that would allow him to escape over the fence (e.g., a wood pile, a fountain, latticework)? Some dogs know how to flip open gate latches, so latches should be clipped or locked if your dog can reach them.

What sort of plants do you have in your yard? Snail bait and some plants (such as oleander, azaleas and rhododendrons) are poisonous to dogs. Antifreeze is another hazard for dogs – it is toxic and can be fatal. Dogs are attracted to its sweet taste, so don't allow your dog to drink from standing water near where cars have been parked.

Do you have an uncovered pond or pool in your yard? Dogs have been known to drown in backyard pools when they jumped or fell in and couldn't get out. You should also make sure your trashcans have tight lids – to avoid “dumpster diving” by your dog. Besides the smelly mess that an overturned trashcan creates, some of the items in your trash (like chicken bones) may be dangerous for your dog to ingest.

Ideally, you should check your yard for safety before your new dog comes home. If you haven't done this prior to the dog's arrival, supervise the time that your pet spends outside. Even a child's toy can be trouble if it is chewed up and swallowed.

# What Dogs Need to Be Happy

By Sherry Woodard

Most dogs are loving, intelligent, and loyal. They want nothing more than to be members of a family. They give unconditional love, but they need love, attention, and kindness in return. In this fast-paced world, we all have so much to do that a dog's needs can be easily forgotten. Some dog owners may not even realize how much attention a dog needs for him or her to live a happy life. This story illustrates how this "benign neglect" can happen:

## Cowboy's Story

Cowboy is a border collie mix. When he was brought home as a puppy from a local shelter, his adoptive family thought the world of him. The boys spent hours playing in the yard with Cowboy, and every night he climbed into bed with one of the kids. In the beginning, it seemed like there wasn't enough of Cowboy to go around – he was very much a part of the family.

Slowly, however, things began to change. As Cowboy grew into an adult dog, he started losing his puppy charm. The family started feeling that he required too much attention. He had never had training, and the antics that were cute when he was a puppy were now annoying. He had never been taught the difference between appropriate and rough play, so the boys avoided playing with him. His uncontrolled exuberance in the house caused him to break things. When he scratched a visiting child, he was exiled to the backyard from that day on.

The family bought Cowboy a nice doghouse and new, bigger bowls for food and water. The boys were assigned the job of feeding Cowboy and keeping his water bowl filled. As the days passed, however, the boys stopped giving Cowboy daily meals. They just filled his big bowl every two days; his water was often dirty and warm.

One day, the family came home and Cowboy was gone. They found a hole that Cowboy had dug under the fence. His family walked the streets near their home, calling his name. They found him at the park – the boys used to play with him there when he was small. Cowboy ran to them when he saw them; they were so glad to see him that they hugged him and walked him home.



But then, after a few days, Cowboy escaped again. This time, the family decided that for Cowboy's safety, they should tie him on a chain so that he could not dig out again. As the weeks passed, Cowboy waited in vain for the boys to come out and play with him. He started barking, sometimes for hours, trying to relieve his boredom and loneliness. When the boys came out to feed and water him, Cowboy naturally became very excited. He would leap and jump at the end of his chain. The boys didn't let him off his chain very much, since he was hard to catch when it was time to put the chain back on.

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Unfortunately, this story is true for many dogs. In most communities, there are dogs living through each day alone in a backyard, some on chains. Now, all people would agree that intentional physical abuse of animals is a terrible thing. Yet, the isolation and neglect that Cowboy suffered, however unintentionally, is also a form of abuse.

Dogs are social animals – one of their most basic needs is to spend time with other creatures.

## Section 2: Getting Started

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Dogs who are left alone most of the time are being asked to go against their basic nature, and that's too much to ask of a dog.

Because there are no laws that require love and attention be given to animals, no one can demand that dogs like Cowboy be treated differently. Often, the dog's distress gets worse over time. The neighbors start complaining about the incessant barking. The family starts yelling at the dog to get him to stop. Whenever anyone does spend time with him, the dog is unruly and overexcited, so they avoid him even more.

Chaining a dog as a form of long-term containment is often damaging to his health and disposition. Out of sheer frustration, many dogs run for hours every day in the circle allowed by the chain. They run through their own waste, and flies are attracted by the smell and may begin to eat away at the dog's ear tips until they are raw and sore.

If a chained dog is released by his family for exercise, he often will refuse to come when

called, since he's so reluctant to be chained up again. The family may see this as disobedience, so the dog is put back on the chain and is let off less and less. Some chained dogs will begin to exhibit aggression, and some lose the ability to interact with other dogs.

What happened to Cowboy? Cowboy was one of the fortunate ones. He came here to Best Friends because his family thought he was too much of a nuisance. At first, he only walked and ran in circles – he had been on his chain for almost a year. He loved people but could not focus. He would stop for a toy or treat and then begin to circle again. As the months passed, however, his circles became bigger and bigger. Eventually, he was adopted into a good new home. We have kept in touch with his new family and they say, "He is the world's greatest dog!"

We hope Cowboy's story can help to change the lives of other dogs like him.

## What's in a Name?

By Sherry Woodard

Teaching name recognition is a great way to start a personal relationship with a dog. When I work with a dog, I teach her to respond enthusiastically to me by calling her by name in a happy tone of voice. A dog's name should be a good thing for her to hear. Even shelter dogs should be given names and be taught to respond to them.

What is the hidden value in a dog loving her name?

- Your dog will run – not walk – to you when she hears her name.
- You can use her name to interrupt and distract her from any behavior (e.g., barking, chewing inappropriate items) that you want to stop. Remember to keep your tone happy – you don't want the dog to associate her name with a reprimand.
- You can use her name and the positive associations she has with it to help her become more comfortable in scary situations. For example, you can say her name and consequently have her focus on you when walking by something that makes her fearful or anxious. If she is relaxed and distracted until you pass the scary situation, she will realize that it wasn't as frightening as in the past.
- If your dog knows her name and has good recall, you can call her away from a potentially dangerous situation.

To teach name recognition, pack a treat pouch with about a hundred pea-sized soft treats. Take the dog somewhere with few distractions. I tether the dog to me, a doorknob or a chair leg so she won't wander off. Have a treat in your hand ready and when she looks away from you, say her name and give her the treat. Interact with her

briefly, then wait for her to look away again and repeat. Do this over and over; to keep it fun, always use a happy tone.

Once you have practiced in locations with few distractions, start practicing in locations with more distractions. Then, add other people to the game of learning. Start with the exercise described above: Have a friend stand near the dog and instruct him/her to wait until the dog is not looking and then have your friend call the dog's name and give her a treat. Next, stand a short distance from your friend and alternate calling the dog's name and giving treats. You and your friend can start moving farther away from each other and have the dog on a long leash so she can run between you for fun and treats. This can grow into a long-distance game of recall. It's a great way for your dog to interact, exercise and learn to enjoy more people.

What should you name your dog? Most people try a variety of names before settling on one; some dogs have first, middle and last names. I knew a dog with a long Russian name. Most long names chosen are eventually shortened or replaced by nicknames. I think the important part of choosing a name is that the dog learns that it is his name.

Some people worry about changing a dog's name after adoption: Will the dog be confused? Will it be difficult to teach him a new name? I haven't found it to be a problem. Dogs generally respond just fine to name changes or nicknames if the names are properly taught and maintained as positive associations. Every socialized dog will want to come when called, looking forward to spending time with humans because humans can be best friends to dogs.

# Dog Body Language

By Sherry Woodard

Just like people, dogs communicate using “body language.” Your dog is communicating with his entire body, not just his tail or his voice. You’ll need to learn to read your particular dog’s body language if you want to know how your dog is feeling. To get a sense of what your dog is trying to tell you, spend as much time as you can observing your dog and his body posture.

Because each dog is an individual and will express fear, aggression, stress or joy slightly differently, there are no hard and fast rules for interpreting dog body language. Tail-wagging, for instance, can indicate several emotions. The important thing is to look at the entire body of the dog. With that said, here are some examples of dog body language and what they might mean.

**Play bow.** The rear end of the dog is up, while the front end is down. The play bow generally means “I want to play.”



**Tail wagging.** Contrary to popular belief, tail wagging can mean many things:

- A low-hung wagging tail could mean “I am scared or unsure.”
- A high, stiff wag can mean “I am agitated, unsure or scared, but not submissive. I might bite you or your dog.” If the dog’s body is stiff, he is staring, and his ears are up, use caution. Keep the dog out of trouble – he may be about to make a bad decision.
- A loose wag – not really high or really low – normally means “I am comfortable and friend-

ly.” But, you should keep watching the dog’s entire body: Some dogs have a large personal-space requirement. They will tell you if you get too close.

**Freeze.** A dog freezes if she is scared or guarding, or feels cornered. She may bite, so please slow down.

**Rolling over.** Rolling over generally means the dog is being submissive, but look at the whole dog. If the tail and mouth are loose, the dog is probably comfortable and asking for a belly rub. If the tail is tucked and the lips are stiff, the dog may be scared. Some dogs will solicit attention and then become fearful and bite, so observe the whole dog, looking for comfortable, loose body language.

**Ears perked up.** When a dog’s ears are forward, he is alert, interested in something.

**Tail between the legs.** If the dog’s tail is tucked between her legs and her ears are back against her head, she is afraid, uncomfortable with something.

## Signs of Stress

When a dog is stressed, he often shows displacement behavior – any of a variety of activities that seem inappropriate in the situation they are seen in. These behaviors occur most often during times of emotional conflict. For example, a dog starts self-grooming when he’s afraid and faces the decision to fight or run away; grooming is an odd response to a “flight or fight” situation. Displacement behavior can be the dog’s attempt to calm himself.

Here are some typical displacement behaviors:

- Yawning in new or emotional situations
- Panting when it’s not hot
- Scratching himself when he’s not itchy



*Far left: If the tail and mouth are loose, the dog is probably comfortable and asking for a belly rub.*

*Left: Tail tucked, body stiff, looking away: indicates fear and discomfort.*

- Lifting a front paw as someone walks toward the dog
- Licking his lips, even though the dog hasn't been eating or drinking
- Looking away as a person or another animal walks toward the dog
- Shaking off after someone handles the dog or another dog plays too roughly
- Stretching out as though doing a play bow, but not asking for play (sometimes a greeting when a dog is stressed)
- Making a puff (exhale) of breath, sometimes whining at the same time, and looking away or turning away
- Lying down and trying to make whatever is happening stop by not taking part in it

There is stress along with fear when a dog:

- Starts to drool when she normally doesn't
- Paces or circles
- Tucks his tail and moves away from something
- Starts to whine
- Sweats through her feet
- Puts his hackles up, his tail is low or high, and his body is still
- Starts to growl, and may start to move away, though not all dogs move away from things they fear (Many people punish dogs for growling, which takes away a valuable form of communication)

- Starts to curl her lips (Sometimes this is all the warning a dog will give before biting)
- Starts to show his teeth (Again, the warning before biting can be brief, so try to remember every detail of what triggered the behavior so you can work on improving or at least managing it)

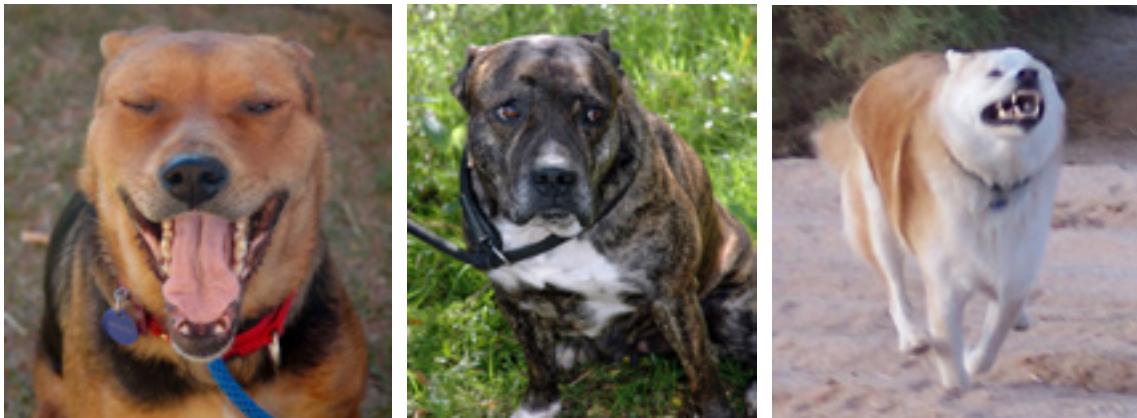
### Diffusing the Stress-Inducing Situation

If you notice that a dog appears stressed, stop whatever you are doing and try to determine what the dog is reacting to. You want to help the dog become more comfortable or manage the behavior in the future so that a bite to a person or animal doesn't happen.

Often, if we slow down whatever situation caused the fear and start exposing the dog in small amounts at a distance, we can help him to completely overcome his fear. We can also help dogs to become more comfortable in general, in order to keep them safe and to keep us safe. For more details, see "Managing a Dog with Behavior Challenges," in this section, and the resources in Section 4 of this manual.

## Section 2: Getting Started

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*Left: Yawning may be displacement behavior. Middle: Ears back and whites of eyes showing indicate that this dog is unsure or fearful. Right: Running with teeth showing could mean several things. If you don't know the dog, you will learn more shortly.*



*Above: Bunny shows fear by looking away and lowering her body to appear smaller.*

*Above left: Bunny's body language indicates that she is uncomfortable with being touched while she's eating.*

*Left: Bunny learns to practice trades with pig ears. She is more comfortable now.*

## How to Educate Your Dog

By Sherry Woodard

Dogs need guidance and consistent training from their people if they are going to live in harmony with humans. All dogs must be taught acceptable behavior, and one way to do that is to train your dog or pay a trainer to do it. Dogs are happiest when they know who's in charge and what's expected of them.

When you are looking for an obedience class or a trainer, shop around and ask questions. You will want to find a trainer who uses humane methods, someone who uses positive reinforcement rather than punishment. Ask if you can watch the trainer give a class and speak with people who are currently taking a class. If the trainer says or does anything that you are uncomfortable with, you may want to look elsewhere.

With positive reinforcement – treats, rewards like ball-playing, and praise – training can be fun for all involved. If you develop a loving, fun relationship with your dog, she will enjoy the time spent learning.

You should be integrally involved in your dog's training. The trainer should also be training you, so that you understand how to practice with your dog what she has learned. Training your dog doesn't end after the class is over; you will need to practice cues with your dog throughout her life.

Your dog should be taught helpful cues such as come, sit, wait, down, stay, leave it, and drop it. Consistent training can produce a dog who will walk nicely on lead, which makes outings a lot more enjoyable. Your dog can learn to give greetings by politely sitting (instead of jumping up) when meeting new people.

Though training is a good thing, keep in mind that dogs still need to behave like dogs. They need to play, run, dig, and chew. These are

natural behaviors that can happen in appropriate ways and places:

- Make sure your dog gets plenty of running and playing outside the house; that way, she will be less inclined to be rambunctious inside the house.
- Provide a dirt box out in the backyard for your dog to dig in. You can bury a variety of toys in the box to encourage him to dig there (instead of in your flower beds).
- Supply your dog with a variety of appropriate things to chew on – some examples are frozen carrots, Kongs stuffed with peanut butter or treats, Red Barn bullies, rawhide chips, and Nylabones.

You also need to socialize your dog – to get him accustomed to behaving acceptably in public, and comfortable with meeting new people and other dogs. If your dog is properly socialized, he will enjoy meeting other animals and will be able to safely interact with them. A socialized, emotionally healthy dog allows handling of every part of his body, not only by you, but also by the veterinarian and the groomer.

If at any point, your dog's training doesn't seem to be working or his behavior is problematic, please seek help before becoming frustrated with him. Try to remember that he needs continuing education throughout his life. Some problems are easy to fix by going back to basic training and practicing cues consistently. For more complex issues, you may want to consult your veterinarian. If the cause is not medical, your veterinarian may recommend a behaviorist, who can do an in-depth assessment and develop a plan for behavior modification and long-term management of the problem.

# Daily Activities for You and Your Dog

By Sherry Woodard

If you want a well-trained, well-mannered, well-socialized dog, interact multiple times every day with your dog, with the goal of building a foundation of trust and a healthy relationship with your dog.

All dogs benefit from learning and practicing skills daily. Keep all interaction fun; if you are stressed on a particular day and will not play nicely with your dog, skip spending time with your dog that day. Dogs are sensitive to your emotional state and will pick up on your stress.

## Things to Teach and Practice Daily

**House-training.** I add the words “Go potty” right away. I set each dog up for success by walking him or her outside about every 45 minutes on lead to allow the dog many opportunities to get it right. I supervise the dog inside the house because it’s much easier and faster to help her learn where to go potty before she starts having “accidents” in the house.

**Name recognition.** Use the dog’s name often when you’re praising and playing with her, and always with a happy tone. Dogs should have only positive associations with their names and nicknames.

**Recall.** Call the dog to you often – again, always using a happy tone. Add treats sometimes to pleasantly surprise her and keep her coming to you fast. Remember to practice recall frequently, not just when something fun is about to end. People often lose great recall because they only call the dog for negative reasons or use a negative tone. Why would any dog want to come running to you if you seem angry or if the fun almost always ends when she runs to you?

**The joy of touch.** Teach your dog to enjoy being touched on all body parts. Start with getting your dog to enjoy your touch and work toward

the goal of getting him comfortable with being touched by people he doesn’t know. It is important that dogs allow us to touch them because they may need to be handled by various people: strangers, rescuers after an emergency, the vet, the groomer. They may need to be picked up off the ground or floor for grooming or medical reasons. If you can lift the dog’s body up off the floor, practice this to help him relax and realize that nothing bad happens when he is lifted.

Can you trim your dog’s nails? Is he comfortable having his feet touched? Grooming has many benefits for dogs, so teach your dog to enjoy grooming. Make sure that anyone who grooms your dog is kind and gentle to help ensure that you have a dog who is safe for others to handle. You can help him to feel more relaxed by adding positive experiences to his grooming memories.

When I have a new dog in my home, I massage the dog every day, touching his entire body and continuing to touch him until he relaxes. Many dogs are so excited and reactive to our touch that this is a challenge. To help the dog learn to relax and enjoy touch, I do the massage in a qui-



et room without a lot of human or non-human traffic. If your dog does not allow touch, please read “Teaching Your Dog to Enjoy Touch.”

**Rest and relaxation.** Dogs don’t know how to control their own energy and the result can be destructive, nuisance or rough behaviors. There are dogs who bark incessantly, chew up everything within reach, dogs who mount, pull humans around by the limbs or hair, knock down children, and decapitate Barbie! People must teach their dogs to have an “off” switch. Many dogs are dropped off at shelters because their people became frustrated and felt they could no longer control their dogs.

Every day, you can help your dog by teaching her how to rest and relax in your home and during outings. Going on walks or riding in a vehicle should be relaxing for both human and dog. When I have a new dog in my home, I practice R&R daily by having the dog either tethered to me or crated for a while. I tether new dogs or crate them for travel; I do not allow them to jump around barking while I drive.

They also enjoy walking on lead without pulling. How? Because they are taught to walk without pulling: I simply stop walking until they ease up on pulling. Going for walks is much more enjoyable if the dog isn’t yanking you along. Also, any dog will be more welcome in public settings if she has manners. Her energy will be more focused and calm if she is not in emotional overdrive while out walking.

**Retrieve.** The retrieving game is not for every dog; those who enjoy it will let you know. I start with a toy tied on a lunge whip. Drag the toy around excitedly and the dog will probably chase it. If he does, this can be the game for a while. Then I start throwing one toy tied with a thin line a short distance and have another toy in my hand. If the dog goes to the thrown toy, I guide her back with the line and show her that I have another toy.

The two-toy method helps many dogs learn to interact instead of just taking a toy and going off to play with it. The dog also learns to trade



the toy in his mouth for the toy you have in your hand, which is more fun because you can keep that toy moving to entice him to continue to play with you. I add words for trading toys – “trade,” “drop it” or “give” are common words used.

**Tug.** I teach dogs to tug. The game of tug, with rules, is a very healthy, educational game. You start and end the game, and if the dog ever puts her teeth on your skin, the game is over. I use an emotional tone to say “Ouch!” if I feel teeth on my skin. This helps dogs learn to play within limits. Self-limiting behavior is normal for dogs: Watch well-socialized adult dogs play with puppies or senior dogs. They sense what is appropriate and play accordingly. Again, you can use two toys to help the dog learn to drop the one she is holding, signaling the end of one game and the start of another.

**Search.** Keep them thinking! I hide food, treats and favorite toys to encourage my dogs to search daily. When a dog finds these hidden treasures, I reward him with lots of praise.

**Agility.** Many dogs enjoy agility training and benefit from the experiences that come with doing something physical. In agility training, dogs learn how to really use their bodies – and all four feet. Fearful dogs learn to be more confident, overweight dogs get some great exercise, but just about any dog can benefit from learning to negotiate his way over, under, through and around objects. Agility training can be fun for your dog – and for you, too. Remember to check

## Section 2: Getting Started

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with your veterinarian before beginning any weight loss or exercise program with your dog.

### Getting the Behavior You Want

Be proactive by teaching your dog to perform the behavior you want! We can reward any behavior we like and want to see more of, including being calm and gentle. The most effective way to squelch unwanted behavior is to ignore it. Why? Because giving any attention (even negative forms of attention, such as saying “no!”) for unwanted behavior is still seen by the dog as a good thing because he’s getting attention. You can immediately ask for another wanted behavior while ignoring what the dog has offered.

**Hand-feeding.** Taking treats gently from all human hands is a valuable lesson and, of course, dogs love practicing it. Hand-feeding a dog is a great way to raise the value, in his mind, of interaction with all people. This simple human behavior builds trust in fearful or shy dogs. For all social dogs, we can hand-feed while practicing all known cues.

**Lure training and capturing.** These are primary ways to train easily and quickly. In lure training, I guide the dog with a treat or toy – the lure – into a sit, down, stand, or up (jumping or climbing up on something). You can use lure training to teach a dog to use his paws to touch an object. For example, in my house I have a bell on the door to the yard. I show new dogs that the bell ringing causes the human to open the door. I teach dogs to ring the bell to go outside, which is helpful once a new dog has been house-trained.

I use capturing to reward any behavior I like, such as sneezing. You can capture any behavior and cause the dog to repeat it by assigning a word to the behavior and rewarding the dog whenever she does the behavior. I give it a word right away and use the word every time they do the behavior. Many dogs in my life sneeze as a way to request things they want; I prefer this to barking as a way of asking for things. I do teach

“Speak” and give it that word (speak) from the beginning. However, I am careful to only reward “speaking” (barking) when it is wanted. Otherwise, “request barking” can become a problem behavior; if a dog believes that barking will get her what she wants, it can easily be overused by the dog.

**Teaching “wait.”** I teach every dog to wait. I use wait at doors before going in or out, in the car, when I’m giving a dog a bowl of food, if I drop something I do not want the dog to pick up. The cue I use is a hand signal: palm up, facing out toward the dog. I say “au auat” (a sound more than a word); my tone is firm but not harsh. The dog can be standing, sitting or lying down. If the dog tries to move forward, I physically block him with my hand, trying not to touch him but clearly communicating that he needs to pause briefly.



**Teaching “stay.”** Once a dog has learned to wait, it is easier to teach stay, which is used for longer periods of time than wait, times when you don’t want the dog to move. To start learning to stay, the dog should be in a sit or down position, since standing for long periods can be physically difficult, causing the dog to break position to get more comfortable.

I start very close to the dog and reward often for non-movement. I build up the length of time the dog stays still before I start to move away. When I start to move during the stay, I take baby steps around the dog, not away from him. Many dogs want desperately to be near us, so go slow when teaching stay. If we cause a fear reaction, it is much more difficult for the dog to learn. Just like us, dogs learn best when they are enjoying the learning experience and aren’t stressed, emotional or distracted.

**Teaching social skills with other animals.** Most of us want to take our dogs out in public. Going places, of course, means that our dogs meet a variety of people and other animals, and

they get to practice their social skills. Please protect your dog by not letting her have negative experiences. One way to help dogs learn to have more socially acceptable behavior is to have people meet you with their dog-friendly dogs to allow the dogs to have positive experiences. If your dog is not social, please read “Managing a Dog with Behavior Challenges.” Some dogs require more management than others, but with our help they can go out safely and enjoy a bigger life than the house and yard offers.

**Providing medical and dental care.** All dogs need regular medical and dental care. They need a family doctor just like us – one we trust to oversee their general health. Routine visits allow your doctor to see changes through examinations, blood tests and x-rays. Different parts of the country have different parasites, for example; your veterinarian will be able to keep your dog safe in your area. Please report any change in behavior to your family veterinarian. Often, changes in behavior are related to changes in the dog’s physical health.

# Crate Training: The Benefits for You and Your Dog

By Sherry Woodard

## Why should I use a crate?

Dogs are hard-wired by their genetic history to be den animals. A den is a small, safe, well-defined space. It is a place in which dogs feel instinctively safe. It is also a place that they instinctively avoid soiling. The combination of these two native traits are what make crate training, done in the right way, a kind and effective component in house-training your new puppy or dog.

A crate can also be a place for your dog to rest or have “down time.” If you have just acquired a dog, a crate can limit access to the entire house until your new dog knows the house rules. A crate can help with house-training by setting up a routine. For example, you can feed the puppy in the crate and, afterwards, carry him or walk him on a lead straight out to an elimination site where you can use a word or phrase to remind the dog what the trip outside is for.

There are other benefits of crate training. At some point in your dog’s life, it may be necessary to use a crate when you are traveling with your pet or when your dog is recuperating from an injury. Such potentially traumatic situations will be much less stressful if your dog is already familiar with and comfortable in a crate.

## Where do I purchase a crate and how do I know which one to buy?

Most pet-supply stores carry dog crates; pet catalogs sell them as well. Considerations when buying your crate: Make sure the crate is big enough so that the dog can stand up, turn around and lay flat on his side in comfort, but small enough that there isn’t enough room for the dog to sleep and eat at one end and eliminate at the other. If you are training a growing puppy, you can buy a larger crate with a divider for adjusting the crate as he grows.



## How do I introduce the crate?

You can prevent problems with crate training by setting your dog up for success. Your dog should only associate good things with the crate, so start by putting treats and/or toys in the crate and encouraging him to go in. Some dogs may need to warm up to the crate slowly. If your dog is afraid to go in, place a treat in the crate as far as he is willing to go. After he takes the treat, place another treat a little further back in the crate. Keep going until he is eating treats at the very back, then feed him his next meal in the crate with the door open, so that he can walk in and out at will. Crate training a fearful dog can take days, so be patient and encouraging. If a crate is properly introduced and used, your dog will happily enter and settle down.

## Should the crate be used at night?

Sure, you can use the crate at night. Put the dog in with a treat and a cue like “kennel” or “kennel up” delivered in a cheery tone of voice. The crate should be situated close to you so that you can hear the dog whine or whimper if he needs

to eliminate during the night. (Dogs will usually make some kind of noise rather than make a mess where they sleep.)

If you are training a puppy, be prepared for one or two trips outside at night to eliminate. If the puppy goes outside and doesn't produce, do not allow any extra time for play or long drinks of water when you come back inside. Instead, encourage the pup to return to the crate. He may whine a bit, but if you have given him ample opportunity to eliminate, try to ignore the protest and the puppy should settle down quickly.

### **How much time in the crate is okay?**

No dog, young or old, should be living in a crate full-time. Dogs are social animals, so for a dog to have a good quality of life, social isolation should be kept to a minimum. All dogs need daily exercise and some interaction with others. Even four hours in a crate without a break during the day is a long time for many adult dogs, so we don't recommend that you crate your dog if you're gone all day. Except for nighttime, crating a dog for long periods of time is not acceptable.

Puppies, especially, should not be left in a crate for long periods of time (more than two hours). It is important that puppies not be neglected and forced to break their instinctive aversion to soiling their sleeping area. Unfortunately, this is what happens to many pet-store puppies and it can lead to serious house-training difficulties. Also, since they are still developing, puppies have even more need for social interaction than adult dogs. If they aren't socialized to the world while they are young, they can develop fears and aberrant behaviors of many kinds.

Most adult dogs can stay in a crate for the entire night without a trip outside. However, young puppies and some old dogs cannot physically hold their bladders and bowels through the night.

### **When should a crate not be used?**

A crate should not be used as a form of punishment. As mentioned earlier, your dog should have only warm, fuzzy feelings about her crate. Even though a dog can come to see her crate as a safe place, it is not the solution for a dog with separation anxiety, since she could injure herself trying to get out.

## House-Training Your Dog

By Sherry Woodard

When you get a new puppy or dog, you'll need to show him or her what is acceptable in your home. Different people may have different rules: Some want to train their dogs to eliminate in litter trays or on paper, while others want all "bathroom" business to occur outdoors. For your dog to know what you want, you have to establish a predictable routine.

### How do I house-train my dog?

First, during those times when you cannot supervise him, it is wise to restrict the movement of a new animal during the house-training phase. You can house-train your dog by using a crate. Or, for limited periods of time, you can confine the dog to a small, easy-to-clean room, like the bathroom, equipped with a child gate. Under supervision, of course, he can have the run of the house.

Your dog should consider this space a safe place, so add the dog's bed, water and things to chew on to create a comfortable den. The dog should be fed in this space as well.

Set up a daily schedule where you walk your dog on lead (or carry her) to the desired elimination spot after meals, after naps, and every couple of hours in between. To reinforce that the trip has a purpose, you should not play with the dog during trips to eliminate. Use a word or phrase (like "do your business") to remind the dog of her duty. As soon as she has produced, praise her lavishly and give her a treat.

I recommend the use of sponge pads to help clearly communicate where you want your dog or puppy to eliminate. I place the sponge – containing urine from cleaning up their urine outside – in the spot where I want the dog to go daily. If you hang the sponge, many dogs will see it as a place to mark (i.e., lift a leg and

urinate). I carry feces to the desired location as well. During this training process, keep the urine on the sponge and feces fresh so the dog gets the idea, but don't allow the area to become too "messy" because some dogs will avoid the spot if they feel they may step in feces and/or urine.

### What do I need to know about house-training a puppy?

Puppies cannot hold their bladders and bowels for more than a few hours. Even the most intelligent and well-intentioned puppy has to wait until its muscles develop before it can exercise appropriate bladder and bowel control, just like a human infant. If you must be away for more than two or three hours, and you are training the puppy to eliminate outdoors, you will need someone to help by walking the puppy for you.

If you are training a puppy to eliminate on paper or in a litter box, the space the puppy is contained in will need to be large enough for a sleeping area away from an elimination spot. (Dogs don't like to eliminate where they sleep.) Keep in mind that a puppy, if trained to



Sponge pad

eliminate on paper or in a litter box, may have a lifelong surface preference – that is, even as an adult, he may eliminate on paper if it is lying around the house. Having a puppy eliminate in the house will prolong the process of teaching him to eliminate outdoors.

If you do decide to change a paper-trained dog to an outside-eliminating dog, move the paper closer day by day to the door. If your dog continues to eliminate on the spot where the paper was originally placed, slow down on how far you are moving the paper each day. Keep some paper (or a pad) just inside the door and after the dog uses it, move it outside. Leave the paper or pad close to the door outside at first, and gradually move it until the dog is eliminating outside in the designated spot.

The next step is to make the size of the paper or pad gradually smaller until it no longer exists. While employing this step-by-step process, take your dog often to the outside place where you want her to eliminate. Put a used paper or pad there every day to help make quick progress. If you don't have a doggie door, remember that your dog will rely on you to provide access to the outdoors multiple times per day.

## **How long does house-training take?**

After a week or so of no accidents, you can begin allowing the dog freedom in the house after each successful trip outdoors. Supervision will still be needed, however, as well as praise and an occasional reward. Supervise the dog anytime he is given free run of the house, watching for signs such as circling and sniffing corners.

## **How do I deal with "accidents"?**

If an "accident" happens and you catch the dog in the act, stop him and escort him to the correct spot. Praise him if he stops eliminating when you ask him to. If you find the results of an accident after it's happened, do not punish the dog, since punishment could make him afraid to eliminate in your presence. It's more effective

to clean up the mess and put it in the designated elimination spot, so the smell will help your dog recognize that this is where to go. If you're training a puppy, keep in mind that a puppy's muscles are still developing, so he may not be able to control himself when he eliminates in an inappropriate spot. Puppies mature at different rates, and some will take longer to develop bladder and bowel control.

There's a difference between a dog who marks his territory and a dog who isn't house-trained. Early neutering will reduce a dog's inclination



to mark surfaces with his scent. For dogs who mark inside, I recommend the use of a belly band for males (*see photo above*) or panties for females. For small male dogs, tube socks work well. I have found that most dogs do not continue marking inside when the result is that they wet themselves with their urine. Remember to take the dog outside often and, of course, remove the garment for appropriate elimination. Have the dog wear his/her "clothes" until you have a dry week.

Finally, if a dog who is already house-trained starts having accidents, check with your veterinarian – there may be a medical cause.

## Finding a Good Veterinarian

By Faith Maloney

It's important to find a veterinarian with whom you are comfortable and whose expertise you respect. Don't hesitate to talk to your vet about concerns or questions that you have about your pet's care. If you are ever unhappy with your vet care, get a second opinion. Here are some guidelines for selecting a veterinarian:

**Concern for the animal.** A friend of mine in Chicago told me that she chose her vet because he always greeted her dog first when she went to his office. Simple though that is, it meant a lot to her that he did that. But don't be taken in simply by a good bedside manner if your instincts tell you that something is not right. Will your vet's advice always center on the well-being of the animal?

**Willingness to listen, to answer questions, and to communicate easily.** As someone who is new to taking care of a pet, you want to feel able to ask your vet anything and have her give you just the right amount of information to help you do your job.

**Kindness and patience.** If you are a new mom or dad to an animal, you are going to need to know the basics. Your vet should be able to walk you through these without making you feel like an idiot.

**Professional skills.** Does your vet keep up with the latest developments in the veterinary field that will help your animal?

**Accessibility.** Will she be available, especially in a crisis?

**Generous nature.** Are you just a money machine for your vet's office? You want to feel as if they are taking into account your costs, especially if you are in rescue work and are bringing in a lot of animals.

**Honesty and openness.** Will she let you stay while a procedure is being done, or allow you to visit your pet in the back if he has to stay at the clinic?

**Love of animals.** Surprisingly, many people choose to become vets not because they love animals, but simply as a way of making a living. Does your vet have animals at home? Is he warm and comfortable around your animals when you bring them to the clinic?

**Referral from a friend.** This can be a good way to find a good vet, but remember, just because the referral came from a friend does not mean that friend has done his research. Again, if something does not feel right, find a vet on your own.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but hopefully it will help you to pinpoint the right person for you and for your animal. Our animals give us so much that the least we can do for them is to find the best doctor around.

*Faith Maloney, one of the founders of Best Friends, is the former director of animal care at the Sanctuary. These days, she devotes her time to helping people from all over the world who are starting sanctuaries themselves.*

## Staying Safe Around Dogs

Well-socialized and happy dogs can add so much to our lives and to our families. Dogs give us companionship, provide fun and physical exercise, and help us to teach our children about caring for others and about responsibility. Most dogs are the happy family pets that we enjoy being with.

There are situations, however, that can frighten or anger even the nicest of dogs, and their natural defense is to bite. There are also dogs who, due to the circumstances of their lives, may not behave like the typical family dog.

You, your family and your community can take simple steps to reduce the number of dog bites that occur. Here are some ways to keep the families and family pets in your community safe.

### Dog Safety for You

- Learn how to interpret dog body language (read “Dog Body Language,” in this section).
- Always ask permission before petting or touching someone else’s dog.
- Most of the time, we encounter friendly, wiggly dogs in public. But you should be cautious if a dog goes still, becomes stiff, and/or is not wagging in a loose and friendly way.
- Don’t corner a dog. All dogs have a sense of personal space, so watch their body language as you get closer (or the dog gets closer to you).
- When approached by a strange dog, stand quietly, hands at your sides and avoid eye contact. A dog’s natural instinct is to chase, so if you run, a dog may chase. Keep your eyes on the dog and don’t turn your back.
- Do not approach dogs in cars or on chains or ropes. Dogs can be protective about their territory and may be a bit more mouthy than usual. When dogs are tied up, they know they can’t run away so their only defense will be to fight.
- To avoid startling dogs, don’t approach or touch them while they’re sleeping, fixated on something, or with puppies.
- Never get between dogs who are fighting.
- Leave dogs alone when they are eating, whether the dog is eating from a bowl or chewing a treat (generally a high-value item for dogs). Like people, dogs don’t like it when people get between them and their food.
- Don’t reach over or through fences or barriers to pet or touch a dog.
- Never tease, chase or harass a dog.
- Don’t enter a property containing a dog if you’re not accompanied by the dog’s person. Dogs can be protective of their family and territory and think it’s their job to protect them.



### The Dog-Safe Family

- Children should always be accompanied around dogs, even the family dog.
- Supervising children around dogs not only protects the children from accidents but also protects the dog from harm by children who don't always know that touching animals in a certain way can hurt them.
- Don't leave babies unattended around dogs. Dogs may not realize that babies aren't as strong as adults or even know what a baby is.
- If you're expecting a baby, start early to get your dog used to the changes a baby will make in your dog's and your lives.
- Don't attempt to remove anything (toys, food or other objects) from your dog's mouth.
- Teach your children about dog safety early and promote dog-safe practices.
- If you are considering bringing a new dog into your family, write down what your family is like and then consult your local shelter staff or do research on the Internet to learn about what kind of dog would be best for you.

### Good Dog Habits

- Socialize your dog and make him a part of your family activities early on. Dogs also need to be socialized beyond your family and home; they need to be comfortable in the world.
- Teach your dog appropriate behavior.
- Read up on positive training techniques and get your whole family involved.
- Take your dog to obedience training.
- Make a game for the whole family of spotting and reinforcing positive behavior in your dog.
- Don't allow children to play rough with your dog. (That doesn't mean you shouldn't play games like tug with your dog. Teaching your dog to play games using healthy rules will help the dog to learn self-control.)
- Avoid hitting your dog or using other forms of punishment. Punishment can make the dog aggressive.

- Provide lots of exercise for your dog through positive play like fetch and/or frequent walks. Walks or hikes provide great exercise for you and your canine companion. Regular activity not only gets rid of excess energy but reduces frustration levels in your pet. Interactive play increases the bond between you and your pet.
- Spay or neuter your dog. Over a six-year period, 92 percent of all fatal attacks by dogs were by intact (unneutered) dogs. Spay/neuter also reduces the likelihood of costly medical conditions and reduces the number of unwanted pets who end up in shelters.
- Make sure that your dog has lots of human interaction every day. A happy dog is a good dog. As social animals, dogs thrive on social interaction and love to be a part of the family.
- Avoid tethering (chaining or tying to a rope) your dog. Tethering removes a dog's ability to flee and makes him/her feel vulnerable. If he/she can't escape a perceived threat, the only option is to attack. According to a study by the CDC, tethered dogs are 2.8 times more likely to bite.
- Never let your dog roam free. Letting your dog roam free greatly increases his/her chance of injury or death from cars or attacks by people or other animals. A roaming dog may become confused or frightened, leading to aggressive behavior.
- Use caution when introducing your dog to new people, new dogs or new situations. Your goal is to provide the dog with a succession of positive experiences so his/her social skills will continually improve.
- If your dog's behavior changes (e.g., he becomes irritable), take him to your vet for a checkup. Behavior changes can sometimes be a symptom of a medical problem.

# Preventing Dog Bites on Children

By Sherry Woodard

Children can have the most amazing relationships with dogs if both are taught how to properly interact and respect each other. Proper training and management of both children and dogs can prevent tragedies from ever happening.

When a child is bitten, both the child and the dog pay a high price. Even if the child is not physically damaged, he or she is still emotionally affected. The dog may end up homeless (and a poor adoption prospect) in a shelter or be destroyed as a future safety precaution.

## **What does my child need to know to prevent dog bites?**

- Teach your children that they should never tease a dog. Teach them to be especially gentle and calm around dogs that they don't know.
- Tell your children not to run, jump or scream around an unfamiliar dog, since you are unaware of what actions may cause fear or predatory aggression in that animal.
- Children are often the same size as dogs and may stare into a dog's eyes without meaning to or without understanding that the dog may feel threatened.
- Tell your children not to wake up a sleeping dog. The dog may be startled and react aggressively.
- Tell your children not to climb on any dog, even the family dog. It may be perfectly safe with your own dog, but children may try this with another dog and get bitten.
- Tell your children not to pet strange dogs without asking permission.

## **What does my dog need to know?**

- Socialize your puppy or dog to children. Watch your puppy or dog as she plays with children; stop the play if the child or the dog gets too rough.
- First, handle all of his body parts. If your dog objects to any part of his body being handled, go to an area of his body that he likes to have touched. As you talk soothingly to him, begin touching him there and then move over to the area that he does not like. Praise him if he does not react, and do this over and over until the dog is fine with touch everywhere. Use treats in addition to praise if necessary.

## **What do I need to know?**

- Have your whole family go to training classes with the dog. Everyone in your family should have some understanding of acceptable dog behavior
- Don't stare into a dog's eyes, since this can be threatening to him.
- Watch your dog carefully around other people's children, since he or she does not know those children, and you can't be certain of how your dog will react.
- Get your dog checked out by a vet if your dog's behavior suddenly changes (i.e., she becomes more irritable). Sudden negative behavior change may mean your dog is in pain and needs medical attention.

Finally, if you have a dog that is not okay around children, it is your responsibility to protect your dog from her tendencies. Never allow her to be in a situation where she might bite a child. If you teach both children and dogs how to properly interact, they will enjoy a wonderful, safe, fun relationship.

# Pets and a New Baby

By Sherry Woodard

## What can I do to prepare my pets for the new baby?

Getting ready for a new family member is a busy, exciting time. In addition to all that you need to do to prepare for the new baby, there are a few things you can do to make the transition easier for your pets. Most pets accept a new baby with no problem. But, if you want to be extra careful, you can begin to prepare them ahead of time for the big event.

First, make sure your pets are up-to-date with veterinary checkups and vaccinations, since you may not have time for such things in the first few months after the baby's birth. Give your pets plenty of special attention. Play with your cats and dogs on a regular basis; exercise helps them to relax, and it relieves stress for the whole family.

If you have a dog, consider taking him or her in for a training refresher course. Find a trainer who uses positive reinforcement. A trainer who has experience with babies and children is ideal, since he or she can design a training, exercise, and safety plan for your family. It will save you a lot of time and frustration when you are busy with the baby if your dog knows key cues, such as "drop it," "leave it," "wait," and "down/stay." Make sure you practice the cues daily with your dog.

Both cats and dogs can benefit from familiarity with babies before you bring your new one home. Invite friends over who have babies and small children. Watch your animals closely to see how they react. If your pets seem unduly frightened, you might want to seek help from a behaviorist; your veterinarian may be able to refer you to someone. Never, ever leave a baby or child unsupervised with the animals.

Start using baby products such as lotion, bath



soap, powder, and laundry soap. If you and the rest of the family smell like baby products, the baby will have a familiar smell when he or she arrives.

Set up the baby's room as soon as possible, so your animals will accept the new arrangement long before the baby comes home. A screen door can be very helpful to keep cats and dogs away from the sleeping baby. You can practice going into the room and reading aloud or talking in tones you will use with the baby. The animals will learn to wait (probably at the door) for your return.

## How should I introduce the baby on the big day?

Mom should greet the animals while another person holds the baby, since a normal greeting from mom will help the animals feel that everything is okay. Mom can then hold out one of the baby's blankets for the animals to smell. Your dog should be held on a loose lead.

When you enter the house, stay standing until the animals have had a chance to smell and listen to the baby. Ask your dog to sit or lay down

before the person holding the baby sits down. Watch the animals closely. If your dog is curious, allow him to view the baby from about six feet away. Hold the lead loose, but short enough so that the dog can't reach the baby. Reward the dog with praise if he shows no fear or aggression. If your dog has been fine with other babies, you can allow him to go closer, but use caution.

## **What do I need to be aware of as we start life with a baby?**

Your animals may need reassurance that life hasn't changed all that much, so make sure you continue to give them special attention. Watch for signs of stress. Your dog may bark more; chase her tail, circle or pace; eliminate inappropriately; sulk or look depressed; start licking herself or chewing on herself incessantly; lose her appetite; or have diarrhea.

Your cat may hide or seem shy; become grumpy, smacking people and other animals; eliminate inappropriately; sulk or look depressed; groom excessively, to the point of making bald spots or sores; lose his appetite; or have diarrhea. Any change in behavior can be a warning that your animal may need help adjusting. Consult with your veterinarian if you notice changes in your pet's behavior.

When you start using a high chair to feed the baby, your cat or dog may try to share meals with the baby. Teach the animals that when the baby is eating, they don't get any tidbits. They will soon stop begging.

Never give your dog a doll that looks like a real baby to play with. Young dogs that play rough

need to practice being calm and gentle. You can help by giving your puppy a massage; sit on the floor with her and slowly rub her all over until she is so relaxed that she falls asleep. Try to restrict vigorous play to places the baby will not be crawling around in later (outside or in the garage).

If you need to leave your baby with a sitter, tell the sitter to keep the animals and the baby apart in your absence. Don't take unnecessary risks with any of your family members – human or otherwise.

There will be new challenges when the baby starts to crawl and then walk. You will soon have a very short person walking around the house with toys and food that may be very tempting (and accessible) to a dog. Once you have a toddler, it's even more important to practice your dog's cues every day. Your pets can sometimes be a big help – if your child isn't ready to calm down for a nap, try reading out loud to your dog or cat to create the appropriate restful atmosphere.

Even if your animals are extremely tolerant, children need to be taught to be gentle with animals, since eventually they will be around someone else's pets who may not be so tolerant. Teaching kindness and respect for animals will bring greater benefit than simply avoiding getting bitten or scratched – it builds a better world for all of us.

Remember, never leave a baby or child unattended around animals.

## **Small Dogs, Big Dogs: What's Safe?**

**By Sherry Woodard**

The dogs of today have been bred by people into hundreds of different breeds that come in a wide range of sizes, from toy dogs that weigh a few pounds to large dogs who top the scales at over 100 pounds. This disparity in dog sizes is very different from what nature would have created – that is, extra small sizes are not found in the wild.

The result is that people with pet dogs need to be aware of some safety issues. You may not see your friendly 50-pound dog as large or dangerous, but a mid-size dog with an easygoing temperament can cause injury to a tiny toy dog even when trying to play. Some dogs have a strong chase drive (which is normal behavior) that instinctively causes them to want to chase and catch moving objects. Even if they're not bent on killing, they can hurt or even kill much smaller dogs if they catch them. Other dogs have a strong prey drive that motivates them to shake, kill and eat small animals. Like the chase drive, this instinct is a natural behavior inherited from the need to hunt to survive.

On the other end of the size spectrum, some toy dogs try to play with much larger animals, or they may be aggressive toward them. We find it amusing when a small dog stands up ferociously to a big dog, but it's actually an inappropriate greeting that could endanger the small dog. Little dogs often lack proper social skills with other animals and people because of our human tendency to act as their protectors. Our instinct is to protect small dogs, so we hold them in our arms above the other dogs, and pick them up all the time, so they never learn proper greetings.



Of course, we do need to protect them. Whenever dogs are off lead, we should supervise them closely. For safety, small dogs can be kept on a loose lead and be picked up only when necessary. If you see a bigger dog (more than 50 percent larger than another dog) who is staring, stalking or charging, use your voice to slow or stop the dog. Some dogs are fine with all dogs of a similar size, but they will react negatively if a small dog passes by. Know your own dog's tendencies. Some triggers for dogs with strong chase or prey drive are:

- Small dog showing fear and running away
- Small dog running off lead, even if he appears confident or is playing
- Small dog yelping or barking

No matter what size dogs we live with, let's try to be aware that size matters, so all dogs can be kept safe and trouble-free.

## Introducing Dogs to Each Other

By Sherry Woodard

If you have a dog and a new one will be entering or visiting your home, there are things you can do to ensure that the meeting comes off without a hitch. A new dog can mean you are bringing home a foster dog or a new puppy; someone who has a dog is moving into your house; or someone is visiting with a dog.

If you know that both dogs are very social with other dogs, the meeting should be easy. But, you may not know this, since some dogs don't get out and mix with other dogs that much. If your dog (or the new dog) has not been spayed/neutered, the meeting may be more difficult.

If you are uncertain how one (or both) of the dogs will react, be cautious. First, the dogs will need to meet on neutral ground. Choose a place where neither dog is likely to feel territorial. Even your dog's favorite park is not a good spot, unless it is a dog park (dogs are often used to meeting other dogs there). If you are adopting a dog from a shelter, ask the staff if they can help to introduce the dogs. If your dog is accustomed to meeting dogs at a pet supply store like PetSmart or Petco, you can ask their trainer to

help with the introduction. The dogs could casually meet while you are on a shopping trip.

When the meeting occurs, have each dog on lead, each with a calm, relaxed adult handler. Keep the leads loose, since tension on the leash might communicate to the dog that you are fearful or anxious about their meeting. Walk the dogs side by side with a safe distance between the dogs. Then, cross paths (still maintaining that distance) and allow the dogs to smell where the other has walked.

Don't rush things ... some dogs need to "date" a bit. Next, let the dogs meet. As the dogs approach each other, watch their body language closely, paying attention to the entire body. The dogs may need to do a little posturing or make a little noise, but if you don't know how to tell the difference between dogs getting to know each other and dogs who don't like each other, have someone there who does.

Do not allow nose-to-nose greetings. This type of greeting is very stressful for many dogs, particularly those who are fearful or feel threatened



*Above: Improper dog greeting.*

*Left: Proper dog greeting.*

## Section 2: Getting Started

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by eye contact. For these dogs, nose-to-nose greetings may cause them to make a bad decision and bite. When dogs first look into each other's eyes, the appropriate behavior is to give a glance and then look away. A hard stare into another dog's eyes is a challenge – not a friendly way to greet. If the dogs practice inappropriate behavior like stiffening, staring or threats, try to get the dogs to focus back on walking.

If they stiffen their bodies and stare into each other's eyes with their hair up and their teeth bared, they probably aren't going to become fast friends. If they lunge at each other and try to fight, separate them and don't try further introductions without help from someone with experience in dog training and behavior. Some dogs cannot safely interact with other animals and therefore should be the only pet in the home. Most, however, can be taught to ignore other animals while out in public.

If the dogs try to play by pawing or play-bowing with their legs stretched out in front of them, they may want to be best buddies. Allow them to sniff each other, and give praise for a nice greeting. If you want, you can take them for a walk together, stopping occasionally to allow them to sniff and investigate each other.

If neither of the dogs is food aggressive, you can practice cues that they know and give treats as rewards. Giving treats can also serve to distract the dogs from focusing too much on each other.

If the dogs seem fine with each other, drive them home and settle in, but make sure you've put away your dog's toys, bones and food bowls first, since these items may be sources of conflict. If you're going to offer "high-value" items like Kongs or chews, it may be best to separate the dogs. Once the dogs are good friends, they may be more willing to chomp side by side on high-value items.

To introduce a puppy to a dog, use the same procedure as above. But, if the puppy is under four months old, both the dog and the puppy may need frequent breaks from each other. Some adult dogs will quickly lose patience with puppy energy.

In the beginning of all new doggie relationships, don't leave the dogs unsupervised. If you are not confident or comfortable at any point, please seek help from someone who is knowledgeable about dog behavior.

## Introducing a Cat and a Dog

By Sherry Woodard

Some dogs do fine living with cats; others simply cannot live safely with felines. Even if the dog has cat experience and the cat has lived with a dog before, proceed cautiously during the first introduction. It's best to have two people present, one to intervene with each animal if necessary. If you have more than one dog, introduce each dog separately to the cat.

The dog should be held on a loose lead. One person should watch the dog's body language and the other should watch the cat's. If the cat is not acting aggressively (raising his back, hissing) toward the dog, he can be allowed to move around freely. A cat is rarely a threat to a dog, but there are some cats that will meet dogs aggressively. If the dog is not acting aggressively toward the cat, then you can ask the dog to sit, or lay down and stay, while the cat moves around freely, sniffing the dog if he wishes. The dog should be praised and rewarded if she ignores the cat.

If the dog has a strong prey instinct, she will become very focused; she'll stiffen and stare, and may start barking or whining. If you see these signs, do not allow the dog near the cat. Especially, do not allow the dog to chase the cat. If the dog lunges and tries to chase the cat, you should try a different strategy for getting them to share space.

Instead, put the cat in a bedroom with a tall baby gate across the door. Give the kitty all needed supplies – litter box, food and water. Allow the dog to view the cat briefly through the gate, and then get the dog to focus on something else, like playing or practicing cues. Praise and reward the dog for being able to focus elsewhere. Continue to give the dog short viewings of the cat throughout the day.

The hope here is that the dog will eventually lose interest in the kitty. In some cases, the dog

will lose interest in the cat within a couple of hours, but some need days, and others simply will not be able to share a space safely with a cat. If you don't feel you can trust your dog around your cat, you should keep them apart. Many dogs can injure or kill a cat very quickly, and dogs can also be injured by cats (eye injuries are not uncommon).

Now, about kittens and puppies: If you are introducing a kitten to more than one dog, again, introduce only one dog at a time. Small kittens may not have any fear of dogs, so you must watch the dog carefully. If your dog is young and high energy, he could hurt or kill the kitten simply by trying to play. Because kittens are small and want to run and play, dogs with a strong prey drive may be very excited by a kitten's movements.

In fact, kittens and dogs should not be left alone at all. Even if your dog is okay with your adult cats, she may become too rough with a kitten and hurt him. So, for safety's sake, keep small kittens and dogs apart any time you are not watching them.

Introducing puppies and adult cats can sometimes be easy, since a well-socialized adult cat will quickly stand up for himself and "tell" a puppy to respect his personal cat space. However, if your rambunctious puppy is chasing your shy cat, the cat may need your help to control the puppy. Until the puppy is old enough to have more self-control and has had some training, baby gates can be used to keep the animals safely and comfortably apart.

Animals with good past experience often adjust well and quickly. But, if introductions do not go well, seek professional help from a behaviorist. Don't ever use punishment – it will not help and it could make matters much worse.

# Preventing Your Dog from Chasing Your Cat

By Ann Allums

Chasing is a natural instinct for a dog, but it is not appropriate behavior in your home when directed toward your cat. The following guidelines can help you deal with this behavior through management (preventing the problem) and training (motivating the dog to change his behavior).

Management means arranging the environment to prevent the behavior. Ideally, this happens right from the start, so your dog never has the opportunity to act inappropriately, and your cat doesn't have to endure it! Prevention of the inappropriate behavior is very important, since cat-chasing is a self-reinforcing behavior (i.e., the more the dog chases, the more he wants to repeat it). So, if you're introducing a new dog or cat to your household, please read the resource called "Introducing a Cat and a Dog."

If at any time during the introduction process, the dog barks, fixates on the cat or tries to chase the cat, give the dog a time-out. You'll also want to use the time-out process if you have a dog who has already made a habit of chasing cats. A time-out involves removing your dog from the situation so he cannot continue practicing inappropriate behavior.

So, decide on a time-out room (a bathroom, for example) in advance. The instant your dog starts to behave inappropriately toward your cat (chasing the cat or whining), calmly tell your dog "time-out," then go to him and lead him by the collar or leash to the time-out room. You should act and speak calmly to avoid arousing the dog even more. After a minute or two, release your dog from the time-out in an equally low-key manner. If the dog comes back from a time-out and repeats the inappropriate behavior toward the cat, he should immediately go back to time-out.

To increase the chances of success, reward your dog for desired behavior. Reinforcing appropri-



ate behavior teaches your dog what you want him to do (i.e., behave appropriately around your cat). Prepare a ready supply of great-tasting training treats — small bits of whatever food your dog finds most enticing. As soon as your dog looks away from the cat, praise him profusely and give him a treat. Repeat every time your dog ignores the cat. Your dog will learn that whenever he sees your cat, rewards are forthcoming from you if he looks away from the cat. You are training your dog to perform a certain behavior upon seeing the cue (the cat). Just make sure the treats you are giving are more desirable to your dog than the fun of chasing the cat!

Once you've established what you want your dog to do (ignore the cat) and you've built a re-

ward history for that behavior, you may choose to allow the dog more freedom around the cat. At some point, you may need to help your cat change her association with your dog by feeding her tasty kitty treats while she's in the dog's presence. (During this exercise, make sure the dog can't chase the cat.) Also, modify the environment so that your cat has a safety zone, a place that is inaccessible to your dog. Set up baby gates to create safe rooms, provide lots of high perches for your cat, and always supervise your dog when the cat is around.

If the chasing persists, the motivation for your dog could be boredom or he could need more exercise. So, give your dog appropriate outlets. For instance, make sure he gets plenty of physical exercise, like running off-leash, playing with another dog friend, playing fetch with you, or swimming. A tired dog is a good dog, and tired dogs do much less chasing. Also, provide a variety of appropriate chew toys. Some ideas for ap-

pealing chews are stuffed Kongs, pressed raw-hide and frozen broth. For mental stimulation, teach your dog basic cues or tricks. A reward-based training program will teach your dog to listen to you, provide him with alternative behaviors to perform, and exercise his brain.

In summary, prevent the problem from occurring; be consistent in training and reward appropriate behavior; be persistent with instituting the time-out as a consequence for inappropriate behavior; and make sure your dog's social, physical and mental needs are being met. Finally, never leave your dog alone with the cat unsupervised, since behavior can never be guaranteed.

*Ann Allums, a certified professional dog trainer (CPDT), was a dog trainer at Best Friends from August 2004 to September 2010.*

## Managing a Dog with Behavior Challenges

By Sherry Woodard

I have met many dogs with behavior challenges whose people want to keep them and help them, but they just don't know how. This resource can help people learn how to manage dogs with behavior challenges like aggression.

"Managing" means doing what is required to keep your dog from getting into trouble, while offering him great quality of life. It involves getting to know your dog, helping him to become as social as possible, supervising your dog when necessary – with the ultimate goal of keeping him safe for life.

You probably know that it's not OK to allow your dog to injure a person or another animal. But, it's also unacceptable to let your dog practice inappropriate or threatening behavior (such as lunging or nipping), even if that behavior hasn't led to injury. Don't wait for your dog to bite someone before getting help.

If you allow your dog to continue threatening behavior, you are putting yourself, the dog and others in danger. Without help, the dog can make bad decisions that may result in physical damage to a person or another animal, and could ultimately cost the dog her life. Don't take that chance – learn how to manage your dog so everyone stays safe.

There are various tools and techniques that can help dogs who are currently exhibiting dangerous behavior. I recommend reading the resources in Section 7 and working with a kind, gentle trainer, a veterinarian, and your family and friends to help your dog become less fearful and more comfortable in the world.

Fear and a lack of positive experiences are the main reasons for aggression in dogs. (For more information, see "Dogs and Aggression," Section 4.) You should be aware, though, that aggression can be genetic: Not every dog is born genetically stable. Your vet can help you de-

termine if there's a genetic component to your dog's aggressiveness.

### Get to Know Your Dog

Just like people, dogs communicate using "body language," so your dog is communicating with his entire body, not just his tail or his voice. To know how your dog is feeling, you'll need to learn to read your particular dog's body language. For more specifics, see "Dog Body Language," in this section.

Many people chastise a dog for growling, thinking that the dog is being "bad." But growling is actually a good way for your dog to communicate. Growling is his way of saying he is feeling



threatened by something or someone. If you punish your dog for growling, you will have less warning before a possible bite.

## Socialize Your Dog

Many dogs with behavior challenges can learn to feel better about other animals, including people. If your dog is aggressive and fearful because she hasn't had a lot of positive experiences, there is a good chance that you can have a more comfortable, less aggressive dog if you work with her gently and consistently.

Before starting any training with your dog, please bring the dog to your vet for a medical exam. You'll want to rule out medical causes for the dog's aggressive behavior.

Start the training by teaching basic cues using positive-reinforcement training methods. Be a kind, gentle, patient leader. Don't expect your dog to know what you want; you'll need to teach him to focus and learn from you. So, work with the dog in your home, away from distractions. Teaching him in your home is going to help him know what you are asking for when you need him to focus on you in all other situations.

In every interaction with your dog, think in terms of building a positive relationship: He must be able to trust you. Give plenty of rewards, but have the dog earn them. Ask the dog to give you a sit or a "down" before you give a treat. He should learn to wait for everything he

wants. Remember, too, that even though training is a serious thing, learning should be fun for your dog!

If it's warranted, train your dog using a muzzle. Again, focus on the positive: Teach your dog to look forward to wearing her muzzle. For more details on the use of muzzles for training, read "Muzzles: A Tool to Keep Everyone Safe" (Section 7). This resource will help you to work safely with your dog to change how she feels about new people and other animals.

If at any point during training you feel that your dog may injure you, stop! Think about what you were doing. Keep in mind that progress takes time; if you were pushing too far or too fast, slow down. Back up a step or two – to a place where the dog was having fun. Check your tone and emotion. Did you become frustrated or angry? Could the dog have felt threatened? Most genetically stable dogs will respond to kind, gentle training by making steady progress. If you do reach a plateau and your dog stops making progress, make an appointment with your veterinarian for another medical checkup. Any kind of pain, infection or injury may have a negative effect on a dog's behavior.

Finally, learning and using socialization skills is a lifelong process for the dog. Keep practicing and rewarding her for the rest of her life. Your goal is a relaxed dog who is comfortable in the world and can enjoy a wide variety of experiences – doing more while staying safe.

## **Section 2: Getting Started**

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# **Section 3: Health and Care**



# Routine Veterinary Care for Your Dog

By Sherry Woodard

Puppies should be seen by a veterinarian at approximately three weeks of age for a physical and a fecal test for intestinal parasites. While you're there, you can talk about what vaccines will be needed in the future, how to prevent disease, when to have spay/neuter surgery done, and how to handle the diet change from mom to meals.

At six to eight weeks, puppies start getting vaccinations. The vaccines can be given every three to four weeks, depending on when the vaccines are started and the perceived risk to the animal. If heartworm preventive medication is needed in your area, you should start that, too.

To keep your puppy safe from possible diseases, carry the puppy in your arms when you go in to see the veterinarian. Spay/neuter can be done as early as eight weeks; the puppy must weigh at least two pounds.

At 12 weeks, your puppy should get a parasite test. A rabies vaccine should be given between 12-16 weeks of age, depending on the state in which you live and local laws. Continue to keep your puppy up off the floor during visits to the veterinarian. If spay/neuter has not happened yet, it can be scheduled around this time. At 16 weeks, the veterinarian will administer the third and final set of shots. Some dogs (mostly black and tan dogs like Rottweilers and Dobermans) require an additional vaccine at 20 weeks of age.

After the four-month visit, your dog should be seen annually by your vet for a physical examination, vaccines, parasite test, dental check, and any needed bloodwork or other tests that your veterinarian recommends. Older dogs may need to be seen more often.

Besides taking your dog in for annual checkups, you should also take him or her to see the veterinarian if:



- He is a puppy and is not gaining weight
- She is lethargic, or she is losing or gaining weight
- She seems to be having some discomfort
- You notice a change in his behavior
- You notice a change in her general health – for example, her eyes have lost their brightness or her coat has lost its luster

Remember, regular veterinary care is an essential component of your pet's good health!

## The Costs of Caring for a Dog

In the excitement that comes with the decision to get a dog, people sometimes forget to consider whether they can afford one. Part of being a responsible dog person is making sure you have the money to keep your pet happy and healthy.

Your first expense will be the adoption fee, which can range from \$50 to \$300, depending on the facility you're adopting from and where you live. Adopting from a shelter tends to be cheaper than adopting from a breed rescue group. Besides being the right thing to do, adoption is much cheaper than buying a dog from a breeder or pet store, which can cost \$300 to \$1,500, or more.

If the dog isn't fixed, you'll probably spend \$45 to \$135 for neuter surgery or \$50 to \$175 for spay surgery at a low-cost clinic. Animal hospitals and veterinary clinics can charge \$200 to \$300.

Then, you'll need supplies: a dog collar and leash, toys, a dog bed, maybe a doghouse or crate, food and water bowls, dog food and treats, grooming brushes. If you live in an area where heartworm, fleas and/or ticks are a problem, you'll want to add in the cost of heartworm prevention or flea/tick control: \$150 to \$200 or more per year. Your dog will need an annual checkup and vaccinations, which can cost \$175 to \$200 for a puppy and \$50 to \$100 for an adult dog. For more details on what people are paying for things like spay/neuter surgery, teeth cleaning, grooming and vaccinations, go to CostHelper.com:

[costhelper.com/cost/pets/pets-pet-care.html](http://costhelper.com/cost/pets/pets-pet-care.html)

Depending on your lifestyle and the type of dog you get, you may also need to factor in other costs, such as paying for doggie daycare, grooming, training, dog walking, boarding or pet-sitting. All of the costs mentioned above vary according to what part of the country you

live in and whether you live in a big city, a town or a rural area, so you might want to do some preliminary research yourself.

According to PetPlace.com, here are average, routine costs for caring for a dog:

### **Small to medium-sized dogs:**

- Estimated life span: 14 years
- First year: \$740 to \$1,325
- Estimated annual costs thereafter: \$500 to \$875

Total cost over a dog's lifetime is about \$7,240 to \$12,700.

### **Large to giant-sized dogs:**

- Estimated life span: 8 years
- First year: \$1,020 to \$1,825
- Estimated annual costs thereafter: \$690 to \$875

Total estimated lifetime cost: \$5,850 to \$7,950.

### **Puppies: The First Year**

- Veterinary care and laboratory tests: \$100 to \$200
- Physical examinations and immunizations: \$80 to \$200
- Internal/external parasite treatment and control: \$100 to \$150
- Spay/neuter: \$90 to \$200 (The cost often depends on the dog's size and age.)
- Food: \$150 to \$250
- Miscellaneous (collars, leads, crate, toys, bed, training): \$250 to \$285

Total: \$770 to \$1,285

## Section 3: Health and Care

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### Dogs: Annual Costs

- Veterinary care, examinations and laboratory costs: \$150 to \$255
- Immunizations: \$60 to \$75
- Internal/external parasite preventatives: \$120 to \$190
- Food: \$150 to \$300
- Miscellaneous: \$100 to \$125

Total: \$580 to \$945

These are routine costs – not including the cost of emergency trips to the vet or necessary surgeries or treatments. Surgeries can cost several thousand dollars or more, while a simple ear infection may only cost a couple hundred dollars in vet fees and medications.

### Helpful Resources

*Consumer Reports:* Veterinary Care Without the Bite

[www.consumerreports.org/Pets](http://www.consumerreports.org/Pets)

About.com: The Cost of Dog Ownership

[dogs.about.com/od/becomingadogowner/a/costofdogs.htm](http://dogs.about.com/od/becomingadogowner/a/costofdogs.htm)

ASPCA: Saving Money on Vet Care

[www.aspca.org/pet-care/saving-money-vet-care](http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/saving-money-vet-care)

## Signs of Health and Sickness in Your Dog

By Sherry Woodard



Your dog may not be able to communicate with you in words, but he can give you signs to indicate whether he is healthy or sick.

Here are some signs of a healthy dog:

- Skin is smooth and supple, and free of scabs, growths and rashes.
- Coat is glossy, without dandruff or any areas of baldness, and with no signs of parasites.
- Eyes are bright, not watering, and free of discharge.

- Ears on the inside should be light pink (though dark-skinned dogs may have black pigment), clean or with just a trace of wax, not swollen, and free of discharge.
- Nose should be moist – not necessarily wet, but not dry or cracked.
- Temperature should be 100 to 102.5 degrees (101.5 is the average).
- Gums are normally pink, but they can have black or gray pigment.
- Stools should be firm and free of parasites.

One of your responsibilities as a dog owner is to bring her to a veterinarian if you think she may be ill. Here are some signs that your dog could be sick:

- A significant change in behavior (such as increased irritability)
- Perceived pain or lethargy
- Visible pain (such as limping or chewing on a joint)
- Persistent vomiting
- Persistent diarrhea
- Persistent coughing
- Lack of appetite
- Excessive drinking
- Excessive urination

If any of these symptoms last more than 24 hours, you should bring your dog to your veterinarian. You should also bring her in for routine checkups and dental care.

# Spay or Neuter Your Dog

By Karen Sueda

Spaying or neutering is one of the greatest gifts you can provide your pet and your family. These routine medical procedures not only help control pet overpopulation, but they may also prevent medical and behavioral problems from developing, allowing your dog to lead a longer, healthier and happier life.

## What's spaying? What's neutering?

Spaying is the surgical removal of a female dog's ovaries and uterus, while neutering is the removal of a male dog's testicles. While both operations are conducted routinely with few complications, only licensed veterinarians are allowed to perform them.

Prior to surgery, your veterinarian may carry out a complete physical examination of your dog or draw a sample of his blood for analysis. To minimize pain and discomfort, both spaying and neutering are conducted while your dog is under general anesthesia. Following surgery, your veterinarian will instruct you on how to care for your dog while he is recovering. Most dogs are back to normal within a few days. The surgery site usually heals within two weeks and any skin stitches are removed at a follow-up appointment with your vet.

## Why should I spay or neuter?

Spaying or neutering your dog prevents unwanted births and reduces the influence of sex hormones on your pet's behavior. Millions of unwanted animals end up in shelters or on the streets each year. Only a lucky few are adopted; the rest are either euthanized or die from trauma, exposure, starvation or disease. By spaying or neutering your dog, you do your part to prevent this tragedy.

Behavior problems can also be prevented or minimized by spaying or neutering your dog.

Sexual behavior in both male and female dogs is reduced following surgery. Neutering male dogs reduces the urge to roam, urine marking, and mounting, and may reduce some forms of aggression. In female dogs, the inconvenient "heat" cycle, with its messy, bloody discharge, is eliminated. Spaying or neutering eliminates or greatly reduces the development of mammary tumors in females and reproductive organ tumors in both sexes.

## Will my dog's personality change?

Other than the previously mentioned positive behavior changes, spaying or neutering your dog is unlikely to change his or her basic personality. A dog's playfulness, and general levels of activity and excitement, do not typically change. Your dog will continue to interact with your family in the same manner as he/she did before surgery. Both neutered males and spayed females have a tendency to gain weight, but weight gain can be prevented by proper diet and sufficient exercise.

## When should I spay/neuter my dog?

Dogs as young as eight weeks of age can be spayed or neutered safely. Studies have recommended that male dogs be neutered before six to eight months of age. For female dogs, the surgery should ideally be performed before their first heat cycle. If you have questions, talk to your veterinarian.

Early-age spaying and neutering may prevent problem behaviors before they occur. If it hasn't already been done, spaying or neutering should be considered for any pet with a behavior problem, regardless of age. For certain behaviors, surgery may reduce or eliminate the problem, even in older dogs. Consult with your veterinarian or veterinary behaviorist for further information.

# Your Dog's Diet

By Sherry Woodard

## What should I feed my dog?

There are many good-quality dog foods for sale; read the labels and talk with your veterinarian if you need help deciding what to feed your dog. Many people only feed their dog dry food, since it's more convenient to serve, has less odor, is less likely to spoil in the bowl, and can reduce the buildup of tartar on the dog's teeth.

There are also many nutritionally complete wet dog foods for sale. Many people use wet food as a treat, as a way to hide daily medications, or as a way to increase water intake (sometimes this is medically indicated). Any wet food remaining uneaten after 20 minutes should be thrown away. If you are committed to vegetarianism, dogs can do fine on a vegetarian diet, either homemade or commercial. Remember to have fresh, cool water available for your dog at all times.

## What else do I need to know about feeding my dog?

To know whether your dog's appetite is normal, supervise your dog while she's eating. If you have more than one dog, supervising their meal-times will ensure that the dogs do not eat each other's portions or the wrong food.

You can use mealtime to reinforce your role as the leader. By doling out food at mealtimes, you are seen as the hunter, an important and powerful figure. Asking the dogs to sit before their bowls are given to them helps to reinforce the idea that living in a human home has behavior requirements.

If a dog eats too much or too fast, or exercises too soon after a meal, he can get bloating or GDV (gastric dilatation and volvulus). Deep-chested breeds are at higher risk, but if any dog shows discomfort after eating or has a visibly



*If your dog eats too fast, try putting a smaller bowl (turned upside down) or a large smooth stone in the food bowl.*

bloated abdomen, seek medical attention right away. GDV is very painful and will be fatal if left untreated.

## Should I change my dog's diet over the course of his or her life?

You should change your dog's diet according to age and special needs requirements. Most puppies are eating dry puppy food by six weeks of age; they need three or four small fresh meals offered throughout the day. At six months, puppies can go down to two meals per day. If your puppy is going to grow to be a large dog, he may benefit from an attempt to slow his growth through diet change. Ask your veterinarian

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when you should transition from puppy to adult food.

Know what a good weight is for your dog and watch his weight as he gets older. If your dog does not have a visible waistline, have your veterinarian take a look at him. There may be a medical cause for his weight gain, or you may need to give him more exercise and switch to a “light” dog food.

Here are some special circumstances that may mean a change in your dog’s diet:

- Sometimes, skin problems, ear infections and digestive problems are signs of food allergies. Discuss with your veterinarian whether a diet change is indicated.
- Some medical conditions, such kidney disease or diabetes, require special diets.
- Most older dogs need to be fed “senior” dog food. Extra-large breeds and some mixes age faster than other breeds. Ask your veterinarian when your dog should begin eating a senior diet.

If you have any questions or concerns, discuss your dog’s diet with your veterinarian during regular checkups. If you plan to change your dog’s diet, do it gradually. Start by mixing 25 percent of the new food with 75 percent of the old food. Slowly increase the amount of new food over the course of three days until you are feeding her all new food. Some dogs try to pick out just the old familiar food to eat, but don’t

worry – one small or missed meal will not hurt a healthy dog. While you’re making the change, don’t offer your dog other foods, treats or table scraps, or you may be promoting finicky eating behavior.

### **What should I avoid feeding my dog?**

You should avoid the following:

- Alcoholic beverages (they can cause coma and even death)
- Cat food (it’s generally too high in protein and fats)
- Caffeine (it can be toxic, and adversely affect the heart and nervous system)
- Chocolate (in large amounts, chocolate can also be toxic)
- Fat trimmings (they can cause pancreatitis)
- Raisins and grapes (they can damage the kidneys)
- Nicotine (it affects the digestive and nervous systems, and can result in rapid heartbeat, collapse, coma and death)
- Table scraps (they are not nutritionally balanced)

Excess salt, sugar and fats can cause obesity, dental problems and finicky eating in your dog. For a happy dog, feed him a healthy diet and get plenty of exercise together.

## Obesity in Your Pet

By Virginia Clemans

Is your pooch pudgy? Is your feline fat? When you try to feel ribs, do you feel folds of fat instead? As a veterinarian, I see obese pets every day, day after day! Obesity is as much a problem in pets as it is in humans, and it can cause many of the same health problems.

There are many reasons why our pets become overweight, but the most common cause is overeating – that is, the pet consumes more calories than he uses. Other contributing factors to obesity in pets are heredity, breed, body type, and certain medical conditions. Spaying and neutering are often blamed for causing pets to become overweight. This perception seems to be derived from the fact that altered pets do tend to be more calm and relaxed, and to be more content to stay close to home (which are good things). But, a calmer animal doesn't cause weight gain – overeating does.

Do you know the ideal weight for your pet? Your veterinarian can help you with this. The ideal weight of dogs varies tremendously – from Chihuahuas, who weigh about 6 pounds, to St. Bernards, who can weigh as much as 165 pounds. And what about mixed breeds? There will be many variations, based on such factors as bone structure, body type, sex, etc. Most cats should weigh between 8 and 10 pounds.

If you're not sure if your pet is overweight, try feeling her rib cage. Put your hands on the rib cage with your thumbs over her spine. If you can easily feel the ribs, then your pet is probably a normal weight. If you can see the ribs, then your pet is too thin. If you can feel fat between the skin and ribs, or if the ribs are difficult to feel, your pet is overweight. If you cannot feel the ribs at all, your pet is obese. In cats, a large abdomen that hangs down and swings when the cat walks indicates obesity.

There are many health risks associated with obesity. Overweight dogs and cats have a higher incidence of heart and lung problems, diabetes and arthritis. They're at an increased risk for complications should they need to be anesthetized for surgery. Overweight pets can have problems with their skin as well.

The treatment for weight loss is (you've heard it before) reduced caloric intake and increased energy output. Less food, more exercise. A reduced caloric intake can best be accomplished by feeding your pet a high-fiber, low-fat diet, which allows your pet to continue to eat approximately the same volume of food as before and still feel full and satisfied. Feeding lesser amounts of a regular diet can lead to vitamin and mineral deficiencies, and your pet's hunger won't be satisfied. You should cut down on treats or eliminate them altogether. To reduce begging and sneaking of snacks, keep your pet out of the room when the family is eating. And make sure your pet doesn't have access to the garbage can or the neighbor's dog or cat food!

Your veterinarian should be the final judge of your pet's weight status. Make an appointment with him or her to determine if your pet is truly just overweight and not suffering from signs of heart, kidney, or endocrine or hormonal disorders. At your visit, after a complete physical exam and blood work, your pet's dietary needs can be established. Remember, you can give your pet a longer and happier life by providing the proper diet, exercise, and regular veterinary care.

*Dr. Virginia Clemans was Best Friends' chief veterinarian from 2001 to 2004.*

# Hazardous to Your Pet's Health!

By Sherry Woodard

## At Home

Your pets rely on you to protect them from harm. In general, you should only feed your pets food and treats specially formulated for the type of pet that you have. Some human food and drink can make animals sick, so keep them out of your pets' reach. Here are some examples:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Substances containing caffeine, such as coffee
- Chocolate
- Fatty foods, especially drippings and grease from cooking
- Chicken and turkey bones
- Grapes and raisins
- Onions
- Macadamia nuts
- Salt and sugar
- Yeast dough
- All medications

Many other things in or around your home can cause serious illness or even death in your pet:

- Antifreeze
- Bait for rodents
- Batteries (they can contain corrosive fluid)
- Car care products, such as cleaners or oils
- Fertilizer
- Gorilla Glue (or similar products)
- Household cleaners
- Ice-melting products
- Nicotine products (including patches)
- Pesticides for insects
- Plants that are toxic to pets
- Pool or pond products
- Poisonous snakes
- Utensils with food on them (e.g., steak knives)

Other potential dangers in your home include burning candles that may be knocked over, electrical cords that can be chewed, and loose cords or wires that animals may become tangled in. Take a look around your house and make it pet-safe.

For more information on what to do for a poisoned animal, what plants are poisonous, and how to poison-proof your home, visit the ASPCA website ([www.aspca.org](http://www.aspca.org)) and click on "Animal Poison Control" on the Pet Care tab. If you suspect your pet has been poisoned and you need immediate assistance, you can call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435. The nonprofit hotline is staffed 24/7 by a team of veterinarians, including veterinary toxicologists; the consultation fee is \$65.

## Away from Home

Here are some things to avoid when traveling with your pet:

- Don't let your pet ride in the back of an open truck. He can be injured if you need to brake suddenly or take a sharp turn. Tying the animal to the truck doesn't solve the problem; he can still be seriously hurt or killed. If you must use the back of a truck to transport a pet, put the animal in a secure crate that is anchored so it doesn't move around in the bed of the truck.
- Never leave your pet in a vehicle in hot weather, even for a few minutes. Even with the windows wide open, the car can quickly become hot enough to cause heatstroke, brain damage, and even death.

Finally, don't let your pet roam. He or she can suffer injury or death from running at large. Your pet doesn't understand the danger of speeding cars, poisoned bait or trespassing on someone else's property.

## Why Dogs Itch

By Virginia Clemans

Does your dog itch? Scratch? Chew? Rub? Shake? Scoot? Is it driving you and your dog mad? Just like in people, itching in dogs can be caused by a lot of different things.

The most common cause is atopic dermatitis, also called “inhalant allergy.” When dogs are allergic to dust, pollens, mold, mildew, insects, or animal or human dander, instead of suffering from hay fever, they get itchy skin. When they scratch, the bacteria normally present on the skin becomes driven into the deeper skin layers and causes an infection. Sometimes dogs even develop an allergy to the bacteria itself and this causes even more itching! Those little red bumps you may see on the skin are probably pustules (little pimples) caused by the bacteria.

Fungal infections like ringworm can affect the skin and nail beds, causing itching and chewing of the feet. Yeast infections of the skin and ears also can be very itchy, and cause a very characteristic odor.

Some other causes of itching include “contact allergy” – an allergic reaction to the detergent used to wash bedding, for example, or allergies to materials like wool. But this type of allergy is fairly rare in dogs. Dogs can become allergic to fleas, however, and even one flea bite can become very itchy. There are some skin mites that can cause itching as well. A food allergy (allergy to proteins contained in food) can be the cause of itching in some dogs. Dogs can have several different types of allergies all at once (bacterial, food, inhalant, etc.), making the causes more difficult to determine.

Certain diseases can cause skin problems or make existing skin problems worse. Just like people, dogs can have thyroid problems. In dogs, a condition called hypothyroidism (not enough thyroid hormone produced) can make the skin more likely to have allergy and infection problems. Thyroid disease can cause the

skin to become oily or flaky, and the hair coat to be dull, thin, and brittle.

Blood tests, skin scrapings, and fungal cultures all help determine the exact cause of a skin problem. Once we know what the cause is, an appropriate treatment can be prescribed and the dog can be on the way to comfortable, healthy skin. Various combinations of treatments may need to be tried before the right combination is found. Medications such as antibiotics, antihistamines, anti-inflammatories, and fatty acid supplements may need to be given by mouth until the problem is under control. Some medications may need to be continued long-term.

Bathing is very important to maintain healthy skin. Regular baths with a medicated shampoo can reduce the number of bacteria on the skin. Baths remove dead hair and skin cells that aggravate skin conditions.

If a food allergy is suspected, a diet change may be in order as well. Try switching your dog’s food to one that contains a type of protein that your dog hasn’t been exposed to yet. Beef, lamb and chicken are found in most dog foods, so this means switching to a dog food containing a “novel” protein, such as fish, venison or rabbit. Talk to your veterinarian about which food to switch to and where to obtain this type of food.

The skin cycle lasts approximately 21 days – it takes that long for old skin to be replaced by new skin. So, any treatment that you attempt may not show results until a three-week period has passed. This is especially true for diet changes and fatty acid supplements. Be patient! Find the cause, follow the treatment exactly, and get your dog’s skin back on the track to health. Beauty is only skin deep, but healthy skin makes you and your dog feel better!

*Dr. Virginia Clemans was Best Friends’ chief veterinarian from 2001 to 2004.*

## Flea and Heartworm Prevention for Your Pets

By Dr. Mike Dix

Here's some basic information about preventing fleas and heartworms in your cats and dogs. For more specifics about how to treat your pets for these conditions, please talk to your veterinarian.

### Flea Prevention

Flea preventative comes in either an oral or a topical form. The oral forms typically only last a short time (Capstar is one example) or do not kill adult fleas and only prevent flea reproduction (e.g., Program).

The most popular forms are the topical preparations, which usually last for about a month and are very effective. Some are more waterproof than others (for example, Frontline is more waterproof than Advantage). Some also treat other insects, such as ticks (Promeris in dogs,

Frontline and Revolution) and lice (Revolution and Frontline); repel mosquitoes (Revolution); and control other external parasites (Promeris in dogs, and Revolution). Revolution is also a heartworm preventative and can control internal parasites (in cats more than dogs).

All these products have been proven to be relatively safe as long as they are used for the species intended; for example, never give Advantix (not to be confused with Advantage) to cats. Some people don't like putting these chemicals on their pets, but in my opinion, it is better than having the nuisance of fleas and the potential diseases that can come from fleas. There are alternative therapies, such as feeding garlic and spreading diatomaceous earth on the ground, but I have not found these methods to be consistently effective.

In some regions of the country (e.g., the desert) and seasons (e.g., winters in cold climates), fleas are less of a problem. Consult with a veterinarian about what flea product is best for your pet, your pet's lifestyle and your geographic region.



### Heartworm Prevention

Heartworm is a parasitic infection that is spread by mosquitoes. Cats and dogs can both get it, but heartworm is much less prevalent in cats: between 10 and 15 percent of the rate of infection in dogs, depending on geographic region. Not all mosquitoes everywhere transmit heartworm. The weather has to be warm enough consistently for long enough for the mosquitoes to be able to transmit the infection, which is why most mosquitoes in Alaska don't spread the disease.

Here's what happens: Heartworm is injected into the dog or cat from the mosquito in a larval stage. This larva develops through several more stages before becoming an adult worm and re-

siding in the pulmonary arteries of the dog or cat. The infection is debilitating to the animal and treatment is costly, so it's best to prevent the disease from happening in the first place.

The heartworm preventatives available today are effective if used consistently. They actually work retroactively, meaning they kill larvae that have been in the dog for up to 45 days. Once the larval stages advance beyond this 45-day period, however, the preventatives are no longer effective. Since it is easier to remember to give medication every 30 days instead of every 45 days, the heartworm preventatives are dosed at 30-day intervals.

Heartworm preventatives come in three forms – oral, topical and injectable (soon to come back on the market as ProHeart). The oral products are my favorite, since the animals like them, you know they got the medication at the right dose, and they also control intestinal parasites (good for the health of the dog and the human family). The most popular are Heartgard and Interceptor. Some breeds (such as collies) are sensitive to the medications, so please consult a vet before starting one of the preventatives.

The most popular topical preventative is Revolution, which works in a similar fashion to Heartgard but is applied topically. My concern with this medication is that if some gets stuck on the fur or gets washed away, the dose may not be appropriate and the animal may not be protected. The injectable form is good for six months, which is more convenient than a monthly dose, but it does not control intestinal parasites (at least it didn't used to). I am not sure how ProHeart will work because injectables have been off the market for awhile.

Heartworm is a regional condition. Because the mosquitoes must have a certain ambient temperature to develop the mosquito larvae, some areas only get the disease seasonally (e.g., Wisconsin does not have a problem in the winter), some do not get it at all (e.g., most of Alaska) and other areas have it year-round (e.g., the southeastern U.S.). In warm areas like the southeastern U.S., if pets are not on preventative, they will get the disease. Consult with a vet to determine when and if your pet should be on heartworm preventative.

*Dr. Mike Dix is Best Friends' medical director.*

## **Smile! Dental Care for Your Pets**

**By Virginia Clemans**

Do you avoid getting up close and personal with your pet's breath? That bad breath is certainly unpleasant enough, but your pet could have a worse problem. Tartar buildup on teeth and inflamed gums can actually undermine your pet's good health.

### **Do animals have dental disease?**

Sure they do! Dental disease is actually seen more often in pets than it is in humans. Why? Because pets can't brush or floss their teeth. So it's no surprise that 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats show signs of dental disease by the age of four. In fact, dental disease is probably one of the most common health problems in dogs and cats.

In humans, the cavity is the most common form of dental disease, but in dogs and cats, it's tartar buildup. Tartar causes irritation of the gums, loosening of the teeth, exposure of the tooth roots, infection, tooth abscesses, and, eventually, tooth loss. An untreated infection within the mouth may be picked up by the bloodstream and carried to other parts of the body. The result can be more serious health risks, such as kidney, liver and heart disease. Also, sore, painful and loose teeth can make your pet very uncomfortable and unwilling or unable to eat properly.

### **Won't feeding my pet dry food prevent dental problems?**

Most people believe that feeding their pets dry food is enough to ward off dental problems. Not so. Diet is probably much less important to prevent tartar buildup than most people think. Dry food is less sticky, of course, and does not adhere to the teeth as readily as canned food. But, eating dry food does not remove tartar from the teeth. Certain chewing toys or strips (especially those that contain enzymes) designed to clean



the teeth may help tartar buildup somewhat, but only a professional cleaning by your veterinarian can remove tartar once it forms.

### **What contributes to dental disease in pets?**

One of the main factors is your pet's individual mouth chemistry. Some pets need yearly cleanings; others need cleanings only once every few years. Breed also plays a role in your pet's dental health. Small dogs, especially those with short faces (Pekingesees, pugs, etc.) are particularly prone to dental problems, as are Persian cats.

## **How can I tell if my pet has dental disease?**

Well, bad breath is one obvious clue. But you may also see yellow-brown teeth covered with a barnacle-like hard substance and red irritated gums that bleed easily. You may even see loose teeth that are very tender to the touch. However, the best way to determine if your pet needs a dental cleaning is to have your veterinarian do a dental health checkup.

## **What does a dental cleaning involve?**

If your vet determines that your pet needs a dental cleaning, here's what happens. First, your pet must be completely anesthetized. It is not possible to thoroughly clean the teeth if your

pet is awake. Your pet's teeth will be cleaned, scaled with an ultrasonic scaler, and polished. A thorough evaluation of the teeth will determine if any of them need to be pulled. The vet will examine the entire oral cavity to look for abnormalities such as tumors or deep infections of the gums or jawbone.

After the cleaning, your pet may need to take oral antibiotics and eat a softer diet for a few days, particularly if there was a lot of infection or if many teeth had to be extracted. When your pet goes home, you will be advised on the proper dental care program for your pet.

So, to keep your pet smiling, schedule regular veterinary dental exams!

*Dr. Virginia Clemans was Best Friends' chief veterinarian from 2001 to 2004.*

## Grooming Your Pets

By Sherry Woodard

Most animals can be taught to enjoy grooming at any age. Regular grooming will help you build and maintain healthy relationships with your pets, and practice gentle leadership skills. If your dog has positive associations with grooming, it can help to reduce handling challenges. Another benefit of grooming is that you may notice a physical change that needs medical attention, something that might not have been obvious if you hadn't been grooming your pet. If you find any lumps, bumps or soreness, schedule an appointment with your veterinarian for a checkup.

Here are some supplies that you might need for grooming:

- Shampoo that is appropriate for the age and species of your pet (kittens and puppies need gentle shampoo; very young animals need products free of harsh pesticides; and ferrets should have ferret shampoo)
- Large cup or small bucket containing water, to create a nice lather
- Cotton balls
- Ear cleaner
- Parasite-control products (ask your veterinarian about what is needed in your area for fleas, ticks and mites)
- Metal comb
- Brush (there are many styles to choose from: pin, rake, slicker, mitt or curry)
- Nail trimmers (find the best size for your pet's nails)
- Nail file (some animals will actually sleep while their people file each toenail)
- Styptic powder (to use if you accidentally cut a nail too short)
- Ophthalmic ointment (used in the eyes to protect them from shampoo and debris)



- Detangler or conditioner (great for combing through long hair before a final rinse)
- Spray attachment for your shower (very helpful for rinsing your pet)
- A hair dryer (because some animals can chill easily, but be careful not to overheat the pet)
- Toothbrush and animal toothpaste
- Safety scissors for trimming hair
- Clippers (if you want to learn to style your pet)

One caution about clipping your pet: If you change the length of your pet's natural coat, he/she will need protection from the cold and the sun. (Pets can get sunburned!) Also, some coats do not grow back well, so I recommend that you consult a professional groomer if you want your pet to wear an un-natural style.

Start the grooming process by gently touching all the animal's body parts. If any parts seem sore, stop and schedule an appointment with your veterinarian for a checkup. If your pet seems uncomfortable with your touch, remember that animals learn positive associations with repetition and praise. You will need to be a kind,

gentle leader but remain firm in your intentions. The plan is to teach your pet to enjoy being groomed and to groom your pet on a regular basis, not just when the animal is matted or really dirty.

If you need help, you can start by accompanying your pet to a professional groomer for a lesson. Choose a groomer who is patient, gentle and kind. Most groomers are thrilled to meet people who want to work with their animals in between professional grooming visits.

Here are some specifics about various aspects of grooming:

**Brushing.** Brushing and combing should happen daily or at least several times each week, no matter what kind of coat your animal has. If you plan to give your pet a bath, do the brushing part first. Brushing and combing will feel good to your pet; it removes dead hair and tangles, and distributes natural skin oils. If the coat is thick, make sure you are combing all the way to the skin. Be gentle and patient, though; too much pressure on the skin can cause irritation called brush burn, and pulling the tangles will hurt if you try to hurry. A detangler can be used on dry hair to loosen any knots.

Different types of brushes are used for different coats. A curved wire slicker or pin brush works well for long, straight coats. Use a regular wire slicker for medium-length hair and coats with a dense undercoat. I like rakes for brushing under-



*Another good reason to keep dogs well groomed: It can be difficult to read the body language of ungroomed dogs. The groomed dog on the right is alert, eyes soft, no fear seen.*

coats during the shedding season. Short, smooth coats can be brushed with a grooming mitt or rubber curry. After brushing, you can use an all-purpose comb to work out small knots the brush missed.

**Baths.** The water should be warm, even in summer, because very cold water can chill animals and leave your pet with a bad association to bathing in general. If you are bathing small animals, support them in the tub so they don't panic. Give your pet a full body massage while lathering up the shampoo, then rinse. If you wish, add conditioner and comb through the coat before a final rinse. I comb through long-haired dogs and horses' tails with conditioner before doing the final rinse. On cold days, all animals should be dried, and very young, old or sick animals should always be dried to prevent chilling.

**Nails.** Begin by picking up each foot and handling the nails. Then, without clipping, hold the clippers near a nail and squeeze the nail as though you are clipping. Look carefully for the quick – where the blood supply ends. You'll want to avoid cutting into the quick, since it is painful and will bleed. If you ever accidentally cut the quick, don't panic. Cover the nail end with your styptic powder and put pressure on the nail for 30 seconds, until it stops bleeding. Be gentle and patient with your pet. If you start by trimming one nail on each foot daily and rewarding with praise, you will soon have a relaxed, willing animal. Remember to also trim the dewclaws.

If you keep your pets' nails trimmed, you will protect their feet from long nails that can become caught and break off, causing pain. Long nails can also cause permanent damage to toes by bending them into unnatural positions. Animals with hooves need routine foot care by professionals, so make sure they are getting the care they need.

**Teeth.** You can gently massage the gums and brush the teeth on any pet – from the smallest rodents to the largest horses. If taught with

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patience and kindness, most animals enjoy a mouth massage. The benefits are healthy mouths and fresh breath. Plus, you'll be more aware of when your pet needs dental work by a professional, before your pet is in pain. Remember to use animal toothpaste appropriate for each type of pet.

**Ears.** You should periodically check your animal's ears. If they are clean and free of debris, then give your pet a nice ear rub. Again, a gentle massage is going to give your pet a good association to your touch. If the ears are dirty, smell bad or look sore, make an appointment with your veterinarian. The doctor can check for infection or parasites, and can get you started with a cleaning lesson.

If you are doing a quick cleaning to healthy ears, start by dampening a cotton ball with appropriate ear cleaner and wipe the folds of skin, starting near the head and cleaning out to the ends of the ear flaps. Do not use cotton swabs because they can reach too deeply inside the ear and cause damage. Some animals are sensitive to the feeling of the cleaner going in, so you might want to start with just a small amount. Be prepared to "wear" some ear cleaner, though, as most animals shake their heads and send it flying!

Grooming can be a pleasurable activity for both you and your pets. Enjoy your animal family members and the time you spend interacting with them.

## Cold Weather and Your Pets

By Sherry Woodard

Here are a few things to consider when the season changes and the weather turns cold:

Think about the amount of exercise your pet gets in the winter months. If your pet is less active, he or she may need less food. But, if your dog plays out in the cold a lot, she may be burning more calories and need more food to produce more body heat. The same is true if your cat spends a lot of time out in his cattery in the cold. So, watch your pet's weight, and consult your veterinarian if you have questions.

If you have a dog and she spends time in a fenced yard, watch your fence line to make sure that the snow doesn't pile up so high that the dog can walk out of the yard.

Check the condition of your pet's coat. Mats sometimes appear in winter and interfere with the coat's ability to keep your pet warm.

Make sure that water is available both indoors and outdoors. If you live in a very cold climate, use plastic instead of metal bowls and buckets. Your pet's tongue may stick to metal, and he could injure himself trying to pull away.

Be on the lookout for antifreeze, which often leaks from cars into parking lots and puddles. Check the floor of your garage, too, for any telltale signs. Antifreeze is attractive to pets because it tastes sweet, but most brands are very poisonous and may be fatal. If your pet ingests even a small amount of antifreeze, contact your veterinarian immediately. Pet-safe antifreeze (which tastes bad) is now available, so consider buying it for your car in the future.

If you live in an area where there's snow, wipe your dog's feet after walking her. She may have picked up ice-melting chemicals, which can ir-



ritate and burn the dog's pads. Some of these products are poisonous if ingested by pets. You may want to try dog boots, which protect your dog's feet from sharp pieces of ice, as well as ice-melting products.

Use caution when you start your car in the cold winter months. If animals are left outside, they may climb under the car hood for protection from the cold. Before you climb into your car, slap the hood or open it for a quick look around.

If your dog stays outside in cold weather for more than potty breaks, he will need a warm, dry place away from the cold and wet. Provide him with a doghouse raised up off the ground at least a few inches, and equipped with a door flap to keep out drafts. Also, make sure the doghouse always has dry bedding. Please remember, though, that dogs are social animals – they want to be with you, so don't leave them out in the cold too long!

# Hot Weather and Your Dog

By Sherry Woodard

One of the most life-threatening mistakes people can make is to leave a dog in a vehicle during hot weather. Dogs can't perspire, as humans do, to cool themselves off via evaporation, so they have to pant to cool themselves. If the air that they are taking in is too hot (as it is in a parked car in hot weather), then panting has little cooling effect and the dog quickly overheats. Many people think their dog will be okay if they leave the windows open, but even with the windows wide open, the car can quickly become hot enough to cause heatstroke, brain damage, and even death. Your pet may pay dearly for even a few minutes spent in a sweltering car.

You should never let your dog ride in an open pickup truck, but it's especially dangerous in hot weather, since truck beds are often dark colors, which get very hot. Please leave your pets at home during hot weather.

Over-exposure to heat causes many of the same symptoms as shock. You will see rapid, shallow breathing, weakness, and a very high body temperature. Cool the animal as quickly as possible by spraying him with cool (not cold) water or wrapping him in cool, moist towels. Because of the many problems caused by an elevated body temperature, seek professional help immediately.

If you walk your dog on lead, keep in mind that asphalt can get very hot during the summer. In fact, it can get hot enough to burn a dog's pads, causing him pain for days. Before taking your dog for a walk, check the ground for hotness with one of your own hands or bare feet. If you can't keep your hand (or foot) on the ground for more than three seconds, it's probably too hot to walk your dog. Also, if you have an older dog or an overweight dog, you might want to do only short walks early in the morning or later in the evening, when the temperatures are lower.



Providing water for your dog is always important, but it's especially critical during hot weather. If your dog is inside during the day, make sure you supply fresh, cool water that remains in a shaded spot throughout the day, since sun coming through a window can heat a bowl of water.

If your dog stays outside during the day, make sure his water bowl isn't in a place where he will tip it over. Water bowls can be tipped over by dogs trying to make a cool spot to lay down. If necessary, buy a tip-proof water bowl. Also, make sure he has a shady place where he can get relief from the sun. Kiddie pools are a nice way to give dogs their own clean puddle in which to play.

Grooming all dogs, even dogs with short coats, helps to keep them comfortable as the seasons change. A natural coat that has been groomed offers protection from sunburn and acts as cooling insulation. Shaving your dog's coat will take away that protection. If you give your dog a close cut for summer, she may need sunscreen.

# Keeping Your Dog Safe and Sound

By Sherry Woodard

## Why shouldn't I let my dog run free?

Many dogs are allowed to roam the streets. The dog's family might say, "Oh, he's okay – he comes home eventually; he has friends out there." But, it's often a dangerous world out there. If you allow your dog to roam, you are abdicating responsibility for his safety. Here are some ways your dog could be harmed:

- He might be hit by traffic, causing injury or death.
- She might be picked up by animal control officers, just doing their jobs.
- He might be poisoned or suffer injury at the hands of people who feel that the dog is a nuisance.
- She might be poisoned by drinking antifreeze from a puddle, or ingesting snail bait or other toxins.
- He might fight with or be attacked by other dogs, resulting in injury.

## What to do about an escape artist?

If you have a dog who is an escape artist, start with securing your yard so he can't escape. But, don't stop there. Your dog may be escaping because he is bored. Try the following:

- Let him spend more time in the house, interacting with his family.
- Make sure she gets some active play time with some dog friends.
- Get him some fun things to chew on (like Kongs and hollow bones with treats stuffed inside).

- Get her a dirt box to dig in or a kiddie pool to splash in.
- Take him on more walks so he can smell and explore outside the confines of his yard.

Make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise. A tired dog is much less likely to try and escape from his yard. He would much rather relax in front of the TV with his family!

## What else can I do to keep my dog safe and sound?

Some other responsibilities of taking care of a dog are:

- Make sure your dog always has a current I.D. tag on his collar, so that you can be called if he is found wandering alone. He should also have a microchip ID.
- Spay/neuter your pet – it's your responsibility to prevent unwanted animals from being born, and spaying or neutering helps animals lead happier, healthier lives.
- Take care of your dog's health by bringing her to the vet for annual checkups. Be aware that your dog may require more medical checkups and medication as she ages.
- Train your dog – teach him simple cues and proper manners so he will be well-behaved and welcome in any home or setting.

When you take an animal as a pet, it is your responsibility to stay committed to your loyal companion for a lifetime – through thick and thin, through whatever changes occur in your life. If you absolutely must find a new home for your pet, it is also your responsibility to find a home that is as good as or better than your own.

## Preventing Your Dog from Escaping

By Sherry Woodard

Is your dog escaping from the yard? Here are two reasons why this could be happening and some possible solutions to the problem:

**Sexual motivation.** If your dog is not neutered, he may be escaping to search for female dogs. There's a simple solution: Neuter your dog. (The same holds true for unfixed female dogs, who may be escaping to find male dogs.)

**Lack of exercise and interaction.** All dogs need exercise and interaction with their people. If your dog is spending too many hours out in the yard alone, escaping may be her way of dealing with loneliness and boredom. If you're away from home all day, are there ways that you can break up the long days for her? Perhaps a neighbor could give her a walk halfway through the day or maybe you could arrange to have your dog visit another dog at a friend's home some days while you are away. Other options are putting your dog in doggie daycare or hiring a dog walker. Some dog walkers are seniors or students who don't charge much – they mainly want to enjoy time with a dog.

Here are the various ways that dogs get out and some methods to prevent escape:

**Latch-lifting.** Some dogs have learned to open gates and let themselves out. Most gates have a latch that can be secured by placing a clip through a hole when the latch is closed. The clip can be a clip from an old leash or a lock. If you need a reminder to use the clip and to get others to use it, put a sign on the gate that says, "Please clip the gate."

**Jumping or climbing over the fence.** Look for and move objects that the dog may be using as aids. For instance, if the doghouse is close to the fence, he may be launching off the roof. Add additional fencing to add height to your fence. You could try using a light-gauge wire for this pur-

pose; if the dog feels that the light wire is unstable, he may decide that he can no longer jump out. If your dog only climbs out at the corners, you can add fencing across the corners over the top. There's also a product called Coyote Roller ([www.coyoteroller.com](http://www.coyoteroller.com)), rollers that can be installed on the top of fencing to prevent the dog from being able to grip the top of the fence.

**Digging under the fence.** If digging out is your dog's plan, you will need to either bury fencing in the ground (18 to 24 inches deep) to deter her from digging, or attach fencing to the bottom of your fence and lay it on the ground at least 12 inches into the yard. Both methods work, but you must fix the entire perimeter of the yard or the dog will probably find the unprotected spots.

**Dashing out the door.** Some dogs escape by dashing out of the house the moment the door opens. For door-dashers, the best strategy is to train the dog to expect a treat whenever the door is opened. Start by placing a baby gate at the doorway. If you have a big dog, you might want to use one that is tall and extra sturdy.

Practice opening the door, stepping over the gate (or walking through it, depending on the style of the gate), and then giving the dog a treat. Soon, your dog will be waiting for a treat rather than dashing out the door.

Next, you can add the cue, "Sit." Luring your dog into a sit is done by holding a treat up, giving the cue, waiting until he sits, and then offering the treat. Only give the treat when his rear is on the floor – not before he sits or after he pops up. Practice walking into the house and closing the door behind you, offering the treat only after your dog gives you a sit. When teaching your dog to sit, you don't need to use a harsh tone. Once he is trained, you can have fun with your happy, well-behaved dog.

## Fencing Options for Your Escape Artist

By Sherry Woodard



If you have a dog who's an escape artist, you might have to go the extra mile to provide fencing that will keep your pooch contained and safe. Here are some options for you to consider.

**Coyote Roller.** (*above left*) This device consists of roller bars that you install at the top of existing fencing. The Coyote Roller can be installed on different types of fencing, such as chain-link and wooden fences. The rollers prevent the dog from gaining purchase when he tries to climb over the fence. For more information, check out [www.coyotroller.com](http://www.coyotroller.com).

**Wire-mesh fencing.** (*above center*) If you need extra tall fencing, chain-link is not a good choice. Instead, buy coated wire-mesh fencing, which is stronger than chain-link. One company that sells this type of wire mesh is Riverdale Mills ([www.riverdale.com](http://www.riverdale.com)).

**Flat-top.** (*above right*) For extra insurance against escape, top off your wire-mesh fencing with a foot of fencing that extends perpendicular into the enclosure. Even if the dog manages to climb to the top of the fence, he won't be able to lean back far enough to get up and over the flat-top.

### Fencing and Shelter Manufacturers

Barnmaster buildings and panels  
[www.barnmaster.com](http://www.barnmaster.com)

MD Barns buildings and panels  
[www.mdbarns.com](http://www.mdbarns.com)

Centaur Horse Fencing  
[www.centaurhtp.com](http://www.centaurhtp.com)

Cover-All buildings  
[www.norsemanstructures.com](http://www.norsemanstructures.com)

## Section 3: Health and Care

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**Top-angling.** A slightly different approach to the flat-top: Angle the fence extension so that it's aimed upward.



**Full cover.** For dogs who've managed to climb over every fence, and for dogs who've been in trouble for escaping, cover the fencing completely on top.



**Free-standing.** This type of fencing pops apart, so it can be easily taken apart and positioned in a different spot. It's a good solution for aggressive dogs who must be kept away from the outside fence line of a yard. Priefert Ranch Equipment ([www.priefert.com](http://www.priefert.com)) is a good supplier of this type of fencing.

*Note:* Best Friends doesn't recommend invisible fence systems. Read this article from *Whole Dog Journal*:

“Simply Shocking” by Pat Miller  
[www.kerryblues.info/WDJ/SHOCKING.HTML](http://www.kerryblues.info/WDJ/SHOCKING.HTML)

# Unusual Eating Habits in Pets

By Sherry Woodard

## Pica

Cats and dogs will sometimes eat non-food items such as rocks, dirt, clothing, rubber bands, or string. This condition is called pica. Once ingested, some of these items can produce life-threatening blockages in the animal's intestines and surgical removal is sometimes necessary.

The cause of pica is unknown. These unusual eating habits may be the animals' attempt to obtain nutrients lacking in their diet or may be related to anxiety, boredom, or frustration. If you witness pica in your pet, speak with your veterinarian. He or she will need to rule out medical causes and may have recommendations for how to deal with the problem.

Since pica may be caused by boredom, offer your pet a wide variety of appropriate toys, and try to prevent access to inappropriate items. Cats are often attracted to string, rubber bands, and tinsel – all of which can be detrimental to your cat's health if she ingests them. Also, make sure your pet gets plenty of social interaction; some people believe that pica may be a cry for attention.

## Coprophagy

Another type of pica behavior is stool-eating, called coprophagy. Coprophagy is fairly common in dogs, but is rarely seen in cats. Dogs have been known to eat their own or other dogs' feces, and some dogs find cat feces quite delectable. Again, the causes are unknown. There are some techniques that have been tried to eliminate this unsavory behavior, but none seem to be consistently effective in resolving the problem.

One preventive measure is to pick up daily after your dog to minimize his opportunity to eat his own feces. The dog's food can be treated with MSG or commercial products such as ForBid or Deter, which make the dog's stool taste bad. Before using any food additives, schedule a visit to your veterinarian to check for any medical cause and to talk about the dog's diet. Supplements or a diet change may help.

If your dog is eating your cat's feces, install a baby gate in front of the area where your litter box is kept or otherwise make the litter box inaccessible to the dog (but still accessible to the cat).

# Holiday Hazards for Pets

by Sherry Woodard

Though holidays can be a great time for people, they can be problematic for our pets. Here are some things to be aware of as you celebrate the holidays.

## The Fourth of July

Fireworks can be very frightening for our pets. They may panic and try to escape the noise by attempting to leave the safety of their own house or yard. Here's how you can protect your animal family members on the fourth of July:

- Make sure they wear properly sized collars (no more than two fingers should fit under the collar). All dogs and cats (even house cats) should have current ID on their collars, and they should have microchip IDs as well. Cats should wear safety collars that will pop or stretch if they get caught on something.
- Keep your pets inside the house. If there will be a lot of people going in and out, you might want to put your animals in a bedroom with the door shut. Close the windows, curtains and shades so they will feel more safe and secure.
- You can muffle the sound of fireworks by turning on a fan, radio or television.

If your pet is extremely distressed during fireworks, she may become destructive and may even hurt herself trying to escape the noise. To calm her, you may need to stay with her and try to distract her with play or favorite things to chew. Do not verbally reassure a nervous pet, however, since that may reinforce her nervousness.

Do not put a frightened dog in a crate and leave the house. Though his crate may normally be a safe place for him, he may feel trapped in there if he's frightened by fireworks. He could injure himself badly trying to get out of the crate.



## Halloween

Halloween is a fun day for humans, but pets may become spooked (no pun intended!) by the altered appearance of their families. If your dog does not appear to recognize you and your children, use caution when approaching him or her.

Candy can make your pets sick, so you should always keep it out of reach of your pets, but especially on this holiday, when there's so much of it around. You can encourage pet involvement in Halloween by making homemade dog and cat treats for your own animals and for other people's pets. (Make sure they're clearly labeled as pet treats!)

Some people like to dress up their pets for Halloween (or other holidays). Because wearing a costume might be uncomfortable or frightening to your pet, introduce the costume slowly. Start by taking the costume out of the packaging and allow it to air out. Costumes may have strong smells that pets can be sensitive to.

Lay the costume on the floor and allow all house pets to sniff it. If your pet avoids the costume, shows no interest, or is fearful, put treats or a favorite toy near the costume to make it a positive experience for your pet. If your pet walks up to the costume, praise him/her and provide treats.

Wait until your pet is comfortable with the costume before attempting to dress your pet. If you have multiple pets, put the pets who aren't going to dress up in a secured room. The reason for this is that your other pets may become stressed or fearful and have unexpected defensive behavior during the dressing-up process.

The process of dressing your pet should be done in steps and using repetition. If the costume has more than one piece, try one piece a day. For example, on the first day practice putting on the cape, and repeat. On the following day, practice putting on the hat and repeat. The next day, try putting on the cape and the hat. During this process, remember to provide praise, encouragement and treats. If your pet demonstrates fear, stress, and/or defensive behavior during the process, your pet may not be comfortable dressing up. Be respectful to your pet.

Finally, dogs and cats should be kept inside on Halloween. If a lot of people will be coming to your door, put your pets in a bedroom with the door shut to prevent them from escaping into the night. Keeping them in a closed room will also minimize the fright they might get from loud voices and wild costumes. Black cats are especially vulnerable on Halloween, since black cats are often associated with evil and misfortune, and they can be the victims of abuse. So, to keep them safe, keep them inside.

## **Thanksgiving**

Many of the traditional holiday foods for people are dangerous to your dog's health. Feeding dogs large quantities of fatty foods, such as turkey gravy, mashed potatoes with butter, and stuffing, can cause pancreatitis. This potentially deadly inflammation of the pancreas produces severe symptoms of diarrhea or vomiting.

Even cooked turkey, duck, geese, and other bird bones are dangerous to dogs. Cooked bones splinter and break easily, so sharp pieces may tear the intestines.

## **Christmas**

Here are some tips for keeping pets safe at Christmas time:

- If you have a real Christmas tree, keep the water in the stand covered so your animals can't drink it. The pine sap is dangerous if ingested.
- Secure the tree to a wall or the ceiling with fishing line and a hook to prevent pets from knocking it over.
- Tree lights should not be left on when you're not around, since your pets may tangle themselves in the cords. Unplug the tree lights when you're not using them.
- Once you've decorated your tree, pick up all tinsel, ribbon and ornament hooks on the floor. These glittery items may be attractive playthings to your pets, but they can get sick if they ingest them. If a gastrointestinal blockage occurs, surgery may be needed to save your pet.
- If your pets express interest in playing with the decorations on the tree, decorate the bottom third of the tree with wood or plastic ornaments that won't break.
- Keep all gifts that contain human food off the floor so that pets are not tempted by the smells. Human treats can be dangerous for pets – especially food containing chocolate, alcohol, raisins and onions.
- Holiday plants such as poinsettias and mistletoe can be dangerous, too, if your pets chew on them. Keep holiday plants well out of reach of your pets, or buy artificial plants.
- Burning candles can also be a concern around this time of year. Put burning candles in places that are inaccessible to your pets and don't let candles burn unattended. Your cat can easily light herself on fire by brushing up against a burning candle or start a fire by tipping the candle over.

# Bloat in Dogs

By Virginia Clemans

Bloat, or gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV), is a serious, life-threatening condition seen in dogs. GDV mainly affects large deep-chested dogs, but it can affect any size of dog. It happens when distention of the stomach with food and/or air together with the momentum of this now heavy organ by movement (walking or running) causes the stomach to “flip” upon itself, closing both the in-flow and out-flow passages. The stomach then becomes more and more distended, causing pressure on the large blood vessels of the abdomen, cardiac irregularities, difficulty breathing, tissue death and toxin release.

Many theories exist about why this scenario develops. An older but still accepted theory involves large dogs eating large quantities of food (particularly dry food), eating fast and ingesting air, then drinking large quantities of water, and then exercising. The theory is that the stomach becomes very heavy and “swings” inside the dog’s abdomen. The pendulous momentum sends the stomach in a twisting motion over and around itself.

Since some dogs with GDV have been found to not have a stomach that is excessively full of food or water, newer theories have been adopted. One of these is that, particularly in older dogs, the stomach’s regular contractions become weaker, and air and food can remain in the stomach longer than normal, causing the stomach to become heavy, which then results in the twisting event. Still another theory proposes that, again, particularly in older dogs, the spleen can become enlarged due to congestion

or cancer. Since the spleen is so closely associated anatomically with the stomach, it can be involved in causing the stomach to become heavy and pendulous, and then twist.

Regardless of the cause of the twisting, gastric dilatation and volvulus in a dog is a life-threatening medical emergency. In order for there to be a chance of a good outcome, aggressive medical care must be obtained without delay.

A dog whose stomach has twisted shows acute signs of sickness – difficulty moving around, restlessness, and attempts to vomit (the “dry heaves”). Usually, a dog with this condition salivates, pants, and has a rather remarkable distention of the abdomen that is very hard and painful to the touch. Once these signs appear, the dog can decline rapidly, and death can occur in as little as one hour. A “wait and see” attitude is not advisable. For the best outcome, the dog must be seen by a veterinarian immediately.

Diagnosis is made by x-ray. It is sometimes necessary to decompress the stomach; surgery is usually needed to correct the twisting and stabilize the dog. The prognosis for recovery depends upon the condition of the stomach and other organs at the time of surgery. Despite aggressive treatment, though, many of these dogs do not recover. So, monitor your large-breed dog carefully and seek veterinary care at the first sign of a problem.

*Dr. Virginia Clemans was Best Friends’ chief veterinarian from 2001 to 2004.*

## Caring for Your Older Dog

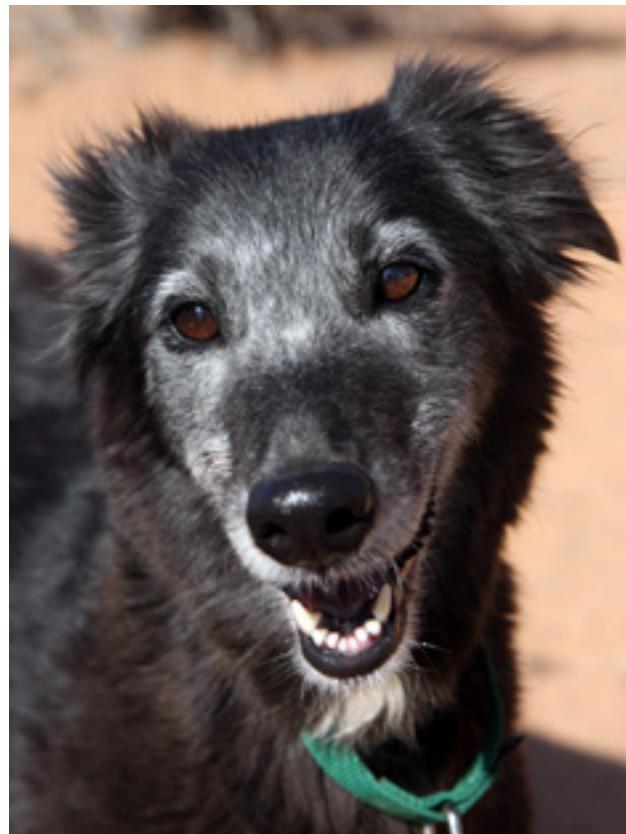
By Sherry Woodard

Whether you have been sharing your life with your dog for years or a senior dog has just joined your family, having an older dog has many benefits. For one thing, adult dogs often need very little house-training. If given access to a dog door, most will routinely go out to eliminate; a few need to have the door flap clipped up for a day or two so they get the idea. Dog doors are great for those senior dogs who have to answer the call of nature a bit more frequently.

Adult dogs have usually passed the restless, destructive chewing stage that young dogs and puppies go through. They are more mellow and need less exercise than young dogs. Even adult dogs, though, need things to do and chew. They enjoy light exercise, practicing basic cues, and finding hidden treasures with their noses. Dispensing toys like Buster Cubes, Kongs, and TreatStik can be loaded with appropriate treats for your dog and placed around the house to encourage working for food.

Keeping dogs social is also important for their emotional health. Many dogs love going out to see other doggie friends or having friends over for a visit. Some dogs seem to become much younger when they have an active social life or when a new, slightly younger dog is adopted into the family. Of course, your old dog will want to help choose the new addition!

As our dogs age, there may be physical changes to address. They may need a change in diet or some arthritis pain medication. The older dog's eyesight or hearing may start to diminish. You can accommodate failing eyesight by keeping the furniture and water bowls in the same locations. A hard-of-hearing dog can wear a vibrating collar and be taught that when it vibrates, a treat is forthcoming. Once that association is taught, the dog will look for you to hand her a treat if the collar vibrates. Instructions to make



a vibrating collar are found at the bottom of this web page:

[www.deafdogs.org/resources/vibramakers.php](http://www.deafdogs.org/resources/vibramakers.php)

If at any time your dog's behavior changes, a trip to see your veterinarian is in order, since a dog's health can affect his behavior. Don't wait for your routine examination or yearly blood work; medical needs can change at any age.

Sharing our lives with dogs into and throughout their adulthood teaches us how precious their lives are. I buy them comfy beds, hand-feed them, and tell them I love every hair on their bodies (even the ones they have shed). Enjoy every moment with your older dog!

# Living with a Diabetic Pet

by Dr. Patti Patterson

Diabetes mellitus is a common disease in both dogs and cats. The good news is that animals with diabetes can lead full, happy and — yes — healthy lives. A close relationship among you, your pet and your veterinarian is the key to successfully living with and caring for a diabetic pet.

## Diagnosis

Diabetes in pets is fairly straightforward to diagnose and treat. The most common signs you may see at home are increased thirst and urination, increased appetite and/or weight loss. Although there are other diseases that can cause similar signs, a few quick tests by your veterinarian can determine if diabetes is present. Blood work and a urine sample are typically sufficient to confirm the diagnosis.

Dealing with diabetes in your pet may seem daunting. There are things to consider, such as cost, time commitments, medication, and possible complications of the diabetes itself. Your veterinarian will help you fully understand the disease and be able to avoid complications or more quickly address problems if they do arise.

The most complicated and sometimes frustrating part of living with a diabetic pet occurs during the first few months after diagnosis. This is typically when costs are most high, your learning curve is most steep, and more complications can arise. Some pets are quite sick at diagnosis and need to be hospitalized, or there may be complicating factors such as urinary tract infections, skin infections or pneumonia. Some pets take weeks or months to become regulated as your veterinarian determines the appropriate dose of insulin.

Hang in there during these early months. Most pets recover quite well with appropriate care from a veterinarian and go home feeling much

better. In fact, because diabetes can arise slowly, you may not realize just how affected your pet was until he is treated and back to his old self!

## Daily Care

Caring for a diabetic pet is a lifelong commitment, but the day-to-day care of most stable diabetic pets is actually quite simple. They can sleep in your bed, hang out with you on the couch, go to the park, swim, play, and in general act and be treated like any other pet.

Your diabetic pet does, however, require insulin each morning and night, every day, twice a day, forever. This is not nearly as scary as most people think. The needles are very small, and there are ways you can make administering the insulin an easy, and even fun, part of your daily routine with your pet.

It is important that your pet feels well and eats a full meal prior to his shot. As he is finishing his meal, you can typically sneak in the insulin shot without him even noticing ... yes, really! Or you can associate the shot with a special treat or game or just some one-on-one quality time so your pet looks forward to this time together. Your veterinarian will teach you how to administer the insulin.

If your pet is part of a family, involve all family members who are mature enough to care for your pet. This helps to ensure that the shots are not forgotten and are given on time, and certainly helps to make sure any problems are noticed.

It's a great idea to keep a simple daily log in a spiral-bound notebook tracking who gave the insulin and when it was given, along with a notation about your pet's well-being each day. Watch your pet closely for early signs of not feeling well.

Your pet must be on a stable diet, with regular feeding times of consistent quality and quantity



of food. It is not a good idea to share your people food with your pet or offer your ice cream bowl to finish. Your pet must always have access to fresh, clean water. Even a well-regulated diabetic will drink more water than a typical dog or cat.

Your diabetic pet can be an active part of the family, but remember he cannot regulate his own blood sugar, so you need to make sure that if he is really active in a day that he receives small snacks and, as always, has access to plenty of water.

### Potential Complications

To care well for your diabetic pet, you need to be aware of potential complications. Most of the things that you need to watch for fall into two categories:

- Signs that the blood sugar is too low (hypoglycemia)
- Signs that the blood sugar is too high (hyperglycemia)

Hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, is the more serious of the two complications. Signs include

wobbliness, disorientation, vomiting and even seizures. The solution: Do NOT give insulin; feed your pet if she is able to chew and swallow; call your vet immediately. Don't panic. This is not a sign that you have to give up. It does mean that you have to work with your vet to readjust the insulin to a lower dose. Throughout a diabetic's life, the insulin requirements will change. Not all adjustments are associated with signs of hypoglycemia, but you should know what to look for. Another good thing to have on hand is the number of an after-hours emergency veterinary clinic. You need to have a Plan B in case your vet is not available.

Hyperglycemia, or high blood sugar, may be signaled by increased thirst and urination, "accidents" in the house, excessive hunger and stealing food, and weight loss. The solution: Call your vet and arrange for him/her to help you adjust the insulin. Again, don't become discouraged. Even though these signs are not as severe as the signs of hypoglycemia, they can be quite frustrating for a caregiver. Work closely with your vet, since he/she can often help you get these symptoms under control, making your life (and your pet's life) much easier.

### Getting Help

If you feel that caring for your diabetic pet is just too much for you to do, ask for help. There are often sympathetic friends, family, neighbors, veterinary technicians, and other pet lovers in your life who will be happy to help. You can ask your veterinarian for sources of help. Many pet owners have found great support and advice on websites set up by others caring for diabetic animals. At [www.petdiabetes.com](http://www.petdiabetes.com) there's a comprehensive list of diabetes-related pet websites.

Always remember: You do not have to do this alone! Once you get a system in place, you will find that caring for your diabetic pet is really not as difficult as it might have seemed at first, and your pet can bring you many years of joy.

*Dr. Patti Patterson is one of the staff veterinarians at Best Friends Animal Society.*

# Living with a Deaf Dog

A lot of the same things that cause hearing loss in humans also cause hearing loss in dogs. Dogs can be born deaf (congenital deafness) or can become deaf because of some injury, disease, drug, toxin, or simply as a result of aging (acquired deafness).

The most common cause of congenital deafness is related to the amount of pigment (coloring) that the dog has. The proper development of the hearing mechanism depends partly on the development of pigment in certain cells of the inner ear. If there is no pigment development (as seen in dogs who are white), these cells do not function properly and the animal may be deaf. A white animal with blue eyes is more likely to be deaf than a white animal who has gold, green, or brown eyes.

Acquired deafness can happen after an injury to the head or ear canal. Certain drugs can also cause deafness. Even chronic ear infections can eventually cause deafness.

It may be difficult to determine whether or not your dog is deaf. A dog who doesn't respond to being called or to other noises may be deaf, or he may just have "selective hearing," meaning that he hears when he chooses to do so! Older animals may experience a gradual loss of hearing as part of the aging process. The only sure way to know if your dog is deaf is to have a Brainstem Auditory Evoked Response (BAER) test done. Unfortunately, this test is available only at veterinary schools or large referral hospitals.

If you believe that your dog is deaf, start with a complete health checkup by your veterinarian. After receiving a clean bill of health, you can work with your deaf friend to teach him or her how to recognize basic cues.

Dogs who are deaf can lead long, healthy, happy lives. If you're patient with training, they can be

taught to respond to cues as well as any hearing dog. In terms of learning principles, deaf dogs are trained just like dogs with normal hearing. The biggest difference lies in how we get their attention, and what type of cues we use to ask for a behavior. Teaching a deaf dog to respond reliably to the "come" cue when she's not on leash is probably the biggest challenge. The simplest solution is to keep her on a long leash rather than wonder how to get her to look at you when she is 50 yards away and looking at a rabbit.

Indoors, stomping your foot on the floor will create vibrations that can signal your dog. If the dog is off-leash in a fenced yard at night, try using a flashlight. Laser pointers also work well at night and sometimes even in daylight. (Caution: Never shine a laser pointer anywhere near your dog's head, as it can cause eye damage. Point the laser at the ground or on an object in front of your dog.)



You can also train your dog to come to you in response to a flashing light: You can flick your porch light off and on when your dog is outdoors at night; indoors, you can use the room lights. If you're gadget-oriented, you might want to buy a remote-controlled vibrating collar, which creates a sensation similar to that of a cell phone or an electric toothbrush.

To teach most behaviors, such as sit, down and stay, the techniques of capturing or luring work equally well for deaf dogs and dogs with good hearing. In some situations, in fact, deafness is an advantage because deaf dogs are less susceptible to random distracting noises during training. Instead of using a verbal cue ("sit," "stay"), you'll use a visual marker, such as a hand signal. Dogs are actually more naturally disposed to respond to visual cues. (It is humans who like to put words to things.)

A few more points worth mentioning:

- Although verbal praise may not be a meaningful reinforcer for a deaf dog, you are not limited to food as a reward. Physical contact like petting or other playful interactions can be highly desired rewards for any dog.

- The loss of hearing associated with normal aging occurs gradually and in stages. The few studies done show that hearing is lost first in the middle- to high-frequency range of sounds, with the hearing loss for low-frequency sounds coming later. Therefore, your dog will be able to hear you when you speak in a low-pitched voice for a longer period of time than when you use a normal or high-pitched voice. Sometimes, whistles (sports or dog whistles, or using your own mouth) will work for certain partially deaf dogs.
- Because hearing-impaired dogs can't hear approaching cars, always pay extremely close attention to your dog whenever you and he are near a street or road.

Finally, two excellent resources for people who have deaf dogs are the Deaf Dog Education Action Fund website at [www.deafdogs.org](http://www.deafdogs.org) and the book *Living with a Deaf Dog* by Susan Cope Becker.

# Living with a Blind Dog

When blindness strikes a pet, it can be quite sudden or it can slowly develop over time. If you think your dog has gone blind or is going blind, a trip to the veterinarian is in order as soon as possible. Blindness can be caused by a variety of medical problems, not just those affecting the eye itself. Diabetes in dogs can cause sudden blindness, as can cataracts or glaucoma. Diabetes is potentially life-threatening, so it's important to make an appointment with your vet right away. Also, a quick diagnosis and treatment can sometimes restore the animal's sight.

If the medical conditions have been dealt with and your pet has been determined to be permanently blind, you need to be aware that blind pets need time to adjust to their new limitations.

Here are some guidelines:

- Do not approach and handle your pet without first announcing your approach. Gently say his name before trying to touch him, so he knows who you are.
- Blind pets may not like to be picked up. They lose their orientation and may become frightened. Pet and play with them on the floor, where they feel more secure.
- Limit changes in furniture arrangement and routines as much as possible. Place food and water bowls in familiar places that are easy to locate.
- If your pet has recently become blind, carefully monitor her food and water intake until you are sure she is able to manage on her own.



Despite these few limitations, life for blind pets can be quite enjoyable. Since dogs have such a keen sense of smell, walks can be just as much fun as they were before the onset of blindness. For safety, of course, it's a good idea to keep your dog on a leash when you're out walking and watch for obstacles in her path. If your dog is a ball or toy lover, he can still locate these things with his sense of smell. Again, make sure there aren't any dangerous obstacles in the way when you play with your dog.

The website [www.blinddogs.com](http://www.blinddogs.com) contains suggestions for toys and games for blind dogs, as well as other resources to help you enhance your dog's quality of life.

## Cleaning Up Pet Stains and Odors

By Sherry Woodard

If your pet has an “accident” in your home, it’s important to neutralize the spot with an enzymatic cleaner to completely get rid of the odor. Otherwise, the smell is an invitation to the animal to mark the same spot again. The enzymes in the cleaner (Nature’s Miracle, OdoBan and Simple Solution are good brands) digest the odor-causing protein in organic materials. These products are safe for use around pets and children.

Bleach is also a good cleaner, but it is not as safe because it is often used at strong concentrations. (It may also bleach out your carpets or floors.) When using any cleaners, always read and follow the directions carefully.

A black light can be helpful in locating urine accident sites, even old accident sites. Turn off all the lights in the room, except the black light, of course. As the stain lights up, you can mark the outline with chalk. You may need to rinse or soak the spot if prior efforts failed to completely clean the site.

While accident sites are drying, they may still be attractive as an elimination spot. To discourage your pet, you can try covering the spot with vinyl, flannel-backed tablecloths, which are machine-washable, inexpensive, and unattractive to most dogs and cats.

## The Trouble with Breeding

By Sherry Woodard

Here are some reasons that people give for breeding their pets, and some things to consider:

### **"We just want one litter, and then we will have her spayed."**

Though much progress has been made toward solving the pet overpopulation problem, millions of wonderful animals are homeless, waiting in shelters for families to adopt them. Breed rescue groups have too many animals to place as well. Over four million pets are still put down each year in the U.S. for want of a home.

Without realizing it, many people contribute to the pet overpopulation problem by having "just one litter." By not breeding your pet, you become part of the solution.

### **"We will find good homes for all the babies."**

Every day, shelters take in pets who were in good homes, but their people moved, married, divorced or had a baby – and decided they had to give up their pets. Don't let them be pets that you have created.

### **"We want a kitten from our cat (or a puppy from our dog)."**

There are no guarantees that your pet's offspring will be just like your pet. There are many wonderful, unique animals available from your local shelter or rescue group. You can love and cherish an adopted animal just as much as the offspring of your beloved pet. Shelter staff can help you find a pet with just the right personality for your family. And, think about how satisfying it is to save a life.

### **"We heard that having a litter has health benefits."**

Actually, the opposite is true. Pregnancy does not confer any health benefits, but spay/neuter has both health and behavior benefits. Spaying or neutering greatly reduces the risk of your pet developing mammary tumors in females and reproductive organ tumors in both sexes. Neutering reduces the urge to roam, urine marking, and aggression.

There are risks associated with pregnancy and delivery. Animals sometimes have a difficult pregnancy, miscarry, or have stillborn babies or babies with defects. Your pet may need help with a surgical delivery (a Cesarean section), which could be expensive.

### **"We want to get our money back on our investment."**

Buying and breeding a purebred dog with the intention of raising money is not a realistic expectation. There is a large investment of money and time involved in breeding a dog and raising puppies responsibly until they are ready for sale.

If you'd like a purebred dog or cat, you don't have to spend a lot of money to get one. There are rescue groups for almost any breed and 25% of dogs at shelters are purebred. To locate a purebred rescue group near you, search the Internet using the word "rescue," the breed name and your state or city (e.g., "Chihuahua rescue California").

If you're thinking about breeding your pet, please think twice – for the benefit of your pet, your family and the homeless pets across the country.

# Zoonotic Diseases in Cats and Dogs

By Virginia Clemans

Zoonotic diseases are diseases that can be transmitted to people by animals. These diseases can be caused by internal parasites, external parasites, fungal infections, and dog and cat bites. Let's look at some of these diseases and find out how they are transmitted to humans and how they can be prevented.

## Internal Parasites

Giardia is the most common intestinal parasitic disease in humans in the United States. It is caused by a one-celled organism that can live in the intestinal tract of many species of wild and domestic animals. Dogs, cats, or humans infected with giardia may have diarrhea and/or weight loss, or may have no symptoms at all. The signs, if present, may be intermittent.

Direct transmission from pets to humans is not considered to be a source of infection, but giardia can be transmitted indirectly via handling of contaminated feces or soil. Drinking contaminated water is usually the way giardia is transmitted, so drinking water from rivers or streams may be a problem for campers, hikers, and pets who use water for recreational purposes. Diagnosis is made by laboratory analysis of feces and an effective treatment is available. You can prevent giardia by not drinking water directly from lakes, ponds, and streams. Also, adults and children should wash their hands before eating and after handling dog or cat feces.

Roundworms and hookworms can also be a problem in humans, particularly children. Roundworms are spread when a person accidentally ingests an infective egg. If you touch the ground or soil that contains the eggs, and then touch your mouth and swallow the eggs, you can get the disease. Roundworm occurs primarily in children, who pick up and eat contaminated dirt. Most cases occur because of lack of personal hygiene. Hookworms are another in-



testinal parasite of dogs and cats that can cause disease in people. Transmission occurs when the larvae are accidentally ingested. The larvae can also penetrate the skin. Most cases of hookworm have been traced to the soft, wet sand at beaches or moist soil under buildings.

Roundworm and hookworm infection can be detected by examination of the feces. Prevention involves the control of parasitic infections in our pets with regular testing and the use of dewormers. You should remove dog and cat feces from the environment on a daily basis. The best way to prevent infection is to wash your hands after handling dog or cat feces, after gardening, or before eating, and always wear shoes in areas that you think may be contaminated.

Toxoplasmosis is another single-celled organism

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that lives in the intestinal tract of rodents, cats, other animals and, potentially, humans. People become infected most commonly by eating undercooked meat. Infection can also occur by accidentally ingesting the organism after handling cat feces or while gardening. Women who are pregnant or considering becoming pregnant should see their physician regarding toxoplasmosis, particularly if they have cats as pets. In pregnant women, the disease can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, and serious birth defects. The best prevention is good personal hygiene. Cat litter boxes should be changed on a daily basis and pregnant women should avoid handling any cat feces or cat litter.

### External Parasites

Fleas are wingless insects that feed on the blood of animals, including dogs, cats and people. Biting fleas can cause a wide range of signs in dogs and cats, from mild to moderate itching to extreme itching, hair loss and skin sores. People who are bitten by fleas usually have red, irritating, itchy bumps on their ankles and lower legs. If you're allergic to flea saliva, you may have intense itchy reactions that can last for days. The fleas that bite dogs and cats prefer dogs and cats to people. Humans are usually bitten only when the flea burden on the pet becomes overwhelming or when the pet is absent.

There are many effective flea-control medications available that are designed to rid pets and the environment of biting fleas, eggs, and larvae. Your veterinarian can help you choose products that are safe for both your pet and your family. When treating your pet for fleas, be sure to follow package directions carefully for the best and safest results.

Ticks, besides being annoying to dogs and cats, can transmit diseases to people. These diseases include Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. There is no evidence of direct transmission of these diseases from pets to people. However, if ticks are found on your dog or cat, then there are ticks in the environment and you are at risk of tick bites and tick-borne

disease. People can be bitten by ticks that fall off a pet and by sharing exposure to ticks in the environment. Tick bites and disease transmission increase in warm weather, when ticks are most active.

Treatment is available for tick-borne diseases in animals and humans. The best means of prevention is to avoid tick bites, so avoid tick-infested areas and wear long pants, long sleeves, socks, boots, and repellent when traveling in areas that are habitats for ticks. Pets can be protected by some of the same products used to prevent fleas. Transmission of disease by feeding ticks requires a minimum of 12 to 24 hours of attachment, so ticks should be removed daily from pets and humans.

### Fungal Infections

Ringworm is a fungal infection of the hair, nails and skin caused by a unique fungus that has adapted to living on animals. The infection is commonly known as ringworm because of the typical circular shape of the skin lesions seen on the skin of humans. There is no "worm" involved, however. Among animals, ringworm is most commonly seen on cats, but dogs and horses can be infected as well. Some animals show no disease signs, while others may have patches of hair loss, scaling, and itching. Few animals show the classic circular, red crusty patches seen in humans.

Cats, dogs and humans most commonly come into contact with the organism from the soil, from infected bedding or brushes, or from other animals. People can even spread the infection to their pets. An exact diagnosis in animals and people is made by appearance of the skin lesions and fungal cultures.

There are a variety of anti-fungal creams, lotions, shampoos, and oral medications available for both pets and people. If ringworm is identified on your pet, all bedding, combs, and brushes must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. The fungal spores remain infective for up to 18 months, so remove as many as pos-

sible by vacuuming floors, surfaces, and vents. Steam-cleaning carpets is also necessary. Avoid contact with stray animals, particularly if they show signs of ringworm infection. The best way to prevent ringworm transmission is diagnosing your pet early and following your veterinarian's instructions completely when treating your pet.

## Dog and Cat Bites

Most dog and cat bites are not severe but, depending on the location of the bite and the severity of the wound, bites can result in infection and damage to bones and soft tissues. Aside from people who handle dogs routinely, such as veterinarians, most dog bites occur in children under the age of 12. The damage inflicted by dog and cat bites is a function of both the physical trauma associated with the wound and the bacteria that spread from the animal's mouth into the wound. Your pet's mouth contains many bacteria that can cause disease if it gets into a wound. The majority of bites result in small wounds, but even the smallest wound can become infected.

Signs of infection in people and animals include pain, swelling, redness, and/or drainage from the wound. All animal bites should be vigorously cleaned with soap and water. A physician should see all bite victims, and animals bitten by another animal should be seen by a veterinarian. Following a bite, many people and pets are treated with antibiotics to prevent infection.

Bites can be avoided by taking measures to prevent the interactions that lead to bites. People who have pets should learn proper methods of obedience training, and children should be taught to avoid loose or unfamiliar dogs or cats. Young children should always be supervised when playing with dogs or cats, and no child should be left alone with a dog or cat. Remember, most bites involve children, and bite victims can suffer from long-term negative physical and emotional effects.

*Dr. Virginia Clemans was Best Friends' chief veterinarian from 2001 to 2004.*

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# **Section 4: Socialization, Basic Training and Enrichment**



# Positive Reinforcement: Training with Praise and Rewards

By Sherry Woodard

Positive reinforcement is the most effective and humane way to train animals. The basic principle is to reward a desired behavior with something pleasant. As with so many things, correct timing is essential. To get the animal to associate the reward with the correct behavior, the treat or praise must be delivered immediately. Consistency is also essential – always reward the desired behavior and don't ever reward undesired behavior.

The reward for good behavior can be a favorite toy, a game, petting, praise, or food treats. Most dogs and cats will work for food, so food is the most common training reward. Use small pieces of soft treats that don't require a lot of chewing, so that you don't lose the animal's focus on the task at hand. Offer praise and food rewards every time a dog is learning a new behavior. After the dog responds consistently to a cue, you can praise him without offering any treats.

Your dog will learn cues better if everyone in your household uses the same cues. Some commonly used cues are sit, stay, down (used when you want your dog to lay down), off (used when a dog has jumped up on someone), and come.

Keep training sessions short – you want training to be fun for both you and your pet. Dogs are very sensitive to the tone of your voice, so if you're in a bad mood, put off the training session until you can enjoy the time spent with your dog.

Remember, to remain well-behaved, all dogs need regular exercise and social interaction. To keep them socially acceptable, they need to socialize. After some basic training, your dog will politely interact with most humans, whether they are guests in your home or strangers in the park. If you want more information about



humane methods of training, here are a few resources:

- *How to Teach a New Dog Old Tricks* by Ian Dunbar (1996). A comprehensive workbook for the motivated dog person, with sections on basic off-leash obedience, temperament modification, behavior troubleshooting, training theory and health care.
- *The Whole Dog Journal* is a monthly guide to natural dog care and training. It contains helpful information on new training methods and products, and accepts no commercial advertising. Approximately 25 pages each month.

For more information, read the other training resources in this manual and “Recommended Dog Training and Care Resources” in Section 1.

## **Getting the Behavior You Want from Your Dog**

**By Sherry Woodard**

All dogs benefit from learning how to behave appropriately when sharing space and time with their human family members and their other animal friends. Dogs aren't born knowing how to interact politely with people, so you'll need to teach your dog the basics using positive reinforcement training techniques.

The basic cues every dog should know are:

**Recall.** Recall involves name recognition and getting your dog to come when called. Be aware of the tone of voice you use. We humans often use recall with an unhappy tone, and it also often means that whatever fun thing the dog is doing is about to stop. You want your dog to associate good things with running to you, so practice the following daily: Using a happy tone, call your dog and when she comes, reward her with a treat or a pet, and then let her go.

**Sit.** Dogs cannot jump up and sit at the same time, so teaching your dog to sit can eliminate jumping-up behavior. "Sit" is a great way for your dog to greet new people.

**Down.** Teach your dog to lie down all the way, with elbows on the floor. As with "sit," the cue "down" can stop jumping-up behavior by replacing it. "Down" also helps to teach patience and self-control to your dog.

**Stand.** This cue is used for grooming, and inspecting lumps and bumps. You can use "wait" with a stand position.

**Wait.** The cues "wait" and "stay" also teach your dog patience and self-control. "Wait" involves a brief wait. In a sit, stand or down position, ask your dog to wait for food, wait to have a leash clipped on her collar, wait while you go in and out of doorways.

**Stay.** The "stay" cue is used for longer waiting periods. If you don't want the dog to move, it's best to ask her to stay in a down position, since other positions may become uncomfortable to hold. Teach "stay" on a bed or mat if you want the dog to stay in one place. Using a mat makes the place for the stay more comfortable, and the dog can clearly see, feel and relax in the designated space.

Make sure you use "stay" appropriately. For example, if you teach a dog to stay until released, but then start saying it as you leave for work every day, you will confuse your dog and lose the true use of "stay."



## Section 4: Socialization, Basic Training and Enrichment

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**Go to bed.** You can make a game out of “go to bed.” Start by leading your dog to his bed and then rewarding him. Then, add the words once your dog is running to this place, expecting a treat, toy, praise or chewy.

Once you have taught your dog the basics, you can reinforce his learning throughout the daily routine. There are many opportunities to practice every day, without setting aside a specific time for training. Here are some examples:

- Ask your dog to sit before going outside and before coming back in.
- Use “down” before giving your dog a meal.
- Use “sit” before giving the dog a treat or toy, or before throwing a toy for a game of fetch.

- You can add “wait” or “stay” to any “sit” or “down.”

Ask your dog to sit, lie down, wait or stay in order to get access to anything the dog wants: a walk, a favorite game, toys, treats, social time with people and other animals. Remember to reward only when the dog is in the correct position.

Being consistent with this daily training and making it fun will allow you and your dog to develop a trusting, positive relationship. Your dog will see you as the best, most generous leader ever – and he’ll respond with great behavior in exchange for fun rewards.

# Improving a Dog's Social Skills

By Sherry Woodard

All dogs can benefit from practicing their social skills. Many dogs lack basic social skills, either because of limited exposure to other dogs and people, or a lack of positive experiences. Dogs who were raised without leaving their house and yard often show fear of many commonplace situations, such as meeting new people. These dogs are uncomfortable near new people because they look, smell and sound different from their families.

If a dog has had limited experience with the outside world, any change, such as a move to a new house or city, can be quite a challenge. When dogs like these end up in shelters, they often have a very hard time adjusting to their new environment. They may have been great with their people, even with a few family friends, but when everything in their lives has been turned upside down, they become fearful and antisocial. Unless someone works with them to improve their social skills, they are often deemed unsuitable family pets.

We can help these dogs by teaching them that the world isn't as scary as it seems. Here is a list of things to practice with a dog to get him up to speed on his social skills and more comfortable with all types of situations. When working with a dog, try to check all the boxes and use a fresh copy of the worksheet each month. If your dog develops positive associations with meeting new challenges, he will soon be comfortable and relaxed, ready to go places and do many fun things.

## Dog Socialization Check-Off List

Handle all the dog's body parts on a daily basis, giving praise and small food rewards for relaxing. As the dog becomes more comfortable, have other people start to handle the dog, too.

### Introduce the dog to people.

People of various ages:

- Newborn to three months
- Three months to six months
- Six months to nine months
- Newly walking toddlers
- One year old
- Two years old
- More than one toddler at a time
- Three to four years old
- Groups of children playing
- Teenagers – boys and girls
- Adults – many different ones
- Seniors – many different ones

Differences in people:

- Loud man
- Loud woman
- Ethnic differences
- Using oxygen
- Using a cane
- Using a walker
- Using a wheelchair
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

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People doing different things:

- Singing
- Dancing
- Clapping
- Jumping
- Hopping
- Skipping
- Whistling
- Jogging
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

People wearing different things:

- Hats
- Glasses
- Sunglasses
- A helmet
- Coats with hood up
- Capes with hood up
- Gloves
- Masks
- Big boots
- Uniforms

### **Introduce the dog to other animals. To keep all pets safe, supervise at all times.**

- Cats                    Kittens
- Dogs                    Puppies
- Horses                   Small pet animals

### **Introduce the dog to household activities.**

If the dog was an outdoor pet, everything will be new, so don't do too much at once.

- Vacuum
- Broom
- Mop
- Alarm clock
- TV
- Radio

- Noise-making children's toys

- Children's pull toys

- Umbrella (open and close it)

- Dog nail clippers

- Dog brush and comb

- Sound of electric hair clippers

- Sound of electric fan

- Plastic bags flapping

- A balloon with air escaping

- A recording of storm sounds

- A kite

- Things being dropped

- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Introduce the dog to the big, wide world.**

Take the dog on many different types of outings.

- Ride in cars

- Walk on different flooring

- See people on skates

- Use stairs with and without backs

- See people using shopping carts

- Walk on bridges

- Meet new friends

- Visit other people's homes

- Take the dog to be groomed

- See and smell parks

- Sit at coffee shop with you

- Use elevators

- Use automatic doors at stores

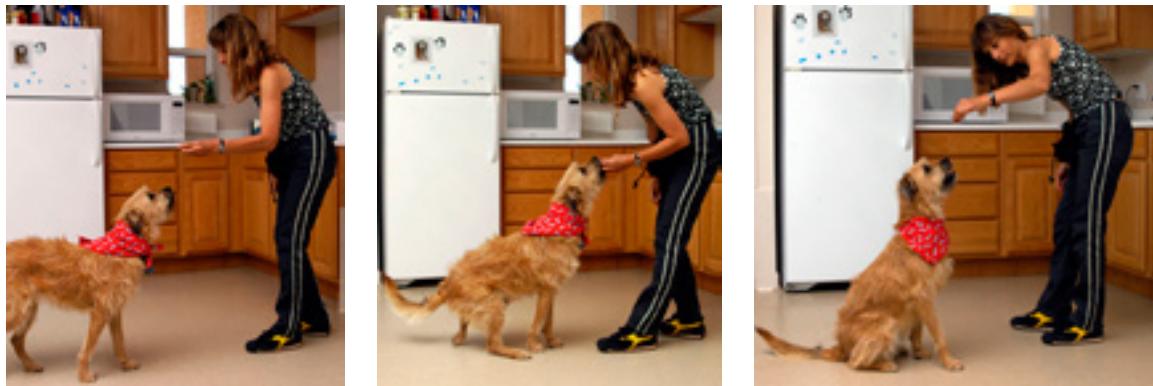
- See people on bicycles

- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Teaching Your Dog Basic Cues

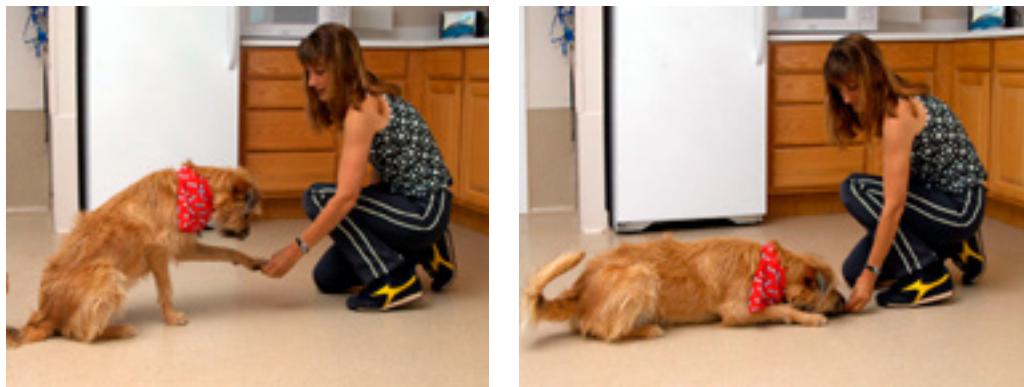
By Sherry Woodard

Teaching a dog to respond to basic cues, using small food treats as a lure, is easy, fun and gives fast results. Here's how to do it:



### Teaching "Sit"

Hold a treat in front of the dog's nose, just out of the dog's reach. Raise the treat toward the top of the dog's head. When the dog's head follows the treat up, the dog's rear end will go down. When the dog's rear is solidly on the floor, give the dog the treat and praise her. If the dog jumps up rather than sits, you are holding the treat too high. If the dog backs up, try teaching the cue with a wall behind the dog.



### Teaching "Down"

Start with the dog sitting in front of you. Hold a treat near his face, then move the treat down toward the floor. Wait a moment, holding the treat close in to the dog's body, then move the treat slowly away from the dog. Be patient with this exercise – it may not work perfectly the first time. If the dog gets up instead of lying down, try again. Once the dog lies down, praise him and give him the treat.

### Teaching “Stand”

Start with the dog sitting in front of you. Slowly move the treat toward your body and take one step back. As the dog follows the treat, she will stand up. Give her the treat as soon as she is standing.

### Teaching “Sit” from “Down”

Start with the dog lying down. Hold a treat in front of the dog’s nose, keeping the treat close to his nose. Slowly raise the treat up over his head. As he follows the treat, he will move into a sit. Give him the treat as soon as he is sitting.

### Adding a Verbal Cue

When the dog is consistently performing the behavior you want (e.g., sitting), add a verbal cue (e.g., “sit”) when the dog is sitting. If you start giving the cue before the animal is offering the behavior, the dog will not clearly associate the cue with the behavior. Instead, get the behavior first and then start giving the cue while the dog performs the behavior. Gradually move the cue back in time until you are giving the cue before the behavior. If done correctly, this is an easy way for the dog to learn that a particular cue is associated with a particular behavior.

## **Clicker Training for You and Your Pets**

By Sherry Woodard

### **What is clicker training?**

Clicker training is a fun and effective way to communicate with your pets. You can train almost any kind of pet – including cats, birds, dogs, and horses – to respond to the clicker. For example, you can teach your dog to sit or your bird to hop onto a stick using clicker training. The only thing you need is a clicker, some treats, and an animal friend!

Clicker training is gentler than traditional training methods. According to Karen Pryor's clickertraining.com website, "In traditional training, you tell an animal or person what to do, make that behavior happen (using force if necessary), reward good results, and punish mistakes. In clicker training you watch for the behavior you like, mark the instant it happens with a click, and pay off with a treat. The treat may be food, a pat, praise, or anything else the learner enjoys. If the learner makes a mistake all you do is wait and let them try again."

### **How did clicker training get started?**

Clicker training uses a method called operant conditioning, pioneered by psychologist B.F. Skinner in the 1960s. Skinner observed that an animal will tend to repeat an action that has a positive consequence and will avoid an action that has a negative consequence. If a primary reinforcer (like food) is used, the animal will become conditioned to repeat the action that produces the food. Using operant conditioning, Skinner trained rats to push a lever that released food pellets.

The clicker is used as a conditioned reinforcer – a cue that something good is coming. A form of clicker training (using whistles) was originally used with great success on dolphins. In the 1990s, clicker training for other animals really



took off when trainers realized how easy and effective it was.

### **How does clicker training work?**

Clicker training works by getting your pet to expect something positive (like a treat) in return for doing something you ask him or her to do. You use the clicker so that your pet will associate the treat with the clicking noise. (By the way, you don't have to use a clicker; if your dog is frightened by the clicker sound, try clicking a ballpoint pen.) Eventually, you won't even have to use treats; your pet will respond to the clicker alone.

### **How do I do clicker training?**

To start, make sure you have your clicker and some soft treats on hand, cut or broken up into small pieces. You don't want treats that are too crumbly, since you want your pet to focus on you, not the crumbs dropping on the floor.

Step 1: Face your pet. Push and release the clicker, then give your pet a treat. Practice this a few times. You want your pet to expect a treat every time she hears the clicking noise.

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Step 2: Ask your pet to do something easy – like “sit.” Then, as she is doing what you’ve asked, click the clicker and offer the treat. Make sure you click and offer the treat while your pet is sitting, so she connects it all together – the click, the treat, and the act of sitting.

### **What if my pet doesn’t do what I asked?**

If your pet doesn’t do what you’ve asked (like sit or come), don’t click or offer a treat. You can try to help her get the idea by holding the treat above her nose (to get her to sit) or by walking away from her and holding the treat out in front of you (to get her to come).

If your pet is still not responding, you can do a click when there’s even small movements in the right direction. For example, if you are working on “come” and your pet takes two steps in the right direction, click the clicker and offer a treat. Don’t ever push, pull or force her to do what you want.

### **What other kinds of things can I teach my pet to do?**

Once your pet has learned one behavior and does it every time, you can start adding others. Don’t try to teach her more than one at a time. Here are some examples of other behaviors to click and give treats for:

- A head tilt
- Holding up one paw (high five!)
- Sitting up on her hind legs
- Dancing or turning in a circle

Remember:

- Click while the behavior is happening.
- Always click first, then offer a treat.
- Only click once.

One last thing: Keep the practice sessions short. You want your pet to enjoy clicker training, so don’t make it into a chore. Have fun clicker training your pet!

### **Where can I find out more about clicker training?**

Here are two websites to check out:

- [www.clickertrain.com](http://www.clickertrain.com)  
[www.clickertraining.com](http://www.clickertraining.com)

# Teaching 'Come'

By Sherry Woodard

The best way to have your dog come reliably is to make it a party every time you call her and she comes to you. Whether the party involves giving treats, affection, praise or toys, she should never have a reason to think twice about coming to you.

To teach your dog to come, prepare yourself for the lesson with pea-sized treats in a treat pouch you wear and/or a favorite toy tucked in your pocket. Take the dog somewhere with few distractions. I tether the dog to me, a doorknob or a chair leg so she won't wander off. Say "come" (or her name) only once, but say it with great enthusiasm and wave treats right in front of the dog's nose. Reward her with a treat when she comes and repeat the exercise. If she does not come within a few seconds after you say "come," don't repeat the cue. Just wait until she comes, reward her, and start again. Do this over and over; to keep it fun, always use a happy tone.

When she comes consistently with only a short distance between you, gradually increase the distance and repeat the exercise. The length of leash can grow to a 20- to 30-foot-long line with improved skills at learning the cue. A dog should never be allowed off-leash, or at least never be asked to come when off-leash, until she has perfect recall on leash.

Once you have practiced in locations with few distractions, start practicing in locations with more distractions. Then, add other people to the game of learning. Start with the exercise described above: Have a friend stand near the dog and instruct him/her to say "come" and give her a treat when she complies. Next, stand a short distance from your friend and alternate saying "come" and giving treats. You and your friend can start moving farther away from each other and have the dog on a long leash so she can run between you for fun and treats. This can grow



into a long-distance game of recall. It's a great way for your dog to interact, exercise and learn to enjoy more people.

One of the reasons that "come" can be challenging to teach is that much of the time, it is used to interrupt what a dog thinks is fun. For instance, say your dog is running in the yard, barking at the neighbor's cat. You respond by yelling, "Stop that and come in the house!" For the dog, continuing to bark at the cat is a lot more fun than responding to your stern tone of voice. So, call your dog in a cheerful voice and reward her generously when she comes.

To create a positive association with "come," don't use it casually. "Come" can be a lifesaving cue if your dog is in danger. Practice until it becomes a reflex for the dog.

Remember to keep all learning as fun as possible. Use a happy tone, be patient, and keep lessons short and frequent.

# Teaching ‘Down’ and ‘Stay’

By Sherry Woodard

“Stay” is a lifesaving cue to teach all dogs. When can “stay” save your dog’s life? Whenever giving the cue would prevent your dog from making a mad dash out the front door, the car, or the back-yard gate. Stay is a cue that many people forget to practice – and without practice, your dog may not have this skill when it truly matters.

Prepare yourself for the lesson with pea-sized treats in a treat pouch you wear and/or a favorite toy tucked in your pocket. Select a place with few distractions. I offer a flat pad or mat for the dog to lie on. I think it helps communicate to the dog that if he moves from that spot, he will be going back and trying again before a reward comes his way. For the dog’s comfort, I teach him to stay in a “down” position. He can wiggle in a “down” without leaving his stay, whereas wiggling in a “sit” or “stand” often means leaving the desired position.

### Down

If your dog doesn’t know “down,” here’s how to teach him: Start with the dog sitting in front of you. Hold a treat near his face, then move the treat down toward the floor. Wait a moment, holding the treat close in to the dog’s body, then move the treat slowly away from the dog. Be patient with this exercise – it may not work perfectly the first time. If the dog gets up instead of lying down, try again. Once the dog lies down, praise him and give him the treat.

When the dog is consistently doing a “down,” add a verbal cue (e.g., “down”) when the dog is lying down. If you start giving the cue before

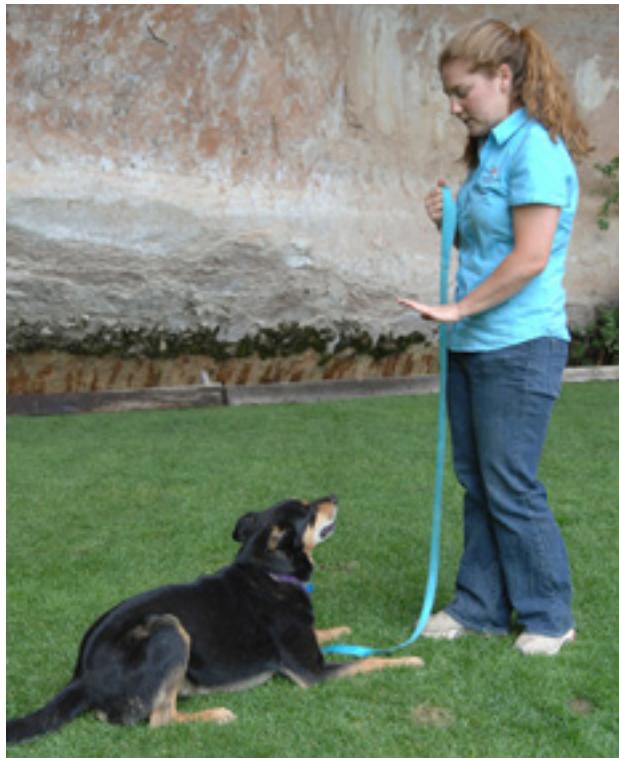


the animal is doing the behavior, the dog will not clearly associate the cue with the behavior. Instead, get the behavior first and then start giving the cue while the dog performs the behavior. Gradually move the cue back in time until you are giving the cue before the behavior. If done correctly, this is an easy way for the animal to learn that a particular cue is associated with a particular behavior.

### Stay

To teach “stay”: Have your dog lie down. Put one hand out toward him and say “stay.” Give a treat quickly, before he moves. He may then get excited and stand up. Have him lie down again and repeat: Say “stay” and give a treat quickly so he gets the idea that the treat is given only when he is down.

Then, start lengthening the time before the treat is popped into his mouth. I start using a release word to indicate that the dog may move. In fact, I use the word “release” because it is a word not often used in casual conversation. Once your



dog is waiting consistently in a “down,” move one step away before stepping back and giving him the treat. Use small steps for best results. I continue this process, gradually increasing the number of steps back, until I have the dog waiting for a treat while I leave the room and return.

If your dog is high energy or easily bored, you

can start the lessons with a tether on him so he cannot move away. If you started with a tether, remove it once you have a brief “stay.” If your dog needs many lessons with the tether before he has the self-control necessary to do a “stay,” don’t worry. Some dogs need more time to get the idea.

Remember to keep all learning as fun as possible. Use a happy tone, be patient, and keep lessons short and frequent.

### Teaching 'Leave It'

By Sherry Woodard

Like "stay," "leave it" is a cue that may prevent your dog from being injured and may even save his life. "Leave it" should be taught to all dogs and practiced frequently. Hazards that you want your dog to leave alone include antifreeze in a puddle; sharp bones, broken glass or any other dangerous trash on the ground; and even a dog squabble at the dog park. Your dog responding to the cue "leave it" can be the difference between you giving quick praise or heading to an emergency vet clinic.

Teaching "leave it" is not difficult. Do the lessons inside your home or in an area with very few distractions. I prepare by loading a treat pouch with pea-sized, high-value treats — food the dog will find enticing but won't take him a long time to eat. I place a boring item (something the dog has not seen before) on the floor. The item — an unopened can of human food from the kitchen, for example — will get the dog's attention but most dogs won't want to pick up the can.

Allow the dog to approach the can and as he starts to sniff, say "leave it" in a happy tone and pop a treat into his mouth. Change the item to something else that he probably won't want to pick up and repeat the exercise. Try five different items, repeating the exercise, and each time move farther away from the item so the dog has to come to you to get the treat.

After using five different "boring" items and gradually increasing the distance between the dog and the treat, start using slightly more exciting items. You know your dog, so you alone know what items he would consider more in-



teresting, but don't jump to "high-value" items right away. To increase his chances of success at learning the cue, you want to work up to high-value items gradually. If Kleenex or a piece of plastic, for instance, would attract your dog on a walk, don't start with those. Choose the items based on your ultimate goal: Anytime you say "leave it," you want to be confident that your dog will indeed leave whatever it is and come to you.

The reward can change as well. If your dog has a favorite toy, squeak it and play for a moment when he comes running to you after leaving the other item of interest. Most dogs love interacting with us, so a moment of praise or play with a toy can be just as effective as a treat.

Even though you're practicing "leave it" as a way to keep your dog safe, you want him to see it as a fun game you play. When your dog is proficient at the game in your home, start practicing in a variety of locations with more distractions.

## Teaching ‘Speak’ and ‘Quiet’

By Sherry Woodard

Why would you want to teach your dog to “speak” (bark)? Well, teaching a dog to bark on cue can actually help control excessive barking. Plus, barking is one way for dogs to express themselves.

It’s a good idea to teach “quiet” first, though, especially if your dog is very talkative. Have a supply of soft, small yummy treats at the ready. You can teach “quiet” by rewarding the dog with a treat between barks. You want to be clear that you are rewarding the quiet, not a bark, so use a marker — a clicker or your voice saying “yes” — at the quiet moment. Start by rewarding a quiet moment, then reward for longer and longer periods of quiet.

Add a verbal cue (“quiet,” for instance) once the dog is consistently giving you the behavior you want. If you start giving the cue before the animal is doing the behavior, the dog may not associate the cue with the behavior. Instead, get the behavior first and then start giving the cue while the dog performs the behavior. Gradually move the cue back in time until you are giving the cue before the behavior. If done correctly, this is an easy way for the animal to learn that a particular cue is associated with a particular behavior. Your dog will learn that if you give the cue “quiet,” she will only be rewarded if she doesn’t make a sound.

To teach “speak,” I often have another dog act as a role model. This technique works amazingly fast if you are rewarding the “speaking” dog with treats. Tether both dogs and stand in front of them so you can be ready to reward the “speaking” behavior from each dog.



If you do not have a role model who speaks, start by tethering your dog and standing in front of her. Show the dog the treat and wave it close enough for the smell to be enticing.

Most dogs will then start offering any behaviors that have been rewarded in the past (sit, down). Others may wiggle and seem confused. Give the dog time to become slightly frustrated. It doesn’t take more than a minute for most dogs. If the dog makes any sound — a whine or a yip — give her a marker (a click from a clicker or a verbal “yes”) to mark that moment, then reward her with a treat.

Step back and wait again. I reward for any sound for about five repetitions, then I wait for more sound. If I don’t get a bark but do have more vocalizing, I continue to reward the dog. As with teaching “quiet,” get the behavior first and then start giving a cue (e.g., “speak”) while the dog performs the desired behavior. Gradually move the cue back in time until you are giving the cue before the dog barks.

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I have met many people who say they will never again teach a dog to speak because their dog started barking all the time, as a way of requesting treats. If you want your dog to speak on cue, reward her for speaking only when you have asked her to speak. Ignore any unsolicited barking: Turn your body away or walk away.

To increase your rate of success, practice both of these cues often and remember to keep it fun. Talkative dogs love to interact! With that said, I do meet dogs who are not barkers. If your dog is not enjoying learning to speak, I suggest that you move on to something both you and your dog will enjoy.

# Teaching Your Dog to Enjoy Touch

By Sherry Woodard

Many dogs have sensitive areas where they would rather not be touched. If you've adopted a dog with an unknown past, you may never know what past experiences triggered your dog's current aversion to having certain areas of his body touched.

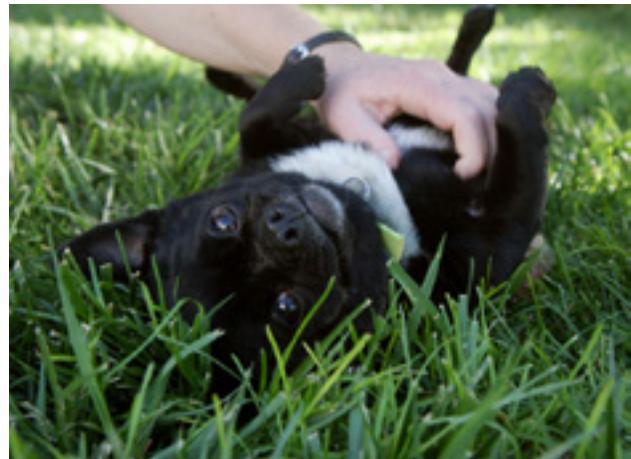
These past experiences may have included one or more of the following:

- If the dog's nails were cut to the quick, it is very painful. The next time someone tries to lift and hold a paw, the dog may expect pain.
- If the dog was badly matted or overdue for a grooming, her hair may have been pulled during grooming. Mats themselves can become painful as they pull on the skin.
- Lack of socialization is a common reason that some dogs don't enjoy touch as much as they would if they had been properly socialized.

You don't have to accept the status quo, however. You can help the dogs in your life learn to enjoy touch more. First, see a veterinarian to rule out any medical causes for the discomfort. Then, you can begin to work on teaching your dog new associations to touch.

Here are a few things you will need:

- Comfortable clothes that allow you to move freely.
- A lead, to let the dog have freedom of movement without allowing wandering.
- A washable mat big enough for you and the dog to sit on. Ideally, the mat would be big enough so the dog could lay down on the mat next to you or between your legs.
- A treat pouch, such as a fanny pack with a zipper or other closable pouch.
- Treats to fill the pouch. The treats should be small enough so that doling out many treats won't be a meal or cause stomach upset. (Try mixing dry kibble and soft moist kibble.)



- A grooming kit: a comb, a brush, and nail clippers. (These are for teaching more than actual grooming.)

If you are doing this exercise at home, you might want to work with the TV or radio on to reduce distractions. To get started, put the dog on lead and wear your treat pouch. If the dog is too focused on the pouch, you can keep the treats in a plastic bag inside the pouch to control yummy smells until you are ready to give a treat.

Next, place your mat and grooming tools on the floor and allow or, if needed, encourage the dog to investigate. Sit on the mat with the dog and bring her toward you with the lead. Don't stare directly into the dog's eyes or lean over the dog, since the dog may find this behavior threatening. Allow the dog about 2 1/2 feet of lead for movement. Once she relaxes – either in a standing, sitting or prone position – you can loosen the lead, but keep it under part of your body so that she cannot wander off.

Make sure you are relaxed yourself – if this exercise is going to be relaxing for the dog, you must be relaxed as well. Start talking to the dog using a calm, soothing voice. Next, touch her

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and pet her, using gentle pressure. Move your hand slowly so you don't startle her. Try not to touch the spots that she is uncomfortable with. Depending on how sensitive the dog is, she may relax quickly or not relax much the first time. You might have to do several sessions before you see and feel the changes in her energy and body language.

Some dogs are fearful of touch in general and will need many sessions of these exercises to become relaxed. All sessions should be kept short, starting with five minutes. When the dog begins to relax, add five more minutes, and continue adding time until the dog is able to fall asleep.

Some dogs need help on very specific body parts, such as feet or ears. If that's the case with your dog, don't touch those areas the first couple of sessions, just get close to them without touching them. After three sessions, move near the problem area and then touch it, watching closely for a reaction. Use caution here! If he has a negative reaction (such as moving away from you), offer a small treat and start touching other parts

of his body again. Gradually work your way back to the problem area, and then give a treat and touch the sensitive spot. If he reacts positively, repeat the process: Touch his whole body and return to the problem area, giving a treat if he stays relaxed. Remember to keep the sessions short until you have a relaxed dog.

Once you have a relaxed dog, you can proceed to lifting and holding his paws, lifting his lips and rubbing his gums, giving hugs, combing and brushing, and looking in his ears. If you want to progress to clipping his nails, the first step is to simply move the nail clippers near his feet. Next, just touch the clippers on the nails and watch your dog's reaction. Always back up the process if he appears anxious or upset.

The key is to do everything slowly and gently. The goal is to teach the dog to enjoy being touched everywhere, not just to tolerate handling. If you can achieve that, you'll have a relaxed dog with good associations to the presence of the handler, the act of being handled and the use of grooming tools.

## **Helping Your Dog to Enjoy Car Rides**

**By Sherry Woodard**

Do you have a dog who hates car rides, or who looks ill at even the mention of a ride in the car? Many dogs lack positive associations to car rides because when they do go for a drive, it's to the groomer or veterinarian, outings they may not like.

We can help most dogs feel better about car rides by teaching them to associate the car with good things. Before starting these exercises, open a car window just a little for fresh air. If it's hot out, you may want to work in the evenings or early mornings. You could also try cooling the car before bringing your dog out to it, but don't blast air conditioning on the dog. Remember to praise your dog for all progress she makes.

Here are some steps you can take to help your dog enjoy car rides:

1. Don't feed your dog her daily meal before doing the exercise. Start with a walk out to the car. If your car is in an unfenced driveway, keep her on a loose lead for safety. Open the car door and hand the dog a small piece of food or her favorite toy, which you have retrieved from inside the car. If your dog doesn't want to get into the car, walk back to the house. (If the dog does get into the car, move on to step 2.) Repeat this step one to three times each day for six days.
2. Once you've established a positive association to being near the car, climb into the car holding the dog's lead and hand her some of her food, kibble by kibble, or hold out her favorite toy. Tell her how much fun car rides are, hand her one more piece of food or the toy, and return to the house. If she still seemed reluctant during this step, repeat the process three times daily – and start moving further inside the car so that she is stretching to reach the toy or kibble. If needed, repeat
3. After six days, you should be able to walk out and sit in the car with your dog. If she is still unwilling to climb in, gently pick her up and help her in. Attach a seatbelt to the dog if you plan to use one for rides. Sit next to her, pet her and praise her, and use the toy or food as a reward. Then, teach her a release word, such as "okay," and climb out together (you first) and go for a short walk – another reward. Practice three times in one day.
4. On another day, repeat step 3 but this time have your dog eat her whole meal out in the car. Sit in the car with her next to you and



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- let her eat. After she has finished, release her with an “okay” and take a walk.
5. Dinner out again! This time, put the dog in the car with her food and start the engine. Don’t go anywhere – just start the car. If she is willing to eat with the motor running, let it run. If not, shut it off and let her finish her dinner. Then, release her and take your walk together.
  6. If the dog stopped eating with the motor on, try a higher-value food the next day. Repeat the previous day’s activity: give a yummy dinner with the motor running and take a walk afterward. Practice daily or nightly until your dog is relaxed, climbs in and out of the car, and enjoys dinner with the motor running.
  7. You have reached the big event: the car ride! Just like every other day, go out together, get in the car and start the motor. Have the dog’s dinner with you, but don’t serve it yet. Attach her seatbelt and give her a toy for the short journey. As you leave the driveway, talk to her and praise her. Drive no more than five minutes and when you get back, serve her dinner in your driveway with the motor still running. Then release her, take a walk together, and tell her how great she is.
- From this point on, practice daily, adding drive time each day. If your dog starts to drool or become anxious at any time, stop and take her for a walk to relax her, and then go home. Make the next day’s drive a little shorter or take a route with fewer curves and bumps if you suspect that might make a difference. Start taking her out for walks during your outings and remember to travel together often. You don’t need to serve dinner, but a small treat or playtime are great rewards for stress-free trips. Thank you for working with your dog so that she can enjoy car rides for the rest of her life!

## Dogs and Aggression

By Sherry Woodard

Aggression is normal canine behavior. In the wild, dogs use aggressive behavior to hunt for food, to defend themselves, and to guard their territory. Dogs use aggression to intimidate or harm, but most of the time, dogs threaten aggression without needing to follow through. The reason is that dogs who are properly socialized understand and respect the social hierarchy.

Because people don't communicate in the same ways that dogs do, misunderstandings between people and dogs can occur. If a dog feels intimidated, confused or threatened by a person, the dog may growl, show his teeth, or snap.



Unneutered dogs are more likely to display aggressive behaviors. If your dog has not been spayed or neutered, that surgery alone may lessen aggressive behavior. Besides spay/neuter, the best way to prevent aggression is to thoroughly socialize your dog as a young puppy. Introduce her to many different people and situations. She needs to experience positive interactions with other dogs and other animals, and the sights and sounds of everyday life. Take her out with you often and make new experiences fun. Make sure she understands that strangers can be her friend; she should enjoy being petted and handled.

If you watch dogs play together, they often mouth each other in a sort of mock bite. Other puppies and mom dogs teach soft biting during normal dog play. Many dogs play with people in the same way – by mouthing our hands or other body parts. Though mouthing is not biting, it can become too aggressive to be acceptable. To discourage mouthing, always use a toy to play with your dog. If you inadvertently become the toy, say “Ouch!” in a loud, surprised tone and take your hand away.

Aggression between dogs and people can be very dangerous. If your dog has ever hurt (broken the skin) of a person, it is your responsibility to seek help from a behavior specialist for your dog's aggression. You should protect both your dog and future victims by using a muzzle in situations like trips to the veterinarian or the groomer. If you are planning to use a muzzle, buy a basket-style muzzle and secure it with string in at least two places on your dog's collar. Test the muzzle for safety and proper fit before trying it in any situation where it is truly needed.

If your dog has broken the skin on another dog, you should still be concerned about injury to people, since they can be bitten trying to stop dog fights. Again, you should seek help from a behavior specialist for your dog's aggression.

## Section 4: Socialization, Basic Training and Enrichment

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If your dog suddenly starts exhibiting aggressive behavior, there could be a medical cause, so consult your veterinarian first. If that's ruled out, ask your veterinarian to recommend a behavior specialist. Choose an expert who uses positive reinforcement. Physical punishment won't help the situation; in fact, it can make the problem much worse. You might also want to choose a behaviorist who does in-home evaluations. Aggression can be a very complex situation to resolve, so it can be potentially dangerous to follow recommendations made without doing an in-home evaluation.

There are various types of aggression exhibited by dogs:

**Dominance aggression** is motivated by a perceived challenge to the dog's social status or a challenge to his control of a social interaction. Most well-socialized dogs will work out dog/dog disagreements without a fight. Dominance toward people most often occurs when there is an unclear structure. Some dogs may place themselves higher than people in their perceived group or human family. Dogs who show dominance toward people need training to help build healthy relationships. The training must be done with positive reinforcement, not punishment.

**Fear-motivated aggression** is a defensive reaction that occurs when the dog believes she is in danger. For example, if she believes you are going to hurt her when you lift up your arm to throw a ball for a game of fetch, she may bite you. A dog may perceive the approach of another dog as a threat and act aggressively out of fear. Fear-motivated aggression can often be greatly reduced through training and socialization.

**Prey aggression**, or the prey drive, is motivated by a natural instinct to obtain food. If you find that your dog wants to hurt small animals – such as cats, rabbits, hamsters or small dogs – you must protect your dog from his tendencies. As the guardian of our pets, we are responsible for their behavior.

**Territorial aggression** happens when a dog defends what he sees as his property. The boundaries of what he considers his territory, however, may extend far beyond your yard.

**Protective aggression** is usually directed toward perceived threats to the dog's family.

**Possessive aggression** happens when a dog is defending his possessions. Guarding objects like food or chew toys is quite common, but dogs will guard almost anything that is important to them – from a favorite spot on the couch to a dirty sock on the floor! You can help alleviate this type of aggression by working with trades. If your dog is guarding something, you can trade him for something better.

**Redirected aggression** is relatively common and often misunderstood. If a dog is in an agitated, aggressive state, she may redirect her aggression onto someone else. For example, if two dogs are watching another dog (a potential intruder) walk by outside their fence, they may get so excited that they redirect their aggression onto each other.

Remember: Working with aggressive dogs can be dangerous, so use caution and seek help from a behavior specialist.

# The Look of Fear in Dogs

By Sherry Woodard

Dogs vary in their basic approach to the big wide world: Some have a “bring it on” attitude and others are fearful. A dog’s body language will change as he becomes fearful. What does a fearful dog look like?

- His ears will be flat if they normally stand up or will lay back against his head if they are normally floppy.
- Her tail will be down low or tucked under her body, between her legs.
- He will hold his head down; he may try to avoid eye contact.
- Her body will be tense and will sometimes tremble.
- He may urinate or defecate as you approach.
- She may try to hide or run away.
- He may exhibit excessive drooling, panting or yawning.
- She may offer threats to try to scare you away: She may become motionless or stiff, show her teeth or lunge at you.

A dog with healthy behavior has the following characteristics:

- She is friendly with adults and at least tolerant of children.
- He can be handled by you and other people, such as the veterinarian, the groomer or a stranger giving a casual hello.
- She is friendly with other dogs and plays well with them while young (of course, she may play less as she gets older).
- He relinquishes control of food and other objects, such as toys, without any guarding behavior, like growling.
- She is affectionate without being too needy. She can be left alone for reasonable periods of time without any dire consequences.



It's possible to work with fearful dogs so they can become adoptable. When working with a fearful dog, be extra gentle and patient. Some may always be shy around new people and new places, but with patience and understanding, a good home can be found.

Use caution while getting to know fearful dogs. If you have not worked with dogs before, you may need help to start building trust and a respectful relationship with a fearful dog. Fearful and shy dogs benefit from being around behaviorally healthy dogs, who serve as role models. The fearful dogs watch and learn.

Training is also helpful to fearful and shy dogs, since learning basic cues and agility builds their confidence. Simply going out in public places to socialize will help fearful dogs to become more confident and gregarious. You might invite your friends (who are strangers to the dog) to offer small food treats to teach the dog about the pleasant rewards of interacting with people.

# Fun Things to Do with Your Dog

By Sherry Woodard

There are many activities that you can enjoy with your dog. Here are some examples:

**Agility.** In agility trials, human handlers guide dogs off lead through obstacle courses that consist of hurdles, teeter-totters, tunnels, balance beams, weave poles, climbing structures, etc. Agility trials can be very competitive, or they can be done just for fun. Dogs gain confidence, release energy and learn how to stay focused while in high spirits. There are various organizations in the United States that sanction agility trials. For more information, visit [ehow.com](http://ehow.com), and then search for “agility training for dogs.”

**Animal-assisted activities (AAA).** These activities usually take place in a hospital or nursing home, not in a rehabilitative setting. Teams doing this type of visit help to improve mood or promote socialization rather than work on specific patient goals. Facilities that use animals for these activities may or may not require that handlers and animals become certified.

**Animal-assisted therapy (AAT).** AAT is more goal-directed than AAA; the results may be documented to meet a particular patient’s specific goals. AAA and AAT are valuable tools that can be used to promote well-being while celebrating the joy inherent in the canine-human bond. There are several programs in the United States that certify both the handler and the animal for therapy work. For more information on both AAA and AAT, visit the website for Pet Partners ([www.petpartners.org](http://www.petpartners.org)), whose mission is to improve human health through service and therapy animals.

**Backpacking.** Dogs, like people, love to get away from it all! If you’re going on a backpacking trip with your dog, plan ahead. Taking a dog out on the trail without some type of fitness conditioning can be dangerous to your dog’s health. Fitness doesn’t come overnight, so start

the process well before your trip. Check with a local authority to see if pets are allowed in the area where you’ll be trekking; some places allow dogs, but require permits. Carry a first-aid kit for you and your dog, and know how to administer basic first aid if your dog becomes injured. At any time of year, remember to pack enough water for you and your dog. For more information, visit [www.dogplay.com/Activities/hike.html](http://www.dogplay.com/Activities/hike.html).

**Day trips.** Most dogs love to ride in the car. Take your dog along if you’re visiting friends or family. For a special treat, include a side trip to do some shopping with your dog. Some dogs love to browse at pet supply stores (many of which allow you to bring your dog inside). Your dog may ask for a treat or two, so be prepared to spend a little money on this outing!

**Dog parks.** Dog parks – places where dogs are allowed to roam free – are becoming more common in many cities. Most are securely fenced, have safety signs posted with park rules, and require that you clean up after your dog (take some bags in case they’re not provided). Social dogs enjoy meeting new dog friends and returning to see them time and time again. You might make new friends as well! If your dog is toy-sized, supervise him or her closely around other dogs. While trying to play, a big dog may injure a small dog unintentionally. Some parks have a section exclusively for small dogs. For more information, visit [www.dog-play.com/dogpark.html](http://www.dog-play.com/dogpark.html).

**Freestyle musical dance.** This choreographed set of moves, performed to music, is done by dogs in partnership with their handlers. If you have not seen this new “sport” in action, you will be amazed at the level of expertise that can be achieved through teamwork, focus, and practice, practice, practice. For more information, visit [www.dog-play.com/musical.html](http://www.dog-play.com/musical.html).

**Flyball.** Flyball is a relay race that requires a dog to race over four hurdles, catch a tennis ball that has been released from a spring-loaded launcher, and then race back over the hurdles again. The dogs race in teams of four. Any dog who likes to chase a ball will probably love flyball, and it's an excellent way for your dog to burn up excess energy.

**Frisbee.** Dogs who love to play Frisbee, either purely for pleasure or in competition, are called disc dogs. Some dogs won't allow their people to play without them! If your dog loves to play ball, you may want to buy a disc and get your dog involved in this great form of exercise. One word of caution, however: This sport involves a lot of jumping, so consult with your veterinarian before starting your dog on a vigorous Frisbee training program. For more information, visit [www.dogplay.com/Activities/disc.html](http://www.dogplay.com/Activities/disc.html).

**Hiking.** Though most national parks don't allow dogs on trails, there are many state parks that do. For more information on finding dog-friendly trails in your state, visit [hikewithyourdog.com](http://hikewithyourdog.com). Also, almost every city has trails close by that you can explore with your canine companion. Even city streets can be used for a hiking adventure – take a local map and mark off a path up and down streets, adding a hill or two for more strenuous exercise. Don't forget to pack a first-aid kit, poop bags, and plenty of water.

**Obedience.** All dogs should receive some obedience training. How far you take it is up to you – some people want their dogs to compete in serious obedience trials, while others just want a dog who will obey simple cues in daily life. In either case, both you and your dog will enjoy the benefits of better communication and the increased bond between you that results from time spent together teaching, learning, and practicing. For more information, call your local animal shelter and ask for a referral for a training class.

**Tracking.** Playing hide-and-seek with a toy or item of clothing can be a tracking challenge for your dog. In winter, a fun game is to place a

glove (with a treat inside for extra enticement) just under the surface of the snow.

**Trick training.** Using clicker training or lure training (using treats for motivation) to teach your dog to do tricks is a great way to spend time with your dog, improve your relationship, and make obedience training even more fun. Once you and your dog have a repertoire of tricks, you can show off your wonder dog! Here are two websites on clicker training:

[www.clickertrain.com](http://www.clickertrain.com)  
[www.clickertraining.com](http://www.clickertraining.com)

**Vacations.** If you haven't taken a vacation with your dog, give it some thought. It can be very rewarding to have your dog along on your adventure, and many hotel chains accept dogs these days. To find dog-friendly lodging, visit [www.dogfriendly.com](http://www.dogfriendly.com), a website that also lists dog-friendly restaurants, parks, beaches and other attractions. The website called [www.petfriendlytravel.com](http://www.petfriendlytravel.com) includes vacation rentals, such as cabins, condos and B&Bs. If you want to take it a step further, look into dog camps, the ultimate vacation for you and your dog. They provide games, training opportunities, and plenty of other dogs to interact with. For a list of dog camps, visit [www.dog-play.com/camps.html](http://www.dog-play.com/camps.html).

When thinking about involving your dog in any strenuous activity, consider his or her health and physical ability. If your dog has not been exercising regularly, schedule a visit to your veterinarian. If more than a checkup (blood work to look at organ health, x-rays for joint health, etc.) is needed, your vet will advise you. He may also encourage you to increase your dog's exercise level gradually.

Remember – your dog loves spending time with you, so get out there with your canine companion and have some fun!

# Dog Toys

By Sherry Woodard

Dogs who have their own toys are less likely to be attracted to children's toys, or to use household items – such as the garden hose or your favorite shoes – as toys. Most dogs love to play with toys, but just like humans, they get bored with the same old thing. So, get your dog a variety of fun and interesting toys to play with. The toys you buy should be appropriate for the size, strength, activity level and interest of your dog.

For safety, you should watch how your dog uses (or rather, abuses) his toys. Some dogs will keep a soft toy forever without “killing” it. Other dogs will gleefully destroy their toys – it’s all part of the fun. But, it could be dangerous if parts of the toy become lodged in the dog’s mouth or throat, or are ingested. Wood and plastic can become lodged in gum tissue, causing painful injuries and infections that may require medical attention. If ingested, the toy parts can create blockages in the dog’s intestines, and surgery may be needed to remove the blockage.

Please replace all dangerous items with appealing safe toys. Some examples of safe toys are Nylabones and Kongs. Nylabones are hard rubber chew toys that come in a variety of sizes and flavors. Kong-type toys, which come in a variety of shapes, are great fun – you can stuff them, freeze food in them, and hide them for a game of seek. Puzzle toys (Buster Cubes are one example) are also entertaining, safe toys that keep your dog occupied for a while. When the dog rolls the cube, treats fall out at random.

If you have toys that are not dog-safe – for instance, stuffed animals that have ribbons, plastic eyes and other parts that may be chewed off – you can sometimes make them safe by removing the offending parts. Check what the stuffing is made of, too, since some toys contain sharp pieces of nut shells or plastic beads that your dog could ingest. If the toy has a squeaker inside, many dogs feel compelled to remove the

noise-making item. Dogs who tend to be destructive with toys should only play with these toys under supervision. Take the toys away if you are leaving the dog alone. Check all toys periodically for wear and tear.

Rubber balls and tennis balls are often favorite fetch toys. But, never throw them hard and fast toward the dog for her to catch – they may become lodged in the back of her mouth or throat. If your dog is extra large, you will need balls that are larger than tennis balls. Some dogs like to chase after rocks, but don’t use rocks as fetch toys, since they can wear down and even break your dog’s teeth.



If your dog loves chewing, you could try giving him Red Barn bully sticks or chipped rawhide. Again, though, watch him at first. Some dogs are so enthusiastic that they swallow without enough chewing, which could cause choking. Any product can be dangerous – watch your dog so you'll be aware of his habits and preferences, and know how to keep him safe and busy.

To get the most fun out of toys, keep some hidden away and trade a few out every week or so. That way, your dog will think she's getting a

constant supply of new toys. Play hide-and-seek with toys. At first, you may need to teach your dog to seek, but most dogs love the game once they get the idea. If you have a place in the yard where digging is encouraged (a dirt box, for instance), you can bury toys there for your dog to find. And don't forget good old-fashioned fetch and Frisbee-playing with your dog.

Playing with your dog enhances both of your lives – the interaction provides exercise, stress relief, comic relief and bonding opportunities.

# So Your Dog Has ‘Drive’?

By Sherry Woodard

When it comes to dogs, what does “drive” mean? Is there more than one type of drive? People talk about sex drive, play drive, prey drive. They also talk about drive in terms of high or low: a certain breed has a high prey drive, for example.

I have read everything I could find on drive and have found no scientific evidence that “drives” can be generalized in dog behavior. Every dog is an individual and should be treated as such. There is no special energy stored in a dog for sex drive or prey drive or ball drive. What’s important is not whether a dog has a high prey or play drive, but what motivates each dog as an individual.

We can learn how to use the dog’s preferences to encourage behavior we want or that the dog will enjoy. For instance, we can direct the dog’s energy into actions such as retrieving a toy, herding, lure coursing, participating in agility or flyball, catching a Frisbee, or doing scent work (detection or just hide and seek). Dogs who want to interact all day can be good candidates for Best Friends’ Search and Service Dog program. On the other hand, I have met many dogs who did not seem to want to participate in one of these activities until they were encouraged, taught, and/or reinforced.

I think the word “drive” is adding confusion to many human lives. Thinking we can generalize about what drives dogs is far too simple. Behavioral control in each dog is much more complex. I have found “prey drive” defined as natural behavior based in the survival instincts of wild animals. For the most part, though, dogs have not been wild animals for thousands of years and dogs have been bred for hundreds of years to create many different types, sizes and shapes of dogs with many different traits.

Of course, many dog breeds were developed to perform certain jobs, like herding or retrieving. But, I meet many dogs that get labeled as a particular breed because of what they look like, and sometimes these dogs don’t have the expected breed traits or characteristics. There are retriever-type dogs, for example, who don’t “naturally” seem highly motivated to retrieve. I think the concept of “drive” is over-used and misunderstood – and can lead to people feeling disappointed in their dog’s level of drive.

It’s not just genetics that influence who a dog is. The social skills a dog develops and the training techniques used also affect a dog’s overall personality, energy level, potential reached, and ability to show his true self. Fearful dogs may seem to have low energy: They may not play or chase anything.

Again, each dog should be treated as an individual; your dog’s energy level, motivations and preferences are unique to him/her. You can influence your dog’s behavior by rewarding the behavior you like. If your dog has extreme behavior or behavior you do not like, manage the dog so that she does not practice unwanted behavior while giving her other options that are more acceptable to you. (Please read “Managing a Dog with Behavior Challenges.”) If your dog’s behavior changes suddenly, make an appointment with your vet for a checkup because behavior changes can signal illness or injury.

Instead of focusing on how much (or how little) drive your dog has, I recommend that you concentrate on building a great relationship with your dog and directing your dog’s energy into activities you can both enjoy. Try different toys, use different play spaces and have fun together!

# **Section 5: Puppy Care and Training**



# Neonatal Care for Orphaned Puppies

By Sherry Woodard

Raising orphaned puppies can be very rewarding. It is, however, a serious responsibility that requires some time, money and work on your part if you want to help the little ones grow up healthy. Close observation and prompt attention if any problems develop are especially important. If you have not raised orphans before, you should have a veterinarian look the babies over before you get started. Don't be disappointed if you are unable to save all the orphan puppies; you can only give it your best effort.

## Basic Medical Care

What are the medical concerns when raising orphaned puppies? Here's some basic information about what's normal and what's not:

**Temperature.** A normal rectal temperature for a newborn puppy is 95 to 99 degrees Fahrenheit for the first week, and 97 to 100 for the second week. By the fourth week, the puppy's temperature should reach the normal temperature of an adult dog – 100 to 102 degrees.

**Weight.** Weighing the puppies daily to check for weight gain can reassure you that they are doing well. If a puppy is losing weight, you should consult with your veterinarian.

**Dehydration.** The lack of normal parental care may mean that you receive puppies who are dehydrated. They may also become dehydrated by being chilled – newborns can't nurse if they are too cold, because their energy is spent trying to stay warm. One sign of dehydration is loss of elasticity in the skin. If you pick up the pup's scruff with two fingers, it will stay up, looking pinched. Another way to test for dehydration is to look at the puppy's gums (mucous membranes). The gums should be moist and shiny; if you touch them, they should not be sticky.

**Hypoglycemia.** Hypoglycemia, an abnormal



decrease of sugar in the blood, can also happen to orphaned puppies. The signs to look for are lack of strength, lack of movement, and muscle twitching (sometimes with convulsions). If a puppy shows signs of hypoglycemia, you can place a few drops of corn syrup under his or her tongue before calling your veterinarian for further assistance.

**Warmth.** A puppy burns far more body heat per pound of body weight than an adult dog. To stay warm, puppies depend on radiant heat from their mother. In her absence, they need constant temperature control. So, provide your puppies with a draft-free nesting area. Heat lamps or hot water bottles can be used to keep the temperature up. During the first four or five days of life, puppies should be kept in an environment that is between 85 and 90 degrees. The temperature may gradually be decreased to 80 degrees by the seventh to tenth day, and may be reduced to 72 degrees by the end of the fourth week. Warm and cool the puppies gradually. If you have a large litter, they will huddle together, which means they won't require as much help with heat from you. Don't overheat the puppies – newborns cannot move away from the heat on their own.

**Stimulation for elimination.** For the first two

weeks of life, puppies are stimulated by their mother to encourage urination and defecation. In the absence of their mother, you will have to provide the stimulation. Massage your puppies' genital area with a moist cloth to stimulate bladder and bowel action. After two weeks, puppies should urinate and defecate on their own. Watch them carefully to make sure that happens.

**Internal parasites.** If your puppies are developing very slowly or have blood in their stool, they may have an infestation of internal parasites. A stool sample should be taken to your veterinarian for examination.

**Vision.** Puppies' eyes open when they are 10 to 14 days old. Because their eyes are very sensitive to light, they should be kept out of direct sunlight until approximately four weeks of age.

### Getting Started

**Living space.** If the puppies were being cared for by their mother, she would choose a place that is soft, warm and away from full sunlight. In the absence of their mother, you must provide this type of environment. A box may be large enough for a first home for the family. Put the box in a warm, sheltered space. (See the section above on temperature.) If the litter is a big one, you may need to buy a child-size plastic pool. As the puppies grow, watch to see whether they can climb out of the box or pool. Once puppies start to move, they can climb well within a surprisingly short period of time.

**Bedding.** Use clean newspaper for the first week or so. Newborn puppies can get caught up in soft cloth and can die if they can't breathe. After they are able to lift their heads and move around a bit, you can use a sheet or blanket. Sheets or blankets purchased from a thrift store are inexpensive and easy to wash. They work great when folded and rolled into a nice bed. When your puppies start crawling, and then walking, they'll use the cloth for traction.

**Disease prevention.** Puppies are very vulnerable to disease, so disease prevention is needed around the clock. Create a bleach bath to walk

through before entering the area where they are kept. The "bath" can be a cat litter tray with an old towel in the bottom. Add a light (30 to 1) mixture of bleach and water to moisten, but not cover, the towel. This method will disinfect your shoes without soaking them or the floors. Always wash your hands before touching the puppies. If you work with other animals or visit shelters or dog parks (anyplace where you come into contact with other dogs), changing your clothes before handling the puppies is recommended.

**Feeding.** Newborns will need food every three hours, around the clock. Six or eight meals, equally spaced over 24 hours, are sufficient for most puppies; small or weak puppies may need more feedings.

You can give your orphans complete nutrition by buying a commercial puppy milk replacer (such as Esbilac), which can be purchased through your veterinarian or a pet supply store. Commercial milk replacers have feeding directions on the label. In an emergency, you can feed puppies the following recipe, but only use it short-term, until a milk replacer can be purchased:

- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 tablespoon corn oil
- 3 egg yolks (no whites)
- Pinch of salt

Blend the mixture well and warm it to 95 to 100 degrees. Test it on your forearm – the milk should feel slightly warmer than your skin. When the puppies are two and a half weeks old, you can start feeding them milk replacer at room temperature.

There are various methods of feeding orphan puppies. You can use an ordinary eyedropper, but commercial animal baby bottles can also be purchased. Puppies do not have a well-developed gag reflex, so you must be very careful not to drown the puppy while feeding him or her. The size of the hole in the nipple is crucial. If you turn the bottle upside down and the milk drips freely, the hole is too large. The bottle

## Section 5: Puppy Care and Training

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should need a light squeeze for milk to drip out. If you need to enlarge the hole, you can heat a needle with a lighter and apply it to the hole.

Tube-feeding is the easiest, cleanest and most efficient method of hand-feeding newborns. To tube-feed, you will need to purchase supplies from your veterinarian and have a lesson in the technique used to prevent milk replacer from getting into the puppy's lungs. Hand-feeding can generally be ended during the third week.

**Nail trimming.** The puppies will need nail trims often, so if you have not trimmed toenails on dogs, ask someone to show you how to do it safely. Human nail clippers work well on small puppies.

**Visitors.** You should limit the number of visitors and the number of people who handle the pups until the puppies are a few weeks old. Use caution – gentle handling and disease control will continue to be concerns for many weeks.

### As the Puppies Grow

**Visits to the vet.** During the puppies' third week, a visit to your veterinarian for a checkup is a good idea. The puppies' eyes are still sensitive at this stage, so don't expose them to direct sunlight on this first outing. Ask your veterinarian about diet, deworming and vaccinations. You should also talk to the vet about spay/neuter, since this procedure should be done before the puppies leave your care. (Spay/neuter can be done as early as eight weeks; the puppies must weigh at least two pounds.) The vet may want to evaluate each puppy and start individual records for their future human families. Yes, they are growing up!

**Weaning puppies to gruel.** During the third week, begin offering the puppies a water dish, one that is not too large, since they may attempt

to climb in instead of drinking from it. Then, introduce the puppies to gruel. Make a gruel by blending a good-quality dry puppy food with commercial milk replacer. Put the gruel, warm and not too thick, in a low pan. As the puppies discover how to lap the gruel, you can gradually thicken the mixture. By five weeks of age, most puppies can eat a diet of dry puppy food. Don't forget to give them a constant supply of fresh water.

**Socialization.** In your role of dog parent, you will have the challenge of safely socializing these pups to other canines and the rest of the world. They have much to learn – things that mom would normally teach them. Invite fully vaccinated dog guests over to visit, and introduce the puppies to cats as well. Be careful to protect the puppies from any harm, however – not all other animals like puppies.

When children visit, supervision is absolutely necessary. Puppies scratch and bite; children sometimes get too rough in their handling of them. Both children and puppies can benefit from learning proper manners required in human/animal relationships. The puppies should also encounter men, women, raincoats, hats, glasses – anything you can think of that is commonplace out in the world. To prevent them from becoming fearful of noises, you can play thunderstorm sounds, run the vacuum, and turn on the TV for background noise. If they are comfortable hearing many different sounds as puppies, there will be less to fear later on.

**Finding homes for the puppies.** Please try to place the puppies in homes where they will be considered valued family members. Emphasize the social needs of dogs and recommend to the puppy's new family that they invest in some training as the puppy gets older.

# Puppy Development

By Sherry Woodard

Here is a quick summary of the stages of puppy development, starting at birth:

## **Neonatal: Birth to Two Weeks**

From birth to two weeks, puppies are completely dependent on mom for food and care, such as keeping themselves clean. The senses of touch and taste are present at birth.

## **Transitional: Two to Four Weeks**

From two to four weeks, puppies become aware of and interact with their littermates as well as their mother. Their eyes open and their sight is well developed by five weeks. The senses of hearing and smell are developing; their baby teeth start emerging. During this stage, puppies begin to walk, bark and wag their tails.

Weaning from the mother also begins during this phase. At around three weeks, puppies should be started on solid food. Offer the puppies small amounts of soft food in a shallow dish. By the time the puppies are eight weeks old, they should be eating solid food and no longer nursing.

## **Socialization: Four to Twelve Weeks**

From four to six weeks, puppies continue to be influenced by their mother and littermates. They learn to play, gaining needed social skills from littermates, such as inhibited biting (biting to play, not to hurt). The puppies also learn the ins and outs of group structure and ranking within the group.

At this point, if mom is aggressive or fearful of people, the puppies may be affected by her attitude. To socialize your puppies with humans, have a variety of people interacting with them

— young (with supervision) and old, male and female.

House-training can begin as early as five weeks, when puppies will follow their mother through a dog door or can be taken out for elimination lessons. At approximately six weeks, puppies can begin in-home training. You should handle all parts of the puppy, introduce his first collar and lead, encourage him to come using his name, and reward him with praise and treats. At this age, you can also start training puppies with positive reinforcement methods: using a clicker, praise, and rewards.

At about eight weeks, puppies start experiencing fear; everyday objects and experiences can alarm them. This is a perfectly normal reaction — it doesn't mean that you will have a fearful dog.

You don't want to socialize your puppies with other dogs and cats until the puppies have been vaccinated, since they may pick up diseases (such as parvo, distemper, and hepatitis) that can be fatal to puppies. The time to worry about is the period after mom's protection ends (between six to eight weeks) and until after the second vaccine takes effect. By 12 weeks, puppies usu-



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ally have received a couple of vaccine combo shots and can safely interact with other vaccinated puppies and dogs. Ask your veterinarian if she or he knows of any parvo or distemper outbreaks in your area.

Puppies can socialize with other species of animals as well – horses, cats, whatever animals you would like your puppy to be comfortable around. But, use caution and make sure that the other animals are friendly.

### **Four to Six Months**

During this period, puppies grow rapidly and you may notice daily changes. Even though puppies are very energetic, don't exercise your puppy too much – he can overdo it! Among themselves, puppies begin to use ranking in their group structure – that is, they start testing where they fit in. Puppies may experience another fear phase that lasts about a month and seems to come from nowhere. Again, this is a

perfectly normal part of puppy development and is nothing to be alarmed about.

### **Adolescence: Six to Twelve Months**

Like most adolescents, puppies are very rambunctious, so continue the process of training and socializing your dog during this phase. Socialization and training are important if you want your puppy to be comfortable and act acceptably in public places such as dog parks and beaches, or anywhere that she will meet new dogs and new people.

### **Social Maturity: Between One and Two Years**

By this age, your dog will be socially mature and will know what her ranking is in your family. Ongoing training will ensure a respectful and fun relationship between your dog and all human family members, which makes having an animal in the family a daily pleasure.

# Socializing Your Puppy

By Sherry Woodard

Puppies and dogs need to be socialized to the big wide world so that they won't be afraid of new situations, objects, sounds, people and other animals. Dogs should be socialized when they are puppies – it's critical to their lifelong emotional well-being and their ability to be comfortable in the world.

There are a few guidelines to follow, however. Until the puppy has been vaccinated, you don't want him to be around other unvaccinated animals, since he may pick up diseases (such as parvo, distemper, and hepatitis) that can be fatal to puppies. Consult your veterinarian about when and how to safely introduce your puppy to other animals.

Even before vaccinations are complete, however, you can begin socializing your pup. Puppies can safely be around other vaccinated animals in your home. It can be fun to introduce the new addition to your family by having friends over for a small party. Your puppy can become accustomed to people who are loud or quiet, young or old, tall or short, active or inactive. Introduce



your puppy to people wearing hats, glasses or sunglasses, helmets, coats or capes with hoods up, gloves and masks. You can also take the puppy on short car rides, so she'll be a good traveler from an early age.

Be careful to make all of your puppy's socialization experiences positive. If something or someone seems to frighten your pet, introduce that object or person more slowly, and associate the object or person with positive things. For example, if your puppy is afraid of someone wearing a big hat, have the person with the scary hat offer treats to the puppy. Soon, the puppy will associate the hat with something good instead of something scary.

You should also gradually introduce your puppy to a variety of household items and sounds, such as:

- The sound and movement of the vacuum cleaner, broom or mop
- TV and radio noise (play a variety of types of music)
- The noises made by whistles and children's toys
- The sound of electrical appliances, like a blender, fan or hair dryer
- The sound and motion of a kite or a plastic bag rippling in the breeze
- The sound of a balloon as air is allowed to escape
- A CD or tape recording of storm sounds (played at low volume)

Start early with getting your puppy comfortable with handling and grooming. Touch all her body parts: Open her mouth, look in her ears, hold her tail for a moment, wiggle your fingers between her toes. Hold the pup on your lap and hug her for 10 seconds. To help her practice being calm, massage her whole body and have the puppy

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relax with you until she falls asleep. Friends and family can help by handling the puppy, too.

Using positive reinforcement (treats and praise), introduce a brush, comb, and dog nail clippers. If you plan to use a professional groomer, introduce your puppy to the sound of electric hair clippers at home first.

When the puppy is eight weeks old, other animals who are healthy, vaccinated and friendly can come to your home, and you can work on socializing your puppy to them. After you have your veterinarian's blessing to take the puppy out into the world, you can introduce the pup to the delights of going for walks in the neighborhood or to the park, and visiting other people's homes, where the puppy can get used to different types of flooring and stairs. Your puppy also needs to learn not to be startled by bikes, skateboards, shopping carts and wheelchairs.

If you have more than one pet, make a point to spend time with your puppy one-on-one. The individual attention can prevent the pup from becoming codependent on another animal in the household. To be emotionally healthy, a dog needs to form his/her own personality.

Finally, to enhance your dog's socialization skills, do basic training. Teach your puppy to take treats gently, and to play with his toys (not your hands). You can make walks fun for both you and your dog by teaching him to walk nicely on lead. He should also be taught basic cues, such as "sit," "down" and "stay." If you are conscientious about socializing and training your puppy, he will be happier, more welcome, and more comfortable in our busy, often chaotic human world.

# **Section 6:**

# **Common Behavior Challenges**



# Chewing and Mouthing

By Sherry Woodard

## Why does my dog chew on things?

Chewing is a normal canine behavior. So, instead of punishing your dog for chewing, try to redirect his attention to more appropriate objects. If your dog starts chewing on an inappropriate item, simply offer him an appropriate one. When he begins to chew on it, give him lavish praise. Don't allow your dog to chew on any of your possessions (even the ones that you don't mind him chewing up), since he can't distinguish between an old worn-out shoe and a brand-new one.

## What should my dog chew on?

Pet supply stores have a wide variety of durable rubber or nylon toys that satisfy a dog's urge to chew. Dog "puzzles" that you can stuff treats into (like Kongs and Buster Cubes) can keep her occupied for a long time. You can also buy sterilized, hollow bones that you can fill with peanut butter, cheese or wet dog food mixed with dry. If your dog empties the bone or toy too quickly, experiment with different fillers. You can try freezing wet dog food or wedging a piece of hard cheese tightly inside the toy or bone.



To prevent your dog from becoming bored, give her a variety of items to chew that offer different tastes, odors, textures and challenges. Occasionally add new items to your dog's choices. Besides the above suggestions, many dogs love frozen carrots, cow hooves and Nylabones.

If your dog is very enthusiastic about chewing, make sure chew toys are available to him all the time. For example, put chew toys outside if you leave your dog in the yard for more than a few minutes. Remember, too, that dogs will chew out of boredom, so make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise and interaction with you on a daily basis.

## What is mouthing?

If you watch dogs play together, they often mouth each other in a sort of mock bite. Many dogs play with people in the same way – by mouthing our hands or other body parts. Though mouthing is not biting, it can become too aggressive to be acceptable.

## How do I discourage mouthing?

To discourage mouthing, always use a toy to play with your dog. If you inadvertently become the toy, say "Ouch!" in a loud, surprised tone and remove your hand from the dog's mouth. Wait just one second, then offer your hand for licking. If the dog mouths your hand again, repeat the steps above until the mouthing stops. When she does not mouth your hand, praise her and introduce a toy. You can then throw the toy and say "get the toy" to start a game of fetch.

For her to get the idea that mouthing is not acceptable, your dog will need lots of practice with the above technique. As with other training techniques, consistency is key, so try to make sure that anyone who plays with your dog knows how to discourage mouthing.

## Excessive Barking

By Sherry Woodard

Dogs bark for different reasons: There's watch-dog barking, request barking, "spooky" barking, and boredom barking. Though people find barking annoying, it isn't annoying to dogs. Rather, it's one of a variety of ways that dogs express themselves. To other dogs and some people, each bark has a tone that communicates something specific and significant. Controlling excessive barking with training is more than possible. In fact, it can and should be fun! We'll go through each type of barking and describe how best to keep it to a minimum.

**Watchdog barking.** Many dogs consider it their job to warn you that someone dangerous is at the door. Rather than trying to take your dog's job away, you can teach him to bark just once (with a cue like "bark" or "who's there"), and then leave it for something more fun. Practice by stationing a training helper outside to knock on the door. After one bark comes out of the dog's mouth, give another cue (like "enough" or "okay"), then get him involved in fetching a favorite toy, which you can keep near the door. If your dog does not enjoy retrieving, then use food rewards. Here's how to do it:

1. Give the cue: "Who's there?"
2. Have the person knock on the door.
3. When the dog barks, give the next cue ("enough" or "okay") and show the dog the toy or treat.
4. Start playing with the toy or give the dog the treat.

Repeat many times until the dog knows the game. The toy you pick should be used exclusively for practicing this behavior. Soon, the dog will bark with the cue "Who's there?" (no knock needed) and he will stop on the cue "okay" and wait for you to play or offer a treat. If he starts to bark again after you use the cue "okay," do



not reward him. Practice this routine many times to reinforce the desired behavior. Real-life situations, of course, are the real test. You might want to put a note on your door (dog in training!), explaining that you will answer after a short delay.

If your dog starts barking the minute someone pulls into the driveway, use the same sequence as above, except have your training helper drive up in a car (instead of knocking at the door).

**Request barking.** Dogs often bark when they are excited, perhaps anticipating a walk or meal. If you have a dog that does too much of this "request" barking, do not reward the dog by fulfilling his request until after the barking has stopped. Ignore all barking as though you have lost your hearing. Then, after a decent interval when the dog has been quiet, you can come up with a meal or a walk. In so doing, you teach

## Section 6: Common Behavior Challenges

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your dog that being quiet has its rewards. To reinforce this behavior, you can give him praise or something to chew on if he is lying down quietly.

**Spooky” barking.** This type of barking is provoked by fear and it normally comes with some body language. To scare off the source of her fear, she may have her hair up and her tail between her legs. She may be very rigid and bounce on her front legs. Your dog may be fearful if she is under-socialized; the solution may be more exposure to the world. A dog training class can be a helpful way to introduce her to new people, places and sounds. Try to make socializing fun – new people can offer treats and trips to town can include treats for being brave. Remember not to reward your dog while she is barking. Reward her only when she has relaxed.

This strategy may take some time, but a happy, well-adjusted dog is a joy to be around.

**Boredom barking.** This type of barking is common when dogs are not receiving enough interaction with their family. If your dog is alone all day, every day, she will need a significant amount of attention once you come home. To help relieve her boredom during the day, you can supply her with durable rubber and nylon toys to chew on, like Kongs or Nylabones. Outside dogs who have very little interaction with their families often become boredom barkers. If you have an outside dog, please allow her to be part of your family. Because dogs are social animals, it is stressful for them to be alone all the time. Dogs do not need space as much as they need our time and our love.

# Digging

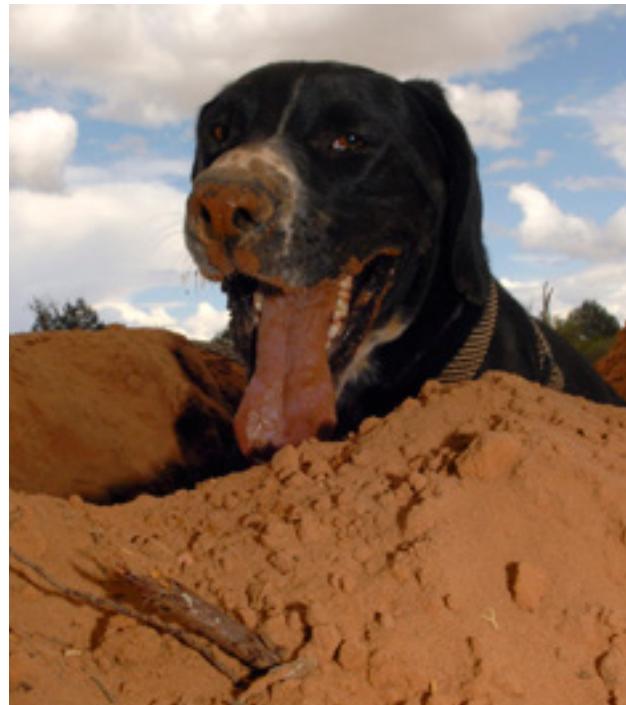
By Sherry Woodard

## Why does my dog dig?

Digging is a natural canine behavior. Dogs dig for many reasons: Some simply enjoy digging; some are looking for a cool spot if it's hot out; some like to bury things to save for later. If your dog is left out in the yard alone for hours, she may be digging holes out of boredom. She may also dig under fencing in order to find an escape route. Some dogs "dig" inside the house in an attempt to create a bed. If your dog scrapes the floor with his paw and circles around, put an old blanket or a square of carpet in that spot to make a bed.

## How can I prevent my dog from digging?

Since digging is an enjoyable activity for dogs, it's tough to get a dog to stop. But, you can train your dog to dig in an acceptable spot. Here's how to do it: Pick a place in your yard where a wooden dirt or sand box can be built. (If you can't build a box, you could try a child-size pool.) For a 50-pound dog, the dirt box should be at least 12 inches deep. After you fill the box with dirt or sand, moisten the soil and hide some toys in the box. Provide a variety of treasures for your dog to dig up – new toys, her favorite toys and long-lasting things to chew. Then, encourage your dog to dig in the box. Watch your dog for awhile – if you see her digging anywhere else in the yard, take her back to her dirt box. If you're someone who enjoys playing in the dirt, you might try actually digging with her. Sometimes, you may be what your dog would like to play with!



To minimize digging, make sure your dog's physical and social needs are met. In hot weather, dogs must have shade and clean, cool water to drink. Some dogs enjoy a child-size pool to splash around in. Remember, too, that dogs will dig out of boredom, so make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise and interaction with you on a daily basis. If your dog likes to play with other dogs, try to ensure that he gets the chance to do that. Besides keeping him occupied for a time, playing with other dogs will use up some of his excess energy. In general, when dogs have enough exercise, they are more relaxed and more likely to happily lay around instead of digging in your garden.

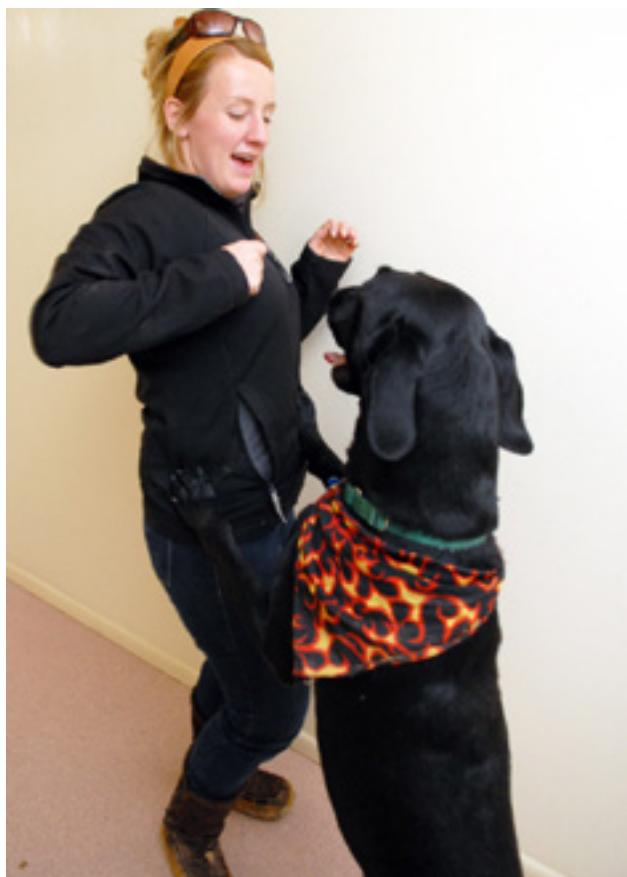
# Preventing Jumping Up

By Sherry Woodard

Most puppies are so cute (and so short) that we allow them to jump up on us. By the time they reach adulthood, however, jumping up to say hello is not so popular.

The best way to teach a dog to stop jumping up is to teach and practice proper greetings. Dogs can easily learn to sit every time they greet a person, even when they are very happy to see that person. When they are trained to associate meeting a person with a sit cue and a treat, soon they will sit and wait for a treat without a cue.

If you have more than one dog, practice with each dog alone. Teach your dog to sit in front of



you for a small treat. Hold up the treat, say “sit,” and then offer the treat when the dog complies. Give the treat only if the dog’s bottom is on the floor. (Don’t reward for a half-sitting position.) Have your dog wait one second, then two, then three for the treat.

When your dog is consistently sitting for a treat, you can practice leaving and returning. Place a mat or dog bed inside the entryway of your house, where the dog will be situated when the door opens. (Since many entryways are tile or wood, a dog will be more willing to sit or lay on something more comfortable and less slippery.) Place a treat jar outside your door.

Go outside, pick up a treat and, as you enter, ask the dog to sit. Use your body to position the dog on the mat as you walk in. Do not give the treat or praise until the dog sits. You may need to be patient, since this is the greeting scenario that the dog has trouble with. Avoid using an angry tone if your dog doesn’t do what you want. Just say “sit” once and wait, holding the treat in front of you.

If you have practiced enough inside the house, your dog will eventually sit in the greeting situation. If she doesn’t, practice some more inside the house, and use higher-value treats. When she is consistently sitting for a treat, try the exit-and-entry routine again.

When your dog is greeting you with a good sit as you open the door, you can start adding a knock or ring of the doorbell. When she is doing well with that, practice with friends. Have friends come to the door, knock and ask for a sit as they enter. Soon you will have proper greetings every time. A treat jar may be needed for a while, but eventually you can move to praise alone.

# Pulling on the Leash

By Sherry Woodard

Most dogs want to go out for walks and get very excited when the leash is brought out. But, do you have one of those dogs who is so enthusiastic that he literally pulls you out the door? Walking should be fun for both you and your dog – and there are some things you can do to make it so. Start by checking your dog's collar. It should be snug enough so she cannot pull out of it, but not so tight that you can't put a finger or two between the collar and her neck.

If your dog is especially rambunctious, one strategy you can try is playing with her in your yard first to release some of her excess energy. You will find that a tired dog can focus and will learn more easily than a wired dog.

The way to teach a dog to walk with a loose lead is to reward for a relaxed pace and stop walking if you are being pulled. You can begin teaching a dog to walk nicely on lead in your home or yard. Put a four- to six-foot lead on your dog's collar and talk to her as you start to walk. If she walks without pulling, praise her and walk some more. If she pulls on the lead, stop, and wait until she stops pulling. As soon as the tension on the lead is released, praise the dog, offer a quick treat, and then continue walking.

If your dog continues to pull after you stop walking, turn and walk the other way. A change in direction will cause her to be behind you. Then, as she comes by, you can get her to focus on you with praise and a treat. Don't yank the leash when you change directions. One good technique is to practice a lot of random direction-changing, so the dog gets used to focusing attention on you and moves with you.

If you're not making much headway with a regular collar, you might want to purchase a head halter. Made by Gentle Leader, Halti and other companies, these halters can be valuable tools



for training dogs to walk on a loose lead. They wrap around the dog's muzzle and operate on the simple principle that a dog will follow where his head leads him. A head halter will not choke or pinch your dog. Once your dog is used to the head halter, it can make training much easier.

Keep in mind, however, that all dogs need a little time to adjust to wearing a head halter. At first, they often try to take off the foreign object. Each halter will come with fitting instructions, so make sure that you read the instructions and properly adjust the halter to fit your dog. If you don't want to use a head halter but have a dog who tries to pull back out of his collar, a martingale collar may be a safe choice. They are designed with a fabric loop that tightens if the dog pulls.

Be patient and persistent – your dog will improve with practice. She'll gradually learn what to expect, and both of you can enjoy daily exercise. Your efforts to train your dog in this and other aspects of good behavior will be rewarded – you'll have a polite, well-socialized animal who is welcome in many places.

# Head Halters for Dogs

By Sherry Woodard

## What is a head halter?

A head halter for dogs is similar to a horse halter – there are straps around the nose and behind the ears. The dog's lead is attached to a ring at the bottom of the nose strap. Dogs can eat, drink, pant, and bark while wearing a halter.

## What is a head halter used for?

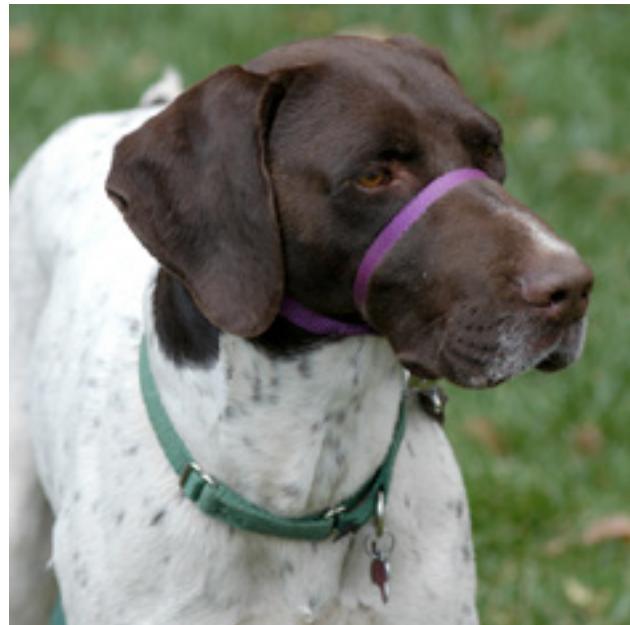
A head halter is used to give you more control when you're walking your dog. When you use a head halter, it's much easier to train your dog to walk nicely on lead, without pulling. Head halters are completely humane. Some brand names are Gentle Leader and Halti.

According to the Gentle Leader documentation, the halter works with the dog's instincts. Dogs will follow their noses, so the lead attached to the nose loop (instead of the neck) allows you to gently guide the dog's direction.

The result in many cases is a calmer, more focused dog. If your dog is aggressive, you will have better control of his head if he wears a halter, but a halter is not a muzzle – the dog can still bite.

## How should it fit?

All halters should come with wearing instructions. Make sure you fit the halter properly to your dog. The neck strap sits just behind the ears, high on the neck. The configuration of the nose strap may differ slightly, depending on the brand, but it should be adjusted so that it cannot slide off the end of the dog's nose. Make sure the attachment ring (to which you attach the lead) is under the dog's chin.



## How will my dog react?

When you put the halter on for the first time, your dog will probably try to get it off by pawing at it. The best thing you can do is get him moving – start walking and keep him walking to divert his attention from the foreign object on his head. Praise him and offer small treats to distract him from pawing and rubbing. Soon, you will be enjoying a nice walk without pulling. Head halters work without using lead corrections – there's no jerking needed!

Finally, do not leave a halter on your dog if he is unsupervised. He might catch the halter on something and injure himself.

# Urine Marking in Dogs

By Sherry Woodard

## Why do dogs engage in urine marking?

Among dogs, urine marking is territorial behavior. An intact (uncastrated) male dog will instinctively mark his territory with his urine. A well-trained dog may not mark indoors in familiar surroundings, but as soon as he is moved to a new place, the behavior will resurface. Some female dogs are highly territorial and they will also urine-mark.

Dogs may feel threatened and consequently feel the need to mark their territory because:

- A new pet moves into your home.
- A new human baby comes home.
- A new adult starts spending time at your house.
- You move to a new place that may or may not have smells from other dogs.

## What can I do to eliminate urine marking?

The best way to prevent a male dog from urine marking is to have him neutered before he develops territorial behavior. If the dog is an adult and the behavior is already well established, then neutering may not help. If your dog does urine-mark in your home, it's important to

neutralize the spot with an enzymatic cleaner to completely get rid of the odor. Otherwise, the smell is an invitation to the dog to mark the same spot again. The enzymes in the cleaner (Nature's Miracle and Simple Solution are two brands) digest the odor-causing protein in organic materials.

Spots where marking has happened can be covered with two-sided sticky tape or vinyl carpet runners turned upside down. If the dog simply moves to marking another spot, you may want to limit what areas the dog has access to while you attempt to change the marking behavior through counterconditioning.

You can counter-condition by using one spot that your dog has marked – now clean – as a site to place food treats. Many dogs will not mark a place where they eat. If your dog has marked in several spots, you might want to cover the other spots with upside-down carpet runner or furniture. Your dog will need supervision while he's in the house and regular trips outdoors to urinate. Remember to praise your dog every time she eliminates in an appropriate place. (See "House-Training Your Dog," Section 2.)

If your neutered dog is still marking after you have tried the above suggestions, seek professional help from a behaviorist in your area.

# Submissive and Excitement Urination

By Sherry Woodard

Dogs sometimes resort to submissive urination when they don't want to challenge someone that they perceive as dominant. Other dogs are prone to urinating when they become excited. The submissive urinators are often timid or young dogs who lack confidence in themselves. Submissive urination can be their response to intimidating encounters with either people or with other dogs.

Submissive urination is fairly standard puppy behavior in relation to a dominant adult dog, so it's not anything abnormal. If you have an adult dog, however, who suddenly starts having submissive or excitement urination, you should first see your veterinarian because there could be a medical cause.

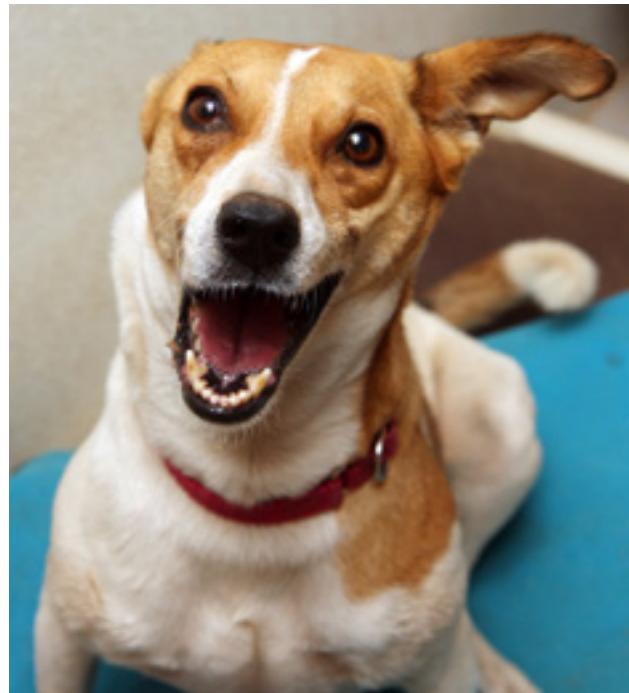
To minimize the possibility of submissive urination, you should avoid using postures or gestures that the dog might view as threatening, such as:

- Making direct eye contact with the dog
- Bending over the dog
- Reaching toward the dog with both hands, especially over the dog's head
- Hugging the dog
- Approaching the dog head-on

Punishment of any kind, even harsh tones, may cause submissive urination.

A less-threatening greeting for a submissive dog would be as follows:

- When approaching the dog, look off to the side rather than directly at her
- Bend down on your haunches or sit, so that you appear smaller to the dog
- Wait quietly, without moving, for the dog to approach you and smell you
- After the dog approaches, reach slowly with one hand to pet her under the chin



If the dog doesn't approach, offer a small treat. Much of the advice above also applies to dogs who urinate out of excitement. Keep greetings low-key and tell visitors to ignore the dog. Try to encourage quiet, non-threatening forms of play, and reward the dog when playtime doesn't end in urination.

If an accident does happen, clean it up with an enzymatic cleaner (such as Nature's Miracle or Simple Solution), which neutralizes the odor. To encourage the dog to urinate in a more appropriate place, take the urine-soaked paper towels to the desired spot outside. Don't ever punish a dog for urinating in the house.

Management of submissive or excitement urination requires patience and time. If the inappropriate urination continues, seek help from a trainer or behaviorist. Inappropriate urination can also be a result of fear, separation anxiety, incomplete house-training, or an unneutered male dog's natural tendency to mark his territory.

## Fear of Thunder and Other Loud Noises

By Sherry Woodard

Many dogs have a fear of loud noises, such as thunder, firecrackers, and cap guns. Often, a dog will try to run from a frightening sound or, if unable to run, will become destructive trying to escape. If you do not help to calm your dog's fear, she may injure herself, run away, or wreak havoc on your home in her desperation to get away from the fearful noise.

### What can I do to reassure my dog during a storm?

If you know that a storm is coming, turn on some music or your TV to muffle the sound of the thunder. Create a safe place in your home for the dog. Let your dog show you where: If he goes to a favorite spot, make a nice bed there. Encourage him to rest there with you and, if he does relax, offer him a food-filled Kong or bone. Allow him to leave that spot and return to it if he wants.

Do not put a frightened dog in a crate and leave. Though his crate may normally be a safe place for him, he may feel trapped in there if he's frightened during a storm. He could injure himself badly trying to get out of the crate.

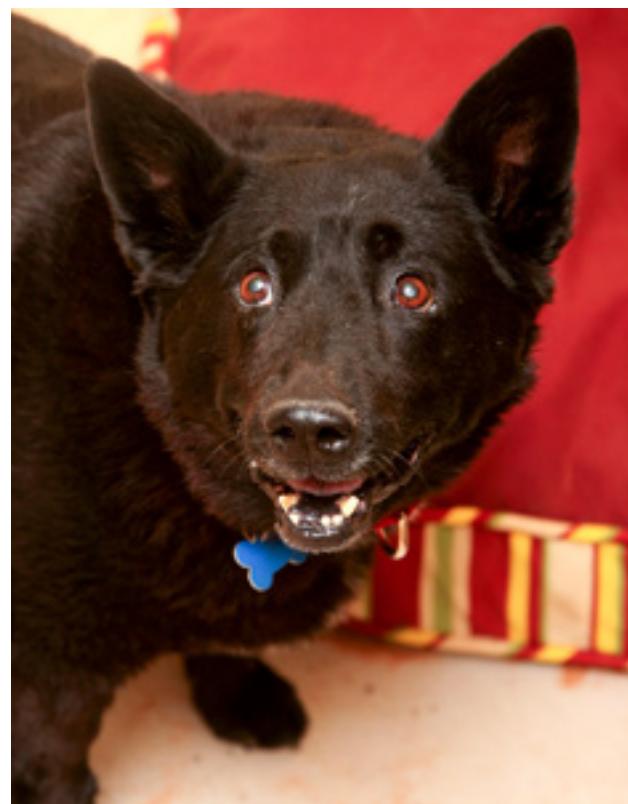
As the thunder gets louder, he may not be able to stay relaxed with his treat. You can try to play a favorite game with him or hand-feed him a really special treat. If he does not calm down, just be with him, but don't reassure him. When dogs are frightened, you may reinforce fearful behavior by providing reassurance.

### How can I help my dog overcome her fear?

If your dog's fear is not extreme, you may want to try behavior modification. Here's how it works: Get a recording of storm sounds (or

whatever the offending noise is) and play it at very low volume while you engage your dog in activities she likes. You can play games with her, groom her, hand-feed her, or practice cues she knows in return for treats. If she is fine with that volume, practice the next day with the volume turned up a bit. Continue raising the volume a little each day as you involve her in pleasurable activities.

This method gradually desensitizes the dog and, over time, she finds the noise less fearful. If she becomes fearful at any point, lower the volume to a level where she is comfortable and proceed more slowly. If your dog's fearfulness is severe, you may need help from your veterinarian and a behavior specialist.



# Separation Anxiety in Dogs

By Sherry Woodard

## What is separation anxiety?

It is anxiety that manifests itself as visible stress within 30 minutes of the departure of the dog's person. The anxiety can vary from mild to severe. Separation anxiety is preventable and responds well when treated.

## What causes separation anxiety?

By nature, dogs are social animals – they don't like being alone. Many dogs who are in stable, structured homes will never suffer from separation anxiety, even if their people go off to work every day. In some dogs, however, separation anxiety might be triggered if there's a change in the dog's routine or the family's daily life. But, a dog will often accept change in his human family more easily if he is not the only pet.

## Are there specific times when separation anxiety can begin?

Here are some circumstances that may result in separation anxiety:

- A new home (a move for the dog to a new family)
- A change in the amount of time you are absent
- A move to a different house (with the same family)
- The death of a family member (human or otherwise)
- A new baby
- Time spent in a boarding kennel or away from you
- Time spent at the veterinary clinic

## What are the signs of separation anxiety?

If you are making preparations to leave, the dog may follow you from room to room. Other signs are pacing, excessive salivating, vomiting, barking, howling or whining. During your absence, your dog may engage in destructive behavior, often directed at the exits (windows and doors) or clothing or other items that have your scent. An otherwise house-trained dog may eliminate inappropriately. In severe cases, the dog may have a panic attack and hurt herself by breaking through windows or attempting to get out of her crate. (Crating dogs with separation anxiety is not recommended, since they often become even more stressed.)

## Could these symptoms mean something else?

A visit to the veterinarian to check your dog's health is always recommended if your dog's behavior changes suddenly. Your vet can help diagnose whether your dog's problem is truly separation anxiety. The above symptoms could be a sign of a medical problem, such as seizures, diabetes, Cushing's disease, renal disease, cystitis, or gastrointestinal distress. Dogs who are unable to control their bladder and bowel functions may become destructive trying to get outside to eliminate.

Behavioral or training issues should also be ruled out. The above symptoms could be a sign of one of the following:

- A need for house training
- A marking habit
- Submissive or excitement urination
- Teething
- Boredom chewing or digging

- Cognitive dysfunction
- A phobia about thunderstorms or other sounds

### What can I do about separation anxiety?

If you have been told that your dog has mild to moderate separation anxiety, there are some strategies you can try to break the cycle of escalating anxiety. First, practice leaving without opening the door. Put on your shoes, pick up your keys, and walk to the door, but don't leave. You may need to do this 10 times per day for weeks or months to quell your dog's anxiety.

Another strategy is to walk into closets and close the door behind you. Wait one minute and then reappear. You can also exit via an outside door that you normally don't leave through. Wait one minute and then walk back in. If your dog doesn't appear anxious, try two minutes and add time if the dog continues to be comfortable with it. Back off on your time, however, if the dog becomes stressed.

Once your dog is comfortable with you leaving through the back door, you can start working on walking out the main door and returning after a short period of time. Again, gradually increase the time according to how your dog handles it. Practice as many absences as possible that last less than 10 minutes.

Here are some additional tips to improve your chances of success:

- Make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise. Being physically tired helps everyone to relax.
- Offer the dog a Kong toy stuffed with treats before practicing the leaving-and-returning exercises.
- Ignore the dog before and during the exercises.
- Provide background noise (the radio or television) during the exercises. The background sounds may provide a reassuring cue that you will return soon.
- You can also use a word as a cue. Say the words ("I'll be back" or "Later") every time you exit.

- Keep your arrivals and departures as quiet and calm as possible. Don't indulge in long good-byes or excited greetings.

Depending on how severe your dog's case is, you may not be able to leave the dog alone at all during treatment. If you do have to leave, minimize the time that the dog is alone. Use a dog sitter, dog walker, or doggie day-care; have the dog stay with a friend or family member at their home. Inquire about the possibility of your dog going to work with you.

If your dog is suffering from severe separation anxiety, an individual evaluation with a behavior specialist is recommended. Together, you can create a plan to relieve your dog's anxiety and keep him safe. Resolving separation anxiety may require months of work from you, but please don't give up on your dog. Most of the time, this condition responds to treatment. If your dog is not improving or you are feeling frustrated, seek professional help from a behavior specialist.

### How can I prevent separation anxiety in the first place?

After you bring your dog or puppy home for the first time, acclimate him to periods of time away from you by practicing departures and brief absences. If you get in the habit of providing your dog with a loaded Kong, your dog may even look forward to you leaving! Only give treats as you leave, however, not upon your arrival home.

As mentioned above, make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise. To help her learn to relax after playing, give her gentle massages. You should also challenge your dog mentally by working on obedience training and problem solving (such as a game of hide-and-seek). All of these activities, both physical and mental, help to build the dog's confidence and make her less anxious in general.

## **Section 6: Common Behavior Challenges**

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# **Section 7: More Complex Behavior Challenges**



# Eliminating Barrier Aggression

By Sherry Woodard

*Please use caution at all times when working on behavior modification. It's important to establish a positive relationship with a dog; once you have that, you will be able to make good progress with behavior modification techniques.*

Many dogs act aggressively when they are behind a barrier, such as a gate, fence, crate or car window. The following technique can be used to eliminate this undesirable behavior. It is not intended for use with a dog who acts aggressively on lead. For your own safety, do the exercise through a barrier with an opening just large enough for a treat to pass through.

To begin changing the undesirable behavior, you will need to change the dog's negative association with being behind the barrier to a positive association. Use these steps:

1. Equip yourself with food rewards. For safety, long moist stick treats are recommended. Put the rewards in a pouch around your waist so that your hands are free.
2. Take the dog to an area where you can use food rewards without interference from other dogs. If you have to work in a run, remove the other dogs until you've finished.
3. Begin by giving a treat through the barrier, even if the dog looks aggressive. Give another as soon as the first has been eaten; repeat until you've given five stick treats.
4. Then, stop and wait for 3–5 seconds; if the dog remains calm, give him five more treats. If he becomes aggressive, say nothing to him; just turn and walk away.
5. If the dog became aggressive, move him to another area (behind another barrier) where he hasn't been practicing bad behavior. Give him five stick treats; if he remains calm, give him five more.



*Working with Buddy on his barrier aggression.*



As you work with a dog, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Always use a calm, gentle tone while working with a dog.
- Keep sessions short – five minutes or less at first.
- Remember to take breaks; stop and take the dog out for a walk.
- Be patient, but optimistic! Progress may be slow, but it will happen.

Once progress has been made with one handler, start introducing different handlers in different locations to help the dogs generalize about the positive associations.

## **Eliminating Collar Sensitivity**

**By Sherry Woodard**

*Please use caution at all times when working on behavior modification. It's important to establish a positive relationship with a dog; once you have that, you will be able to make good progress with behavior modification techniques.*

Some dogs are sensitive to their collars being touched and react negatively to being led by the collar. There are times when, for your dog's safety, you may need to lead her by the collar. You can use the following exercise to change a dog's negative association to his collar being touched into a positive association. Follow these steps:

1. Equip yourself with food rewards that you know the dog will work for. Put the rewards in a pouch worn around your waist so that your hands are free.
2. Take her to an area where you can use food rewards without interference from other dogs. If you have to work in a run, remove the other dogs until you've finished.
3. Begin by giving several small rewards to the dog without touching her collar.
4. Then, touch the dog's head with one hand and give her a reward with your other hand.
5. Touch under her chin with one hand and reward with the other hand. Continue touching and rewarding, gradually moving closer to the collar area.
6. When the dog is comfortable with being rubbed under the collar, then start to move the collar while you are rubbing and rewarding.

Limit the sessions to no more than five minutes, then take a break and take the dog for a walk. You should be able to hold the dog's collar with 10 or fewer sessions.

Do not lead the dog by the collar until you have built a relationship and done the steps above to change the association from something undesir-

able to a wanted reward. Why? There's a difference between being able to hold the dog's collar and being able to lead her by the collar. Some dogs are much more sensitive to the latter, so you should work on simply holding the dog's collar first.

After the work is done, the dog can be led out by the collar for walks, and given a food reward after she has exited the run. Soon, no food reward will be necessary, although a cookie upon returning from a walk is always welcome!

Once progress has been made with one handler, start introducing different handlers in different locations to help the dog generalize about the positive associations.



# Meeting Fearful Dogs Safely

By Sherry Woodard

When meeting new dogs, always use respect, caution, and attentive awareness. Think in terms of learning the dog's language. Be aware of your speed while approaching any dog you don't know – slow your pace and use a gentle tone as you approach.

If you know the dog is shy or fearful, change your body language. Approach toward the side of the dog, not toward his head, and avoid direct eye contact. Watch the dog out of the corner of your eye for signs of fear or aggression, such as:

- Body that is still or frozen
- Hackles are up
- Looking away or lowering of the head while still sitting up, or raising the head way up while looking away
- Staring at you (if a defensive dog stares into your eyes, look away – to show respect and for your own safety)
- Growling
- Wrinkling of the lips without teeth showing
- Snarling with teeth showing

If the dog is snapping or lunging, proceed with extreme caution or find someone with more experience to help you. When you are close, begin to make your body "smaller." Lower the shoulder that is closest to the dog. Start turning so that by the time you are beside the dog, you are almost facing away (but don't have your back turned completely to the dog).

Next, bend down next to the dog. (Do not bend down if the dog is snapping or lunging.)

Keep your hands to yourself and give the dog a few seconds to sniff you or try to avoid you. Glance at the dog, but avoid extended eye con-

tact. If the dog has not moved away, stay where you are and try to think about the message you are giving to the dog. Building a relationship with each dog you meet will require patience and a time commitment. I talk to the dogs when I am meeting them; if they are defensive, I tell them gently that I am not a threat. I tell them about Best Friends, about Dogtown.

I just keep talking as I try to get them to go for a walk with me. I loop a lead over the dog's head (even if he is snapping or lunging). I don't ever try to grab a defensive dog's collar to clip on a lead. Once the loop is around the dog's neck, I move away and wait to see if the dog will join me. If he does not walk, I wait; if he does walk, I just walk with him. The simple act of moving helps many dogs to relax, since they feel less like they are being cornered.

As we walk, I watch his body language and allow him to stop, sniff, eliminate – whatever he wants to do. If he panics, I stop in my tracks and, as soon as he stops flailing about, I bend down and wait for him to realize he is okay. A walk can take 10 minutes or an hour. The goal is for the dog to begin to feel better about being with me (i.e., the relationship begins). I don't normally use treats during my introductions, but you can if you want to.

After that first walk, a dog will often greet me with less fear the next time she sees me coming. She'll be more willing to move toward me and walk away with me. Most dogs I meet who act defensively at first are still willing to have a relationship; as mentioned above, it just takes patience and time. You will find that the rewards of a relationship with a dog are well worth the investment.

# Preventing Dogs from Guarding Food and Objects

By Sherry Woodard

## What is object guarding?

An object-guarding dog is one who guards objects that he considers to be valuable. Often-times, the object is food or a treat, but it can also be other objects such as a toy, a bone or an item picked out of the trash.

## Why is object guarding a problem?

It is not unusual for dogs to covet objects and guard them from each other. In a group, dogs often threaten each other, but then one of them backs down and everything's fine. In a home environment, however, object guarding can be dangerous if your dog sees you or other family members as someone he needs to guard against. You can easily get bitten trying to take something away from a dog who is a serious guarder.

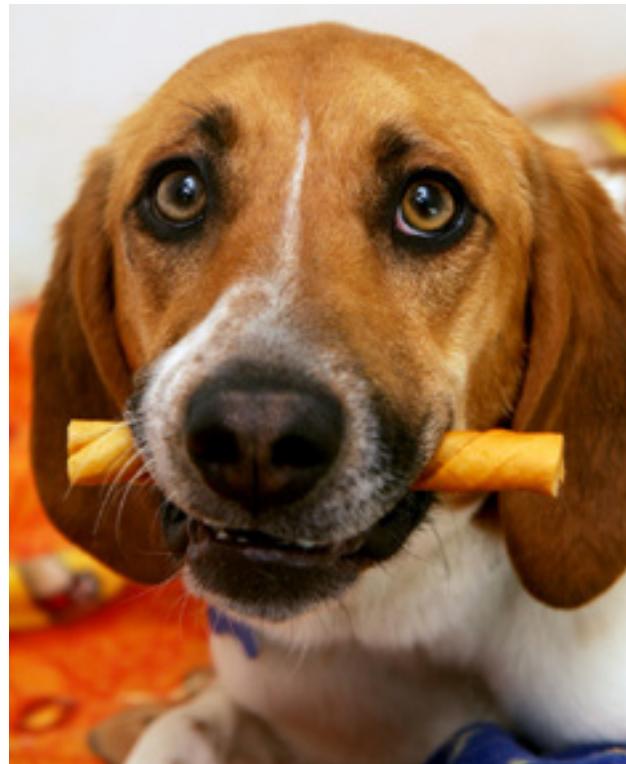
Children can be especially vulnerable, since they are at eye level to the dog and may not understand personal space. Keep children away from a dog until the dog is willing to give up any item when you issue the cue "give it."

## How can I train my dog not to guard food?

First, only adults should train dogs to stop guarding. Here's how to do it:

Place an empty food bowl on the floor. Sit or kneel on the floor near the bowl with a bag of kibble. With your hand, place a few pieces of kibble in the bowl. Say to the dog, "Take it," and let the dog eat the kibble. After you and your dog practice this routine a few times, place a few more pieces in the bowl, but this time keep your hand on the bowl. If the dog is fine with your hand on the bowl, practice three more times.

Then, if there have been no signs of guarding



(growling or stiffening), put a few pieces of kibble in the bowl, but this time, take the bowl away and add a treat to the kibble – something that your dog likes even more than kibble (such as 1/2 spoonful of wet food). Give the bowl back to the dog so she can eat. Practice this routine five times. Use just a few pieces of kibble each time, adding only a small amount of wet food or a small treat. (You don't want a sick dog or a fat one!)

If your dog has still shown no signs of guarding, move on to the next step. Stand up and remove the bowl from the floor. Add a morsel of wet food and return the bowl to the dog. Repeat five times. If you can complete all these steps without signs of guarding, you should be able to safely feed your dog. One thing to remember, though, is that she may be fine with you, but not with other people who attempt to feed her.

## Section 7: More Complex Behavior Challenges

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If the dog becomes threatening toward you at any point, back up to the step where she was relaxed and work forward from that step again. If your dog is a serious guarder already when you start training, you must be very careful. In fact, you may want to get help from a humane trainer.

### **How can I train my dog not to guard other objects?**

Dogs who guard food may also guard other objects, such as a toy, bone, or even an item out of the trash. You can train your dog not to guard these objects by getting him to “trade up” for something better. If you practice with many levels of trades, your dog will always expect something better in return for what he’s giving up, and will gladly relinquish the guarded object.

Here’s how it works:

First, do not have high-value items lying around while you’re training. Start with something that your dog has very little interest in. Give him the object and say, “take it.” Then, say “give it” and take the object back. Reward him with a treat from your pocket. Practice this routine five times, then walk away. Repeat three times the first day.

On the second day, move to a slightly more valuable item. As on day one, do five trades (accompanied by “take it” and “give it” cues) three times throughout the day.

On the third day, put a more valuable item on the floor and bring the dog’s attention to it. After he settles in for a chew, ask him to trade (“give it”) for a higher-value item. If he shows no signs of guarding, you can practice this routine a few times. Again, as with food, back up to the step before if your dog growls or stiffens up.

Remember – be very careful. Do not include other adults in the training until you can trade up for the highest value item with ease. After you’ve worked with other adults, you can work with children, but only if you know that your dog likes children and takes treats with a soft mouth. Also, children should be supervised by you at all times.

### **How long do I have to practice these routines?**

If you have a dog with a tendency to guard food or objects, you should practice the above routines often to prevent any future problems.

## Using Visual Barriers with Dogs

By Sherry Woodard

A visual barrier is a solid wall that prevents dogs from seeing what's on the other side (*see photo at left below*). Most often, visual barriers are used so that dogs can't see other dogs, but occasionally they serve to block the dog's view of human neighbors.

There are several reasons why visual barriers might be used:

- To prevent injury to the dog from daily running, jumping and twisting
- To stop a dog from exercising too much, which could result in excessive weight loss
- For safety – to prevent bites from occurring through a fence
- To prevent a dog from being in an anxious, overly excited state

Visual barriers should only be used if other options have been tried without acceptable results. Dogs who are fence-line runners may be doing it partially because they are bored and/or don't get enough exercise. If you help the dog to improve his behavior, you'll enhance his daily quality of life, which doesn't happen if you simply put up a barrier.



So, here are some things to try before you start putting up walls:

- Spend time every day interacting with the dog.
- Shorten the amount of time the dog is out in the yard, so she's not out there for hours.
- Place the dog in a crate for a short period of time and let him calmly enjoy a treat-dispensing toy or a loaded Kong.
- Teach and practice basic cues.
- Teach and practice fun tricks.
- Take the dog for daily walks on lead.

Interacting with a social dog in any of the ways listed above may reduce fence-line running and, at the very least, will help him enjoy a bigger, better life.

If you are part of a rescue group and/or you're fostering the dog, send the dog on outings and sleepovers with other people. If possible, you can also change the dog's space – putting her in a place with different dogs or neighbors on the other side of the fence.

Another thing to try: Set up path obstacles along the fence line (*see photo below*). The goal is



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to help the dog decide to run less on her own. Faced with path obstacles, many dogs decide that fence-line running is not as exciting as it once was.

If aggression at the fence line is the problem, you can attach an additional layer of fencing (creating a double fence) if your dog, or the neighbor's dog, is willing to bite through the fence (*see photo above left*). Or, you could set up a freestanding run with no shared fence lines (*see photo above right*).

Here are a few other things to consider before putting up visual barriers:

- Visual barriers are not allowed everywhere.
- The cost of construction and maintenance could be considerable.
- Some dogs will continue to have the same behavior even with a barrier in place, or develop other undesirable behaviors that then need to be addressed.
- If you have a scenic view from your yard, you'll lose it.

## Muzzles: A Tool to Keep Everyone Safe

By Sherry Woodard

A muzzle can be a helpful tool to keep everyone safe while you're working to improve a dog's social skills or trying to manage aggressive tendencies. I have used muzzles to safely help many dogs improve their social skills around people and other animals. With a muzzle on the dog, you can make even a scary situation a positive, successful learning experience.

The number one reason that I recommend muzzle use is fear aggression. (For more on this subject, see "Dogs and Aggression" in Section 4.) Other reasons for teaching a dog to become comfortable wearing a muzzle are:

1. To safely handle a terrified or injured dog (either a rescued animal or your own) in an emergency.
2. To safely do a medical exam or groom a dog who is willing to bite.
3. To prevent injury to other animals who are allowed to approach a dog who is willing to bite.

Regarding the third reason: Some dogs will need to continue to wear muzzles out in public because many people are oblivious about aggression in dogs. They allow their off-lead dogs to run up to dogs on lead, not realizing that it's not always a safe thing to do.

Even dogs with poor greeting skills are sometimes allowed to run up and then snap at the dog

on lead. A muzzle is a wonderful tool to show that you are being responsible – doing everything you can to keep everyone safe. You can then try to educate the people who have their dogs off-lead about the dangers of allowing their dogs to approach dogs they don't know.

### Types of Muzzles

There are many types of muzzles:

- Plastic basket muzzle: My favorite for training.
- Leather muzzle: These vary in design, so be sure you choose the basket style so your dog can pant, drink and receive treats.
- Soft muzzle: My favorite in terms of comfort for the dog. I use this type once the dog has learned that having the muzzle on means she will be having fun. (Two types are Tuffie and Softie by ProGuard.)
- Grooming muzzle: I don't use these for training, since the dog can't pant, drink or eat treats with this muzzle on.
- Metal basket muzzle: I don't recommend these because they can break at the welded spots, leaving sharp wire ends or edges that can injure the dog or you.
- Jafco muzzle: This is a comfortable basket muzzle that dogs who require muzzles can look forward to wearing. Dogs can drink, get treats and pant while wearing a Jafco muzzle, which is durable and easy to wash.



*Basket muzzle*



*Tuffie muzzle*



*Softie muzzle*

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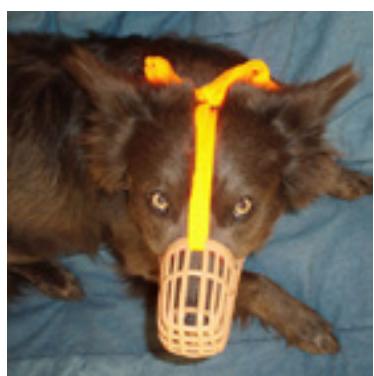
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- Emergency muzzle: In an emergency, you can make a muzzle from gauze. (See “How to Muzzle a Dog in an Emergency,” Section 8.)

A good place to buy muzzles is [www.morcco.com](http://www.morcco.com). If you use a muzzle on a dog, make sure it fits properly so the dog will be comfortable wearing it. Watch how the muzzle is riding on the dog’s head – there should be no wear marks. Sometimes, moleskin must be added to protect the dog’s fur and skin.

You’ll also want to make sure that the dog can’t escape from the muzzle. For extra insurance that the muzzle can’t be

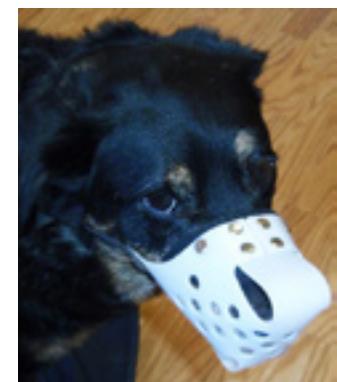
rubbed or scratched off, you can attach two or more strings connecting the dog’s flat collar to the muzzle (*see photo above*). For even more security, attach a string from the top of the muzzle over the dog’s forehead and attach it to the dog’s collar (*see photo above*).



Grooming muzzle



Metal basket muzzle



Jafco muzzle

## Severity of Dog Bites

When it comes to dog bites, does the size of the dog matter? If a dog is willing to bite, a dog of any size can cause damage! Of course, a four-pound dog is not going to cause the same damage as a much bigger dog, but even a small dog can break the skin on a person.

I hear far too often that the bite was an accident caused by human error, but then I find out that it wasn’t a first bite. If we don’t help dogs who have these “accidents,” we are being careless with their lives. Bites from dogs of any size to people’s faces and bites to babies and small children are rarely excused. The consequences could be severe for a dog who bites a child or a person’s face. See the box on the next page for a scale that’s useful to trainers, animal behavior consultants and vets in judging the severity of a dog bite.

## Wearing the Muzzle

Before you start training a dog with a muzzle, you’ll need to get the dog comfortable with wearing the muzzle. Here are the steps:

1. Purchase an appropriately sized basket muzzle.
2. Allow the dog to see it and sniff it.
3. Feed treats very close to the muzzle, then have the dog touch the muzzle to receive the treat.

4. If the dog is relaxed around the muzzle, place a treat in through the front of the muzzle and slip it on. Allow the dog to take the treat and then remove the muzzle. If the dog starts to panic or snaps, slow down and repeat steps 1 through 4 until the dog is comfortable.
5. Next, build up the time that the muzzle is on. Some dogs will be preoccupied with the muzzle at first, so before you start any training, you'll want to make sure the dog is able to focus on you while he's wearing the muzzle. Give lots of treats and work with the dog in your home or someplace with no distractions.

### Training with the Muzzle

Once the dog is accustomed to wearing the muzzle, it's time to start the training. With the dog wearing the muzzle and focusing on you, teach and/or practice basic cues, giving praise and treats generously. (See "Teaching Your Dog Basic Cues" in Section 4.) Do whatever else the dog enjoys – playing with toys, petting – so the dog continues to associate wearing the muzzle with positive things. Again, do this work in your home or someplace with no distractions.

When you've mastered basic cues, start taking

the muzzled dog out walking on lead in a low-traffic area (few people or other animals, depending on what the dog reacts negatively to). Give lots of great treats through the muzzle and allow the dog to enjoy sniffing, marking, rolling – whatever makes it a great walk for the dog.

Keep the walks brief: Use this short distance daily in different locations. When the dog is able to focus on you without becoming overly excited or fearful, try moving closer to whom-ever the dog has reacted negatively to (people or animals). Each dog will vary as to how quickly he/she can progress. Some dogs can move 10 feet closer at a time; for other dogs, two feet is a big challenge. You'll want to be careful to keep the distance between the dog and the people or animals large enough so the dog doesn't become overly excited or panicky.

If at any point the dog does become excited or fearful, move further away from the people or animals and raise the value of your treats. For example, if you normally reward with dog biscuits, give bits of cheese or cooked chicken instead. It's a good idea to carry a variety of treats at all times, since it may help the dog to stay focused or return to focusing on you instead of reacting negatively to people or other animals being nearby. Also, by varying your treats, you

This standard scale was developed by Ian Dunbar to judge the severity of dog bites based on damage inflicted.

- Level one: Bark, lunge and no teeth on skin.
- Level two: Teeth touched skin, no puncture.
- Level three: One to four holes from a single bite; all holes less than half the length of a single canine tooth.
- Level four: Single bite, deep puncture (up to 1 1/2 times the depth of a single canine tooth). Wound goes black within 24 hours.
- Level five: Multiple-bite attack or multiple attack incidents.
- Level six: Missing large portions of flesh.

Anyone with sensitive skin – such as babies, young children and elderly people – will have more damage.

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can keep this daily activity interesting for the dog.

Next, build up the traffic by walking in places where more people or other animals are passing by. Recruit people that the dog is comfortable with and have them appear, approach and give treats. Even if the dog's challenge is not people, this is a great way to reinforce that good things happen when she's out wearing her muzzle.

The next step: Practice, practice, and more practice! Every day, work at getting closer to whomever the dog reacts negatively to – but do it at the dog's pace. If you try to progress too quickly, the dog will have a more difficult time focusing and changing his behavior and his emotions. Keep in mind that change will take time – and every dog is an individual. Genetics and life experience, or lack of experience, will be different for each dog.

For dogs who are willing to bite strangers: Strangers can become friends if you work slowly and carefully with the dog. Once the stranger can approach the dog safely, have the stranger start giving treats, then gradually move

on to touching and petting the dog, holding the lead and walking with the dog. Don't remove the muzzle until the dog is clearly looking forward to spending time with this person. If you see any fear in the dog, slow down! Keep the dog muzzled while practicing in many different locations, including your home. Over time, you can build the dog's circle of friends for life.

For dogs who are willing to bite other animals: I have had lots of success with teaching these dogs to focus on me and walk past other dogs on lead, cats outside, and wildlife such as squirrels and rabbits. To be absolutely safe, always have a muzzle with you for emergencies.

To sum up: If there is any chance that a dog is willing to cause physical damage, please manage him/her with a muzzle to keep everyone safe. Dogs who lack social skills with humans and other animals can often make visible progress by wearing a muzzle while we help them change their associations from negative to positive. Remember to keep practicing and rewarding the dog. Your goal is a relaxed dog who is comfortable in the world and can enjoy a wide variety of experiences – doing more while staying safe.

# When the Helpline Can't Help

By Sherry Woodard

If you have contacted an animal behavior helpline about your pet's problem behavior, and the helpline hasn't helped, there are a few other options to consider. You could consult with a traditional or a holistic veterinarian, a pet trainer, a behavior counselor, a certified applied animal behaviorist, or a board-certified veterinary behaviorist.

How do you decide which professional to use? You should always start by taking your pet to a traditional veterinarian to determine if the behavior has a medical cause. Once that is ruled out, you could hire a trainer to see if the behavior can be altered with some simple training techniques. If the problem persists, you should try a behavior counselor, a certified applied animal behaviorist, or a board-certified veterinary behaviorist, depending on how severe the problem is and what types of professionals are available in your area.

Whoever you decide to work with, please be aware that changing the problem behavior will take time and patience on your part. You will need to work on the behavior at home with your pet, following the recommendations of the trainer, counselor or behaviorist. The professional needs to train you, as well as your pet, so you know how to reinforce the behavior that you want.

Below is an explanation of the function of each of these professionals:

### Pet Trainer

A trainer can help you discourage unwanted behavior in your pet and encourage desirable behavior. They teach the basics: house-training, crate training, and correcting behaviors like digging, barking, chewing, and pulling on lead. Trainers generally don't have medical knowledge or enough expertise to deal with severe

behavior problems, but they are the least expensive option among the behavior professionals.

Anyone can claim to be a trainer, so ask questions like the following if you're thinking about hiring someone:

- **How were you trained?** Look for someone who has had life experience, someone who has been around animals, not just taken classes. If the person has trained different types of animals, so much the better. Ask about formal training, but keep in mind that many good trainers are self-taught through experience. Also, the best trainers keep themselves well-informed about new training methods and theories.
- **How much experience do you have?** The trainer should have at least six months of experience. Anything less and the person may not know how to work with problem behavior in a calm, confident manner. Animals can sense a lack of confidence, and the training will be less successful as a result.
- **What types of animals have you trained?** Some trainers work with a variety of animals and some only work with one type. It's most desirable for the trainer to have had experience working with a wide variety of animals, since you learn something different from training each type of animal.
- **Are you certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers?** This is the only national certification for pet dog trainers.
- **Can I contact a few of your customers?** Often the most helpful information comes from those who have used the services of the trainer you are interested in.

You might also want to visit during one of the trainer's sessions to see the style, techniques and tools being used. If the trainer does anything that you are uncomfortable with, keep looking.

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You want to find a trainer who uses humane training methods – someone who will give you and your pet a positive experience.

You can find a certified dog trainer through [www ccpdt.org](http://www ccpdt.org), the website for the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers. If you are told by a trainer that he or she is not qualified for your case, ask for a referral to a behavior counselor or animal behaviorist.

### Behavior Specialists

There are three different types of specialists who deal with animal behavior problems:

**Behavior counselor.** A behavior counselor is often a certified pet trainer, but he or she should also have more experience and knowledge, including a background in learning theory, awareness of the latest scientific knowledge, and hands-on training. A behavior counselor should be able to analyze and diagnose the problem, devise and explain a possible solution, and do necessary follow-up. Like trainers, some counselors are species-specific.

There is no certification for behavior counselors, but you can ask your veterinarian for a recommendation. Behavior counselors are generally listed in the Yellow Pages as trainers who work on behavioral issues.

**Certified applied animal behaviorist.** These are people who have been certified by the Animal Behavior Society (ABS) as either an applied or an associate applied animal behaviorist. Certification by ABS means that an individual meets certain educational, experiential and ethical standards required by the society. To find a certified animal behaviorist, go here on the Animal Behavior Society website:

[animalbehavior.org/ABSAppliedBehavior/caab-directory](http://animalbehavior.org/ABSAppliedBehavior/caab-directory)

**Board-certified veterinary behaviorist.** A veterinary behaviorist is a veterinarian who has

completed an approved residency training program in veterinary animal behavior and passed a board exam. Veterinary behaviorists can rule out health problems and dispense medications, which are sometimes used to help change behavior in pets. You can think of animal behaviorists as the equivalent of psychologists, while veterinary behaviorists are the equivalent of psychiatrists. For help in finding a board-certified veterinary behaviorist, talk to your veterinarian.

### Veterinarians

**Traditional veterinarian.** There are many vets who are not certified as veterinary behaviorists, but they have a special interest in veterinary behavior and promote behavioral medicine in their practice. Ask your vet how much experience she or he has had with solving animal behavior problems. If your vet has limited experience, ask for a referral.

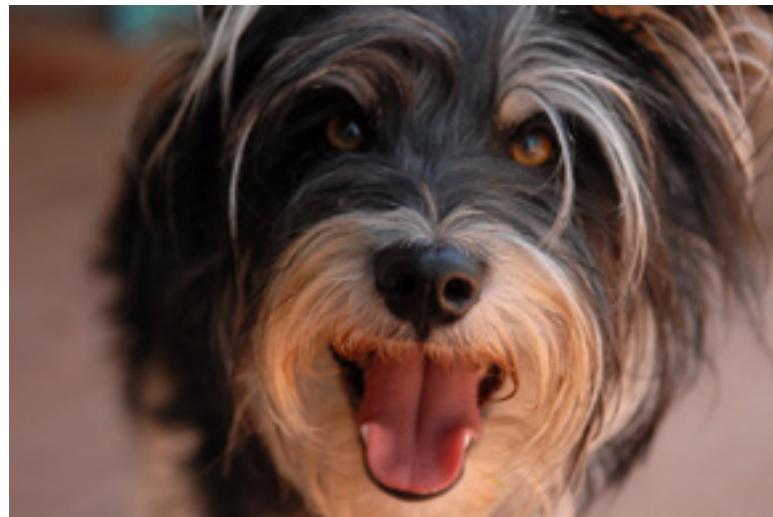
**Holistic veterinarian.** A holistic vet uses alternative means for diagnosing and treating health problems and, sometimes, behavioral problems. As with traditional vets, experience will vary, so you will need to talk to them about what they can offer. For help in finding a holistic veterinarian, visit the website for the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association at [ahvma.org](http://ahvma.org).

### Recommended Reading

If you want to learn more about dog behavior, we recommend the following books:

- *The Dog Who Loved Too Much* by Dr. Nicholas Dodman. Using examples from his own practice, Dodman intelligently and humorously talks about symptoms, treatment options, and helpful tips for prevention.
- *Final Hope* by Stephen Joubert. This book offers a comprehensive approach to dealing with an aggressive dog. It has a helpful section on finding a professional to work with.

# **Section 8:** **Rescue and Emergency**



# Feral Dogs

By Sherry Woodard

## How do dogs become feral?

A feral dog is the offspring of domestic dogs (strays) that may have been abandoned. Like feral cats, they live on the edges of human society, scavenging for food, finding shelter where they can, mating, and raising completely unsocialized feral puppies.

## How can I tell the difference between a stray and a feral dog?

Strays were once family pets. Since they were socialized in the past, they are usually willing to accept handling fairly soon after being trapped. They may need to be trapped if they have been living on their own for a period of time, during which they may have learned to be wary of some people. After eating a few meals, and making some new human and dog friends, most strays will become pets again.

A feral may never be able to enjoy human touch and companionship. When people take ferals into their homes, the dogs often have good social skills with other dogs and are willing to be part of a dog group living in a home. Some are even willing to use a dog door to eliminate outside. But, they often hide if a human enters the room. Most ferals can be handled for necessary medical needs such as sedation for surgeries, blood draws for tests or sedation for grooming.

## Where do feral dogs live?

Like feral cats, feral dogs live wherever there is habitat and a food source. Most commonly, they live in parks, under abandoned buildings, in rural wooded areas, beneath freeways, etc. They live in hiding, and are often seen only at a distance. They generally move about during the times when humans are indoors – in the evening, night and early morning hours. The adult dogs are primarily silent, since drawing atten-

tion to themselves often brings danger. Many ferals are seen by the general public as either dangerous or diseased.

## How can I help the adult dogs?

In general, feral dogs should remain in their original outdoor environment. You can help the dogs by setting up and maintaining feeding stations, and by providing shelter, such as dog houses, for them. You can also improve their lives by doing trap/neuter/return (TNR). TNR involves trapping the dogs; transporting them to a veterinarian to be vaccinated, treated for parasites, and spayed or neutered; and returning them to their home environment. Spay/neuter prevents the dogs from breeding, and it also reduces wandering and fighting.

To capture the dogs, you'll need a trap, thick gloves, a vehicle large enough to carry the trap, and old blankets to cover the trap. Your local animal control may lend out traps or you can purchase them from [www.livetrap.com](http://www.livetrap.com) or [www.havahart.com](http://www.havahart.com). The Havahart website has instructions for how to use traps, depending on the type of trap you buy. If you decide to do TNR, you will need to find a veterinarian who will work with you and a secure place to keep dogs recovering from spay/neuter.

If you find that you have trapped a stray, you can foster him or her until the perfect home is found. During your time as a foster parent, you can teach the dog basic cues and house manners, which will improve your foster dog's prospects for adoption.

If an adult feral dog does not have a safe place to return to, one option is to find someone who owns property that is fenced and who is willing to allow you to set up a station for food, water and shelter.

The other option is to take the feral dog home. But, be aware that a feral dog may never become a sociable, cuddly pet. You have to decide if you can live with the limitations of a feral dog. She may jump and freeze every time you touch her for months, years, maybe forever. She may want to live in hiding, under furniture or in a closet. The dog will be more comfortable if your home is quiet, and you have a dog door that she can use without walking past you. To prevent escape, your yard should be securely fenced. It might also be helpful if you have another dog. Most ferals are not dog aggressive, so a very social, playful dog can be a good role model.

### How can I help feral puppies?

It is best to take the puppies away from their mother when they are two to three weeks of age. They will not be able to run from you or bite you, and they will have the best chance of being socialized if they are young. At two to three weeks, their mom has not yet taught them her fearful behavior. At two weeks old or younger, the puppies will need help eating.

If puppies are over five weeks old, they may bite as you handle them, so wear gloves. You may also need to use a trap to capture them. They are still young enough to socialize and place as family pets, but the older the puppies are, the more



work they will need to be comfortable in human society.

If feral puppies are older than 12 weeks, they will probably remain shy and fearful of new situations for life. This doesn't mean that good homes cannot be found. Many people are willing to adopt shy dogs and continue to socialize them throughout their lives. Other dogs can be very helpful when you are socializing older puppies, since they learn by watching happy, relaxed dogs interact with people.

Finally, the puppies will need to visit the veterinarian for a physical, fecal check for parasites and, depending on their age, vaccines, tests for diseases and spay/neuter surgery.

# How to Trap Animals for Rescue

By Sherry Woodard

Why would you want to learn how to humanely trap animals? One reason is to rescue animals in danger. Be aware that the rescued animals will require at least basic medical care and may need more extensive treatment. They may have diseases, injuries or major behavior challenges.

Before becoming involved in trapping animals, consider what you'll be getting into: You will be the guardian (either temporarily or permanently) of an animal who may not have the social skills for living in our human world. Once trapped, an unsocialized animal will most likely be terrified and might thrash about in the trap, trying to escape. If your plan is to have the animal live with people as a pet, you should know that some animals need a great deal of time and attention before adoption can take place. Of course, many strays can eventually become wonderful family pets – which is possibly what they once were. However, keep in mind that animals that have never been socialized to humans may remain feral and might never become adoptable.

## Safety First

“Safety first” should be your mantra! Bites and scratches can lead to infection, so be careful and be prepared. While they may look harmless, very young animals can inflict serious bites. Learn first aid for yourself and others, including emergency aid for packaging injured animals for transport to a veterinarian. Information about first aid and emergency care of animals can be found on the American Veterinary Medical Association website at [www.avma.org/firstaid](http://www.avma.org/firstaid).

Read up on zoonoses (diseases that can be passed from animals to people) and seek medical attention if you become ill. Zoonoses include internal parasites like roundworms and hookworms, and external parasites like fleas and ticks (which can carry Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever). Other diseases trans-

missible to humans include ringworm, a fungal disease, and rabies and encephalitis, which are viral diseases. “Zoonotic Diseases in Cats and Dogs” (Section 3) is an excellent place to start learning about these diseases. More information about zoonotic diseases can be found on the website of the Centers for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (search for “zoonoses”).

You should also learn about diseases and conditions that are transmissible to other animals, rather than to people, such as parvovirus, canine distemper, feline distemper, feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), feline leukemia, rabies, hantavirus, canine transmissible venereal tumors (CTVT), heartworm, mange, and worms and more worms (pin, tape, round, hook, whip). The American Veterinary Medical Association has excellent information about several of these conditions on their website, at this link:

[www.avma.org/animal\\_health/default.asp](http://www.avma.org/animal_health/default.asp)

## Work with Others

Don’t try to do it all yourself – get other people involved. For one thing, traps are heavy once an animal is inside, so you’ll need help carrying the traps. To socialize animals who are lacking social skills, you’ll want to have people and other animals around to model healthy behavior. Placing animals that have medical or behavior challenges, training your foster parents and adopters, helping the rescued animals long-term – all these tasks are a lot more manageable if you have a team of people working together toward a common goal.

You might want to contact local wildlife management and animal control personnel, since they may be helpful if you have any questions or concerns. They may also be working on the same goal or know of other people involved.

### Getting Started

Here's a list of items you'll need for trapping:

- Humane traps sized for the animals you are going to trap
- Towels, to line the inside of the trap and to cover the trap if you'll be trapping cats
- Blankets, for covering dog-sized traps
- Work gloves, for protection
- Exam gloves, to wear anytime surfaces might be contaminated
- First-aid kit
- Antibacterial hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant, bactericide and virucide cleaner to use on all surfaces and as a foot bath (read the labels carefully to find out how to use them)
- Washable liner (tarp) to put in your vehicle, under the trap

If you need to buy a trap, you can purchase one online. Tomahawk Live Trap at [www.livetrap.com](http://www.livetrap.com) is a good source. Other tools that can be helpful include throw nets, animal control catch-poles, and fence panels and gates to create a small, free-standing pen. Gates can also be used as squeeze boxes and shields if necessary. For the safety of yourself and the animals, learn how to use all tools properly.

### Setting the Trap

Before setting the trap out in the wild, make sure it works. The steps for testing the trap:

1. Set the trap up on a level surface.
2. Place a towel inside the trap for comfortable footing once the animal is inside.
3. Hold the door open.
4. Set your bait (wet food) behind the trip plate. Put the food on a flat plastic cutting board instead of in a can or on a plate. (The reason for this is that some animals will walk in, pick up the can or plate, and walk out without springing the trap.)

5. While holding the door open, set the door with the trip-pin/rod.
6. Apply pressure to the trip plate to spring the door.
7. You can adjust the pressure needed by changing your pin/rod setting on the door.

Before going out to set a trap, go through your checklist of necessary items and make sure you have everything. It's a good idea to carry a cell phone, along with a list of phone numbers you might need.

If you are unsuccessful at trapping an animal within 48 hours, try putting a trail of dog kibble outside the trap, leading to the open door. Don't put out too much food, though. If too much food or high-value food is given outside the trap, trapping will be a challenge. Leaving water outside the trap might help lure the animal in.

Once you have the animal in the trap, keep in mind that the experience is probably very frightening for the animal. Wear your protective gloves in case the animal tries to bite through the trap. Covering the trap before lifting it may help prevent the animal from thrashing about in a panic, trying to escape.

Do not open the door, unless you are releasing an unwanted animal. Carry the trap to a secure place (ideally, to your veterinarian's office) before opening the trap. All animals who are trapped should receive medical evaluation and attention from veterinary professionals.

# After the Rescue: What Next?

By Sherry Woodard

So, you've successfully trapped a stray animal. What's the next step? If you haven't covered the trap yet, put a towel or blanket over it to reduce the animal's stress. Escape is a very real concern, so don't open the trap until you are inside a secure room. Dogs and cats may be frozen from fear or look tame, until the trap door opens and they bolt. Cornered animals may lunge and bite.

If you have trapped a friendly, healthy, neutered animal, he or she may be a lost pet whose family is looking for him/her. You'll need to take appropriate steps to find the animal's family. Some suggestions:

- Knock on doors in the area where you found the animal and ask people if they know who the pet belongs to
- Put up flyers in the area announcing that you've found a pet
- Contact local shelters and veterinarians to find out whether anyone has reported a lost pet
- Have the dog or cat scanned for a microchip at your vet's office or animal shelter
- Put an ad in the "lost and found" section of the local newspaper

## Getting Medical Attention for the Animal

If it's feasible, visit your veterinarian while the animal is still in the trap. Medical attention is especially important if the animal is acting wild or aggressive or looks sick or injured. The vet can assess your new rescue's health needs. All animals who have been living on their own out in the world will need tests for diseases and vaccines. Most animals will need spay/neuter, too. If the animal is weak, dehydrated or sick, he may need to stay at the animal hospital until his health improves.

The vet can also scan the animal for an existing microchip, which could help you locate the animal's person. If there's no microchip, and you're considering adopting the animal, ask the vet to put in a microchip during your visit.

## Bringing Your Stray Home

Before you bring your stray home, you'll need to do some preparation. You'll want to house the animal in a safe, escape-proof environment, so decide where your new charge will live. An enclosed space (such as a small spare bedroom or bathroom) without things to hide behind is recommended. Keep in mind that damage may occur and messes will probably happen. Chances are, your rescue will not be litter-box or house-trained, or may have forgotten about proper bathroom habits. A litter box can be offered to dogs before they are comfortable walking on lead.

If you have other pets, you'll want to keep the stray separated from them for a while. Once your new pet has been medically cleared as healthy, your own well-socialized animals can begin helping this animal become comfortable. Well-socialized pets can be great role models for demonstrating good relationship skills.

Escape is common among strays; they don't know that your home is a safe haven yet, so may try desperately to find a way out. Be especially careful when opening doors and windows. Make sure you've blocked all escape routes and hiding places that you can't access. But do provide safe "hiding" places – a cardboard box or an open crate, for example – so the animal will feel protected to some extent.

## Caring for Your Stray

If you haven't previously cared for the particular type of animal you've rescued, please consult with your veterinarian. Expect the animal to be stressed for a while. Some stressed animals will remain silent; others will yowl, howl, pace, pant, or throw themselves against the walls. Speak to the animal in a soothing voice, telling him that you want to help him relax. Many dogs will be so fearful or anxious that they will eliminate as you approach. If this happens, clean up the mess without displaying any anger toward the dog; if you are angry, you'll only cause the dog more stress.

You'll want to make sure the animal is eating and drinking water. Many animals will not eat or drink in front of you at first, so leave the animal alone with a small amount of food and water. Check periodically to see if the food has been eaten. By giving small amounts, you can remove any uneaten food and replace it with fresh food often.

If the animal is not eating at all, contact your veterinarian. A couple of days without food may be okay for a dog if the animal is healthy, but keep your doctor informed. Cats, however, cannot go without food for very long. Cats who don't eat for a few days can develop a serious liver problem called hepatic lipidosis.

## Socializing Your Stray

If your rescue appears to be unsocialized – fearful and/or aggressive around people and new situations – he/she will need to be taught how to have healthy relationships. If an animal seems fearful, do not corner her or try to handle her until she's a bit more comfortable around you.

If you haven't worked with an antisocial or aggressive animal before, find someone with experience to help you. Contact animal control personnel, veterinarians, groomers or positive reinforcement trainers in your area; even if they can't help, they may be able to refer you to individuals or groups that work with unsocialized animals. (Also, you might want to see "When



the Helpline Can't Help.") Some animals may initially show aggression born out of fear, but settle down once they are handled.

For safety and to prevent problems, though, an animal displaying fear aggression needs to be in knowledgeable hands. A person who's experienced in working with aggressive animals will know how to keep the animal from harming himself or others. A good trainer or animal behaviorist will work slowly and carefully to teach the animal to enjoy the company of people and to at least tolerate other animals. The experienced person will know how to teach desirable behavior and how to discourage inappropriate behaviors.

When choosing a trainer, behaviorist or other person experienced in working with aggressive animals, ask about his/her training philosophy. Some people feel that animals need to be taught to be submissive, and the way to do this is to use dominance, force and punishment. At Best Friends, we believe this approach creates unhealthy relationships that can be dangerous. Aggression by humans can cause or even teach aggression to the animals. Good human leaders do teach animals the value of good manners and

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they reinforce wanted behaviors. This kinder, gentler method involves the use of positive reinforcement: changing the animal's focus to prevent a negative reaction to a trigger, and then rewarding appropriate behavior.

Learn how to read an animal's body language to get clues about how he's feeling. (See "The Look of Fear in Dogs," Section 4, for more details.) Watch the whole body; animals are fast-moving, so look for warning signs of their next move. Reading body language accurately helps to keep both people and the animals safe. Use non-threatening body language yourself; for example, avoid direct eye contact, since it's interpreted as a challenge, a sign of aggression on your part.

Even if they're not aggressive, almost all rescued animals will lack some social and basic life skills. Remember that every animal is an individual. Some animals make progress quickly, but others need more time. Look for small signs of progress, such as the animal showing curiosity, exploring his space without anxiety. Once the animal seems comfortable with having you around, try hand-feeding or staying close while she is eating. Bring out some toys and entice the animal to play. Animals of all ages can make progress, so don't assume that you can't teach an old dog new tricks!

### Introducing Other Animals as Role Models

To further socialize your stray, you can use other well-behaved animals as role models. Non-reactive animals can be a great help for animals who have inappropriate behavior. The new family member will watch your interactions with other animals, and will hopefully learn from them. The presence of another animal will sometimes drastically speed up the new pet's progress in terms of enjoying play, allowing you to be close and permitting touch.

Only introduce role models if your stray is healthy. Your role models should be adult animals who have been fully vaccinated. They

must have wonderful greeting skills – that is, they should meet new animals in a friendly, non-threatening way. Don't use puppies and kittens as role models – they can be injured or killed – and avoid extreme size differences. Also, introduce animals of the same species first.

Here are the steps to follow to introduce other animals to your stray:

1. Ask an experienced animal person to help you with the introductions. Start by allowing the animals to see each other at a distance. Watch the body language of your rescue carefully. Is he interested, looking away, holding a hard stare? A hard stare into the eyes of another animal is not appropriate as a greeting. It is a challenge.
2. If your rescue looks interested, but is not staring intently, you can move the animals closer together. Continue watching the whole body for signs of aggression as you move closer. In cats, fear aggression can manifest itself as hissing or spitting, back arched with a puffed-up tail, or lunging forward and then retreating. In dogs, signs of fear aggression can be charging forward, growling or snapping, hackles up or tail tucked.
3. If there are no signs of aggression, you can have the animals meet for a first sniff. Since nose-to-nose greetings can be very stressful, you might want to have them meet through a screen or gate panel for safety. Hold the stray (or have him on lead) as you allow him to sniff the role model's body.
4. If there are any signs of aggression, keep the animals a safe distance apart and start teaching your new animal proper greetings. With you and someone else each holding an animal, allow the fearful/aggressive one to sniff the tail end of the social one. Try to prevent any nipping from dogs or swatting from cats. Muzzles can be used for safety. If your new family member attempts to injure the other animal or redirects aggression toward you, keep her at a safe distance from other animals and work on getting her more comfortable

by gradually decreasing the space between her and other animals. Because strays often lack positive associations with other animals, practice is needed. Life out on the street was probably tough, and some people and other animals may have seemed unpredictable or aggressive.

5. Be prepared to stop aggressive behavior if it happens when the animals are close together. A loud, quick sound from you (try a sound like “aaah!”) should be enough.
6. Until your rescue learns proper greetings, keep your role model at a safe distance. You can still use your role models, though, to demonstrate hand-feeding, to practice basic cues, to model healthy behavior, and to show how people and animals can have fun together.

### Teaching a Dog to Walk on Lead

All dogs need to learn to walk comfortably on lead. A stray or rescue may take some time to master this skill. It may even be quite a while before you are touching and petting this dog, so get your rescue comfortable with those things before you work on walking on lead.

When you think the dog is ready, start slowly and be careful. Begin by getting the dog used to having a collar around her neck. For this exercise, you might want to use a cable noose (a vinyl-coated cable used by animal control personnel). Slip the noose over the dog’s head, wait three seconds, and then take it off. Practice this exercise daily, increasing the amount of time that you leave the noose on. Then, progress to gradually adding tension to the cable. Watch the dog’s body language carefully to detect any signs of anxiety or aggression.

Make sure you practice these initial steps inside a room or an escape-proof enclosure, since the dog will probably try to escape by pulling

back, biting the cable or “gator rolling.” If the dog pulls or rolls, simply stop moving and keep a small amount of tension on the noose. Once calm has returned, try to take another step and repeat the process if you meet with resistance. Most dogs realize eventually that their efforts aren’t successful and they are wasting energy. Within a couple of days, you should be able to lead the dog by the cable noose inside the escape-proof place. Then you can graduate to a regular collar and lead.

Go as slowly as you need to; some dogs take longer than others to get the concept of what you want them to do. If your stray has a doggie role model, it might help your new pet’s comfort level to have the dogs walk together once you start taking your stray out for jaunts in the world at large.

### Asking for Help

Major progress may take weeks or even months. If you don’t have a lot of experience working with a challenging animal, progress will be slower. That’s okay – just stay safe yourself and keep learning. Sometimes, though, the cat or dog with whom you are working stops making progress or starts threatening you. If you are at this point, you might need to take a deep breath and admit that you need help. Call people you know who have more experience working with a challenging animal – your veterinarian, local rescue groups, an animal behaviorist or trainer, Best Friends Community Animal Assistance (e-mail [animalhelp@bestfriends.org](mailto:animalhelp@bestfriends.org) or call 435-644-2001, ext. 4800). These people will try to walk you through whatever roadblock you’ve come up against.

Please know that you are not alone: Help is out there! Thank you for your willingness to not only rescue animals, but to help them get what they need to live happy, healthy lives.

## How to Muzzle a Dog in an Emergency



1. Make a loop, using a leash, soft rope, cloth, tie or belt.
2. Slip over the nose and draw tight.
3. Cross under the chin.
4. Bring behind the neck (under ears). Tie in a bow (NEVER use a knot).
5. For short noses, take one end of the bow and loop it through the band around the muzzle.
6. Bring the ends together and tie on top of the dog's head.

# Finding Your Lost Dog

by Kathy "Kat" Albrecht

## Factors That Influence Distances Traveled

There are six major factors that influence the distances that lost dogs travel: temperament, circumstances, weather, terrain, appearance, and population density.

**Temperament of the dog.** How a dog behaves toward strangers influences how far he will travel (when lost) before someone intervenes and rescues him. There are three primary behavioral categories into which lost dogs are classified:

- *Gregarious dogs.* Wiggly-butt, friendly dogs are more inclined to go directly up to the first person who calls them. Depending on the terrain and the population density where the dog was lost, these dogs will generally be found fairly close to home or will be picked up by someone close to the escape point. Gregarious dogs are often “adopted” by individuals who find them.
- *Aloof dogs.* Dogs with aloof temperaments are wary of strangers and will initially avoid human contact. They will be inclined to accept human contact, however, once they have overcome fear issues and become hungry enough. While aloof dogs can travel a great distance, they eventually can be enticed with food and patience, typically by experienced rescuers who know how to approach and capture a wary dog. These dogs are often recovered by rescue group volunteers, and their wariness can be easily misinterpreted as the result of abuse. In addition, these dogs are often not recovered for weeks or months after their escape, giving them the physical appearance (thinness, injuries, stickers, ticks, etc.) that they are homeless and unloved, and have been abused.
- *Xenophobic (fearful) dogs.* Xenophobia means “fear or hatred of things strange or foreign.” Dogs with xenophobic temperaments (due to



genetics and/or puppyhood experiences) are more inclined to travel farther and are at a higher risk of being hit by cars. Due to their cowering, fearful behavior, people assume these dogs were abused, and even if the dog has ID tags, they will refuse to contact the dog’s people. Some of these panic-stricken dogs will even run from their own people! It may be necessary to use other dogs to get close enough to capture them or to use baited dog traps.

**Circumstances surrounding the disappearance.** A dog who digs out from a yard to explore a scent will tend to travel a short distance before she is found – meandering and doubling back as she explores the scent. On the other hand, a dog who bolts in panic because of fireworks or thunder will take off at a blind run and can run for several miles.

**Weather.** A dog who escapes on a beautiful spring day may travel farther than one who escapes in a snowstorm. Extreme weather conditions (snow, hail, rain, sweltering heat) will decrease the distances that lost dogs travel.

**Terrain.** A dog who escapes in a residential area will not travel as far as a dog who escapes in a mountainous area. Fences that create barriers

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will influence a dog's travel, since a dog will tend to take the path of least resistance when traveling. Cactus, heavy brush, and steep cliffs can be barriers that influence whether a dog continues on a path or changes directions.

**Appearance of the dog.** What a dog looks like can influence how quickly he will be picked up by a rescuer. In general, most people are less inclined to pull over and attempt to grab a loose pit bull (a breed they often perceive as being aggressive) than they would a Labrador retriever (a breed they perceive as being friendly). Also, size matters: People are more inclined to pick up small dogs, since they look vulnerable and are easier to transport and house than large dogs.

In addition, people are more likely to attempt to rescue a purebred dog, whom they perceive to have value, rather than a mixed-breed dog. When average motorists see a mixed-breed dog trotting down the sidewalk, their impression is often that the dog belongs in the neighborhood or that she is a homeless stray. But when those same people see a Boston terrier, they are inclined to believe that he must be a lost pet because he is a purebred dog.

**Population density.** A dog who escapes in Manhattan will travel a shorter distance than a dog who escapes in the Rocky Mountains or in rural farmland. When dogs escape into areas with a high number of people, their chances of being found close to the escape point are increased. But in areas with an extremely low number of people, they tend to travel further and their chances of being found close to the escape point are decreased. A dog who escapes in the middle of the night will travel farther before being seen than a dog who escapes during rush-hour traffic.

### Owner Behaviors That Create Problems

People often behave in ways that actually inhibit their chances of recovering their lost dogs. Some develop a "wait and see" approach (believing their dog will return home, like Lassie). By the time they start actively looking, those

vital first few hours, during which they might have located the dog (or witnesses who saw the dog), are gone.

Others develop "tunnel vision" and fail to find their dog because they focus on the wrong theories. They might assume, for instance, that their dog was stolen and sold for research when, in fact, their dog may have been rescued and put up for adoption through a local adoption event. They experience "grief avoidance" and quickly give up the search because they really believe they will never see their dog again. They feel helpless and alone, often discouraged by others who rebuke them and tell them "It was just a dog" and "You'll never find your dog."

In addition, the level of human-animal bond (HAB) will influence the recovery efforts of a lost dog. People with a strong HAB will go to extremes to find their lost dog. They will tirelessly visit all the local shelters, post flyers, and contact rescue groups while maintaining a full-time job and other family commitments. On the other hand, people with a weak HAB will quickly become discouraged, assume they will never see their dog again, and will stop searching.

### Rescuer Behaviors That Create Problems

People who find stray dogs often misinterpret the dog's behavior. They assume that the cowering, fearful dog was abused when, in fact, the dog has a xenophobic temperament and has been shy and fearful since she was a puppy, due to genetics and puppyhood experiences. Dogs found in rural areas are often assumed to be "dumped" and homeless; many rescuers never think that this could be a dog who was lost. Some people who find a stray dog who does not have a collar automatically assume that the dog is homeless. They immediately work to place the dog rather than attempt to find the dog's people. In addition, the first place where people search for their lost dog – the local shelter – is typically the last place where someone who finds a loose dog will take him (due to the fear of euthanasia)!

For more information on the behavioral patterns of lost pets, visit [www.lostapet.org](http://www.lostapet.org). For a list of training resources that can help you search for your lost pet (including search dogs trained to track lost pets), visit [www.pethunters.com](http://www.pethunters.com).

*Kathy “Kat” Albrecht is a former police officer, field training officer, police detective, and K9 (police bloodhounds and cadaver dogs) trainer turned pet detective. In 2001, Albrecht founded Missing Pet Partnership, a national nonprofit organization that is working to research the*

*behavioral patterns of lost pets, educate people with pets in how to properly search for a lost pet, and educate animal shelter staff and volunteers in the science of lost pet behavior. In 2004, Albrecht founded Pet Hunters International ([www.pethunters.com](http://www.pethunters.com)), a pet detective academy that trains Missing Animal Response (MAR) technicians in how to analyze both human and animal behaviors when investigating a lost-pet incident.*

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# What to Do When Your Pet Is Hurt

By Dr. Virginia Clemans

Proper first aid can prevent injuries from worsening, can alleviate pain, or can even save your pet's life. Remember, however, first aid is preliminary action only. It can never replace professional care by your veterinarian. But, making yourself familiar with basic first aid can help you and your veterinarian better handle emergency situations. Be sure to have the telephone number of a veterinarian readily available (placed with other household emergency numbers).

What kind of situations might warrant first aid? Cuts, exposure to poisons, eye injuries, trauma and heatstroke or cold exposure are just a few of the many types of emergencies that may require first aid at home.

The following takes a brief look at some of the basic do's and don'ts of dealing with an animal requiring first aid. Remember that these are but guidelines and should be used with good judgment and in conjunction with your veterinarian's advice. Be ready to notify the veterinarian that you are on your way with an emergency and describe the nature of the problem so that preparations can be made for your arrival. Preparation can greatly improve the probability of a favorable outcome in the case of an emergency.



Use caution when dealing with an injured animal. In his pain and fright, even a well-loved and trusted pet can become frantic while being handled. Muzzling an injured dog is the quickest and easiest way to prevent yourself from being bitten. Pantyhose, a necktie, or a soft piece of rope about two feet long will make a good muzzle. To give yourself some protection from teeth and claws, cats can be covered with a heavy towel or rug; placed in a pillowcase, box, or pet kennel; and then transported to the veterinarian.

Here's what to do in certain situations:

**External bleeding.** To slow external bleeding, apply a pressure dressing using clean cloth to cover the wound and then bandage it snugly. If swelling occurs below the bandage, loosen or remove it. Please do not apply tourniquets! Tourniquets can potentially cause greater problems than they solve.

**Fractures and dislocations.** These are usually self-evident. The affected limb is held in an unnatural position and the broken bone may actually be visible through the skin. Don't try to apply a splint, since it will most often inflict greater pain. Move the animal as little as possible during transport, and do the transport as soon as possible.

**Shock.** Animals in shock will have pale gums, weakness, and rapid breathing. Keep the animal warm and transport her to the veterinarian as quickly as possible.

**Heatstroke.** Heatstroke causes many of the same signs as shock. You will see rapid, shallow breathing, weakness, and a very high body temperature. Cool the animal as quickly as possible by spraying him with cool (not cold) water or wrapping him in cool, moist towels. Because of the many problems caused by an elevated body temperature, seek professional help immediately.

Remember, to prevent heatstroke, never leave an animal in a parked vehicle during hot weather. Many people think their dog will be okay if they leave the windows open, but even with the windows wide open, the car can quickly become hot enough to cause heatstroke, brain damage, and even death. Your pet may pay dearly for even a few minutes spent in a sweltering car.

**Exposure to poison.** If you think your pet has been exposed to a poison, contact your veterinarian immediately. If detected soon enough, many poisons can be eliminated from the animal without need for extensive, expensive treatment. It's important to bring the label of the suspected poison to your veterinarian so the correct treatment can be given. Some poisons may take a period of time before their effects become evident, so act quickly if you think poison ingestion is a possibility.

You should be especially careful about antifreeze, which often leaks from cars into parking

lots and puddles. Check the floor of your garage, too, for any telltale signs. Antifreeze is attractive to pets because it tastes sweet, but most brands are very poisonous and even a few licks can be fatal. If your pet ingests even a small amount of antifreeze, contact your veterinarian immediately. Pet-safe antifreeze (which tastes bad) is now available, so consider buying it for your car in the future.

For any emergency involving your pet:

- Be prepared.
- Stay calm and act responsibly.
- Call your veterinarian.

Remember, your pet's depending on you!

*Dr. Virginia Clemans was Best Friends' chief veterinarian from 2001 to 2004.*

# Disaster Readiness

By Sherry Woodard

If there's ever a natural disaster or situation requiring evacuation in the area where you live, you'll want to be ready to keep not only yourself safe, but your pets, too. You'll want to think about how to be prepared for three types of disasters:

- Immediate, such as a gas leak or house fire, when evacuation is necessary right away
- Short warning, such as a toxic spill or fire in the neighborhood, when you have to grab your pets and a few supplies and leave within a short period of time
- Seasonal disaster, such as hurricanes, floods or forest fires, when you'll need a plan for gathering your pets, packing up supplies and evacuating

Here's a checklist of some things you can do right now to be prepared for a disaster. Please don't wait to do them. Anyone who has ever been in a widespread disaster will tell you that at the last minute vet hospitals are packed with people trying to get copies of their animals' records, microchips and carriers.

- Put your pet's ID on her collar: your name, address and phone number. Since cell phones and land lines may be down for a while, consider adding the phone number of a relative or friend who lives outside of your area.
- Have your pets microchipped and be sure to register the chip in your name and provide additional phone numbers.
- Have copies of your pet's microchip information and contact information for the microchip company in the event your pet gets lost.
- Have current photos of your pets in case one of them is lost.
- Buy carriers appropriate for your pets' sizes; the carriers should be easy to transport.



- Always have on hand at least a one-month supply of your pets' medications.
- Make sure your pets' vaccination records are current and you have copies.
- Periodically check your pets' collars to make sure they fit properly and tags are securely fastened. If the collar can slip over your pet's head when you pull on it, you may lose him if he panics and pulls back from you.
- Choose potential evacuation destinations – for example, homes of relatives or friends, pet-friendly hotels – in different directions so you'll know where you're going in the event of a disaster.
- Periodically print out a list of phone numbers for animal shelters, animal hospitals and hotels that are pet-friendly.
- Take an animal first-aid class if one is offered in your community and put together a first-aid kit for pets.

- Put all the information mentioned above (copies of your pet's microchip information; current photos of your pets; pets' vaccination records and contact information; list of phone numbers for animal shelters, animal hospitals and hotels) in one easily accessible place in your house or garage so you can get these items at a moment's notice for a quick exit.

You'll also want to pack a storage container with necessary items so you can just grab it and go. Here are the items that should always live in this storage container:

- A roll of paper towels
- A pet-friendly cleaner
- Trash bags
- Small poop bags
- A small bag of litter
- Litter pan
- Pet first-aid kit
- Leashes
- A pair of heavy-duty gloves
- A blanket
- Two towels
- Two bowls
- Can opener and spoon

This means buying duplicates of a lot of items you may already have and use, but having these items in one location will save time when you are in a hurry to leave your home. Last minute items to grab:

- Food, canned and/or dry
- Gallon jug of water
- Treats or snacks

You can practice emergency readiness by doing drills during which you pack all needed supplies, including human supplies.

Be aware that your pets' behavior during and after an emergency evacuation may be different from the normal daily behavior you know and expect. Pets may panic as the danger nears and become lost before they are safely evacuated. If you do end up in the middle of a disaster, bring your pets inside and keep them inside. Block off rooms in your house to keep all your pets in one area, so if you need to evacuate, you can get your pets into their carriers quickly. Keep pets on lead if they must go out to eliminate. Remember, too, that one of the most important things you can do to help your pets during an emergency is to stay calm yourself.

Finally, watch out for hazards during the evacuation, such as chemicals on the ground or in floodwater, broken glass, sharp metal, hot surfaces, or downed, exposed electric wires.

# Disaster, Safety, and First-Aid Websites

Here are some web resources that can help you keep your pets safe in the event of an emergency or disaster:

### American Red Cross

The Red Cross ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)) has a booklet called *Pet First Aid* that you can get at your local Red Cross office. There's also a PDF called "Pets and Disaster Safety Checklist" on the website (search for "pets disaster preparedness").

### American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)

Go to [www.aspca.org](http://www.aspca.org) and search for "emergency pet preparedness."

### American Veterinary Medical Association

This page describes several publications designed to help veterinarians and people with pets prepare for animal safety in the event of a disaster:

[www.avma.org/disaster/default.asp](http://www.avma.org/disaster/default.asp)

### Dog Owner's Guide

This page contains a list of items to include in a basic first-aid kit for your dog:

[www.canismajor.com/dog/fstaidk.html](http://www.canismajor.com/dog/fstaidk.html)

### Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

FEMA offers a DVD kit called *Animals in Emergencies*. Search for the DVD title in the FEMA library:

[www.fema.gov/library](http://www.fema.gov/library)



### ResQPet Emergency Preparedness Kits for Pets

On this site, you can purchase emergency preparedness kits for pets and find out about taking a course in pet first-aid:

[www.resqpet.com/home.html](http://www.resqpet.com/home.html)

### RedRover

The RedRover Relief program provides funding to good Samaritans, animal rescuers and pet owners to help them care for animals in life-threatening situations:

[www.redrover.org](http://www.redrover.org)

# **Section 9: Miscellaneous Resources**



# Finding Pet-Friendly Housing

By Sherry Woodard

Anyone who rents knows how difficult it can be to find a decent place to live. Those of us who have pets face a special challenge. If you know you're going to be looking for a new home for you and your pets, allow plenty of time for your search.

## What can I do to be more effective in my search?

You can start by gathering proof that you are a responsible person. A letter of recommendation from any or all of the following people can help a lot: your current landlord, your veterinarian, your trainer, your groomer, a neighbor or two, a pet sitter or dog walker. All of these people can contribute to the image of your dog or cat as a valued, well-behaved family member.

Next, start checking in your local newspaper and ask local realtors about pet-friendly housing. Here are several websites that might be helpful in your search:

[www.peoplewithpets.com](http://www.peoplewithpets.com)

[www.petrealtnetwork.com](http://www.petrealtnetwork.com)



If someone has a no-pets policy, don't try to sneak in your pets, hoping that your landlord won't notice or your pet will charm the landlord into changing his policy. Instead, bring your references and offer to pay an extra security deposit. Some landlords are impressed by this level of planning and commitment. You can also offer to bring your pet to meet the landlord. To show how well you take care of your pet, bring his or her medical record and, if you have a dog, his license.

## What do I do after I've found a place?

Once you have secured a place, make sure that you have written permission to have a pet. A verbal agreement between you and the landlord is not enough. Some security deposits are non-refundable, so you should discuss deposits or any other pet fees in advance. Again, get all the details in writing. Ask the landlord if he or she has written house rules for pets. If so, make sure the rules are realistic for you and your pets. Ask for a copy of the rules.

## Are there any other resources that might be helpful?

*Best Friends for Life: Humane Housing for Animals and People* is a booklet that covers the following:

- How disabled individuals may be eligible to keep pets even in "no-pets" housing
- A new federal law that allows pets in federally assisted housing
- Arguments that may allow animals in "no pet" privately owned housing
- Responsible pet guardianship
- How to convince your landlord to adopt a "pets welcome" policy

- Model rental guidelines that protect the rights of renters and animals

The booklet is available through Doris Day Animal League by calling (202) 452-1100, e-mailing [info@ddal.org](mailto:info@ddal.org), or accessing [www.ddal.org](http://www.ddal.org) (click on News and Publications).

The Humane Society of the United States has lots of resources for both tenants and landlords. Go to [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org) and search for “pet friendly housing.”

Our pets depend on us to find a place where we can live comfortably and happily together. With an investment of some time and effort, you will find a great pet-friendly home.

### Giving Pets as Gifts

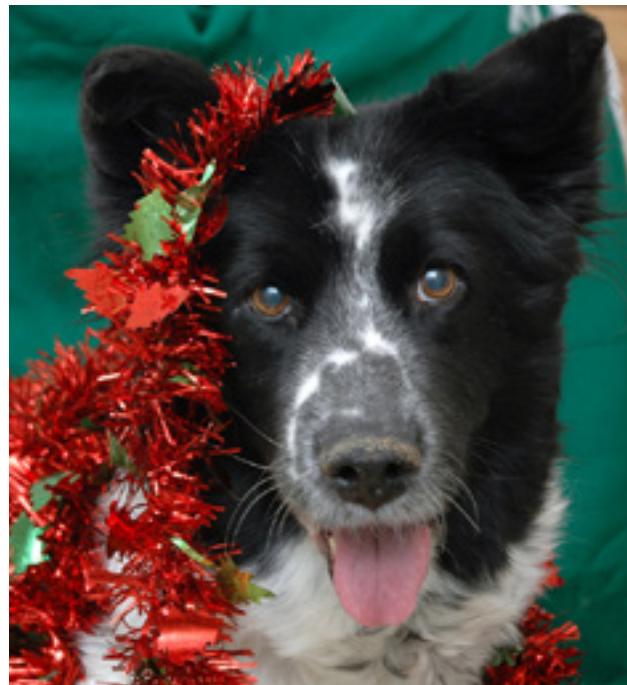
By Sherry Woodard

Are you thinking about giving your beloved a chocolate Lab puppy for Valentine's Day? Or maybe you're considering a furry chinchilla as a Christmas gift for your child. Give it a bit more thought – animals given as presents often end up unwanted and discarded at the local shelter.

Bunnies and chicks are popular animals to give to children at Easter. But, rabbits are sensitive creatures that require a considerable amount of care and those cute chicks grow up to be chickens (or roosters), which can be very messy. Unless you are prepared to take care of a full-grown chicken, real chicks are not a good idea. Stick with peeps (the marshmallow kind) instead!

Here's a better option if you would like to give the gift of a pet: Create a gift certificate stating that you will cover the cost of a future adoption. (Please offer to cover adoption costs rather than the cost of buying a pet from a breeder or pet store. Breed rescue groups exist for almost every type of animal.) Include some information to help your friend or family member make a wise decision. This strategy allows the recipients of your gift to choose their own pet and to decide when they are ready to care for a pet.

The recipients of your gift will appreciate being able to make these decisions themselves. Each type of pet is different in terms of care, feeding, behavior, cost, housing and demands on one's time. Puppies, for instance, need a lot of care.



They cannot be properly socialized and house-trained if left alone all day during the regular work hours kept by most adults.

The gift recipient needs to take into account the commitment that he or she is making to care for an animal for the rest of that animal's life. For some animals, the commitment may be 15 years or more. There will also be future costs (food, supplies medical attention, etc.) for all types of animals, so the gift recipient must be aware that getting a pet is a financial commitment as well as a time commitment.

## Finding a New Home for a Pet

If you would like to find a new home for a pet, rather than turn the animal into a shelter where he or she may be euthanized, there are proactive strategies you can use to increase your chances of success.

First, prepare the animal for adoption. To increase the chances of finding a home and the success of the new placement, it is important that the pet is:

- Spayed or neutered
- In good health
- Clean and groomed
- House-trained and reasonably well-behaved

Although your local shelter may not be able to adopt out the pet, they may be able to offer other assistance. Some have low-cost spay/neuter clinics, or offer obedience-training classes. They may have a bulletin board where they post information about animals available for adoption.

Next, advertise widely. Get the word out, in as many places as possible, to increase your chances of success in finding a new home. Here are some tips:

- Photos and descriptions really help people make a connection to an animal. Compose an ad that describes the pet's personality, habits, and some of the little things that make this animal special. Do not hold back when it comes to telling about any disabilities, health issues or behavior quirks. Sometimes these are the things that potential adopters particularly respond to.
- Flyers are inexpensive to produce and often highly effective, especially when they include a good photo and lively description of the animal. They work especially well for older animals or animals with special needs. Post the flyers throughout your community, wherever a good prospective adoptive person may see

it. Health food stores, supermarkets, libraries, churches, health clubs, and sporting goods stores are just a few examples of good places to post flyers.

- Posting the description and photo of the pet on adoption websites is another effective way to find a new home. Check with your local shelter to see if they have an online adoptions page where you could list your pet. There are specific sites for certain types of animals (FIV+ cats, disabled pets, senior dogs, etc.) as well as general adoption websites (such as [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com)).
- To find a home for a dog of a particular breed or breed mix, look for a breed rescue group with whom you could list the dog. (On the



## Section 9: Miscellaneous Resources

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Internet, search for “breed rescue,” where “breed” is the name of the particular breed.)

Use word of mouth and community contacts. Word of mouth should not be underestimated! Tell anyone and everyone about the pet that needs a home and ask friends, co-workers and family members to help with spreading the word. It could be that a co-worker’s father’s neighbor’s daughter is looking for a new pet.

Ask people you know to mention the animal in their church’s newsletter, send an e-mail about the pet through their office memo system, or share some flyers with the members of their book club.

Get the pet out there! (This works especially well with dogs.) The more the pet is out and about, interacting with people, the more likely he’ll charm the right person. Take him on walks, to pet supply stores, to the local park. You can even put a colorful bandana or sign on him that says “Adopt me” or “Looking for a home.” Check with your local shelter to see if they have off-site adoption days; if so, they might let you bring your pet.

Be creative, positive and persistent. There are many animals needing homes at any one time, so finding a home can take some work. But,

there are good homes out there, so try to maintain a positive attitude. Explore all options you can think of for finding a home – creativity and persistence are usually rewarded.

Remind yourself that you are this pet’s best option for finding a new home. You might think shelters or rescue groups would be more adept at placing the pet because we have experience, facilities, screening guidelines, etc. But, an individual, particularly one who knows the animal, can focus all his or her efforts on that pet, provide the most information to prospective adopters, and best determine the appropriateness of a new home. Also, any shelter or sanctuary is stressful for an animal. The shelter setting, no matter how nice, can bring on stress-related problems. Anxiety, aggression, and even illness are common and these natural reactions may make adoption difficult or impossible.

For more detail about the strategies described above, see the Best Friends manual called *How to Find Homes for Homeless Pets*, available for download as a PDF from the resource library:

[bestfriends.org/Resources/How-To-Find-Homes-For-Homeless-Pets/](http://bestfriends.org/Resources/How-To-Find-Homes-For-Homeless-Pets/)

The manual provides simple step-by-step instructions for finding a good new home.

## Coping with Return-to-Run Resistance

By Sherry Woodard



*Note: This resource is directed at helping dogs in shelters and rescue groups, not personal pets, who should live in our homes as family members.*

A common scenario at shelters everywhere: You've taken a dog out of his run for a bit and now it's time for him to go back in. The dog puts on his brakes, tries to back out of his collar, lies down and won't move. You try to pull him and he starts to growl. What to do?

First, don't get into a physical fight with a dog because you may both be injured. Here are some ways to help him feel better about going back into his run:

- Carry treats, his favorite toy, or some of his regular food with you. After he has eliminated, while walking back, hold a toy (maybe a rope toy or loaded treat tube) or give small treats to help him stay busy enjoying something.
- Toss a few high-value treats in his run as you take him out – a surprise for him to find upon returning to the run.
- Go back into the run with him and stay for a few minutes. Time spent with you in his run will become very special to him.
- If someone else has walked him, surprise him by going in and visiting without him coming out.

- To build trust, give the dog part or all of his daily meals by hand-feeding him instead of putting his food in a bowl.
- If possible, walk back to his run from a different direction sometimes.
- If possible, move him to another run to live. Having different sights and sounds can make returning to the run more palatable.

Things you can do while in his run:

- Introduce aromatherapy – lavender, chamomile, dog-appeasing pheromones (DAP) – for stress relief. Try different ones; some dogs have favorites.
- If he enjoys touch, try petting, brushing and massage. If he is touch-challenged and needs hug therapy, please read “Teaching Your Dog to Enjoy Touch.”
- Play soothing music or read out loud to promote calm.
- Teach and practice responding to basic cues (see “Teaching Your Dog Basic Cues” in Section 4) to keep the dog engaged and thinking.

If possible, go for outings with the dog – car rides, sleepovers, or trips to places where he can romp on a long leash, dig somewhere appropriate, play in water, find hidden toys, or enjoy a Kong or other treat-dispensing toy. Think outside the box: Can he spend a little time in someone's office? Can he go on lunch dates with staff or volunteers?

Besides helping to reduce return-to-run resistance, many of the above activities help dogs become more adoptable. Every dog needs our assistance to become more adoptable or to stay adoptable until he/she finds a wonderful home. You can make a difference in shelter dogs' quality of life by adding enrichment with your time, attention and love.

# Helping Shelter Dogs to Meet Each Other Successfully

By Sherry Woodard

Dogs are naturally social animals, but that doesn't mean they all have the necessary social skills to meet each other politely. Why would you want shelter dogs to meet and get along with each other? Well, shelter dogs can experience stress when housed individually in runs, so one way to provide some social time for the dogs and reduce stress is to take them for walks together or set up play sessions.

The first step to providing these types of enrichment is to introduce the dogs carefully and safely, with the awareness that dogs often lack social skills when meeting each other. If a shelter houses dogs in groups, the initial introduction of a new dog can be done the same way.

To proceed with the meeting, have each dog on lead with a calm, relaxed handler. Keep the leads loose, since pulling on the leash might communicate to the dog that the handlers are fearful or anxious about their meeting. Don't let the dogs rush up to each other; avoid face-to-face greetings (a rude way of meeting) by keeping them 8 to 10 feet apart.

As the dogs approach each other, watch their body language closely. A polite greeting involves making very brief eye contact and then looking away. Some very well-adjusted social dogs will ignore the other dog. If no eye contact is made or the dogs just briefly glance at each other, the handlers should casually walk side by side, keeping the dogs moving. I allow them to get close, even sniffing each other, but not touching or greeting face to face.

If the dogs stiffen their bodies, stare into each other's eyes with their hair up, bare their teeth or lunge at each other, the handlers (if they're comfortable doing this) can try distracting the dogs by keeping them moving. The dogs should



be kept at a distance from each other, far enough apart so that they can't touch. If at any point the handlers become uncomfortable, they should stop. End the walk when the dogs have calmed down, and try again later with short walks just like this. The goal is to build on any positive experience that occurs. Each time the dogs go out together, they may become more relaxed around each other and may be able to walk closer to each other.

However, if the dogs continue to react in negative, defensive ways, to keep them and all other dogs safe, house them only with dogs they are comfortable with. At Best Friends, we continue to socialize them and help them improve their skills with walks and classes in Dogtown.

Dogs live in groups of four or five at Best Friends, so we introduce many dogs in this way. Once each dog in a group has successfully walked with the new dog, the handlers walk the new dog into the run with the last dog. The handler who has the new dog on lead drops the leash and allows it to drag. If any of the other dogs showed behavior that concerned us while being walked with the new dog, we have that dog drag a leash, too. The leashes are for safety — to grab if needed. We watch the group for at least a couple of minutes before un-clipping the leash(es), and we continue to watch for at least 10 minutes before looking away or leaving the run. Also, as we watch, we don't give too much attention to any of the dogs or start playing with them with their toys; the idea is to create a calm atmosphere, not cause excitement.

One thing to keep in mind: Shy and/or fearful dogs do not always show us their true behavior when we are with them. When we exit the run to watch more from outside their space, they may be more comfortable and have different behavior than what we have seen.

If more walks are needed before everyone is comfortable (both humans and dogs), then we have the dogs live separately and walk them for

multiple days. At Best Friends, the new dog is removed from the run at night and is re-introduced in the morning. This is the routine for the first week for most new dogs at the Sanctuary. Since unsupervised dogs sometimes make bad decisions, this routine helps keep the dogs safe. After a week of being spied on by the staff, if no concerning behavior has occurred, the new dog may start sleeping in the shared space. We also restrict the run to staff only (no volunteers) for the one-week period. This practice gives the dogs and the staff a somewhat calm first week to become friends.

Remember, dogs often need our help to learn proper social behavior. Many dogs need practice meeting other dogs to become comfortable and without continuing to practice, they will lack the skills to relax and enjoy new dog friends.

Besides providing social opportunities, encouraging dogs to interact politely also helps them become more adoptable. Every dog needs our assistance to become more adoptable or to stay adoptable until he/she finds a wonderful home. You can make a difference in shelter dogs' quality of life by adding enrichment with your time, attention and love.

## Helping Shelter Dogs Develop Life Skills

By Sherry Woodard

Tara's run is a training facility at Best Friends that contains real-life equipment to help dogs become familiar with structures they'll encounter in a home once they're adopted. Because shelter dogs often come from backgrounds where they weren't taught social skills and many haven't lived in homes, this equipment helps them become ready to go on mobile adoptions and then successfully transition into living happily in homes. These structures can be built inexpensively by anyone handy with a hammer.

You don't have to build special equipment; you can use pre-existing stairs or ramps, for example. Start teaching these life skills in a calm environment free of distractions. You can then move on to practicing anywhere and everywhere to help dogs generalize.

Remember to keep training sessions fun by using praise, pets and treats to encourage the behavior you want.



*Above: Stairs with backs go up to a walkway with different types of flooring, such as linoleum and tile. Anything new can be scary, so dogs who haven't lived in homes may need to get comfortable with stairs and different types of flooring.*

*Right: The other end of the training walkway. This side has stairs without backs. Some dogs refuse to start at this end because stairs without backs are more frightening. With practice, they will approach the walkway from both ends.*



*This structure helps to build a dog's confidence. While the dog is on lead, the lead can be put through the opening in the top and the dog can be encouraged to walk through.*



*The short table was designed to teach dogs to stay in one place. Dogs can be taught to sit, stay down and stay. It can also be used for handling and grooming.*



*Many dogs need practice living in a house, so this structure helps dogs become comfortable with entering and exiting doorways, walking down a hallway, and walking on different types of flooring.*

## Health and Behavior Profile

This health and behavior profile is a form that Sherry Woodard, animal behavior consultant at Best Friends, asks people to fill out before consulting with her about one of their dogs. Whether you are a trainer or someone seeking a trainer, you might find it useful for gathering information about a dog.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dog's name \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Breed/mix \_\_\_\_\_

Special needs \_\_\_\_\_

Spay/neuter status \_\_\_\_\_ Age at surgery \_\_\_\_\_ Date of surgery \_\_\_\_\_

### History

Where did you obtain this dog? \_\_\_\_\_

How long has this dog been living with you? \_\_\_\_\_

Please give a short history of the dog. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please explain in detail your reason for this request for help. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Medical Information**

Date of last vet visit \_\_\_\_\_ Reason for visit \_\_\_\_\_

Blood work done?  Yes  No Concerns found \_\_\_\_\_X-rays done?  Yes  No Concerns found \_\_\_\_\_

Has the dog been tested for:

Heartworm?  Yes  No If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_ Result: + -Lyme disease?  Yes  No If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_ Result: + -Other tick-borne diseases?  Yes  No If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_ Result: + -

Last vaccine(s) given \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Last time worming was done \_\_\_\_\_

Coat type and current condition \_\_\_\_\_

Condition of nails \_\_\_\_\_

Condition of ears \_\_\_\_\_

Condition of teeth:  White  Stained with tartar  Damaged  Missing  Needs dentalCondition of eyes:  Clear  Cloudy  Have discharge  Eyes missing or blindIs this dog taking any medications?  Yes  No If yes, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_Is this dog taking any supplements?  Yes  No If yes, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_Have there been any major medical events or injuries in the dog's past?  Yes  NoIf yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**Training**Has this dog had any training?  Yes  No

If yes, what type of training? (crate training, house-training, training to respond to cues such as "sit" or "down," etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of equipment do you use in training? (crate, collars, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Will the dog sit if you ask?  Yes  No

What other cues (such as “down,” “stay” or “wait”) does the dog respond to? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are your training concerns? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Exercise and Socialization

Do you go for walks with the dog?  Yes  No

If yes, how often and how long is a typical walk? \_\_\_\_\_

Are the walks on lead or off lead? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the dog’s leash behavior. \_\_\_\_\_

Does the dog go for car rides?  Yes  No If yes, describe the dog’s behavior in the car.

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Does this dog play?  Yes  No If yes, with what? (toys, games, people, other animals)

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Does this dog get along with other dogs?  Yes  No  Some dogs

Other animals?  Yes  No  Some animals (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Children?  Yes  No

What type of friends does the dog have? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anyone that this dog dislikes? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the dog’s behavior while being groomed. \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the dog’s behavior while being bathed. \_\_\_\_\_

Can you touch the dog’s entire body?  Yes  No

What does the dog bark at? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the dog fearful of? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your socialization concerns? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Time Alone

Where is the dog if you are not home? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours each day does the dog spend alone? \_\_\_\_\_

Where does the dog sleep? \_\_\_\_\_

### Feeding

What do you feed the dog (include brand names)? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the dog eat table scraps?  Yes  No Who feeds the dog? \_\_\_\_\_

How much do you feed the dog and how many times each day is the dog fed? \_\_\_\_\_

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### The Rest of the Family

Please list any other animals in your home, including the species, breed, age, and spay/neuter status. Also, please note if any animals have recently been ill or require medication.

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Please list the human family members in the household, including age, sex, any disabilities, and special needs.

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Your name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

