

The Whole Dog Journal™



VOLUME 18 | NO. 1 | \$5.95

A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

JANUARY 2015

FEATURES

3 Gear of the Year

Some of our favorite dog-related toys, training tools, books, clothing, and more.

7 Space Invaders

How to create just a little more physical space between you and your dog (when you want it).

10 Crisis Averted

A dog's confusion, a couple's desperation, and a trainer's intervention lead to a nice resolution.

12 Restraining Order

Why there is only one company whose canine car-safety harnesses we'd buy and use. (Don't worry; we'll tell you which company it is, and show you how its products work).

16 Building Trust

What to do when your newly rescued dog is afraid of everyone – even you!

20 Weather the Storm

How to help thunder-phobic dogs.



Can You Read Me?

How to create a little space for yourself.
Page 7



He's Not Coming Out

Not as long as the thunder rolls.
Page 20

© DFIKAR | DREAMSTIME.COM



Catastrophic Failures
Unsafe safety harnesses
Page 7

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Editor's Note
- 24 Product and Expert Resources



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – Nancy Kerns
TRAINING EDITOR – Pat Miller
PUBLISHER – Timothy H. Cole
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR – Greg King

EDITORIAL OFFICE

E-MAIL: WDJEditor@gmail.com
ADDRESS: 1655 Robinson Street
Oroville, CA 95965

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

PHONE: (800) 829-9165
INTERNET: whole-dog-journal.com/cs
U.S. MAIL: PO Box 8535
Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535
CANADA: Box 7820 STN Main
London, Ontario N5Y 5W1

REPRINTS

For price quote, contact
Jennifer Jimolka at (203) 857-3144
Minimum order 1,000

NEWSSTAND

Jocelyn Donnellon, (203) 857-3100

WHOLE DOG JOURNAL DOES NOT ACCEPT COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

B THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL (ISSN #1097-5322) is published monthly by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 535 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Executive Vice President, Editorial Director; Philip L. Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Executive Vice President, Marketing Director; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Vice President, Circulation. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, CT and at additional mailing offices. Copyright ©2015, Belvoir Media Group, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited. Printed in U.S.A. Revenue Canada GST Account #128044658. Canada Publishing Agreement Number #40016479.

THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL makes every effort to provide information on dog health, care, and treatment that is authoritative, reliable, and practical. It is not intended, however, to replace diagnosis or treatment from a veterinarian or other qualified dog professional. THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL does not assume any legal responsibility. Readers should always consult qualified healthcare providers for specific diagnosis and treatment.

Subscriptions: \$39 annually (12 issues). Bulk rate subscriptions for organizations and educational institutions available upon request.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL, PO Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535

In Canada, send to THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL, PO Box 39, Norwich, ON, N0J 1P0



Integration

The goal: being consistent in what I know and how I use it.

BY NANCY KERNS

Wow! It's the start of WDJ's 18th year of publication. Sorry to sound like a cliché, but where did the time go? When I was hired to edit the inaugural edition of the magazine in early 1998, I had an extensive history of editing *horse* magazines; I told my new boss flat out, "I don't know that much about dogs!" Of course, I *had* a dog – I've *always* had dogs – but most of what my publisher had planned for WDJ to cover was new to me, such as raw diets, minimal vaccine schedules, complementary and alternative veterinary medicine, and especially, force-free training.

My boss, who was responsible for the purchase of the magazine that I *had been* working for – *The Whole Horse Journal* – wasn't worried. "Horses, dogs . . . How different could it be? You'll figure it out!"

He was kidding, of course. But he had faith that I could take what I had learned working for a magazine that covered species-appropriate diets and alternative and complementary veterinary care, and apply it to the dog world.

I knew I could, too – but I have to admit, I've wondered more than once since then, why hadn't I *already* made the leap? How could I have known so much about holistic horse care and never considered using the same principles to improve the health of my dogs?

For that matter, how about you guys? How many of you avoid GMO foods and buy organic for yourself and your family, but think nothing of feeding (artificially preserved, artificially colored, corn-heavy) Kibbles 'n Bits to your dog?

Or are you one of those curious sorts who does it the other way around? Who buys the most expensive, top-quality dog foods or home-prepares a diet comprised largely of grass-fed meats and fresh, local vegetables for your dog, but eats fast food and junk food all the time yourself? Pot, meet Mrs. Kettle.

Interestingly, the one area where I had already integrated what I learned about force-free and fear-free horse training into my life was in raising my son. I had already had a decade of exposure to modern horse training

methods that preserved a horse's interest in and willingness to work with humans while learning and practicing difficult new tasks, and I wanted to use the same principles of education when teaching my son how to learn, work hard, and behave well. I had learned that no animals can absorb and remember new things well when they are afraid, intimidated, disinterested, bored, or constantly told they are wrong. I was thrilled to discover that force-free training was an even bigger force in the dog world than in the equine arena, with far more research and educational opportunities and far wider acceptance and use.

When my son (who is now 22) was born, I took great pleasure in consciously interacting with him in such a way as to preserve his enthusiasm for learning. He was four when we launched WDJ and I immersed myself even more deeply into positive training. I have to say, it's worked as well with him as it has for all my dogs since! They are *all* a pleasure to be around.

Here is my new year's resolution, however: I want to try to better integrate what I know about keeping my dogs healthy into my own healthcare regime. My dogs are at a healthier weight than I am! They eat a more appropriate diet for their species than I do! And they certainly see their doctors more often than I do! (We exercise about the same amount, though, because all of my exercise is taken with them at my side – ha!)

Any of this resonating with you? Drop me a line and let me know. *NK*

Gear of the Year

Some of our favorite dog-training and dog-care tools and toys.

We asked WDJ's contributors for their recommendations for "things they can't imagine living without" in their dog-care kits – their favorite dog toys, training tools, and treats. Here are some of the products that made their lists of things that they *must* have for their dogs.



TOYS FROM CLEAN RUN

I tried, but I just can't choose only one of the fantastic training toys offered by Clean Run to feature here; I have half a dozen of them, and I use them as super-special, high-value rewards when I am training my dog to perform new or difficult tasks.



Clean Run is an online store that specializes in unique, well-made products for people who are active in canine performance sports – things that you *cannot* find in chain pet supply stores. Toys made of synthetic fleece, plastic, or rubber will engage most dogs to a point. But when you want to capture the attention of a distracted or unmotivated dog, and engage his interest in – nay, *passion* for – playing a training game, you need a toy that is sturdily made with sheepskin, rabbit fur, or buffalo leather.

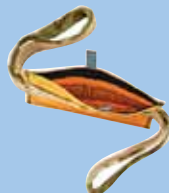
Clean Run offers dozens of such toys, in designs that can do whatever you need them to do: contain hidden bits of aromatic food treats (like the leather TugAway Tuff Pouch Tug, \$13), provide you with a strong handle for a vigorous and rewarding game of tug with your dog (like the TugAway 2-Handled Buffalo Tuff Tug, made with buffalo leather, \$16), fly through the air (like the TugAway Fur Flinger, made with leather and rabbit fur, \$19), or supply the singularly enjoyable (to a dog) mouth-feel of a woolly sheep (like the Ram-Tuff Woolly Chaser, made with real sheepskin, \$13).

Keep in mind that these toys are not intended to be given to a dog to entertain himself for hours; they are meant to be doled out as a high-value reward for short bits of interactive play and then taken away again. The less your dog has them in his possession, the more he will want them. And because they are made with natural materials, he will want them a *lot*, from the very first moment he smells them.

Go to the Clean Run website, then click on toys (under dog supplies). And just see if *you* can buy just one or two toys; it's so hard to choose when there are so many great products to choose from. – *Nancy Kerns*

CLEAN RUN TOYS – \$13 to \$19

Clean Run
South Hadley, MA
(800) 311-6503
cleanrun.com



DR. SHAWN'S ITCH RELIEF ORGANIC SHAMPOO

I don't wash my dogs that often, perhaps once a month. So I want a shampoo that will make Otto's coat clean, soft, and smelling good, without drying his skin (and making him itch) or conditioning Tito's fur to the point of greasiness. Also, I expect my dogs to continue to look and smell clean for at least a few weeks after their baths.

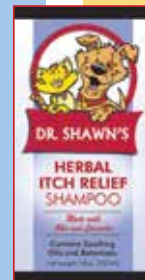
Maybe that's asking too much—because a lot of the dog shampoos I've tried fail at some important part of my wish list. For example, one product cleans them well, but leaves their coats full of static electricity, so that their loose hair flies around and magnetically sticks to everything. Another one is difficult to rinse out completely, giving my dogs an oily look and feel after just a few days.

My quest for a superior dog shampoo leads me to try each and every shampoo that comes into my office unsolicited and every new natural product I see in pet supply stores. But in recent months, I've found myself reaching for the same bottle again and again; my quest may have ended with this product, which was formulated by holistic veterinarian Shawn Messonnier. It doesn't over-lather, yet gets the dogs really clean, and because it's made with organic coconut oil, it's

gentle on Otto's often-irritated skin (he suffers from environmental allergies in the spring and fall). The product contains lemongrass and lavender, so it smells divine, and it contains no artificial colors or fragrances, or sulfates. – *Nancy Kerns*

DR. SHAWN'S ITCH RELIEF ORGANIC SHAMPOO, 16 OZ. – \$13

Dr. Shawn's Naturals
Plano, TX
(972) 867-8800
petcare.naturally.com



KARATE BELT LEASHES

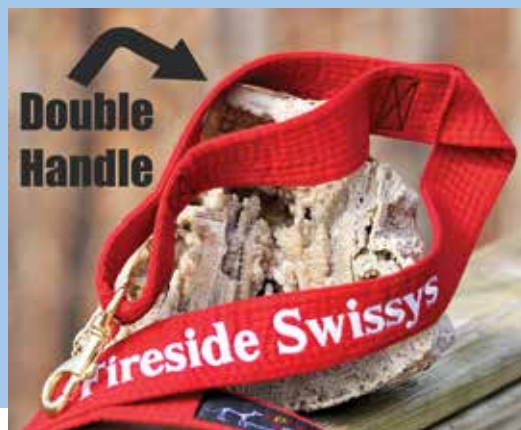
Reduce, reuse, recycle – and now, re-leash. Georgia-based Upcycled Hound transforms karate belts into enviably thick and long dog leashes. Super-soft on your hands and correspondingly strong, the leashes come in all traditional martial-arts colors, from beginner white to the proverbial black belt, and a rainbow in between. Best of all, they're machine washable. You can purchase the leashes as a set with a matching martingale-style collar, and embellish them with embroidery and ribbon trim.

In addition to color and embroidery, options include an O-ring slip lead or snap (if you choose a model with a snap, you also may choose the size and material of the snap – brass or nickel); length (from two to eight feet); and whether you want a single or double handle (the double handle has a second loop sewn in near the leash snap for increased control when you need to restrain a dog right at your side). The Karate Belt Leashes are made from recycled martial-arts belts, so sizes, widths, colors, and wear patterns vary; some even have original labels from their former lives. An Upcycled Hound label is stitched to all leashes, and all work on the leashes is done locally, never outsourced outside the country.

– Denise Flaim

STARTING AT \$20.

Upcycled Hound
Atlanta, GA
(770) 969-4572
upcycledhound.com



"DOG SPORT SKILLS" BOOK SERIES

When you are as into dog training as I am, it's easy to build a vast library of training-related books. The first two books in the developing "Dog Sports Skills" series by Denise Fenzi and Deborah Jones, PhD, can

easily replace a whole shelf full of lesser-quality books in order to clearly and rationally explain the how our dogs learn, and how to use that information to teach our dogs specific behaviors.

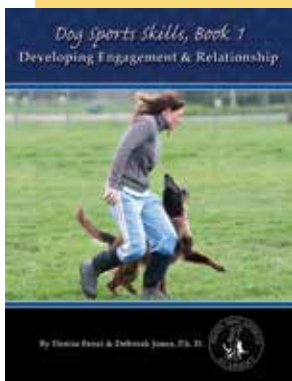
At the core of the series is the authors' desire to help people create meaningful, rewarding relationships with their dogs, whether or not they aspire to set foot in a competition ring, or simply wish to enjoy basic "manners" training at a deeper level. *Developing Engagement & Relationship* does an excellent job of explaining the true value and importance of building solid dog-handler relationships as a means of fostering willing engagement, while *Motivation* thoroughly explores how to build on your relationship with your dog by not only understanding what motivates him, but also, how to humanely and respectfully leverage that motivation to support your desired performance.

Adding to the books' value is the use of a variety of photos and case studies depicting dogs of all shapes, sizes, and skill sets. The inclusiveness of such a variety of dogs is refreshing and supports the idea that success is possible whether or not you train one of the so-called "performance breeds."

The forthcoming third book will address the nuts and bolts of play. Having built a foundation based on relationship, motivation, and play, readers will then be ready for future books, said to offer a systematic approach to training the various skills required for AKC obedience and rally. In the meantime, those wanting to know

more about Fenzi and Jones, both highly accomplished competition exhibitors, can check out the Fenzi Dog Sports Academy, an online training school for a variety of competition dog sports. – Stephanie Colman

Fenzi Dog Sports Academy, Woodside, CA
thedogathlete.com or fenzidogsportsacademy.com



EACH BOOK \$24;
BOTH FOR \$40

For phone
orders, call
Dogwise,
(800) 776-2665

RUFFWEAR'S FRONT RANGE HARNESS

Because of my Border Collie Duncan's senior age and arthritis, I decided to seek out a different kind of harness for him. I was thrilled to find RuffWear's new Front Range Harness. I was immediately drawn to it for its design: instead of straps wrapping around shoulders and torso, the Front Range Harness uses padded chest and belly panels that help to distribute any tension that can occur when using a leash. Even better, it does not inhibit a dog's range of motion and thus avoids the dog having to compromise his gait – making it an ideal harness for off-leash runs and hikes, as well as leisurely walks, with no rubbing straps!

The harness is super easy to put on: it slips over the head and then fastens with two buckles along the back. Not only are there four points for adjustment (two at the neck and two around the belly), there's this nifty little stretch mechanism sewn into the belly portion that provides a little give when you're buckling up. Dog is in the details! There's a pouch on the back piece for identification tags; a secured inner loop easily attaches to tags and the pouch closes tightly with Velcro. There is even an additional ID spot on the inside of the belly panel with space to write your dog's "trail" name and your phone number. The harness comes in five sizes and four attractive colors

With two leash attachment points – reinforced webbing at the chest and an aluminum ring on the back – the harness is versatile for dogs of varying activity levels. The harness can even act as a no-pull device when the leash is attached to the front point. This point is also a perfect spot to attach a safety light; that, combined with the reflective trim, makes it a good option for nighttime outings. – *Barbara Dobbins*

FRONT RANGE HARNESS - \$40

RuffWear, Bend, OR
(888)783-3932; ruffwear.com



PHOTO COURTESY OF RUFFWEAR



AROMIS ESSENTIAL OIL DIFFUSERS

Essential oils are one of my go-to modalities: When I hear that telltale kennel-cough hack, out come my bottles of eucalyptus oil; if there's doggie anxiety afoot, it's lavender essential oil to the rescue. (I use Young Living oils; be sure any oil you use is labeled "therapeutic grade.") Diffusing these potent aromatics into the air is a wonderful way to unlock their healing powers – not to mention, make the house smell great. Since I keep my diffusers on tabletops, they can't look frumpy, and on that score Aromis satisfies my aesthetic imperative. The company's diffusion units have sleek wooden bases and stylish glass diffuser bottles, as well as a built-in timer feature (choose from one, four, or eight-hour run times, or continuous). Since the diffuser bottles are delicate (and the least expensive part of the unit), I always order a spare, just in case. – *Denise Flaim*

AROMIS DIFFUSERS, \$99
Aromis, Ltd.
Longmont, CO
(720) 341-6376
aromis.co

Note: The Aromis website has terrific information on why diffusers are the ideal way to dispense therapeutic essential oils in your home, and how to use and maintain them.

WOOFTRAX

How about a free piece of “gear” that benefits you, your dog, and your favorite city shelter or rescue organization? WoofTrax is a fitness tracker app that motivates you to walk (or run or bike with) your dogs, while raising money for a shelter or rescue group of your choice.

The WoofTrax app is available for free in the Apple App Store and on Google Play. After you create a profile, it allows you to upload pictures and information for each dog you walk, as well as designate a shelter or rescue as beneficiary.



An easy-to-follow interface has users select which dogs will join them for the activity and start the GPS tracker. Like any fitness app that uses GPS, the tracking requires data for the duration of the activity, so it's important to be mindful of your mobile phone's data limits and potential overage charges, especially if tracking lengthy daily treks. At the end of a walk, run, or ride, a setting allows the app to auto-save information, and users have the option to promote their activity using Twitter or Facebook. The app also saves the user's history, and offers updated information about the number of users, number of walks, and total mileage logged on behalf of your designated shelter or rescue. Since WoofTrax's revenue is ad-based, the amount donated to each shelter depends more on the number of people walking on behalf of an organization and the number of walks taken than the distance traveled per walk. According to CEO Doug Hexter, more than 100,000 users have downloaded the app, helping the company donate roughly \$65,000 to its more than 4,500 registered shelters and rescues since its inception in fall 2013. City shelters and registered 501(c)(3) rescues can apply to become beneficiaries through the website.

January is National Walk Your Dog Month! Lace up your shoes, leash up your dog, and hit the road to better health and fitness while supporting your local shelter or rescue. – *Stephanie Colman*

WOOFTRAX – FREE!

WoofTrax
Baltimore, MD
(607) 216-9757
wooftrax.com

TEDDY THE DOG

I'm a t-shirt and jeans kind of woman, and I love a cute and clever dog t-shirt. Teddy the Dog hits the mark. The handsome and cool Teddy – he's always wearing sunglasses – can be seen tracking muddy paw prints across a shirt that reads, “Dirty Dogs Have More Fun,” and hanging with a pig on the limited-edition “Don't Go Bacon My Heart” t-shirt. Fan of the Hunger Games? There's even “Dogniss: Tribute from District K9.”

The tag-free t-shirts are 100 percent garment-dyed cotton. Most of the designs are printed on men's t-shirts. Fewer are available in women's sizes/styles, hoodies, and youth sizes. A word about sizing: The men's shirts run big and *long*. I actually took scissors to one of mine after mistakenly ordering a men's XL. Just because I want my shirt to be big around, doesn't mean I want to wear it as a dress. Teddy the Dog also offers throw blankets, beach towels, and a few accessories.

In addition to the clever designs, Teddy the Dog leads the pack in customer appreciation. Part of what makes Teddy the Dog so fun is the frequency with which new designs appear. The company regularly solicits customer input about new designs through opportunities to vote via Facebook or online surveys, and emails announcing new designs (usually with a discount code) seem to come with just the right frequency to keep me feeling up to date, but not feeling spammed. Two thumbs and four paws up. – *Stephanie Colman*

T-SHIRTS STARTING AT \$24

Teddy the Dog
Needham, MA
(800) 628-9065 x108
teddythedog.com



Space Invaders

How to create just a little more physical space between you and your dog (when you want it).

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA

Do you live with a canine space invader? These are the dogs who always seem to be in your way – under your feet, blocking your path, nudging a nose under your hand as you try to type on your laptop, pressing tightly up against you as you share the sofa. They are often sweet, appeasing, attention-loving snugglers, so it’s hard to discourage the behaviors, but they can also get annoying. I know this all too well, as Bonnie, our appeasing, beguiling, attention-loving, 9-year-old “Scorgidoodle” (Scottie/Corgi/Poodle), is an exceptionally talented space hog.

Despite what you may have heard, space invaders are *not* motivated by dominance. Your dog is not taking your space in a pre-emptive strike to take over the world. Usually, dogs who affectionately crowd you are simply seeking your attention, and have discovered that the best way to get it is to be in your space.

Although the behavior can be annoying, it can also be endearing (“Aww, look how much my dog loves me!”), and the dog often gets reinforced for it. I’m as guilty as the next dog owner; I often pet Bonnie when she inserts her nose under my hand or squeezes herself as closely to me as she can on the sofa.

Since the behaviors *sometimes* get reinforced – behavior geeks call this an “intermittent schedule of reinforcement” – it’s devilishly difficult to stop them, because your dog knows that sooner or later the behaviors will, indeed, succeed in gaining your attention. (When it’s hard to make a behavior go away, behavior geeks call this “resistant to extinction”.) So she keeps trying until it finally works.

The good news is that you don’t *have to* make the behaviors go away.

Instead, just teach your dog to respond to “incompatible behaviors” on cue – that is, behaviors she can’t do at the same time she’s hogging space. I taught Bonnie several incompatible behaviors, and we get along just fine: I can indulge in giving her attention when I feel like it, and ask her to do something else when I don’t.

INCOMPATIBLE BEHAVIORS

There is a long list of behaviors I could ask my dog to do when she’s being a space invader. Here are some of my favorites:

■ **BACK UP** – This cue is useful for space-hog dogs who like to park themselves directly in your path. It’s easy and convenient to be able to cue your dog and have her move politely out of your way! You can “capture” the behavior (click and treat when she happens to back up); use a toy or food lure to entice her into backing up; or lure/shape the “Back up” behavior.

To lure, hold a treat at your dog’s nose, then move it down and toward her breastbone. As she leans or steps backward to follow it, click and treat. (Don’t push her back; let her step back on her own.) When she will lure backward easily, add the “Back” cue.

To fade the lure, say the cue, pause to let her think about it (click and treat if she leans or steps back!), and only then should you lure if necessary. Gradually reduce the amount of luring, giving her plenty of time to figure out what you asked for with your cue, until she will back up on the cue alone, with the treat delivered afterward as her reward.

To lure/shape, place a chair against a wall and stand in front of it (with your back to the chair) and with your dog in front of and facing you. Toss a treat between your legs (under the chair) and invite your dog to get it. The goal is to get her to crawl under the chair and then back out, so you can click (or use a verbal marker, such as the word “Yes!”) when she backs up. Then, immediately toss the next treat (the one you promised her, for the click) under the chair again.

Most of us like to snuggle with our dogs, but it’s most enjoyable when we get to choose the time and place, instead of being pestered into it.



Repeat this until the process is working smoothly; then add your “Back” cue just *before* she backs out from under the chair.

Occasionally do a test run, where you feed the treat directly to her instead of tossing it under the chair, and then just wait to see if she offers a step back. If she does, click and treat, then do several more repetitions of tossing the treat under the chair. As she gets better about offering a step back, you can move away from the chair, stop tossing the treat between your legs, and shape for an increasing number of steps backward.

■ **TOUCH** – One of the most useful applications of “Touch” (teaching your dog to target her nose to your hand) is to position your dog without having to physically move her. Space-hog dogs are notoriously good at using the “opposition reflex,” wherein they resist if you try to push or pull them out of the way. (The scientific name for this phenomenon is “thigmotaxis.”) When your dog knows the cue to touch her nose to your hand, you can easily move her out of your way by positioning your target hand off to your side and asking her to “Touch.”

To teach “Touch,” stand or sit with your dog in front of you, offering your open palm four to six inches away from her nose, at nose level or slightly below, with your fingers pointed toward the floor. If she sniffs your hand, click (or say “Yes!”) and give her a treat. If she doesn’t move toward your hand to sniff, rub a little tasty treat on your palm to tempt her to sniff. Repeat until she is deliberately bumping her nose into your palm to make you click and give her a treat. Then add the cue “Touch” as you offer your hand.



Once your dog understands “touch,” you can direct her out of your way by having her follow your hand with her nose.

When she clearly understands “Touch” in this presentation, position your hand in varying spots and ask her to Touch. You can even move your hand away as she follows it, to position her even farther away from her original location. The better she gets at this, the easier it is to move her wherever you want her without having to physically position her.

■ **OFF** – “Off” means “If you’re on something (like the sofa), I want you to hop off.” I use this one with Bonnie when she’s too persistent about snuggling on the sofa and nudging my laptop-typing hands or inserting her head under my elbow, or when I want her to vacate our shared space so I can eat my dinner. When she has hopped off, I might ask her to “Go lie down” (our equivalent of “Go to your mat”) or “Wait!” to prevent her from immediately hopping back up.

It’s quite simple to teach “Off.” Pick a surface where your dog is allowed to be, such as a bed or sofa, and invite her “Up!”

Lure with a treat if necessary. Once she is up, invite her “Off!” and toss a yummy treat on the floor. You can click or use a “Yes!” marker each time she hops on and off the furniture on cue. Sometimes, ask her to “Wait” and reinforce this behavior at each location, so she doesn’t develop an “up-off-up-off” behavior chain.

In short order, your dog should be jumping on and off on cue, and you can reward her with a treat after the fact, instead of using the treat to lure. In time, you can “fade” the use of the treat (use it less and less often) so that you reward her with a treat only occasionally, or you can do as I do and continue to reinforce with a treat most or all of the time.

■ **FIND IT** – This is the easiest exercise to teach, ever. To play the “Find it” game with your dog, say, “Find it!” and toss a tasty treat on the floor near you. If she can’t find it, tap your toe on the floor near the treat. Repeat until she perks up at the “Find it!” cue and looks for the treats on her own. Then start tossing treats farther away after you say, “Find it!” Once she knows the cue, you can say, “Find it!” and toss a treat when you need to move her out of your way.

This can also be a fun way to exercise your dog: Toss a treat as far as you can to your left, and after she runs and eats that one, toss another as far as you can to your right. You can feed an entire meal to her this way! You can also toss a favorite toy to get your dog to vacate your space – though she’s likely to bring it back and ask you to toss it again!

■ **GO TO YOUR MAT** – This is another method for asking your dog to move out

Start teaching “Off” with a tossed-treat lure; then, use the treat as a reward after she hops off the couch.



of your way. By teaching her a cue that means “go lie down on your bed,” you can get her to go to a specific location – which removes her from your space. My dog Bonnie’s cue for this is “Go lie down.” When she hears this cue, she will find the nearest dog bed in our house and lie down on it. You can lure or shape your dog’s “Go to your mat” behavior.

To lure, call your dog over to a bed or throw rug you have obtained for this purpose. Say, “Go to bed” (or whatever word or phrase you plan to use). Either lure her to the bed with a treat held in your hand, or place a treat on the bed and encourage her to go to it and eat it. Click and give her a treat (or say, “Yes!” and give her a treat) when she does it; then ask her to “Down” and click and treat for that.

Do this a number of times until you think your dog is beginning to associate your cue with going to and lying down on the bed. Then you can start occasionally asking for the behavior without the lure. Click and give a treat when your dog complies.

You can also request a “Wait” so your dog doesn’t pop right back up from the rug. When she is doing this part well, start asking for the behavior when you are farther away from the bed. Ultimately, you should be able to ask your dog to go to her bed from anywhere in the house, which effectively removes her from your space.

To shape this behavior, you simply set up an environment that will allow your dog to easily do the desired behavior, and then click and treat for very tiny steps in the right direction, until you have shaped the entire behavior. Shaping is a fun game; it teaches your dog to think and learn, and encourages her to try to figure out what you want her to do.

Start by standing with your dog within about four to six feet from a rug or mat on the floor. Your dog can be on leash or off leash if she will stay with you and keep playing the shaping game. Watch her closely. Click and treat for *any* behavior associated with the rug. If she looks at or toward it, click and treat. Click and treat if she takes a step toward the rug, or even if she just leans or turns her head toward it.

When she starts moving toward the rug, even ever so slightly, click (or “Yes!”) and then toss the treat on the floor several feet away from the mat, so she can “reset” herself. In other words, you want her to move away from the mat so she

can move back toward the mat (on cue) again. Watch for her movements to start becoming very deliberate – when you can see she understands that moving toward the mat is what makes you click and give her a treat. When she is moving to the rug routinely, start shaping her to sit and then lie down on it.

■ **WAIT** – You can use “Wait” to stop your dog from moving into your space in the first place, or to hold her in place when you have successfully asked her to remove herself from your space. It’s like a pause button – not as formal as a “Stay” cue.

The following are two ways to teach “Wait.” Both will teach your dog that “Wait” means “Pause,” and once she knows that you can generalize it to other situations (such as when you see her approaching and you know she’s going to get in your space by jumping on you, parking herself in front of you, or jumping up on the sofa).

Wait for Food: With your dog sitting at your side, holding her food bowl at chest level and tell her to “Wait.” Move the food bowl (with food in it, topped with tasty treats) about four to six inches toward the floor. If your dog remains sitting, click, raise the bowl back up, and feed her a treat from the bowl. If your dog gets up as you lower the bowl, say “Oops!”, raise the bowl, and ask her to sit again.

If she remains sitting each time you lower the bowl four to six inches, lower the bowl eight to 12 inches. If she holds the sit, click and treat. Repeat this step several times until she consistently remains sitting as you lower the bowl. Gradually move the bowl closer to the floor with successive repetitions until you can place it on the floor without your dog trying to get up or eat it.

Finally, place the bowl on the floor and tell her she can eat! After she has had a few bites, pick up the bowl and try again, lowering the bowl a little farther this time. Repeat these steps until you can place the bowl on the floor and she doesn’t move until you tell her she may.

Wait at the door: With your dog sitting at your side near a door, tell her to “Wait.” Reach for the doorknob. Click and give her a treat if she doesn’t move.

Repeat this step several times. Then jiggle the door knob. Click and reward your dog for not moving. Repeat several times. Slowly open the door a crack. Again, click and reward if she doesn’t move. Repeat several times.

If at any time she *does* move toward the door, say, “Oops!” and close the door (or, if you haven’t even opened the door yet, just bring your hand back to your side and start over).

Gradually open the door wider on each attempt. When your dog has remained sitting and “waiting” (and you have clicked and rewarded her for doing so) several times with the door all the way open, she’s ready for the next step. Ask her to “Wait,” open the door, and then walk through the door, stopping and facing your dog immediately afterward. Wait a few seconds, click (or “Yes!”), and then return to your dog and give her a treat. Of course, you can still invite her to go through the door any time you want!



Food bowl “Wait” teaches your dog self-control, too.

MORE THAN ONE WAY . . .

So there you go – a variety of ways to help your dog learn how to give you some space on cue. Because she gets rewarded for each of them, and makes you happy in the process, she should enjoy complying with your requests for space. Choose the methods that appeal to you (or choose them all) and get to work . . . but don’t forget to save a least a little time for snuggling with your dog, too! 🐾

Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, is WDJ’s Training Editor. She lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center, where she offers dog-training classes and courses for trainers. See page 24 for information about Pat’s classes, books, and courses for trainers.

Crisis Averted

A dog's confusion, a couple's desperation, and a trainer's intervention lead to a nice resolution.

BY NANCY TUCKER, CPDT-KA

One of the most irritating – and common – phone calls I receive in my capacity as a professional dog trainer is when dog owners urgently ask me to help solve their dog's behavior problem *immediately* – even though, as it often turns out, the problem has actually existed for *years*. Sometimes, it's even phrased as, "If we can't get this fixed *now*, we're getting rid of the dog; we just can't take it anymore."

But it's important that I not allow my irritation to show, because frequently, despite the fact that the problem took months or even years to develop, the people really *are* on the verge of giving up on the dog. Sometimes, whatever has been going on with the dog has tipped the scales significantly enough to prompt the client to ask for help right then and there.

I want to harness that motivation! I want to seize that moment and get everyone working together on a solution, finally.

I received such a call on a Saturday afternoon from an exasperated woman whose 4-year-old miniature Poodle had a housetraining issue. The dog had *never* been successfully housetrained, she said, and now she and her husband

were desperate. They wanted this problem solved *now*, immediately. "You have to help us!" On learning how long the problem had existed, I asked what compelled them to seek help at this time. "It's gross," she said. "It has to stop."

People don't generally book a behavior consultation because they suddenly consider their dog's behavior gross after tolerating it for four years. I prodded a bit more. "Well, nothing's worked. We must be doing something wrong!" Aha! It made me very happy that she hadn't put the blame on the dog and that she appeared to recognize that there was something she and her husband should be doing differently. I figured I would get more details when I got there, and I booked them for that evening. Yes, it was a Saturday evening, but I kept thinking of all the fabulous training and practice opportunities they would get the very next day, Sunday, when they were both home all day. The timing was perfect.

I kept in mind that addressing a long-existing housetraining issue can be tricky, and it's stressful for everyone involved, for a number of reasons, including:



Silly's owners were extremely frustrated with their lack of success in housetraining the 4-year-old dog, and they had just about reached the point of rehoming her, due to that frustration. Fortunately, before they gave up, they asked for professional help from a positive trainer, who transformed their frustration into motivation to change their approach and tactics. And, voila! Silly is now reliably housetrained, and they are all much happier.

- The humans are at the end of their rope (even though they've let it go on for several years).
- The dog is stressed because everyone seems to be so angry with her all the time.
- The humans are about to learn that the problem won't be fixed overnight, and that they'll have to significantly change their routine in order to make any progress.
- The dog is about to have the only toilet facilities she's ever known, taken away from her . . . just try to imagine how confusing that must be, for anyone!

LOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

At the clients' house, I was greeted at the door by a very enthusiastic, friendly little female poodle named "Silly." I learned that the couple mostly worked on opposing shifts, and, to make matters more complicated, their schedules were unpredictable and irregular. This meant that a routine was difficult for them to stick to, and also explained why it was important that we meet "right now," as it was one of the rare times they were both at home.

We quickly ruled out any medical issues as a potential cause for Silly's "accidents," as she had very recently received a clean bill of health from her veterinarian at an annual health visit.

My attention was drawn to a couple of training "puppy" pads on the floor – one in the kitchen and another in the bathroom. I asked if Silly had ever been trained to use the pads; the answer was "Yes, sometimes she uses them." *Sometimes* means that the answer was actually *no*; she had never been trained specifically to use the pads – she just managed to hit them sometimes when she eliminated in the spots in the house that she preferred for elimination.

I asked if they had ever attempted to train her to relieve herself outside. They said, "Not really, but sometimes if we're outside, she'll go potty there and she knows we're happy about it." Again, I surmised that no formal training had actually taken place.

I also learned that the husband had, on several occasions and on the advice of several well-meaning friends, resorted to spanking Silly if she was caught in the

act of relieving herself in a location other than on the pad. He had also "rubbed her nose in it" if a mess was discovered after the fact. As a result, Silly now only relieved herself in a corner of the basement when no humans were around, or in the living room during the night when everyone was asleep.

The owners also mentioned that Silly was free-fed, and while she used to nibble throughout the day, she now ate and drank only after the owners had gone to bed. They said she often emptied her water bowl completely during this time.

THE NEW PLAN

We began by removing the training pads and establishing scheduled feeding times, in order to promote regular digestion and elimination.

We also devised a plan that would allow Silly the opportunity to go outside *every 30 minutes* for the next several days, *always* accompanied by someone who could reward her immediately if she relieved herself outside. This plan might prove difficult for some owners, but I learned that the owners' next-door neighbors (in a duplex) were actually the husband's parents, fond of Silly, retired, and readily available. I quickly recruited them to help handle this task.

Silly is not crate-trained and is not comfortable being confined, so we established a large area in the kitchen that could be closed off, where she could be left alone for short periods between visits from the parents. When the owners were home, she was to be either actively supervised or tethered to them at all times. They were to continue the frequent visits outside, with the intention of gradually stretching the time between outdoor trips as Silly became more successful with her outdoor potty breaks.

I explained to Silly's owners that punishing her, whether in the act of eliminating in the house or upon finding evidence of a previous "accident" indoors, would discourage Silly from eliminating in front of them. In order to help Silly feel comfortable eliminating – *outside!* – the owners agreed to stop punishing her for any "mistakes" that she made.

IMMEDIATE PROGRESS

During my visit, I took several opportunities to step into the backyard with Silly on a long leash and was lucky enough to be able to reward her – not once, but twice! – for relieving herself

outside. When asked if they were up for the task of doing this all day on Sunday, with the aim of creating opportunities to reward Silly outside, both owners were extremely enthusiastic.

After one week, with the help of the parents and the urgent commitment of the owners, Silly had slipped up only *once* during the day when left alone for longer than planned and not confined to the kitchen area. And now that she was routinely praised and rewarded for eliminating outdoors, she also began scratching at the back door when she wanted to go outside!

The couple is now optimistic that their problem will finally be resolved. Best of all, the relationship between themselves and their darling little dog – a relationship that had been damaged by the punishment and mutual distrust – is well on its way to being repaired.

WHEN A CRISIS IS GOOD

President John F. Kennedy once noted that when written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters, one that represents danger and one that represents opportunity. Perhaps that's what Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel had in mind when he was more recently quoted as saying that one should "never let a serious crisis go to waste," because "it's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before."

Even life-threatening crises, such as when an owner considers surrendering or even euthanizing his dog due to serious behavior problems, can be seen as an opportunity for a trainer – or even just a friend with a better dog education or more dog experience – to help encourage and redirect the owner toward a smarter and more positive solution.

Not all conversations that begin with "You need to fix this right now!" grow into easy success stories like this one, and yet I can't help but think that my having responded *immediately*, while the iron was hot, had a lot to do with fueling – and reinforcing! – the couple's determination to address their problem in a new and better way. 🐾

Nancy Tucker, CPDT-KA, is a full-time trainer, behavior consultant, and seminar presenter in Quebec, Canada. She has written numerous articles on dog behavior for Quebec publications focusing on life with the imperfect family dog. For contact information, see "Resources," page 24.

Restraining Order

Canine automobile safety harnesses are not all created equal; here's the only one we'd use.

BY LISA RODIER

As Dorea Fowler and her two daughters were nearing the end of a road trip from Atlanta to Florida, Fowler allowed her 7-year-old Boxer, Ruby, to move up and sit unrestrained in the front passenger seat of her Toyota Highlander. They were traveling uneventfully down the highway at about 65 mph, as they had for hundreds of miles, when suddenly Fowler's SUV was struck from behind. Upon first impact, the Boxer stood up; then Fowler's vehicle spun out of control. As the car rotated, Ruby went airborne, flew across Fowler's lap, and hit the driver's side window with her head. The car then hit a guard rail head on. The vehicle's air bag and seat belts protected Fowler (and her two children), but Ruby rocketed forward into the windshield between the driver's door and air bag. When the vehicle came to rest, Ruby was lying on her side across the front seat. The Boxer was still alive, but rigid as a board, indicating to Fowler (an RN) that Ruby had a serious head injury.

Obviously, Fowler is not the only person to drive with her dog unrestrained in her car; more than 80 percent of American pet owners admit to playing the same sort of vehicular Russian roulette with loose dogs in their cars. So far, there are no laws that require pets to be protected with car safety restraints, though at least one state (Hawaii) has made it illegal to drive with a pet on one's lap – more due to the danger of distracted driving than to protect the dogs.

Dogs can certainly distract their drivers in any number of ways in a car, but it's even more common for them to be a completely innocent victim – indeed, the most vulnerable victim – in a car accident. Mandatory seat-belt laws mean that most drivers and human passengers today are belted into cars, but few dogs receive this protection. Because most of them are unrestrained, our canine companions can become deadly projectiles in an out-of-control car, injuring passengers or themselves. Frequently, they are thrown out of the



Ruby survived a car accident while riding unrestrained, but not without lingering side effects, including partial paralysis on her left side. PHOTO BY DOREA FOWLER

car (often through a window), and in pain and panic, bolt from the scene of an accident, never to be seen again.

PREVENTION OPTIONS

Most restraint systems, including crates, car seats, and harness/seat belt combinations, can prevent our dogs from distracting us while we're driving.

Financial considerations, convenience, the size of our dogs, as well as the size of the vehicles we already own, may dictate that a safety harness and seat belt are the best of those options for simply keeping the dog out of the driver's way.

We'd be willing to bet, however, that all of us dog owners who are willing to use a car restraint system for our dogs expect whatever system we use to do more than simply prevent our dogs from being distractions; we also absolutely expect that they'll keep our dogs safe in the event of an accident.

Which is why it was so upsetting to read a recent study by a nonprofit, independent pet-safety advocacy group, the Center for Pet Safety (CPS), which reported that very few of the products intended to protect our dogs in cars are capable of doing so. Most of the car safety restraints included in the CPS tests exhibited "catastrophic failures" – in other words, they either broke, or failed to secure the crash-test-dummy dogs in simulated crashes.

ACCIDENT SPARKS A PASSION FOR SAFETY

The CPS was founded by consultant and long-time pet safety advocate Lindsey Wolko after – what else? – an incident on the road with her English Cocker Spaniel in the car. Wolko is one of the few dog owners who regularly uses a car safety restraint on her dog. She had chosen her dog's restraint harness carefully, after scrutinizing lots of product labels, to make sure the restraint she chose was intended to not only keep her dog from being a distraction while Wolko was driving, but also protect the dog in the case of an accident.

The harness did indeed prevent her dog from hopping around the car. But it wasn't until Wolko had that near-miss at rush hour on a major metropolitan highway that she realized the harness didn't perform the way she thought it would. Cut off unexpectedly by another motorist, Wolko slammed on the brakes. The jolt caused her dog to rocket off the back seat, crash against the front seat, and become entangled in the harness's long tether. Wolko's dog survived, but was seriously injured.

Shaken and distraught, Wolko began investigating canine car-safety restraints

from the perspective of a safety expert, rather than just a consumer. She soon discovered that U.S. manufacturers are not required to crash-test pet travel products before bringing them to market. Further, she learned that there were absolutely no independent standards for any tests that companies conducted to crash-test their products; while some manufacturers claimed their products were crash-tested, this information was useless to consumers (and their dogs) in the absence of test standards.

INDEPENDENT TESTING

A woman on a mission, Wolko set out to create a standard for testing pet-safety restraints. She founded CPS, dedicating the organization to companion-animal and consumer safety, and set a goal for CPS to conduct rigorous crash testing on pet-safety products using realistic crash-test-dummy dogs.

In partnership with Subaru of America, CPS engaged the services of MGA Research Corporation, an independent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) contract testing laboratory, to conduct crash testing of canine car restraints. CPS developed specially weighted and designed crash-test-dummy dogs for use during testing: a 25-pound “terrier-mix,” a 45-pound “Border Collie,” and a 75-pound “Golden Retriever.”

CRASH-TEST CANDIDATES

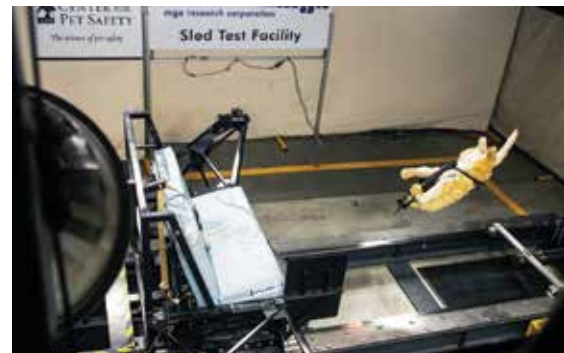
Initially, Wolko focused her attention on products whose manufacturers claimed, in advertising or product labeling, that the product had undergone “testing,” “crash testing,” or offered “crash protection.” During her research, Wolko had found that most of the manufacturers who made a claim regarding crash testing referenced the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 213, “Child Restraint Systems.” This is indisputably the most rigorous standard that can and should be met by any car-safety restraint. But Wolko also discovered that many of the manufacturers who conducted crash testing tested only the “medium” size of



A crash-test-dummy dog (and a multitude of cameras) all set for a Center for Pet Safety (CPS) restraint test.



The CPS developed three crash-test-dummy dogs; the largest is this 75-pound “Golden Retriever.”



This photo is worth 1,000 words on why reliable and independent crash testing of dog safety restraints is needed. A truly protective safety harness does not allow a dog to “launch” on impact. (For worse shocks, see the videos on CPS’s site: centerforpetsafety.org/research/2013-harness-crash-test-videos/.)

their product, rather than the complete size range in which the product was offered. She also found that, frequently, a manufacturer’s definition of “passing” crash testing was subjective. Most importantly, Wolko’s research revealed lots of product marketing claims that were largely unfounded.

After exhaustive research of the market, Wolko found 11 brands of harnesses that met her criteria – products

whose manufacturers made claims of crash testing and protection. These 11 would be the first products she tested.

PRELIMINARY TESTING

Each crash test costs about \$2,000 to conduct, and the independent tests were going to be paid for by CPS and Subaru, not the manufacturers of the products. So, in order to potentially rule out any obviously inferior products prior to crash testing, CPS conducted preliminary strength testing of the harnesses.

Products purchased at retail outlets by CPS were placed on a solid dog-shaped form and pulled until the harness broke. If a particular harness withstood a five-second hold period at a specific load, then it was deemed acceptable to move on to the crash-testing phase. A failure – in any size harness – would knock that harness brand completely out of consideration for further testing.

Only seven of the 11 harness brands passed these static tests and advanced to the crash-testing phase.

CRASH TESTING

In general, CPS’s concept of the ideal harness would be one that, during impact, would keep a dog on the seat, control rotation of the dog (both fore and aft, as well as side to side) to help stabilize the dog’s spine, and keep adjacent passengers safe. CPS determined the following to be critical variables as to whether a harness was a “Top Performer” in these respects:

- Does the harness exhibit a catastrophic failure such that the test dog becomes a projectile or is released from the restraint? That is, does the harness break, freeing the dog to launch?

- Does the test dog stay on the seat for the entirety of the crash test? Even if the dog remains attached to the restraint, falling off the seat increases her risk of further injury.

- Does the harness have a tether that prevents adjustment to a length of six inches or less? Long tethers are dangerous, allowing the dog to launch

and/or becoming wrapped around the dog's body or limbs, leading to the risk of further injury. "Zip lines" are equally dangerous.

■ Does the testing indicate uniform performance across all sizes?

The CPS used the data gathered in its tests to develop and publish its recommended standards for canine car-safety products: CPS-001-014.01, the Companion Animal Safety Harness Restraint System Standard.

At the end of the day, six of the seven harnesses included in the tests failed to meet the CPS-001-014.01 standards.

One manufacturer requested (and paid for) a re-test of its product, but only after making one change to their product's application on the test dog dummy. The maker reversed the position of a carabiner on the harness, which improved the test result; however, it's worth noting that the original position of the carabiner was set according to the product's label directions. (Note: The CPS wouldn't disclose the name of this product or manufacturer, because the manufacturer refused to sign a formal licensing agreement with CPS.)

SOLE SURVIVOR

The *only* product to pass the CPS tests and earn the CPS designation of "Top Performer" in the CPS 2013 Safety Harness Crashworthiness Study was the **Sleepypod Clickit Utility Harness**, which retails for about \$90.

During testing, all three sizes of the

Sleepypod Clickit Utility Harness offered by the company at the time (size XS has since been added) prevented the launch and controlled the rotation of the test-dog dummy; in addition, the dog remained on the seat after impact, and there were no equipment failures.

The Utility's three-point connection is similar, conceptually, to the three-point seat belt required for humans by federal law. The harness is meant to be used in the rear seat (no front-seat usage!) where two side straps latch onto baby-seat anchors (which are standard equipment on all vehicles manufactured after 2003). The third connection point is via a seat belt, which is passed through the back of the harness.

Sleepypod uses a specific measurement – the total length of a figure eight around a dog's neck and torso – to indicate which size of its product a dog should wear. The company recommends that small dogs (those who measure less than 31 inches using the measuring protocol, seen in the adjacent illustration) do not wear a harness, but are crated in a crash-tested and well-secured pet carrier instead. Very large dogs, too, are not considered good candidates for the Sleepypod Utility Harness; it's not recommended for any dogs who measure more than 60 inches and/or weigh more than 75 pounds. (The heaviest test-dog dummy used in the CPS tests was 75

pounds, so the harness is untested at weights greater than that.)

WHEREIN WE TRY THE SLEEPYPOD UTILITY HARNESS

Atle, my Bouvier, is a few inches shy of the maximum measurement, and weighs in at *just* under 75 lbs. Getting the harness on him was pretty easy; it simply slips over the dog's head, with two adjustable straps criss-crossing the dog's back, and then buckles on each side.

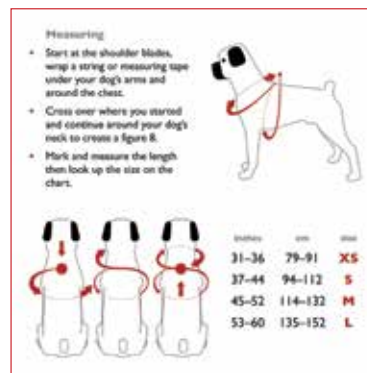
The "vest" of the harness itself is nicely padded, and hugs the dog's upper torso. In my opinion, it's not too bulky or overbuilt, and surprisingly lightweight; it can even do double duty as a walking harness.

It's easiest to clip the two side straps to the vehicle's anchors *first*, put the harness on the dog, load the dog into the car and ask him to sit, and then attach

the straps to the dog's harness. The dog's behind should be snug against the seat when he is sitting up. The final step is to thread the car's seat belt through the back straps of the harness and click the latch plate into the latch.

Securing Atle into my vehicle with the Utility Harness for the first few times took a little elbow grease. My first attempt at stuffing him into the back seat of my sporty station wagon left me sweaty and a bit frustrated, and he was more than a little unsure about the whole enterprise.

After a bit of struggle, and repeated out-loud readings of the instructions provided with the harness, we retired to the house for a break and for some further research online. That's when I discovered that Sleepypod's website features slightly better instructions for attaching the two side straps than the ones included with the harness. (It turns out that a hook on the side strap needs to pass through a D-ring on the harness, then clasp onto another smaller ring.)



WHAT ABOUT CRATES FOR CAR TRAVEL?

I'm one of those folks who travels with my dog in a wire crate in a van. It made my once-carsick, car-averse dog into a happy, willing traveler. However, as with safety restraint harnesses, not all crates are created equal. Check out the not-so-reassuring preliminary wire-crate crash video on the CPS website (centerforpetsafety.org) under the "Research" tab.



CPS is planning a "containment" study, but is in search of a sponsor and donations to help fund the undertaking (the estimated tab is about \$400,000). Once a sponsor is landed, CPS is prepared to begin the study immediately. Want to support the effort with a tax-deductible donation? Head to the CPS website and click on "DonateToday."



Sleepypod's Clickit Utility Harness comes with straps that attach to either side of the harness and the car's anchors. The car's seat belt is passed through the back of the harness to provide a third connection.

For my next attempt, I loaded Atle into our van's rear seat. First I lengthened the straps as far as they could go, and then tightened them once they were attached to the car anchors and the harness. The van seat is a little deeper than the wagon's, and has more head room, which helped.

I will say that trying to maneuver a large, hairy dog into a tight space can be difficult; ideally, he needs to be in a sitting position and perfectly positioned between the car's anchors in order to clip the side straps to the harness. Once I got Atle clipped in, he was able to move fairly easily into a down position and seemed to relax. But then I found that sitting up became the bigger challenge for him.

I don't know how my dog would fare in this rig on a long trip, but my first impression is that the product probably would work best for dogs who were not quite as large (or hairy) as Atle. With Atle pushing the limits of the size L, he might not be the best candidate for this particular model.

NEXT BEST

Instead, we might consider a newer Sleepypod safety harness model, the **Clickit Sport**. This product was not yet on the market when the CPS conducted its 2013 tests, but has been tested by the CPS since, and was awarded a five-star crash-test rating. The Sport is available in three sizes and is priced at \$70.

The Sport does not utilize the side straps that gave Atle and me palpitations; instead, the dog is secured only with the car's seat belt, which is passed through the harness behind the dog's back. Atle

CAR SAFETY RESOURCES

✓ SLEEPYPOD CLICKIT UTILITY AND SPORT HARNESSSES

(626) 421-6818; sleepypod.com

✓ CENTER FOR PET SAFETY (CPS)

(800) 324-3659; centerforpetsafety.org

Check out the complete CPS 2013 Harness Crashworthiness Study Summary: centerforpetsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/2013_cps_harness_study_summary_final.pdf



Sleepypod Sport

and I managed this easily even in the back of my station wagon.

Sleepypod's cofounder Michael Leung commented on the differences between the company's Sport and Utility harnesses: "The Sport was designed with ease of use in mind, and is light-weight. The frontal crash tests prove that it is as safe as the Clickit Utility." Note that the Utility adds much more lateral control of the dog, and would add more protection for a dog in any situation beyond frontal collisions (such as side impacts).

An XL size of the Sport model (for dogs up to 90 pounds) is currently being tested by CPS and should be available by the time this article is in print.

THE REST OF THE STORY

As I mentioned earlier, the Sleepypod Clickit Utility Harness was the only one of the seven harnesses that were included in the 2013 CPS crash tests that earned a "Top Performer" designation by CPS. One other product included in the tests exhibited catastrophic failure in both of its sizes; they broke during the crash tests. The remaining five candidates all failed in some category. Complete results can be found on the CPS website, along with some fairly disturbing video of the crash tests.

CPS invited all of the manufacturers of the products included in the tests to attend the crash tests, though only some accepted the invitation. How did the manufacturers who attended respond? "For some manufacturers, it was eye-opening and a very collaborative effort," Wolko says. "Others didn't appreciate our interpretation of crash protection. After the public response to the testing started to affect some of their product sales, many stopped speaking with CPS. There are several brands that applaud our efforts, and they are the ones working to consistently improve their products."

Wolko cautions, however, that CPS recently discovered that some manufacturers are purposefully using the CPS video from testing to mislead consumers by proclaiming, "Yes, we've crash tested!" even if the product didn't pass all of the CPS tests. CPS has also found manufacturers touting other connection options that were not tested but marketing the product as "safe." It's a classic case where buyer must be aware; don't blindly believe the claims, but ask for substantiation. CPS hopes to run another harness test in 2015.

HARD LESSON

Remember Ruby, the Boxer mentioned at the beginning of this article? She survived her unscheduled flight around the inside of her owner's car in the accident, but suffered a spinal-cord injury and mild brain injury. After months of intensive rehab and a \$9,000 veterinary bill (paid for by the insurance company of the driver who caused the accident, who admitted to texting while driving), Fowler describes Ruby as still a "little wonky," in that the dog still suffers from partial paralysis on her left side, and does not have full bowel control. Nonetheless, Fowler keeps her active and Ruby still loves to hike and run in the grass.

And how has car travel changed for the duo? After the accident, Fowler purchased a harness for Ruby and the dog now rides in the back of Fowler's new SUV, secured in place. Upon learning that the harness she has been using did not pass the CPS crash tests, however, she said she'd be buying a newer one immediately. "It's worth the money and emotional assurance to know that I'm doing all I can do to protect my dog!" 🐾

Lisa Rodier lives in Georgia with her husband and Atle the Bouvier, and volunteers with the American Bouvier Rescue League.

Building Trust

What to do when your dog is afraid of everyone – even you!

BY MARDI RICHMOND, MA, CPDT-KA, CC

There is a certain class of fearful dogs – those who are so afraid they don't even trust the people who are trying to help them. These dogs can come from the streets, puppy mills, or someone's backyard. Choosing to work with, foster, or live with a dog who is afraid of people is choosing to embark on a powerful journey. The ups and downs can be emotionally challenging, but the rewards of building a mutual trust where none existed can be an amazing experience.

Dogs may be fearful for a lot of reasons. Some dogs have a genetic predisposition for shyness or fearfulness. Some dogs are undersocialized, and to them the world can seem big and scary. Some dogs may have had traumatic experiences that led to a fearful response. For many dogs, we never really know the reason they are afraid, we just know they are.

Take Trill, for example. Trill is a mixed-breed dog who now shares her life with Evelyn Sharp, DVM, in Aptos, California. Trill was found roaming the streets with another dog. Any or all of the experiences of being lost, landing in the shelter, and getting separated from her companion could have led to a fearful response. She had recently had puppies, and the loss of those pups may have added to her stress and fear. But in Trill's case, under-socialization and genetics were probably also in play.

At the shelter, one staff member saw some potential in Trill. A volunteer had also connected with her. Both saw some hope for Trill. They thought of Dr. Sharp

because she had previously fostered dogs for the shelter, and they called to ask if the veterinarian might be up for taking in a foster dog who needed a little extra attention.

Sharp was not new to working with foster dogs who had a few issues. In fact, she'd just placed another fearful dog who looked remarkably like Trill.

When she first met Trill, Sharp saw

that the dog was frightened. In fact, Trill wouldn't come near Sharp, not even for a treat. But the dog didn't show the slightest bit of aggressive behavior and seemed to calmly accept the presence of Dr. Sharp's dog. Sharp concluded that a safe place and a little training would do wonders for this girl. After all, these things had worked well with her previous fosters. She agreed to take Trill home.

Trill turned out to be a greater challenge than Sharp expected – more afraid than she had originally appeared, and completely lacking in trust of humans. Dr. Sharp called me that first day and said, "I'm not sure what I've gotten myself into here. I think I'm going to need help."

FATEFUL RETURN

Building trust is complicated. Dr. Sharp did what had worked well with her previous fearful foster dogs. She brought Trill into a quiet room in her house to allow her to explore and acclimate. Sharp figured that she would show the dog where to eat and sleep, and let her explore her new surroundings. But Trill didn't explore. That first day she hid in a corner, her eyes begging Sharp to stay away. "That was hard," Dr. Sharp recalls. She wanted Trill to know she was safe,



Dr. Sharp took this picture of Trill on the dog's first day in her home. Trill's distrust and apprehension is evident in her indirect eye contact and tense, withdrawn posture. She's as wedged as tightly into the corner as she can be; she's even curled her front paws inward.

wanted the dog to understand that she was an ally. “But we couldn’t get there because she didn’t trust me.”

The second day, Dr. Sharp thought she saw a little improvement. Trill looked as if she was starting to check out the house. It turned out, though, that Trill was looking for a way to escape, and escape she did. She somehow opened the rear sliding door and ran into the woods surrounding Sharp’s house.

“I was so scared for her,” Dr. Sharp remembers. “I didn’t know how we would catch her. I thought she was gone for good.” Hoping for the dog’s return, and in hopes of luring Trill into a confined space where the dog might be caught, Sharp loaded her car with food and water, a familiar blanket, and clothing belonging to the person that Trill had connected with at the shelter. She placed the food inside a crate that sat on the back seat of the car. As luck would have it, Trill entered the car in the middle of the night, and went into the crate – probably for the food. But magically, the door closed behind her, and she was safely trapped.

TRUST-BUILDING

After this turn of events, Dr. Sharp knew that building the dog’s trust and sense of safety were the most important things she could do for the young dog.

But it was turning out to be difficult. The house wasn’t big enough for Trill to find a safe spot, where she could relax without appearing to feel crowded. And she took no comfort from the resident dog and cat.

How do you build safety and trust with an animal who is this frightened? The following steps may help:

■ **FIRST, LET THE DOG BE.** Sometimes, scared dogs benefit more from being left alone. I offered this advice to Sharp at the time, but the idea was difficult to accept. “The concept was appalling to me,” she recalls; she wanted to keep trying to engage Trill. But she could also see that what she was doing was not working, so she gave it a try. “When I finally stopped trying to get her to enjoy petting and touching, Trill became more interested in me.” Giving her more space and less attention worked!

■ **DEVELOP A DEPENDABLE STRUCTURE.** Sharp knew that a predictable routine had helped her animals and her previous fosters. When a dog knows

when and where she will eat and sleep, when it will be time to go out, what others in the house will be doing and when, she may start to calm down. With consistency comes predictability, which can allow the stress hormones surging through a frightened dog’s body to subside. Repeated actions, done in a kind, calm, and non-confrontational manner, can also help build trust.

■ **HAVE PATIENCE.** When you live with a scared dog, you will likely want her to feel safer, to change, to relax, and be happy. And in time, most dogs will, but you can’t rush the process. The change will only happen on the dog’s timetable, not yours. Be patient and wait for her to be ready to take a chance.

You will know your dog is starting to feel safer when she shows interest in you or your activities, for example, if she pokes her head out of her safe spot when you are preparing her dinner. When she is curious, looks at you with soft eyes, or starts to explore – these are signs that your previously frightened dog may be ready for a little engagement.

MAKING A CONNECTION

Many (but not all) dogs enjoy being touched, and find comfort in having their chests rubbed, or receiving a soft massage behind their ears. The pleasure they receive from the physical contact can inspire the beginnings of a relationship. But Sharp found it difficult to get near Trill, much less touch her. She spooked with movement, so playing with toys wasn’t going to work. Trill would even skitter away when Sharp reached toward her with a treat.

Dr. Sharp got creative, and started to try to communicate with Trill through clicker training. “Training a dog without touching her was new to me,” Sharp says, but she started trying to “shape” Trill’s behavior.

One of the first clicker-trained behaviors she worked on was clipping a leash onto the dog’s collar. Up until that point, Trill would do anything possible to stay just out of reach. At first, Sharp just put some leashes around the house, and began clicking a clicker, and then tossing a treat to the dog, every time Trill looked at or went near one of the leashes.

Soon, Trill realized she received more treats the closer she went to one of the leashes, and she began purposely walking toward and then touching leashes

SOCIAL PRESSURE

When working with fearful dogs, I talk a lot about removing the social pressure. What exactly do I mean by that?

When we interact socially (talking, looking, touching, moving into a dog’s personal space), we are putting social expectations on an animal (to hear us, see us, and accept our touch or movement.) This is social pressure.

Many dogs find it reinforcing when you remove the social pressure by moving away and/or disengaging. Taking the social pressure off an animal seems to help a scared dog feel safer. Removing social pressure can open the door for the dog to start initiating interaction.

with her nose. Sharp was then able to then able to pick up a leash and ask Trill to touch (or “target”) it. Trill was learning to play the training game! With a few more days of practice and a little more shaping, Sharp was able to clip the leash on and off of Trill’s collar.

Treats didn’t work as effectively when Sharp began trying to train Trill to sit. At first, when Trill would sit and Sharp would step or even just lean toward the dog to reward her with a treat, Trill would move away. Sharp realized that she needed to reduce the pressure that Trill felt from being too close physically – and that Trill felt more comfortable with more distance between them. So she used that space as a reinforcer; she rewarded the dog for sitting by stepping away from Trill, and Trill would remain sitting.

ON TARGET

It quickly became clear to Sharp that training was going to be an effective way to connect with and build trust with the dog. The most powerful and transformative behavior that Trill learned – a behavior that led to learning many other behaviors – was hand targeting. “It was fabulous!” Sharp says. She used this simple foundation behavior to guide Trill, inviting the dog to move forward, turn, and come nearer, just with a simple hand touch. Later, she used the technique to encourage Trill to interact with other people.

Over the course of the first year, Sharp taught Trill 30 or more tricks and other behaviors, as well as the names of dozens of actions. Sharp can say the word “eye” and Trill looks up to have her eye cleaned; when she says “chin,” Trill will plop her chin in Sharp’s hand. If she says “pet,” Trill will walk over to get petted. Sharp also taught Trill to scratch her nails on a sandpaper board to keep them from getting too long while they work to improve her comfort with nail clipping.

“Clicker training has been a really big deal for us,” Sharp says. Trill learned that the clicking sound indicated she was doing something right, and that a reward for doing it was on its way.

What about when she wasn’t doing the desired behavior? Well, then nothing happened! The fact that positive results always came when she figured out and did the “right” thing, and that nothing negative happened when she didn’t know or didn’t do the “right” thing, gave her the confidence to keep trying to figure out what the “right” thing was. “With clicker training, we learned to talk to each other, and learned to play,” Sharp says. She credits clicker training with helping Trill lighten up, noting the dog’s enthusiasm and happy demeanor whenever Sharp gives her a cue or starts a training game.

A LARGE TOOLBOX

Each and every fearful dog and handler is different. While clicker training worked like magic for Trill and Dr. Sharp, having a larger repertoire of techniques can be helpful. With a different dog or handler, one of these other techniques might provide the critical key to connection.

Classical conditioning is when a dog learns to associate one thing with another; it can be a very powerful tool for fearful dogs. Classical conditioning can occur through natural associations, for example, when you grab your hiking shoes and your dog gets super excited; in this case, she’s associated going for an especially fun or long walk with your hiking shoes.

We can also use classical conditioning to our advantage by design. It can be used to create a positive association for a dog between certain things, as well as to counter-condition something that may cause a fearful response.

For example, I used classical conditioning with my fearful dog to help her



“Targeting” is teaching your dog to touch his nose (or sometimes, his paw) to your hand or a target stick. For more about target training, see “Right on Target,” WDJ February 2006.

stop reflexively exhibiting a fear-based response every time she felt a slight tug on the leash. I started the process by giving her bits of roast beef every time there was an unexpected or gentle, planned tug on the leash. The leash tug would predict roast beef. Very quickly, she went from exhibiting a startled or panicked flight every time the leash tugged her collar, to happily looking back at me for the roast beef.

You can use classical counter-conditioning to help a fearful dog learn to

accept you. If food falls from your hands each time you walk by your dog, he will undoubtedly begin to look forward to you walking by. If this is done repeatedly, the dog’s emotional response can begin to shift from fearful to feeling good. One caveat, though: You need to manage the interaction in such a way as to keep the dog below his fear “threshold” – the point at which he’s too frightened to think, much less make a calm, conscious choice of how to behave.

A dog will go “over threshold” when he is too close, exposed for too long, or at too high of an intensity to something that scares him. It’s obvious when some dogs are close to or over threshold; they may panic and try to bolt, or bark or growl in defensive fear. But with some frightened dogs, it may be more difficult to see; some may get abnormally calm and still or display only subtle signs of fear. (For more information on thresholds, see “Across a Threshold,” WDJ April 2013.)

Social facilitation is another tool that may help a frightened dog become less afraid. If you have another dog (and especially if the dogs get along well), your resident dog may be able to show your fearful dog that you are in fact a safe person. When you all walk together, hang out together, and spend time training or playing together, your fearful dog may start to loosen up and see you as part of the group.

Exploring the world together can be very bonding and can build trust and connections. Taking walks together can help you bond. But even if your dog is a little too frightened to walk on a leash, you can explore together at home or in your garden.

For example, when my dog Chance was still new to our home, I would pay attention to the things she was interested in. When Chance would check out a bug on the ground, I would wait until she moved away, and then I would go and check out the bug, too. Then I would focus on something else, say, a flower in the garden. She would follow me and check out the flower, too!

As this mutual exploration developed, Chance would invite me to follow her and see what she was doing. She also began to follow me to see what I was doing. We bonded through this mutual exploration.

Play can be another effective way to connect with a fearful dog. Some



Trill, with growing confidence, happily performs in public with Dr. Sharp as part of the Santa Cruz Dog Training Club’s demonstration team. PHOTO BY SANDI KOHN, SK PHOTOGRAPHY



Trill still has a way to go before she can be considered a completely confident, well-adjusted, social dog. But she's made miles of progress! She can enjoy an off-leash romp on a beach, meet people and dogs, and return to her human friend on cue.

dogs are so afraid that they show no interest in playing. But I have found one type of toy – any sort of stuffed animal or ball on a string or rope – often works very well in engaging a fearful dog in play. With a rope, you can strategically move the toy, to try to entice the dog into chasing it or pouncing on it, without the dog having to be too close to you. Let the dog “win” frequently, by allowing him to catch the toy or even getting to keep the toy. Getting your dog to have fun with you can help cement a budding trust.

WORKING WITH OUTSIDE TRIGGERS

Each of the techniques mentioned above can also help when you have to deal with outside triggers, that is, things in the world that you can't control, such as a loud truck or motorcycle roaring by. Training and training games can help a dog who is unsure in a new environment acclimate quicker. Classical conditioning can help create new, positive associations as well as help shift your dog's fearful response to people, other animals, and things to a happier, more confident response. Calm, worldly dogs can help less-socialized dogs learn about unfamiliar environments, and exploration and play can tap into a dog's sense of fun and adventure, no matter what is going on around them.

BEHAVIOR MEDICATION OPENS DOORS

After about six weeks of living with Trill, Dr. Sharp knew that the frightened, anxious dog needed something more. The training and behavior protocols were working in the sense that the dog was cooperative, but Trill still had a panicked look in her eyes much of the time. Sharp was concerned: No animal should have to live with that much fear, she thought.

Dr. Sharp made the decision to put Trill on fluoxetine (Prozac). Within a few short weeks, Trill's panicked look went away. Trill began to engage more and learn faster. Soon she began to show signs of excitement and even happiness.

If you are living or working with a fearful dog, ask yourself: How is my dog's overall quality of life? Is she mostly happy and content? Or does her chronic fear affect her daily activities? If fear significantly affects your dog's quality of life, consider consulting with a veterinary behavior specialist, and ask if behavior medications might help.

Careful introductions to new places, people, and other animals can also help set up your dog for success. Dr. Sharp, for example, works to find Trill's optimum levels of exposure to new and different things; she watches the dog's reactions and tries to protect Trill from becoming overwhelmed. “I really pay attention to where Trill is and don't expect her to be further along,” Sharp says. “I intervene if I know something is too much for her, but I try to walk the line between protecting her and giving her room to explore.”

Positive experiences cause exponential growth, Dr. Sharp says. “The neat thing is, each good experience grows on itself.” Each dog Trill meets and has a good experience with opens the door wider for her to meet the next dog. Each person she meets and engages with makes her braver the next time.

MOVING FORWARD

As you probably already guessed, Trill is no longer a foster; Sharp intends for Trill to share her home for the rest of Trill's life. They are in their second year of living together, and while it's much better all the time, a challenge of living with an under-socialized or fearful dog can pop up at any time. Sharp says they still have a long way to go before she'd consider Trill to be a truly confident, trusting dog.

“Trill was more than just fearful about humans when I met her,” Sharp says. “The world was just too much for her. I don't remember ever working with a dog who was that scared, even in a veterinary setting.”

Today, Sharp says, Trill mostly trusts her, though on occasion the dog will still get that “Should I trust her?” look in her eye. While Trill is better acclimated to the human world, and can go to the beach, travel with Dr. Sharp, and interact comfortably with most people and dogs, she still has a few significant hurdles to overcome. For example, Trill has yet to accept restraint and is resistant to some types of handling. Sharp says they are working on this, but it will likely take a long time before Trill is as comfortable with intimate handling and restraint.

The support of other knowledgeable, positive dog people was critical to her success with Trill, Sharp says. She credits working closely with a trainer, as well as “the dog club meetings twice a week, all of the people at those meetings who knew to leave Trill alone and let her be, and the well-trained dogs who gave her room to get used to them slowly. It was all so important.”

But as challenging as it has been, Dr. Sharp says that she would do it again. “Trill is a good kid! She loves to learn and I love to train her. Trill forced me to be creative. She made me learn to train without touching. And now watching her go to the beach and seeing her run and run – it is all really fun.” 🐾

Mardi Richmond is a writer and trainer living in Santa Cruz, CA, with her wife and her formerly fearful feral dog, Chance. She is the owner of Good Dog Santa Cruz, where she works with fearful dogs and puppies and utilizes early socialization to prevent fear-based behaviors. Mardi thanks Dr. Evelyn Sharp and Trill for sharing their story.

Weather the Storm

How to help thunder-phobic dogs.

BY DENISE FLAIM

Apologies to that rockabilly Eddie Rabbitt, but not everyone loves a rainy night. Especially if there's thunder and lightning. Fear of thunderstorms – formally called astraphobia – is surprisingly common in dogs; some experts estimate that up to 30 percent are affected with it to some degree or another. (Most cats, apparently, couldn't care less.) The most severely thunderstorm-phobic dogs can become intensely fearful and panicked, to the point where they become a hazard to themselves.

"I've seen them go right through windows, and chew through doors, drywall, even chain-link fences, breaking off their teeth and nails," says holistic veterinarian Stephen Blake of San Diego. "They get into such a level of panic that they just aren't thinking."

In some cases, owners are able to trace a dog's fear to an identifiable trigger.

"Some dogs definitely have experienced something bad that makes them afraid of thunder," says Nancy A. Dreschel, DVM, PhD, who has studied and written about thunderstorm phobia. As part of her research, Dr. Dreschel, an instructor of companion-animal science at Penn State University in University Park, Pennsylvania, met a dog who slept happily in the

family room of his house – until a wood stove in the same room got struck by lightning. He was afraid of storms ever since. And can you blame him?

Often, a conditioned response like that can be reversed, Dr. Dreschel says, through counter-conditioning, that is, pairing the negative stimulus with something the dog enjoys, such as food. It's the more ambiguous cases, where the dog just seems to develop a thunderstorm fear out of the blue, that are more challenging, because no one really understands what elicited the initial reaction, and the dogs aren't talking.

"Some theories suggest that there is something aversive about the storm itself," Dr. Dreschel explains, with guesses ranging from increased static electricity to changes in barometric pressure. "Perhaps there are things in the air that are uncomfortable to the dog, so his skin or his fur hurts. Maybe the storm-associated noise is actually painful to dogs; they hear things that we can't."

Another theory suggests that some

If possible, make sure your thunder-phobic dog has easy access to whatever "safe place" he's found to hide in when storms are raging nearby. Keeping him from his sanctuary may cause even greater problems and increase his anxiety.



dogs are genetically predisposed to thunderstorm sensitivity, including Golden Retrievers and some herding breeds.

OUNCE OF PREVENTION

It can seem as if the recommendations for preventing these intense reactions to thunderstorms – or at least making them more manageable – are as numerous and varied as the affected dogs themselves. What most everyone can agree on this: There is no sure bet, no tried-and-true cure. What works for one dog might have zero effect on another.

Trial and error, then, is your best bet. Be open-minded and creative in how you approach this problem. Dr. Dreschel recalls that one of the dogs in her study would be terrified of storms while in the house, but, inexplicably, did just fine in the car. While she does not recommend a rain-drenched trip to the minivan for every dog – if it didn't work, the potential toll on your upholstery could be staggering – she does applaud the spirit behind it.

"It's a very individual thing," she says about helping a dog through storm sensitivity. "You just have to keep trying."

Many veterinarians and behaviorists recommend working to prevent the problem before it begins, by rewarding the dog as a puppy whenever she is exposed to the sights and sounds of a storm. Have lots of extra-special treats on hand; repeated reinforcement teaches the dog that raindrops and thunder claps mean the yummys are on their way.

To desensitize dogs who have exhibited stress behaviors during a storm, Katherine Houpt, DVM, professor emeritus at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine in Ithaca, New York, uses a storm-simulation CD, initially played at low volume. As a reward, "the dog gets something he never gets otherwise – for example, only salami when you do desensitization." When the dog hears the storm sounds, teach him to go to the safe place where he will ride out the storm. (More on that below.)

In subsequent sessions, gradually increase the volume of the CD. If your dog is taking and eating the treats, then chances are he is coping well, since there is an inverse relationship between stress and appetite. If he stops taking the treats, reduce the audio level until he's comfortable enough to eat again.

Dr. Houpt recommends adding

flashing lights to the desensitization process, recalling one ingenious client who used strobe lights. But most people, she admits, aren't that zealous. "For the lazier ones, I say play the CD whenever you feed the dog."

The limitations of the CD storm sounds, of course, are that they are just one sliver of the experience. Dr. Dreschel recalls a storm-sensitive dog who sailed through the audio experience, "but during the first storm of the spring, he ate through a door." That said, if the CD can desensitize the dog to at least the sound part of the thunderstorm experience, it might lower her overall anxiety – a good thing!

MAKE LIKE QUASIMODO

Thunder-sensitive dogs benefit from having a sanctuary when storms roll through. "Provide them with a safe spot, in a basement, or in a crate," Dr. Dreschel advises. Think about places that would offer a sense of sheltering enclosure, such as the back of a closet. Often, your dog will show you where she thinks she will be most comfortable. The feeling of being enclosed and buffered is important, so draping a crate with a heavy blanket can also help.

Not all hidey holes are equal, however. Dr. Dreschel notes that many dogs will seek out tiled rooms such as bathrooms, as well as showers, bathtubs, even that hard-to-reach space behind the toilet. "Some people have wondered if it has to do with being grounded and not statically charged," she muses. Similarly, other experts report that dogs seem to do better in metal crates rather than plastic ones, perhaps also because of their conductivity.

Since the storm is associated with flashing lights, select a low-light or well-curtained environment, or even, ideally, a room without windows.

A word of caution: Severely phobic dogs often panic during a storm, trying to escape at any cost to themselves or their surroundings. In such cases, a crated dog can inflict great damage on himself. Conversely, whatever "den"



PHOTO COURTESY THUNDERSHIRT.COM

Thundershirts are tight-fitting coats with adjustable Velcro fasteners. The product concept sounds nutty, but thousands of owners count on them to calm their thunder-phobic dogs.

environment you provide, situate it so the dog has access to it whenever he likes.

SHIRTING THE ISSUE

Some owners of thunderstorm-sensitive dogs report amazing results from body-wrap products such as the Anxiety Wrap or Thundershirt, which apply gentle, steady, constant pressure, sort of like sartorial acupressure.

"The pressure wraps work for the same reason that swaddling a baby works," Dr. Houpt explains; they provide a comforting sense of being gently held.

Dr. Houpt draws a parallel to the work of Temple Grandin, whose autism gave her insights into lower-stress livestock handling methods. "She felt that pressure calmed her, just as putting a steer in a pressure sling does." As a young woman, Grandin designed a self-operated hydraulic "hugging machine" that would dispense therapeutic, stress-relieving pressure that triggered a sense of well-being.

HAPPY PILLS

Melatonin, an important hormone that creates an overall feeling of well-being, is high on the list of supplements to try

for storm-sensitive dogs. Dr. Dreschel uses it on her own thunderstorm-phobic dog, a scruffy black mixed-breed she acquired 12 years ago, in the middle of her research.

But dogs with more severe storm reactions are perfect candidates for anti-anxiety drugs. While many owners are reluctant to medicate their anxious dogs, Dr. Dreschel notes that anti-anxiety pharmaceuticals can be incredibly useful for reducing irrational phobias.

Please note that tranquilizers sedate the dog but do not address her underlying anxiety; they can, in fact, significantly worsen the anxiety, and so are contraindicated for thunder-phobic dogs. In contrast, anti-anxiety medications can help prevent a panicked state in storm-phobic dogs.

“Dogs who are phobic can’t be distracted,” Dr. Dreschel says. “It’s like a person having a panic attack.” Drugs can lower the stress threshold, “so that maybe you can get the dog to think.” Until a dog is in that more stable state, she can’t process information well or learn to manage her stress response.

Dr. Houpt generally recommends a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI), such as a generic form of Prozac. These drugs work by blocking a receptor in the brain that absorbs serotonin, a neurotransmitter that is important in maintaining mood balance; this has the net effect of increasing the amount of available serotonin. A dog needs to be maintained on this drug long-term in order for it to be helpful; it’s not a “give as needed” solution.

In contrast are antidepressants such as Trazodone or alprazolam (the generic form of Xanax). These drugs may be given situationally, as needed, so the dog doesn’t have to be on meds all the time, only when a storm is coming. While many owners are hesitant to fill psychotropic prescriptions for their dogs, most are more accepting of the as-needed approach: “A storm is coming, give the dog her meds.”

This is important, because behavior experts suggest that getting the seriously phobic dog on medication sooner is better. “My pet peeve is that people wait too long” before giving the drugs, Dr. Houpt says. Similar to taking migraine medication before the head-splitting pain begins, “you don’t want to give it once the dog is terrified; if a thunderstorm is forecast, give medication now.”

FLOWER POWER

In addition to a conventional medical approach, there are several holistic remedies that are well worth a try.

When those black clouds start gathering over a thunder-phobic dog, Dr. Blake’s first line of defense are flower essences. Distilled from the blooms of trees, shrubs, and flowering plants, these tinctures are considered very safe and can have an emotionally centering effect.

Dr. Blake uses Rescue Remedy, a combination of five essences that “are good for panic situations,” he says. “If you know there’s a storm coming, you can put four drops in the dog’s drinking water. Or you can put them in a spritz bottle with water, and when the dog starts to get antsy, mist him with it, or mist your hand and rub it on his face.”

Because flower essences are so gentle, “you can do this every few minutes, and it can reinforce the calming effect,” he says. “It takes the edge off.” Other flower essences to consider are mimulus (for dogs who are focused on the storm), aspen (for dogs who seem spooked in general) and rock rose (for panic).

Dr. Blake also has had some luck with gemmotherapy, which uses herbal extracts from the buds and emerging shoots of plants. “Lime is really good for calming and detoxing the nervous system,” he explains. “And walnut is a good one for transition.” As with flower essences, one to five drops of the tinctures can be added to the dog’s drinking water whenever needed.

MORE HOLISTIC OPTIONS

Every major system of healing has an approach for dealing with acute panic and stress. In homeopathy, the remedy Dr. Blake reaches for is usually aconite, “which is very commonly used for panic attacks and fear.” Again, use the same technique for administering the white homeopathic pellets, which can be crushed and added to drinking water or a spray bottle. “You want to get it on their mucous membranes,” he says.

Essential oils are still another option. Lavender is traditionally used for calming, but Dr. Blake also likes an oil blend by Young Living called Peace & Calming that includes tangerine, orange, ylang ylang, patchouli, and blue tansy.

Dilute the oil in a carrier oil such as almond or olive oil (lavender on its own is so gentle it can be used “neat”), put a few drops on your fingers, and rub it

into your dog’s ear flaps. “In Chinese medicine, the ears are the conduit to the kidneys, and kidneys are where the fear hangs out,” Dr. Blake explains. “It gets into the bloodstream quickly that way.”

From a holistic point of view, thunderstorm phobia is an indication of a deeper-seated imbalance. While these remedies can help mitigate the symptoms, Dr. Blake recommends working with a holistic or homeopathic vet to get to the source of the imbalance and correct it.

DULCET TONES

Dr. Blake has used classical music for a variety of behavioral issues in dogs, including separation anxiety and, of course, thunderstorm sensitivity. “Basically, you’re just trying to distract them a little bit,” he explains.

But all music isn’t equal when it comes to eliciting a therapeutic effect. The idea is to calm the dog, not excite her further. So when the *Sturm und Drang* begins, think Mozart, not Metallica.

For her part, Dr. Houpt recommends the Through a Dog’s Ear CDs and podcasts (throughadogsear.com). The company’s classical-music selections are “psychoacoustically” designed to be easily assimilated by dogs, helping to enhance mood and active listening.

BE THERE

It sounds so very basic, but literally being there for your dog – if your schedule permits, and if the weather report is accurate enough to allow for advance planning – can go a long way toward helping her weather the emotional storm as much as the meteorological one. Your presence adds to your dog’s sense of security, which is what she needs most at this stressful time.

Dr. Dreschel reminds us that the theory that frightened dogs should not be comforted has been disproven. “When dogs are really phobic like that, you’re not reinforcing the behavior,” she says. “If they’re in that drooling, pacing mode, I’d go ahead and comfort them.” As for puppies or mildly affected dogs, who still are thinking and able to learn in the moment, “I would distract them,” she says. “And then make it positive.” 🐾

Denise Flaim of Revodana Ridgebacks in Long Island, New York, shares her home with three Ridgebacks, 11-year-old triplets, and a very patient husband.

Preview the WHOLE DOG JOURNAL HANDBOOK of Dog and Puppy Care & Training for the next 30 days RISK-FREE!

YOUR DOG MAY NOT CHASE THE POSTMAN, BUT YOU SHOULD!

When you act now, you can preview this brand-new book, packed with over 365 pages of valuable training and dog care guidance, without risking a single cent!



Written by *Whole Dog Journal's* editors, this instructive and comprehensive resource will show you how to...

- 🐾 *Make your dog an eager and responsive learner with positive training techniques.*
- 🐾 *Foster his vigor, appearance, and well-being with wholesome nutrition.*
- 🐾 *Safeguard his health and minimize illnesses with natural medicines and healing techniques.*

PLUS, the Handbook champions common sense and compassion when it comes to addressing a dog's illnesses or injuries... from the judicious use of vaccines to effective herbal and holistic treatments for those diseases that can threaten your dog's life.

IN THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL HANDBOOK YOU'LL DISCOVER...

- The biggest mistake owners make when crate training (p. 71)
- The safest place to store dry dog food (p. 176)
- The easy fix for boredom barking (p. 41)
- The simple test that could save your dog from unnecessary vaccination (p. 248)
- A natural shampoo formula that can help keep your dog flea-free (p. 201)
- The taboo training technique that can cause aggression (p. 148)

YOUR 100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEE

The Whole Dog Journal Handbook of Dog and Puppy Care & Training is yours to read and use for 30 days absolutely **risk-free!** If you aren't fully satisfied, you may return the book for a full, immediate and unquestioned refund.

Get Your Copy of WDJ's Handbook of Dog and Puppy Care & Training Today!

Three Easy Ways to Order!

1. Call 1-800-571-1555
2. Log on to: www.Whole-Dog-Journal.com/Handbook
3. Mail the coupon below:

WHOLE DOG JOURNAL ORDER FORM HANDBOOK OF DOG AND PUPPY CARE & TRAINING

YES! Rush me the *WDJ Handbook of Dog and Puppy Care & Training* **risk-free!** If the book does not exceed my expectations I may return it within 30 days for a full refund!

My check for \$19.95 + \$5 shipping (\$24.95 total) is enclosed

Charge my: Amex VISA MC

Account No. _____ Exp Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: Whole Dog Journal Books, PO Box 221004, Beachwood, OH 44122-1004

 RESOURCES 

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

- ❖ **Pat Miller**, CBCG-KA, CPDT-KA, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Fairplay, MD. Group and private training, rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. Trainers can become "Pat Miller Certified Trainers" (PMCT) by successfully completing Pat's Level 1 (Basic Dog Training and Behavior) and both Level 2 Academies (Behavior Modification and Instructors Course). (301) 582-9420; peaceablepaws.com
- ❖ **Mardi Richmond**, CPDT-KA, CC, Good Dog Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA. Puppy, beginning, intermediate, and advanced group classes, out and about classes, and in-home training. (831) 431-0161; gooddogsantacruz.com

- ❖ **Nancy Tucker**, CPDT-KA, Éducation Canine Nancy Tucker, Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada. Training and behavior consulting; seminars on dog behavior for owners, trainers, and veterinary staff. (819) 580-1583; nancytucker.ca

BOOKS AND DVDS

- ❖ WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of *Positive Perspectives*; *Positive Perspectives 2*; *Power of Positive Dog Training*; *Play With Your Dog*; *Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance at a First Class Life*; and her newest book, *How to Foster Dogs: From Homeless to Homeward Bound*. Available from dogwise.com and wholedogjournal.com



The perils of running agility with a small dog: When you lose time to waiting for the teeter to totter . . .

WHAT'S AHEAD ...

- ❖ **ELIMINATED**
How to construct an elimination diet to help diagnose your dog's allergies or food intolerances.
- ❖ **SOMEONE IS AT THE DOOR**
What to do if your dog goes berserk when guests arrive.
- ❖ **BLOOD TESTS**
Which tests does your dog really need at his annual health exam?
- ❖ **DRY FOOD REVIEW**
Our annual report on the best dry foods you can buy.
- ❖ **HEALTHY SKIN, SHINY COAT**
Feeding and care tips to improve your dog's appearance – and health!
- ❖ **TRAINING TECHNOLOGY**
High-tech tools for better behavior (no shocks, we promise!).