

The Whole Dog Journal™



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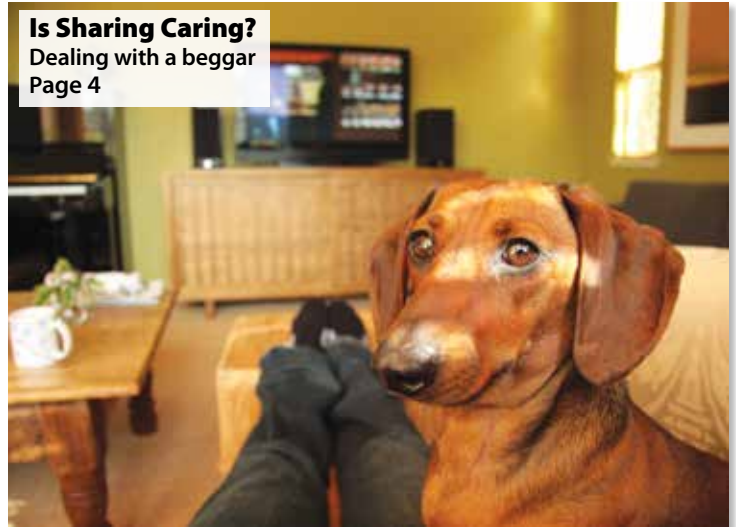
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Fake Out

Focus on the dog's behavior, not the handler's apparent lack of disability.

BY NANCY KERNS

We have published articles, blog posts (on the WDJ website), and posts on the WDJ Facebook page about service dogs and dogs who serve as emotional-support animals (ESAs) a number of times. In every instance, a number of people have commented that there is a scourge of “fake” service dogs appearing in all sorts of places where non-service animals are not permitted. The alleged phenomenon makes people furious – both on behalf of the genuinely disabled, whose hard-working “real” service dogs are sometimes rudely interrupted by bad behavior from dogs who have no right to be in the same place, and out of a sense of injustice.

Many (most?) of us who do not have disabilities and do have well-behaved dogs would *love* to be able to take our dogs with us into grocery stores, shopping malls, banks, restaurants, trains, planes, and so on. On first blush, we may feel angry toward those people who appear to be able-bodied but are accompanied by a dog in a place where dogs are not normally permitted, thinking they are “cheating,” but I bet our resentment is tinged with a fair amount of envy, too.

Maybe I should just speak for myself. I'd love to bring my dog with me when I'm running errands, meeting friends for dinner out, and flying to a vacation destination. I *do* envy people who can be accompanied by their dogs in all of these places.

But if I allow myself to experience that feeling of envy for just a *moment* longer – if I think about the situation more deeply for just a minute – I feel ashamed. Some of the things that those able-bodied-*appearing* people are dealing with would flatten me with despair. Would it be nice for me to take my dog into the bank with me? Sure. Would it be nice for that pretty young woman to be able to go to the bank without having to procure, train, manage, care for, and pay for an assistive aid that enables her to go to the bank without

fearing that she might pass out, fall, and not be able to get up? Yeah, I bet that would be far nicer.

It may be galling to suspect that the person you see with a dog in a place where dogs are not allowed is a faker, that she has no disability. But given the fact that the vast majority of disabilities are invisible, the odds are good that you are just plain wrong, that the person has a great reason to be accompanied by her dog.

Badly behaved *dogs* are another story. Anyone who brings a dog into a public place is responsible for that dog's behavior. Disabled or not, no one should have a right to inflict a loud, aggressive, or otherwise inappropriate dog on the general public – not to mention, the small, young, frail, elderly, vulnerable members of society. Ask any disabled person if his or her service dog has ever been attacked or at least approached by an unleashed, out-of-control dog; I haven't met any service-dog handler yet who hasn't had at least one of these frightening experiences.

Starting on page 6, trainer Stephanie Colman offers a wealth of information about assistance dogs, and what to do if you see a badly behaved one in public. Let us know what *you* think about it all. *NK*

MISSION STATEMENT: WDJ's mission is to provide dog guardians with in-depth information on effective holistic healthcare methods and successful nonviolent training. The methods we discuss will endeavor to do no harm to dogs; we do not advocate perpetrating even minor transgressions in the name of “greater good.” We intend our articles to enable readers to immediately apply training and healthcare techniques to their own dogs with visible and enjoyable success. All topics should contribute to improving the dog's health and vitality, and deepening the canine/human bond. Above all, we wish to contribute information that will enable consumers to make kind, healthy, and informed decisions about caring for their own dogs.

No More Tug Time

Five things to do when your dog grabs the leash and doesn't want to stop playing tug.

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA



The game of leash-tug is encouraged by some agility competitors, as a reinforcer for their dogs at the end of an agility run. However, many dog owners (myself included), find it an annoying and sometimes even dangerous behavior. Here are five things you can do if you're in the latter group and would like to get your dog to stop playing leash tug:

1 THE EXERCISE SOLUTION. Leash-tugging is often the function of too much energy. Exercise your dog (hard) before his walk and you'll have a far less grabby walking companion. If you don't have a backyard for ball- or disc-chasing (perhaps why you're leash-walking him in the first place!), play ball in a long hallway, play "Find it" for hidden treats throughout the house, stand at the top of the stairs (anti-slip runners on the stairs, please), toss a treat to the bottom, call him back to you, toss another treat ...

2 THE INCOMPATIBLE-BEHAVIOR SOLUTION. If it's your dog's morning wake-up bathroom break and you can't exercise him in the house first because he has to poop and pee, grab your highest-value treats on your way out the door and start reinforcing for polite leash walking. He can't look at you in happy anticipation of the next bit of chicken and grab his leash at the same time. And/or carry a favorite non-leash tug toy in your pocket, and invite your dog to tug on it instead. Tugging on a toy is incompatible with tugging on a leash; he can't do both at the same time.

3 THE TWO-LEASH SOLUTION. Part of the problem with leash tugging is that you have to keep hold of the leash so your dog doesn't run off. You're an unwilling partner in the tug, and meanwhile your dog is happily reinforcing himself at his end of the

game. If your dog finds leash-tug more reinforcing than high-value treats, or happily swaps back and forth between leash and tug toy, the incompatible-behavior approach doesn't work. Try attaching two leashes to his collar. When he grabs one, hold the other and drop the one he's got. If he grabs the one you're now holding, switch back to the other. If he grabs both, you're back to square one.

4 THE CHOKE-CHAIN SOLUTION. My students' eyes get very big when I say, "This is the one case in which I will use a choke chain with a dog." I then reassure them by saying, "But not on the dog!"

Take a carabiner or a double-ended metal clip and use it to attach one end of the choke chain to the ring on the dog's collar. Attach the other end of the chain to the clip on the leash. Now when your dog goes to grab the leash, he gets metal instead of soft cotton, leather, or nylon. For most dogs, a metal chain isn't nearly as much fun to grab and tug, and the behavior extinguishes (stops).

If he persists in grabbing above the chain, you can invest in one of those wretched grocery-store chain leashes and use it until the leash grabbing behavior is extinguished. Remember, though: If you need to shorten up your dog's leash as you pass another person, dog, car, or whatever, those chain leashes are really hard on your hands (which is why they are wretched), so be prepared (wear gloves!).

5 THE PVC-PIPE SOLUTION. Perhaps your dog is happy to tug on a metal chain, or the pain of the chain on your own hands is more than you're willing to bear. Take a length (perhaps 3-4 feet) of PVC pipe (depending on the size of the clip on your leash, about 1-2 inches in diameter) and drop the clip through the pipe before attaching it to your dog's collar (see photo above). Now, when he bites his leash he gets hard plastic, and won't be able to get a grip on it to tug.

This has the added advantage of acting as a makeshift "control pole" (as used by animal control officers); if your dog grabs at your hands and clothing as well as his leash, you can use the pole to hold him away from you.

So there you go! Most of these are likely to be temporary solutions until you can positively convince your dog to keep his teeth off his leash, but feel free to use them as long as needed.

Here's a bonus "thing" if you want a training challenge: Put the leash tugging behavior under excellent stimulus control, so your dog does it only when you give him the cue (the way the agility folks do). Then give the cue only when you're prepared and it's convenient to play a minute or two of leash-tug with him. In order to achieve this level of stimulus control you have to be ready and able to never reinforce it if you haven't given him the cue. Ask your obedience friends if their dogs ever grab the leash when they aren't invited to do so. (Personally, I'm sticking with the first five "things.")

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

Don't Make Me Beg

How to prevent begging for food (or how to extinguish it if your dog already learned how).

BY NANCY TUCKER, CPDT-KAI

I can't tell you how many times someone has said to me, "I don't give my dog 'people food' because I don't want him begging at the table while we're eating." If this sounds like you, I've got good news for you, and maybe even better news for your dog!

Many people avoid offering their dog any type of food that they themselves might eat for fear that the dog will acquire a taste for it and develop an annoying and invasive habit of begging for food during family mealtimes.

While preventing "begging" is a good goal, it can be achieved no matter what you feed your dog. The *type* of food isn't what will determine whether or not your dog will learn to beg at the table. Rather, his behavior will be shaped by where, when, and how he gets access to food. Luckily, this is entirely under your control.

HOW YOUR DOG'S BEHAVIOR IS BUILT

To get a clear picture of how begging inappropriately for food can develop, let's start from the beginning. We know that food can be an excellent reinforcer for a dog. Delivering food as a reward immediately following a behavior is likely to produce more of that behavior.

When you are sitting at the table to eat your meal, if your dog nudges your elbow, stares you down, barks, whines, licks his lips, or paws your leg, and imme-

diately gets access to something yummy, he learns that this is an effective strategy to get food, and a beggar is born.

The same principle applies to dogs who hang around the kitchen while meals are being prepared and who are occasionally rewarded with tidbits of food. Their access to food in the kitchen might be intentional – like when the household chef shares a few ingredients with the dog who expertly offers a sad face – or it might be the result of simply acting fast enough to swoop in and gobble up food that is accidentally dropped to the floor from the counter. Regardless of how

or why the dog has access to food, the bottom line is that the kitchen area has become very attractive (and reinforcing!) to him, and is now a location where he is likely to hang out in the presence of food.

It's the fact that there was a reinforcement (rather than the specific *type* of food) that creates and maintains this behavior; understanding this is key to figuring out how to prevent it from developing in the first place, and how to change it if it already exists.

While not all of our foods are appropriate for dogs to eat, many of the foods we eat are just as suitable for dogs as they are for us. For those of you who *do* want to share some of your food with your dog, but choose not to for fear of creating a beggar, rest assured that there is a way to teach your dog good table and kitchen manners and allow him to enjoy some of the same foods as you. Those who prefer not to share "people food" with their dogs can just as effectively teach them polite manners around the dining room table and in the kitchen.

NOTHING TO SEE HERE... MOVE ALONG

Remember the old joke that describes a patient complaining to his doctor about pain in his elbow when he bends his arm, only to be told by the doctor, "Then don't bend your arm"? The same sort of logic can be applied here. If you don't want your dog begging for food at the table, don't *ever* feed him at the table. If you don't want your dog begging for food at the kitchen counter, don't *ever* feed him at the kitchen counter.

Management plays a crucial role in helping your dog figure out that there is no benefit to hanging around the table or kitchen. (If your dog has a history of stealing food off the table or kitchen counter, avoid leaving food unsupervised in these places at all times!) Set up the environment to make it easy for your dog to behave well, and to make it difficult – or impossible – for him to make a mistake. Make sure everyone in the family is on the same page regarding your dog's access to food: No food delivered at the table means no food delivered at the table, from anyone.

If your dog begs from people sitting at the table, it's because someone has fed him from the table. It's as simple as that.



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Remember, dogs repeat behaviors that have been rewarded, so if anyone is sharing snacks with the dog on the couch, you can be sure she's going to hover at snack time.

You may want to feed your dog his meal before you sit down to eat. He won't be as hungry, and therefore not as interested in the food on your plate as he might be, on an empty stomach.

Alternately, feed him at the same time as yourself. If his mealtime doesn't coincide with your own, arrange for your dog to have somewhere to go, like a crate or a cushion, where he can get busy working on a bone or an interactive food toy filled with a light snack while you sit down to eat. Add an indoor tether if your dog has trouble staying put on his cushion and keeps coming back to you at the table. An indoor tether is an excellent management tool for young dogs, especially as they learn your household rules.

EVEN SHARING IS OK

I mentioned earlier that it is possible to share your food with your dog, *without* creating a beggar at the table. I love to give pieces of various foods to my dog while I cook, and even while I eat. I simply deliver the food to her in a way that encourages her to stay far away from me while I cook or eat.

For example, while I work at the kitchen counter, I might look at my dog and show her a piece of whatever vegetable I'm chopping. She responds by sitting in the adjoined dining room, where I toss her the veggie bit. Through repetition, she has learned that the only way she'll get food from the kitchen is if she sits 10 feet away in the dining room. That is where the food is delivered whenever I'm working in the kitchen.

If I'm sitting at the dining room table and want to share a piece of food from my plate with her, I'll toss it a few feet away, into the living room. My dog has learned that her chances of receiving food while we eat at the table are increased if she sits far away, in the living room. She has never received food while sitting next to us at the table, and therefore has no history of ever being reinforced for this behavior. If she lurks close to the table, she may be ignored or she might receive a pat, but she will never receive food.

The same rules apply when we are eating food in the living room. There is a very good chance that snacks during



movie time will be shared, but only if my dog moves into the dining room a few feet away. Because of our reinforcement history, and where and how food is typically delivered, my dog can snuggle peacefully next to me while I eat a snack on the couch, and if she is offered a piece of food – a bite of apple or a chunk of watermelon, for example – she will rise and head for the dining room, where I'll gladly toss her a few pieces.

JUST THIS ONCE?

Keep in mind that your dog will not differentiate between official household rules and those “okay-then-just-this-one-special-time” occasions. If every member of your family adheres to the general rules, your dog will have an easier time understanding what is expected of him. Establish the rules and stick to them. As a guideline:

1 IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR DOG TO EAT “PEOPLE FOOD,” DON'T GIVE HIM ANY. Ever. (Although it really is quite alright to do so, barring any dietary restrictions for medical reasons.)

2 IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR DOG BEGGING FOR FOOD AT THE TABLE, DON'T GIVE HIM ANY FOOD WHILE HE IS NEXT TO THE TABLE. Ever. Not even his own food.

3 IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR DOG IN THE KITCHEN AREA WHILE YOU COOK, DON'T GIVE HIM FOOD WHILE HE'S IN THE KITCHEN. Decide where you want your dog to be instead, and reward him for being in that spot (whether you choose to reward him using his own food or “people food”).

4 DECIDE WHERE YOU WANT YOUR DOG TO BE WHILE YOU EAT. Make that area a great place for him to be by giving him something enjoyable to do while you eat. Manage his mobility while he learns this new rule by using a crate, tether, baby gate, or closed door to restrict his access to the table.

5 IF YOU DO WANT TO SHARE YOUR FOOD, DECIDE WHERE YOU WANT YOUR DOG TO BE WHILE YOU EAT, AND DELIVER THE FOOD IN THAT PLACE. If you catch your dog spontaneously going to that place while you eat (without your having asked), go ahead and reinforce this by going to him and rewarding him, or by tossing some food to him.

It's okay if the food is tossed from the table or the kitchen counter, as long as your dog is already where you want him to be before you toss the food. In other words, food being tossed to your dog is conditional on him being in a certain location. If your dog is already begging at the table, don't toss the food in order to get him to move away from the table, as that would actually be reinforcing the wrong behavior.

Remember, you will get whatever you reinforce. As with all behaviors, decide what you want the dog to do, set things up to make it easy for your dog to choose that particular behavior, and then reinforce it!

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.

Service, Please

Some non-disabled people are tempted to pass off their pets as “service dogs.” Here’s what real service dogs do, and why faking is bad.

BY STEPHANIE COLMAN

For people living with disabilities, a dog can be the key that opens the door to independent living. It’s been estimated that there are more than 500,000 service-dog/handler teams in the United States, and by law, these teams are accorded the right of access to nearly every place that the human handlers can go. Most dog owners love seeing well-trained service dogs enabling their disabled humans to ride public transportation, navigate shopping and workplaces, and enjoy a night out in restaurants and the theater.

Few of us, however, like seeing obviously *untrained* or out-of-control dogs in public places where they may reflect badly on the service-dog industry. They may also engender hostility from business owners and managers, who often feel they have no recourse when ill-mannered dogs wreak havoc in their establishments.

We discussed the moral and legal considerations associated with the growing problem of “fake service dogs” in “Artificial Needs” (WDJ July 2013). It’s a complex conundrum, in part due to the Department of Justice’s use of an “honor system” as to whether or not a dog is a trained service animal, the various agencies involved, and the challenging nature of drafting regulations designed to protect – without infringing upon – the rights of those living with a disability.

Adding to the confusion is another class of companion animals who, teamed with their disabled handlers, are accorded expanded rights of access in certain

situations: emotional-support animals, often referred to as “ESAs.” Many people believe – *falsely* – that emotional-support animals are allowed to go anywhere with their handlers that service-dog/handler teams can go.

It seems that almost everyone is confused about which dogs can go where, and how one can determine which dogs are legitimate helpers and which are pets whose owners may be taking advantage of the confusion! Let’s sort it all out.

THE “ADA”

The law that gives service-dog/handler teams the right to enter places where dogs are not usually permitted is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). First enacted in 1990, the ADA is overseen by the United States Department of Justice. An amendment process began in 2008, with revisions to the Act taking effect in 2011. (Technically, the current regulation is known as the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA), though most people still refer to the “ADA” when referencing federal service-dog law.)

The ADA was enacted to “provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities,” and to protect a disabled person’s access and right to “fully participate in all aspects of society.”

The ADA defines a disabled person as one who “has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.”

The phrase “major life activities” is defined in the ADA as including “caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning,

Moe has been Steve Killips’ service dog for 8½ years. The handsome Labrador, who was trained by Paws With a Cause in Wayland, Michigan, often helps pull Steve’s wheelchair, vastly increasing Steve’s ability to enjoy the outdoors.



reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.”

The ADA recognizes that disabled persons may require “reasonable accommodations or auxiliary aids or services” in order to “fully participate in society.” Service animals are included as one of those aids; that’s why dog/handler teams are granted expanded rights of access to areas that are typically off limits to animals. Under the ADA, “state and local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the public generally must allow service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of the facility where the public is normally allowed to go.”

Currently, only dogs and miniature horses who have been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a disabled person may be considered service animals. (Miniature horses are regulated with slightly different guidelines; we will discuss only service dogs in this article.)

Keep in mind that it’s the task that the dog is specifically trained to perform, in order to entirely or partly mitigate the handler’s disability, that gives handlers the right to have that dog in public areas that are typically off limits to dogs. The ADA’s definition of a service animal includes these clarifications:

“Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person’s disability.”

The ADA imposes reasonable restrictions on the use of service animals in public; the Act is certainly not a license to bring just any dog anywhere at any time. The dog must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered, unless the device interferes with the animal’s ability to work, in which case the individual must still be able to control the animal through

WORDS MATTER (BUT VARIATIONS ON THESE TERMS ARE COMMON)

Jeanine Konopelski is a spokesperson for Assistance Dogs International (ADI), a non-profit coalition of more than 100 organizations working together to promote assistance dogs and the benefits they provide to people with disabilities. Konopelski recommends the phrase “assistance dog” as an umbrella term that covers a variety of working dogs who are specially trained to aid people in different ways.

ADI further refers to “guide dogs” (those that are specifically trained to assist handlers who are visually impaired), “hearing dogs” (those who are specifically trained to assist handlers who are deaf or hard of hearing), and “service dogs.” The latter is a broad category that can include dogs with skills such as alerting to impending seizures, recovering dropped items, assisting with mobility, retrieving medication or emergency equipment, or interrupting self-mutilation caused by obsessive-compulsive disorder. These are just a few ways in which a service dog can be trained to assist his or her handler. The common denominator is the *specific task or tasks for which the dog has been trained to assist a disabled handler.*

WHAT ABOUT “THERAPY DOGS”?

Many people confuse therapy dogs with service dogs, but they are very different. Therapy dog teams are volunteers with pet dogs who have been trained to a standard that deems them safe and appropriate for interactions that provide emotional comfort to others. These volunteer teams are routinely found in hospitals, assisted living facilities, and other care centers, but can also be found on college campuses during finals week, alongside children while in family court, or as part of literacy programs in public libraries.

Therapy dog teams are usually registered with a therapy dog organization. To become registered, the dog and handler are evaluated to ensure that the dog is of a sound temperament and that the dog and handler work well together as a team. Therapy dog teams are not guaranteed public access; whether or not they are welcomed in any facility that doesn’t ordinarily allow dogs is entirely up to the individual establishment.

voice commands, hand signals, or other means of effective control.

The dog must also be well-behaved and entirely under control. “Through the ADA, if a dog is misbehaving in public – if they’re in a restaurant and the animal is not house-trained, or is eating food off of the table, the business owner



Lori Wetz is a disabled veteran whose Dogue de Bordeaux service dog, Diesel, helps her by bracing (so she can balance and get up), pulling her out of chairs or up small stairs, and picking up items that she drops. Diesel and Wetz, shown here after Wetz’s spine surgery, trained together at the All American Dog Training Academy in Clearwater, Florida.

has the right to ask the individual to remove the dog from the premises,” says Jeanine Konopelski, a spokesperson for Assistance Dogs International (ADI).

The ADA also states that, in some cases, it might be appropriate to exclude a service animal. For example, although a service dog can’t be excluded from

the general-access areas of a hospital (patient rooms, exam rooms, or the cafeteria), he can be reasonably excluded from operating rooms and other sterile environments.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE DISABLED

Of course, ordinary dogs are barred by law from many public areas. But disabled people can bring their trained service dogs with them almost anywhere, because the ADA makes it against the law to discriminate against or restrict access to disabled persons – in this case, ones who are using an auxiliary aid (a dog) to mitigate their disabilities. When a business owner or employee is unsure whether the dog is a service animal, he may ask only two specific questions of the handler:

1. Is the service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Staff may not inquire as to the specifics of the handler's disability, require any special documentation, or ask that the animal demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task. However, the handler's answers must be credible. "He's trained to dance on his hind legs and it makes me happy," would not qualify as a credible answer to Question 2. The trained tasks must be relevant to the handler's disability.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Now, buckle up, because this is where the ride gets bumpy.

There is another type of commonly referenced animal that assists disabled humans and is granted greater access in certain situations than most pets: the "emotional-support animal" (ESA). These are personal pets (different types of animals, not just dogs, can be used) who have *not* been trained to perform specific tasks, but whose presence is physically or psychologically beneficial to their disabled handlers.

It's a safe bet that *many* of us would be happier if our dogs were allowed to accompany us on all of life's adventures. But there's a significant difference between being happier when in the company of a beloved pet dog and experiencing a psychiatric disability in its absence. The key word is *disability*, which

must meet a clearly defined standard. In order to qualify as disabled, one or more of a person's activities of daily life must be severely impacted by the condition. A treating medical provider must diagnose the individual's disability *and* state that having access to the animal will benefit the disabled handler.

A team comprised of a disabled person and her emotional-support animal does *not* qualify for any special protections by the ADA, which states clearly, "Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA."

However, there are two other federal departments that grant ESA/handler teams more access than people with ordinary pets. Their access to housing that is otherwise not available to people with pets is protected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's "Fair Housing Act," and their access to air transportation is protected by the U.S. Department of Transportation's "Air Carrier Access Act."

Both Acts stipulate that the disabled person has a letter from his or her treating medical professional corroborating the disability, and the professional's opinion that a specific emotional-support animal ameliorates the symptoms of disability.

The Fair Housing Act prevents landlords from refusing to make reasonable accommodations in rules and policies (such as a "no pets" policy), as needed in order for a disabled person to use the housing. Service dogs and most emotional-support animals are considered reasonable accommodations. There are some exceptions to this provision of the Fair Housing Act; for example, a person with an ESA may be denied housing in a building containing four or fewer units where the owner lives in one, and in cases where an individual who owns three or fewer single-family homes and does not use a broker to manage those homes.

The Air Carrier Access Act states "carriers shall permit dogs and other service animals used by persons with a disability to accompany the persons on a flight." Airlines are not required to permit emotional-support snakes (or other reptiles), rodents, or spiders in the cabin.

People often ask about the difference between PTSD dogs (that is, dogs who are used to assist a person who has been diagnosed with post traumatic stress

disorder) and emotional-support dogs. PTSD dogs are a type of psychiatric service dog. Like all legitimate service dogs, PTSD dogs have been trained to perform specific tasks that mitigate the handler's psychiatric disability. For example, a PTSD dog might be trained to recognize and respond to an impending panic attack or interrupt self-mutilation behaviors.

Emotional-support dogs are not trained to perform specific tasks related to the psychiatric disability, yet in many cases, the dog's presence is considered physically or psychologically beneficial to the disabled handler.

To review: PTSD dogs are service dogs and emotional-support animals are not. Handlers with medically necessary emotional-support animals can fly with their animal and request that the animal be accepted in most housing situations that wouldn't otherwise allow pets. However, they are not allowed in typical "no pets" areas such as inside restaurants, shops, hospitals, office buildings, etc.

SO MANY QUESTIONS, WITH ANSWERS

When it comes to navigating the seemingly endless sea of information pertaining to service-dog law, the following questions are most commonly asked:

■ DO ALL SERVICE DOGS COME FROM PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS?

No. Service dogs are not required to be trained by a professional organization in order to earn the ADA's right to access, and many handlers choose to self-train their dogs. However, it's important that prospective handlers carefully evaluate their own skills when deciding whether to self-train, train with the help of a professional trainer, or look for an already trained dog from a reputable organization.

For a person who has never previously had a dog, working with a service-dog program can be helpful. Dailyah Rudek, a service-dog law and mediation expert and executive director of The ProBoneO Program, says, "For someone who is a novice dog handler, we definitely have a bias toward a program-trained dog."

Handlers with a bit of dog training experience under their belt have access to myriad resources to assist them throughout the owner-training journey. Rudek says it's imperative that those looking to owner-train familiarize

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE ACTS?

Whether it's the most common violation of these three Acts (ADA, Fair Housing, and Air Carrier Access) or the one that makes advocates for the disabled the angriest is a matter of debate, but the most talked-about abuse of legislation that protects the rights of disabled people has to do with "fake service dogs."

In some cases, this is a matter of people who are *not* disabled trying to pass off their dogs as service dogs in order to bring their dogs with them into places dogs are not ordinarily allowed. In others, it's people taking emotional-support dogs into places where only *service dogs* are allowed, such as restaurants, grocery stores, and public transportation.

The perpetrators of these violations may themselves be ignorant of the laws they are breaking, or knowingly taking advantage of the ignorance (or resignation) of the business owners or operators who could – theoretically – lawfully turn them away or even (in some states) summon law enforcement officials to enforce the health codes or other state laws that restrict non-service dogs.

Individual state laws vary. In the case of misrepresenting a pet dog as a service dog, the relevant laws often deal with the misrepresentation of the *person*, not the dog – meaning, it is a crime to falsely present oneself as being disabled and therefore in need of a service dog.

There is no *federal* law against representing a pet dog as a service dog. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a civil rights act designed to protect the rights of people with disabilities, including those who use service dogs. The ADA does not address individuals *without* disabilities, such as anyone who might falsely claim that a pet is a service animal.

"Because this issue does not address the civil rights of people with disabilities, it is not in our regulating authority under the ADA to issue regulations to penalize false claims that a pet is a service animal. However, we note that state civil or criminal



Dailyah Rudek and her service dog, Riley, enjoy a break. A passionate supporter of service dogs, Rudek started The ProBoneO Program, a non-profit organization that provides legal resources to people who use service dogs.

law may already penalize such claims in some circumstances," a Department of Justice spokesperson told us.

That's the law, but what's morally and ethically *right*? We think it's important to keep the people that the laws are in place to protect – the disabled – foremost in consideration. When in "mixed" company, dogs who are less than perfectly behaved make it more difficult for actual service dogs to perform their own important work. Also, poorly behaved dogs may increase the slow-burning resentment of business operators toward *all* dogs, leading to an atmosphere of suspicion and a distinct lack of welcome.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A FAKER

This is a trick; the fact is, you *can't* always identify a fake service dog, just like you often can't always visually detect a person's disability. As dog lovers, we can't help but notice other dogs, especially in places that don't welcome all dogs. And when we see dogs with people who appear perfectly abled, it can be easy to wonder why the person has a service dog and if it's legitimate.

"Society has a lot of issues with invisible disabilities – the whole 'you don't *look* disabled' thing," says Matthew Karpinski, chief legal officer for The ProBoneO Program. "Just because a person doesn't look disabled doesn't mean he's not. I don't know anybody with a disabled parking placard who isn't in a wheelchair who hasn't been confronted by some self-efficacious person challenging them. What somebody looks like gives you no information about their disability status."

Even assessing the dog's behavior isn't 100 percent accurate when it comes to spotting what you might think is a "fake" service dog. Often, the dog suspected to be a "fake" is owned by a disabled person who is doing the best she can to train her dog for public access, but whose dog might be struggling with that facet of the job.

"There are people who take a pet dog they already have and try to turn it into a service dog because they can't afford to get or keep two dogs," says ProBoneO's executive director, Dailyah Rudek. "Some people will wash out a dog with problems, but many won't; they'll try and work through the issue because they don't feel like they have any other options."

"I have met several task-trained service dogs who aren't dogs you'd want to take with you for public access because they aren't comfortable in public," Karpinski says. "That doesn't mean they aren't true service dogs, but it might mean that they are useful to their partners only at home."

Bottom line: Whether the dog is a legitimate task-trained service dog or dog-in-training, or belongs to a pet owner trying to get away with cruising the coffee shop with his Cockapoo, if the dog is ill behaved, the problem should be immediately addressed by the business establishment.

ACKNOWLEDGING INAPPROPRIATE DOG BEHAVIOR IN PUBLIC

Responsible service-dog handlers aim to keep their dogs as inconspicuous as possible, and are quick to take corrective action if the dog's behavior becomes problematic. When they don't, businesses are legally allowed to ask the handler to remove the dog. While many business owners are afraid to exercise this right, not doing so has created significant problems for the disability community.

"Many businesses aren't asking handlers to remove their dogs because they are afraid of being sued and just think the problem will go away in an hour or so," says Dailyah Rudek, executive director of The ProBoneO Program. "Then, unfortunately, they go and talk to their lawmakers." This has led to attempts to draft tighter state service-dog laws. While states cannot enact service-dog laws that are narrower in scope than the federal law, they can draft laws that retract state-specific enhanced protections, such as removing access that had previously been granted to service dogs in training. Additionally, the increased public attention to proposed regulation changes often means that all service-dog teams are more harshly scrutinized. "Handlers have fought so hard over the years to get higher protections, and now we're seeing more language that would potentially pull back some of those extra protections," Rudek says.

To help combat this problem, The ProBoneO Program is launching a campaign targeting business owners with the goal of educating them about their rights and the responsibilities of service-dog handlers. When a dog is behaving inappropriately in public, Rudek says it's important that business owners exercise their right to ask the handler to remove the dog. Doing so encourages legitimate service-dog handlers to maintain minimum public access standards for their dogs, while discouraging pet owners from attempting to "fake it" by bringing ill-mannered pet dogs into establishments that don't ordinarily permit pets.

Rudek has the following recommendations for business owners who are concerned about risks to their establishments or other customers posed by ill-behaved real or "fake" service dogs:

- ✓ Know the legally allowable questions that can be asked: 1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability? 2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform? Business owners should understand that the questions must be answered in a credible fashion.
- ✓ Consider compromising with the handler. Acknowledge that the team is struggling, and perhaps invite them to return on a less busy day when the business could offer a bit more leeway with the dog's behavior. This is especially helpful for handlers who are trying to train through an issue while in public.
- ✓ Offer an alternate means of accommodation that does not involve the dog. For example, an employee can gather the items on the handler's shopping list or otherwise assist the person in the absence of the dog.
- ✓ Seek out a witness or two who can attest to the dog's inappropriate behavior; this could go a long way toward preventing a lawsuit.
- ✓ If the establishment utilizes surveillance video, keep any related footage for at least two years.
- ✓ Proactively call the Department of Justice ADA Hotline to report having to require that a dog be removed, and why.

themselves with – and utilize – as many of the resources as possible.

"If folks are diligent about it and go step by step, and if they're lucky enough to get a dog who has the right temperament, owner-trained dogs can be incredibly successful," she says.

People searching for a professionally trained service dog must exercise due diligence. While the members of ADI are screened as part of their paid membership, dog training remains an unregulated industry, which means any trainer can advertise "trained service dogs" for sale, often with shockingly high price tags.

"People need to be *beyond* careful," Rudek says. "You hear stories all the time – people who paid \$10,000 for a dog and it doesn't even know how to sit. I wouldn't pay that kind of money unless I knew they had successfully trained at least 15 different teams, and I'd had a chance to speak with some of those satisfied customers and see them in action."

■ ARE SERVICE DOGS REQUIRED TO BE CERTIFIED?

No. There is no legally recognized, nor federally required, national certification for service dogs, nor is there a legitimate national registry for service dogs. However, a quick Internet search reveals any number of websites offering to "register" a dog as a service dog – for a fee, and without *any* type of evaluation. Such sites typically sound authoritative, with names boasting words such as "national," "United States," and "official," and offer things like registration certificates, photo identification cards, and service-dog patches – all for a price.

While it is not required, some legitimate dog/handler teams choose to pay for the official-looking paperwork and other accessories, as showing such items sometimes simplifies access issues when dealing with business owners who are not familiar with the law. However, to those truly knowledgeable of the regulations, such paraphernalia is a potential red flag.

"Personally, I am inherently suspicious of anyone who shows me an identification card because the law says you don't need one," cautions Matthew Karpinski, chief legal officer for The ProBoneO Program.

It's also been said within the service-dog community that legitimate handlers who choose to show things like identifi-

cation cards inadvertently make it harder for those within the community who don't, because it sends a mixed message to businesses, many of which become more resistant to teams who lack the same gear.

■ ARE THERE ANY STANDARDS FOR SERVICE DOGS AT ALL?

The answer to this depends on what is meant by standards. As discussed above, service-dog/handler teams don't need any official certifications in order to have public access. However, many service-dog advocacy organizations, including International Association of Assistance Dog Partners and Assistance Dogs International, promote a similar set of minimum training standards for service dogs, which they recommend handlers meet or exceed when training or working a service dog in public.

The two above-mentioned organizations address a minimum number of training hours for basic obedience and public access-specific issues. They also provide basic guidelines for obedience and the ability to perform disability-related tasks on cue. The standards state

that a service dog must not display any signs of aggression (either natural or elicited on-cue, such as in protection work), and further include the handler's responsibilities as part of the dog-handler team.

Both sets of standards can be used as a road map of sorts for handlers wishing to train their own service dogs, or when training in partnership with a professional trainer. They are also used by professional organizations that provide fully trained service dogs. When a dog/handler team successfully meets the minimum standards or passes the public access test, the team is often considered "certified" by virtue of meeting the standard. It's a tricky choice of words, as it likely contributes to the public's confusion regarding the lack of a legally required certification. (Perhaps referring to such dogs as "verified" versus "certified" would lessen the confusion?)

"We at ADI call a dog who has passed our public access test a 'certified dog,' but it's not a certification that's required by law," Jeanine Konopelski explains. "It's sort of like, if you work in finance and you have an MBA; you're not legally required to have that certification. The certification is something we do to make sure that the dog can abide by and adhere to the different guidelines for public access," she adds, pointing out that the certification is for the dog/handler pair as a team and not the individual dog.

■ WHY ISN'T THERE A NATIONAL CERTIFICATION FOR SERVICE DOGS?

Experts cite two major challenges of implementing a national certification process for service dogs: Who would be responsible for testing, and how would such a program be funded?

"The disabled are statistically in the lowest economic bracket," Rudek says. "To have a test become mandatory, you'd have to make it super accessible to a bunch of people, many of whom don't drive and who have no money. How do you make that work? Many people say, 'Well, what about making it like a driver's license?' and the problem with that is that driving is a privilege, not a right. If you're disabled, having your service dog with you is a civil right."

Currently, a Canadian province is exploring new regulations that will potentially limit access to "no pets" areas to only those teams trained by professional ADI partners and the International Guide Dog Federation.

Such a move, while likely initiated in an effort to raise the training standards, could severely limit the disabled community's access to service dogs. Karpinski estimates that in the United States, only 1 to 5 percent of all service dogs are trained through a professional training organization.

■ CAN STATES PASS DIFFERENT LAWS TO PROTECT OR PROHIBIT THE USE OF SERVICE DOGS OR ESAS?

Service-dog law is complicated by the fact that there are two levels of legislation to be considered – state and federal, says Karpinski. While the ADA provides *federal* protection for the public access of service-dog teams that meet its qualifications, individual counties and states have the option of drafting *additional* laws that *extend* ADA accommodations. For example, many states have their own laws that prohibit denying access to a service-dog team, making it a state crime that carries a hefty fine. States may not, however, pass legislation that limits the disabled person's protections to less than what the ADA provides.

The difference between state versus federal protection is most relevant when addressing public access violations. If a team is denied access where it is against *state* law to do so, the police can be called and the issue is likely to be promptly resolved. In states without that enhanced protection, the team's only recourse is to file a complaint with the Department of Justice – a much longer process.

■ CAN STATES REQUIRE THAT SERVICE DOGS BE CERTIFIED, OR REQUIRE THAT HANDLERS SHOW PROOF THAT THE DOG HAS BEEN VACCINATED?

Remember, state laws cannot be more restrictive than federal law. Therefore, states can't require any special certification in order for the team to be granted the public access rights that are outlined in the ADA. However, individual states can designate certain requirements in order for the team to receive state-specific enhanced protections.

For example, let's say the law in a handler's state specifies that service dogs must be identified via orange vests. The handler may choose not to follow this rule, since state laws cannot be more restrictive than federal laws, and the ADA does not require service dogs to work in vests. However, should an issue arise



Paul Vaughn of Kennesaw, Georgia, purchased Hunter as a puppy. Paul and his wife trained Hunter to be Paul's service dog. Hunter's primary duties are to help Paul around the house, picking up and giving Paul items as needed. And when Paul's arm falls off his armrest, preventing him from driving his power chair, Hunter pushes Paul's arm back up on the armrest.

Bri Benton is a Florida dog trainer who trained her own service dog, Dallas. Bri's disability is invisible. She suffers from vasovagal syncope and severe allergies that can cause anaphylaxis. Dallas has been trained to detect changes in Bri's chemistry and consciousness and alert Bri in time to summon help.



– say, a local business owner denies the team access – the handler will not have state law on his side. It's still a crime to deny the team access, but the denial must be dealt with through the Department of Justice as a federal rights violation as opposed to a state law violation.

Regarding proof of vaccination, Rudek says it's likely that states assert that service-dog handlers must be ready to show proof of vaccination for rabies by virtue of the numerous jurisdictional laws that say *all* dogs must have current rabies vaccinations. "In many cases, courts have found that the presence of a current rabies tag on the service dogs'

collar is sufficient proof that the dog is up to date on vaccinations," she says.

■ ARE SERVICE DOGS IN TRAINING PROTECTED BY THE ADA?

No. ADA's public access protection is extended only to service dogs who have been successfully task-trained to mitigate the handler's disability.

That said, individual *state* laws may address service dogs in training. Where they do, the laws are as varied as the states' topography. For example, in Montana, handlers with service dogs in training are granted public access provided that the dogs are clearly identified as such.

Georgia and Virginia specify that dogs in training must be with professional trainers. Michigan also specifies that dogs in training must be with professional trainers, and the state's Department of Labor even maintains a list of approved trainers. The trainers must show photo ID stating they are representatives of an approved organization, if requested.

We all love dogs, and anytime we bring a dog out in public – anywhere that dog is legally allowed to join us – we have a responsibility to ensure that the dog can behave appropriately. Ill-behaved dogs are seen as a nuisance and can indirectly create additional challenges for people who rely on service dogs. Handlers of service and emotional-support dogs have enough challenges, without having to face discrimination or hostility over the use of their canine aids. 🐾

Stephanie Colman is a writer and dog trainer in Los Angeles. See page 24 for contact info.

REGARDING THOSE ONLINE "PRESCRIPTION" LETTERS

A "hot button" topic within the service-dog community is the availability of online prescription letters for emotional-support animals. It's important to remember that an emotional-support animal is required to mitigate a disability. The legal definition of disability is when one or more of a person's activities of daily life is severely impacted. If you are truly experiencing the impairment of a major life function, it's reasonable to assume that you'd be under the care of one or more medical professionals, and would not need to turn to the Internet for a letter that purportedly documents your disability.

"The idea is that the letter is supposed to be written by a treating mental health professional who is familiar with your case," says Dailyah Rudek, executive director of The ProBoneO Program. "I don't understand how someone can talk to you on the phone for 30 minutes, and suddenly be familiar enough with your case to do that."

We asked a representative of the American Psychological Association for a comment. "The APA Guidelines for the practice of telepsychology encourage psychologists to meet with the consumer first before providing services online as good professional practice," says Luana Bossolo, associate director and practice directorate, public relations.

The APA also recommends that consumers consider the following issues before purchasing any kind of "prescription letter," assessment/testing, or other health-related service

online without the benefit of meeting in person with a clinician:

- ✓ Is the clinician licensed to provide the services he offers?
- ✓ Is the clinician licensed where the consumer is located? Healthcare licensing boards around the country take the position that providers need to be licensed where the patient/consumer is, as well as in the state where the provider is located. Otherwise, Bossolo says, that provider could be liable for practicing in another state without a license.
- ✓ Is the testing/assessment designed to be conducted online? Most psychological test instruments are designed to be conducted in person.

According to Rudek, it's highly unlikely that anyone would ever need to legitimately rely on a paid service in order to obtain a letter for an emotional-support animal. Why? Because to legally qualify for an emotional-support animal, one must meet the legal definition of disabled, in which case the person is most likely already under the care of a medical professional who would be able to provide a letter.

If you consider paying for a "prescription letter," you probably don't legally qualify for one. It's no different than parking in a handicapped spot when you don't legally qualify for the special parking. It's dishonest, and potentially further complicates life for those who live with various disabilities.

IT'S NOT THAT COMPLICATED!

A GUIDE TO WHICH DOGS ARE ALLOWED WHERE

TYPE OF DOG	DEFINED AS	REGULATED BY	TYPE OF ACCESS GRANTED
Assistance/ Service Dogs	<p>A broad category that can include dogs trained to perform a variety of skills, such as alerting to impending seizures, retrieving dropped items, assisting with mobility, and easing the symptoms of psychiatric disorders by interrupting self-mutilating behaviors.</p> <p>Also includes:</p> <p>Guide dogs – Dogs specifically trained to assist handlers who are visually impaired.</p> <p>Hearing dogs – Dogs who are specifically trained to assist handlers who are deaf or hard of hearing.</p>	<p>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for public access, including public transportation and some rail travel.</p> <p>Fair Housing Act (FHA) for housing access.</p> <p>Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) for air travel.</p>	<p>Service-dog teams are afforded public access under the ADA. Some restrictions apply. For example, service dogs are not allowed in sterile or food-prep areas, and handlers must be given permission to bring a service dog into religious buildings, federal court, jail/prison cells, private clubs, etc. No type of certification or documentation is required for federal protection. However, individual states can set requirements to receive additional enhanced protections.</p> <p>Teams are generally allowed to rent in most “no pets” housing under the Fair Housing Act. Exceptions include: Buildings of four or fewer units when the owner lives in one. Private individuals who do not own more than three single-family homes, and who do not use a broker, are also exempted from the Fair Housing Act. Written documentation supporting the handler’s need for a service/assistance dog is required.</p> <p>Dog/handler teams are generally permitted to fly together in the cabin. No special documentation or requirements apply except in the case of psychiatric service dogs. Handlers with psychiatric service dogs can be required to show written documentation (on the treating medical provider’s letterhead, which must include the provider’s medical license number) supporting the handler’s need for a psychiatric service dog, and the documentation must be less than one year old. Airlines can also require that handlers with psychiatric service dogs notify the airline regarding travel with the dog at least 48 hours in advance.</p>
Emotional-Support Animals	<p>Personal pets who have not been trained to perform a specific task, but whose presence is beneficial to the disabled handler.</p> <p>Not limited to dogs. However, certain animals can be excluded under the relevant acts. For example, the Air Carrier Access Act says airlines are never required to permit snakes/reptiles, rodents, or spiders in the cabin. Fair Housing Act requires that the animal be considered a “reasonable accommodation,” “reasonable” being the key word.</p>	<p>ADA does not recognize emotional-support animals.</p> <p>FHA for housing access.</p> <p>ACAA for air travel.</p>	<p>Not allowed in public places such as restaurants, stores, etc., which are not already pet-friendly.</p> <p>ESA teams are allowed to rent in most “no pets” housing. Exceptions include: Buildings of four or fewer units when the owner lives in one. Private individuals who do not own more than three single-family homes, and who do not use a broker, are also exempted from the Fair Housing Act. Written documentation supporting the handler’s need for an emotional-support animal is required.</p> <p>ESAs are allowed to fly in the cabin alongside the disabled handler. Written documentation supporting the handler’s need for an emotional-support animal is required. Airlines can impose requirements regarding advanced notification, check-in/boarding procedures, etc.</p>
Therapy Dogs* (* Therapy animals can also be other species.)	<p>Personal pets owned by volunteers who wish to visit others with their pets, with the goal of providing emotional comfort.</p>	<p>No federal or state regulation specific to therapy dogs. Therapy dog teams are often registered with an umbrella organization such as Pet Partners (formerly Delta Society) or Therapy Dogs International.</p>	<p>No protected public access. Individual establishments determine whether or not to allow access. Teams visiting hospitals, etc. are there by special invitation.</p> <p>Not permitted in “no pets” housing.</p> <p>Not permitted to fly alongside the handler in the cabin.</p>

Cool That Hot Dog

Heat can hurt and even kill dogs; here's how to prevent heat stress and heat stroke.

BY CYNTHIA FOLEY

Dogs find summer's high temperatures challenging. That's largely because they don't sweat. Sure, you've read that dogs have sweat glands in their paws, but veterinarians agree that's not much help. A dog's primary means of cooling himself is through panting – and our goal is to make this process more efficient.

When a dog pants, air flows over the tongue and throat area and helps cool the blood sent to the tongue by the heart. That cooler blood then circulates through the rest of the body back to the heart, to start the process over.

The harder a dog's working to stay cool, the bigger his tongue becomes in an effort to maximize that air circulation. That's why a wide, red tongue indicates a dog is working hard at keeping his body cool.

However, as the temperature and humidity rise, the inefficiency of this system becomes apparent. The warmer it is outside, the warmer the air is that the dog takes into his body. When ambient temperatures become close to a dog's normal body temperature, the system begins to fail.

While most dogs begin getting warm around the 80°F mark (depending on humidity), the out-of-shape dog may be stressed at much lower temperatures. Clearly, as the outside air temperature rises and gets closer to the dog's body temperature, the effectiveness of panting decreases. A dog in warm weather needs your attention to avoid potentially deadly heat stroke.

Panting is the dog's best tool for cooling himself, but it's ineffective at lowering his internal temperature once the outdoor temperature and/or humidity get too high. That's when you should take extra steps to keep him cool.

To help avoid this, consider your dog's condition. Keeping your dog well groomed, physically fit, and at his optimal weight will help him avoid suffering from heat stress. Just as in humans, too much fat and not enough exercise result in a decreased level of heat resistance. And, the more he pants, the more water he'll need to consume – the cooler, the better.

But even fit dogs may need you to enforce limits during hot weather. "I try to acclimate them to exercising in warm

weather so they can handle it at a trial, but if it's *extremely* hot out, we will just stay home in our air-conditioned house!" says Linda Aloï, owner of K9 Capers Dog School in Baldwinsville, New York.

Some active dogs have been known to exercise to excess, causing major physical heat-related damage to themselves and possibly death. If you are playing fetch and your dog is barking at you to "Throw the ball again! Throw the ball again!" – but you notice his speed has decreased when running after the ball and returning to you – he's probably had enough.

Some of the most common causes of heat stress are:

- ✗ Being muzzled in a warm environment
- ✗ Leaving the dog in a car during warm weather (even in the shade or with windows cracked open); or leaving a dog in a hot room or garage with insufficient air flow
- ✗ Excessive exercise, or exercise in extreme temperatures
- ✗ Travel over hot pavement/concrete surfaces
- ✗ Lack of shade and/or fresh water



KEEP THAT COAT ON

Your dog's coat is designed to protect him from weather extremes. Regular grooming is a necessity, especially for dogs with a thick undercoat, like Shetland Sheepdogs, Pomeranians, and Labradors. That hair needs to be fluffy to do its insulation job, so if it's matted or dirty, get out the grooming equipment. Dogs who appear to have thick tufts of uneven hair throughout their coat definitely need the old undercoat brushed out. Single-coated dogs – think Papillons, Poodles, and Weimaraners – can actually be at a disadvantage. They may need more protection against sunburn and heat because they lack that protective undercoat.

Whatever you do, avoid the myth about shaving your dog's coat to make him cooler. "Never shave down a double-coated breed," says Mary Jo Johnson, an agility instructor Farmington, New York, who competes with her Shetland Sheepdogs. "It may seem counterintuitive, but that undercoat is a good thing."

There are exceptions to the no-shave rule, of course. Hot spots and other dermatological issues may require spot shaving for treatment. Some dogs may need spots shaved for breed standards or cleanliness. Also, strategic shaving in specific areas (as opposed to shaving the whole dog) can help with the cooling process, especially in canine athletes. "I actually will clip the hair in the summer in the groin area, so my dogs can lie down in the baby pool and the water can reach that skin," Johnson says, "but only the groin area."

WATER THEM WELL

At home, many dogs enjoy playing or lying down in a hard plastic kiddie pool containing a few inches of fresh, cool water. This is a much easier way to wet down your dog to cool him off than a hose.

"When I wet down my dog in a pool, I wet the belly, groin area, and under the 'armpits' of the front legs," says Diane Eggleston, owner of Awesome Abilities Dog Training School in Skaneateles, New York. "You should not wet their backs because it can actually make them hotter," as it can trap the heat closer to the skin.

A simple spritz with a sprayer might do the trick for many dogs. If Eggleston is away from home, she carries a sprayer with a mix of water and a little coat conditioner to help cool her dogs. "I use the type of sprayer used to spray weeds," she

says. "I use it to wet the belly areas, like I do in the pool." Of course, this sprayer should be designated and labeled for dog use only.

Make sure your dog *always* has fresh, cool water for your dog. On especially hot days, toss a few ice cubes in the water. You can also make an inexpensive treat by mixing water with some broth, freezing it in ice trays, and giving the cubes to him in a bowl. Don't add these to his water, however; your dog needs constant access to plain water.

If you're going for a walk or hike in hot weather, always carry along water and a bowl for your dog.

SHADY SOLUTION

If your dog is going to be outside with you for an extended period – say, at your daughter's soccer match – he'll need shade, especially if he has a dark coat. A pop-up tent or umbrella can provide enough instant shade to really help.



People who attend outdoor dog shows or canine athletic events with their dogs almost always bring shade tents, *plus* sun shields that can be draped over a dog's wire or soft-sided crate, to provide extra shade without impairing air flow.

Clean Run, the agility catalog and store, offers a great product called the Cool Puppy Shade Cloth Panel, made of a knitted, reflective aluminized fabric. Draped over a wire crate or exercise pen, it reflects the sun's rays but doesn't stop air flow. Clean Run estimates the result is a spot that is cooler by as much as 14°F and we would agree. The panels are available in a variety of sizes, from

\$25 for a 7' by 6' panel, up to a 14' x 10' panel for \$80. (See cleanrun.com or call 800-311-6503.)

COOLING AIDS

Fans get a big "two paws up" from most dogs. Portable fans, especially those designed for camping, run off of batteries. Most dogs will seek out the cool breeze and lie down right in front of the fans to keep cool. "At agility trials, my dogs are kept cool with a shade tent and fans. I also have gel cool mats for them to lie on," Johnson says. These fans are available at most major hardware and discount department stores, like Walmart.

Commercial cooling mats or beds are based on a dog's natural instinct to dig dirt holes during the summer; they give your dog a cool resting spot. You can also use a wet beach towel on the floor or ground. Frequently refreshed, clean and placed out of the sun, a wet towel can give your dog a cool spot to lie down, even on

the kitchen floor. (Of course, the humans in the household will need to be careful not to step on it and slip!)

Many commercial cooling beds are filled with a gel designed to absorb the dog's body heat. Some beds are filled with water that circulates heat away from the dog.

You can make your own ice-pack bed, too. When I attend a summer agility trial, I pack an equine leg bandage that's been soaked in water and then frozen. It's the perfect size for my Papillons to chill out on. My sister's 80-pound Labrador has a pocketed blanket that she fills with reusable ice packs. Her



When MACH Rebel walks around the agility trial in his Chilly Buddy coat, other competitors often ask about his fancy duds. The lightweight aluminum-fabric coats reflect the sun's heat away – especially helpful for black dogs.

dog pulls to get into the crate when he sees her arranging it for him. We use ice packs from Ice Horse, which stay cool for about two hours. They're non-toxic and flexible, making a comfortable "ice bed." We've found that with care, they can last for years. But they're not cheap; the cost ranges from two for \$17 to 12 for \$95. They are available from icehorse.net (800-786-6633).

The Aspen Pet Gel Cooling Pad is a terrific alternative, as it is comfortable, self-cooling, and effective. In fact, in the cool early-morning hours at a trial, I watched my dog move the pad out of his way in his crate. Later that afternoon, he had pulled it back in place and lay down on it! This bed was 12" by 16" and portable, as it folds in half; it also comes in 16" by 20". The only complaint we heard was that large-dog owners want a much larger size. Both sizes usually retail for under \$25. (Available in pet supply stores, Amazon.com, and sometimes in Bed, Bath & Beyond stores.)

The K&H Cooling Bed III is filled with water and works on the concept that the water will become the same temperature as the air, which is usually lower than the dog's normal temperature. It absorbs the heat, which circulates away from the dog. Most dogs enjoy the feel of the water. "I use water-filled cooling beds in my dogs' crates in hot weather," Eggleston says. "I slip them into a cotton pillow case."

The Cooling Bed III is a great product for home use, but we've found it can be cumbersome if you're away from home. Filled with water, it's very difficult to carry. If you plan to fill it at a show or sporting event, you will need several gallons of water (depending on the bed size).

These beds are available in large sizes, but they cost a fair penny: the 17" by 24" bed costs \$70; the 32" x 44" costs \$130. They do come with a two-year warranty. Available in pet supply stores and online catalogs, and directly from khmfg.com; (877) 738-5188.

COOL CLOTHES

You can find all types of dog clothing purportedly designed to keep your dog cooler, but be aware that anything you're adding to your dog's body has the potential to trap heat, too. Think about yourself. If it's terribly hot out, do you want to add clothing?

That said, most coats for heat defense have some type of sun reflective element to them, and many are designed to be wet down. The caveat with wetting a coat,

however, is that once it warms up to the dog's body temperature or bakes in the sun, it ceases to be cooling to the dog. If you use these coats, keep an eye on its temperature and rewet it if it's warmed.

We're not very enthusiastic about coats or vests that have gel inserts or incorporate water into the design; they often trap heat against your dog. Also, many tend to run small, are too rigid, or too heavy to be comfortable for your dog. Find out what the return policy is before you purchase this type of coat for your dog.

It's also wise to consider your dog's breed and coat when choosing a coat. "I don't use wet coats, since my dogs have a double coat and it would just trap the heat," Alois says.

A popular lightweight choice is the K9 Kooling Coat (horseworks.com, 800-848-1914). Manufactured to standards designed to withstand stresses from a horse, these coats are made of bright white polyester mesh, which is cool, lightweight, and blocks UVA and UVB rays.

The Kooling Coat can be wetted before you put it on your dog (we dunk them in ice water when it's really hot) or even frozen overnight (you'll have to

SHORT-NOSED DOGS

The brachycephalic breeds – such as Pugs, Boston Terriers, Boxers, Bulldogs – are particularly at risk of heat stress, says Eileen Fatcheric, DVM, of Syracuse, New York. "The only way dogs have to thermoregulate their bodies is panting, which is air flow over the respiratory system. These dogs are particularly at risk for heat stress because of the shape and design of the dog's throat."

Awareness is important, Dr. Fatcheric says. "The early symptoms of heat stress are easy to miss – wobbling and increased body temperature. Owners of these breeds need to pay closer-than-average attention to their dogs' behavior and body language."

This Pug is cooked! He's trying to get as much air as possible, and his tongue is starting to look dry. He needs some water and a fan, STAT!



SYMPTOMS OF HEAT STRESS

A dog exhibiting any of these symptoms needs immediate veterinary care as brain damage, kidney failure, seizures, and death can occur:

- ✓ Excessive panting (fast, wide, red tongue)
- ✓ Thickened salivation (drooling)
- ✓ Staring (appears to be looking at nothing)
- ✓ Warm skin and paw pads
- ✓ Rapid pulse
- ✓ Weakness
- ✓ Rectal body temperature over 103° (normal is 100°-102°F)
- ✓ Staggering (may be an early symptom)
- ✓ Extreme fatigue
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhea

If you suspect heat stress, take the dog's rectal temperature. Your goal is to get the temperature down to 103°F and then

transport him to a veterinarian. Repeat taking his temperature every five minutes.

Move the dog to an air-conditioned space, if possible. If not, get him in the shade. Offer water, but do not force it, as he may have difficulty swallowing it.

Apply gel ice packs, bags of frozen vegetables, or cold water (with a cold cloth, by pouring or gently spraying it) to the dog's neck area. Use fans to increase air flow. Wet his groin, underbelly, "armpits," throat area, and paws. Spray him with a water hose for one or two minutes or see if he will go into a kiddie pool full of water. As tempting as it may be, avoid using ice water. Yes, you want a quick, steady decrease of body temperature, but not another shock to the system. Frozen gel packs and cold cloths are recommended and work well if placed in the neck area. As soon as his temperature is back to 103°F, immediately transport him to a veterinarian.

let it thaw a little before putting it on the dog, but it works) to help keep your dog cool. Although the manufacturer says you can spritz the coat once it dries out, it works best to simply totally re-wet it. While some dogs can't wait to have their Kooling Coat on, we've seen others sort of cringe at the idea of wearing a wet coat all day. When dry, most dogs don't even notice they're wearing them, and you still get the reflective properties.

Though they resemble some sort of tinfoil costume, coats that are made of loosely woven aluminized fabric, similar to the material used in the sun shades we discussed above, are terrific for minimizing the sun's direct impact while allowing maximum airflow. This is the kind of coat Aloï uses on her dogs. "I have the woven aluminum foil-type coats to reflect the sun, and these work well."

The K-9 Cooler is a well-made coat that can be worn wet or dry. It's lightweight, durable, and appears comfortable for the dog. The price ranges from \$23 to \$54, depending on size. Available from silvershademesh.com, (507) 893-3646.

The Chilly Buddy coat has a similar

reflective outer surface, but includes a mesh cotton underside that may be kinder to the dog's coat. You can wet the lining to help with cooling, and it will hold the water longer than a coat without a lining. Perhaps best of all, the reflective outer layer means the wet inner layer will stay cooler longer as it's protected from

water – lots of cold, clean water – and lots of shade. Ice cubes are a fun treat that many dogs enjoy.

If your dog is forced to sit in a warm environment, he needs shade, a steady breeze from a fan, and lots of water. A cooling bed – as simple as that wet towel – is often appreciated.

For dogs who are going to spend a lot of time in the sun, we like the reflective coats, especially the Chilly Buddy bed. Its inner lining is actually a brilliant design, combining the best of both types of coats.

When using clothing, be sure you continually monitor the temperature of the coat, so your dog doesn't become too warm. But be sure you're not overdoing the cooling process either; locking him in a shaded crate, wearing a wet blanket, on a cold bed, with a fan constantly blowing directly on him, may result in a chilled dog

even on a warm day. Your dog is your best indicator of whether he needs more – or less – help to stay a truly cool dog. 🐾

Cynthia Foley is an experienced writer, editor, and dog-agility competitor in upstate New York. Her first agility dog is now 10 and still competing at the AKC Masters level.



When it's hot, Diane Eggleston's three agility-star Papillons (from left, MACH Rocket, Cooper, and Nina) enjoy their water-filled cooling beds, and spritzes of Diane's conditioner/water-mix from the garden sprayer.

the beating sun. However, we'd like to see a more tight-fitting surcingle to help keep its place on the dog. Cost is \$45 to \$70. Available from Chillybuddy.com, (888) 762-8149.

BEST CHOICES

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A Strong Start

Managing your new dog's first days with you for long-term success in your family.

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA

Adding a new dog to the family is always a significant event. I recently realized that there is a finite number of new dogs in my and my husband's future, and it made adopting our latest new one take on even more significance. Plus, as a trainer, I'm under a certain amount of added pressure to "do it right." People might be watching, and what if I mess it up? So, as we prepared to add an Australian Kelpie from a rescue group to our family, I reviewed the advice I've given to other new dog owners over the years, and made sure we applied it to our own situation.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

For starters, as I recommended in "How to Prevent a Bad Adoption" (WDJ May 2015), my husband Paul and I planned to

wait until we found the *right* dog for us, and to *meet* the dog to confirm this choice before committing to the adoption. Paul and I had agreed that if, when we drove

Pat Miller managed her new dog, Kaizen, on hikes around her farm on a long line, until she was certain that his recall was reliable. Had he been let off leash too soon, he may have been reinforced by the fun of a chase after a rabbit or deer, and building that reliable recall would have been more difficult.

five hours to go meet the dog, we did not find him to be as represented by his rescuers (friendly, happy, outgoing), we would come home without him.

We also knew that we would have to temper our own excitement when meeting him so we didn't overwhelm him with silly primate behaviors like direct eye contact, patting, and hugging.

We needn't have worried on either count. He was just as wildly enthusiastic about greeting us as we were about meeting him. He looked confidently into our eyes, and welcomed any attention we offered.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:
The Other End of the Leash
by Patricia McConnell
(2002, Ballantine Books)

READING CANINE BODY LANGUAGE

After our mutually enthusiastic greeting, we took a step back to observe Kai a little more carefully. Everything we saw confirmed what we had hoped. He stood tall and forward, taking everything in stride with a happy, swishing tail. He sought human interaction, both from us *and* the two rescue workers he was already familiar with, playing no favorites. He eagerly gobbled the treats we offered (dogs who are highly food motivated are easier to train than dogs who are not as interested in food), and lured to a down easily. He caught tossed treats in mid-air and easily leaped onto a raised surface when invited. He did not appear in the least concerned about the numerous other rescue dogs outside the windows on both sides of the room we were in. Confident and well socialized, slender, agile, and healthy – check!

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:
The Language of Dogs
by Sarah Kalnajs
(2006 DVD)

PROPER IDENTIFICATION

It's never too soon to equip your new dog with multiple forms of identification. Kai came with an ID tag from his rescue, but we filled out a Jiffy Tag we had brought with us and attached it before we even loaded him into the car. Jiffy Tags are handy, instant pet ID tags that you seal in plastic. You just write your information on the two-sided paper tag, then seal it between two pieces of clear, hard, adhesive plastic, and then use a regular metal ring to attach it to the dog's collar.

Kai was already microchipped by the rescue, but we registered the microchip in our name online when we got home. We also added a current rabies tag and county dog license in short order.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:
Jiffy Tags
from Animal Care Equipment & Services
(800) 338-2237; animal-care.com

INTRODUCTIONS

If you're an animal lover like me, chances are your new dog isn't your only animal companion. Proper introductions to the rest of your family members can go a long way toward a harmonious future. We may have more animal family members than most people; we have three other dogs, seven cats, six chickens, a pot-bellied pig, six horses of our own, and seven horses boarded.

When we were meeting Kai for the first time, we asked if the rescue staff could bring a cat into the get-acquainted room, to make sure our prospective family member wasn't a dedicated cat hater. That introduction went well, so we figured we were on solid ground with the cats.

We had seen that Kai was good with other dogs at the rescue. It's ideal to introduce a new dog to your current canine family in a neutral fenced area; absent this, we made do with our indoor riding arena. We started with Lucy, our 11-year-old Cardigan Corgi, who is the queen of the farm. Lucy can be inappropriately pushy and assertive, so we figured we'd get the hardest introduction over with first.

As is my custom, we first allowed the dogs to see each other, on leashes,

from opposite sides of the arena. Then we approached to a distance of about 10 feet, and, when the dogs' body language looked reasonable (interested, happy, alert, excited), we dropped the leashes and let the two dogs meet. All went well. Despite his confident personality, Kai immediately deferred to the Queen, and has continued to do so ever since, even when she rudely grabbed his chewie.

Even though he's deferent when Lucy is being bossy, he's also playful and irreverent. In fact, last week he grew so bold as to dash past her at top speed and grab a stick from her mouth! He was so fast, that by the time she realized it and launched after him he was far out of her reach. No dog has ever done that before and escaped unscathed.

It was a breeze to introduce Kai to 10-year-old Bonnie, a Scotti/Corgi/Poodle-mix; she pretty much loves everyone. She plays well with Kai, and even tolerates him nicely when his level of play is a little more energetic than she might like. She occasionally tells him to back off, and he does so.

In the past, our 13-year-old Pomeranian, Scooter, has suffered from hemorrhagic gastroenteritis when introduced to high-energy dogs. We were a little concerned, but we needn't have



Kai is most fascinated with the larger farm animals. When he pays too much attention to Sturgis the potbellied pig, Pat initiates games that reinforce behaviors that are incompatible with trying to play with the pig, such as sitting for treats and "Find it!"

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been. Kai was very respectful of Scooter, and got the message immediately that Scooter was not going to play with him, so now he doesn't even try.

Our cats are already pretty dog-savvy, albeit a little cautious due to Lucy's proclivity to engage in cat herding from time to time. From the demonstration at the rescue, we expected Kai to do well with our cats, and we weren't disappointed. We simply brought him into the house and let him meet the three house cats as they chose to make their appearance. (We have parts of the house baby-gated so the cats can come and go freely, with the dogs restricted to only certain rooms).

Kai showed a friendly interest in the cats, but no inclination to chase them, and they are already more comfortable with him than they are with Lucy. If we did not have prior information about Kai's response to cats, we would have made the introductions with Kai on a leash so we could observe his behavior before giving him free access to the cats.

Dorothy the barn cat chose to greet Kai with head bumps (something she *never* does to Lucy). Kai hasn't met the three feral cats that live in the lower barn, and we're in no hurry to have that happen.

Our chickens live in fenced enclosures, so we don't worry about the dogs (or visiting dogs) grabbing them. Kai shows some interest through the fence at the fluttering creatures, but he's not intense about it. I'm doing a little counter-conditioning (chickens make chicken happen?) to keep his interest at a healthy level.

Kai is *quite* taken with Sturgis, our pot-bellied pig. Sturgis, on the other hand, has very little interest in playing with dogs, including Kai. He has quite effectively taught the other three to leave him alone with a couple of well-timed pig lunges, but Kai seems to think Sturgis wants to play when the annoyed pig charges at him. Fortunately, it's easy to call Kai away from Sturgis, and I am consistently reinforcing incompatible behaviors (sitting for treats and "find it" are behaviors that are incompatible with playing with Sturgis).

So far, the horses have posed the biggest self-control challenge to our new little stock dog. Kai is having difficulty controlling his enthusiasm around the horses, and I am concerned that one might kick and injure him. For a while I

was reinforcing an incompatible behavior while leading a horse (this worked well with our now-deceased Scottish Terrier, Dubhy), but Kai couldn't resist barking and leaping at the large animals. For now, I am managing the situation by putting Kai in a stall when we move horses around during morning barn chores. I will be setting aside some time for more concentrated work on this in the near future.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:

"Great Introductions"

WDJ, January 2008

WELCOME HOME

Almost every new four-legged addition to the Miller family has, in the past, triggered at least one "What have I done?" moment. To his credit, Kai has not. I did, however, experience a reality check upon bringing him into the house for the first time, having just seen him leap straight into the air onto an eight-foot pile of hay bales in the barn. We had three-foot baby gates already in place that would clearly be no match for him if he wanted to sail over them, and our four-foot kitchen counter suddenly looked pitifully low and vulnerable.

We also had no idea if he was house-trained, having just fetched him from a rescue house that contained at least a dozen dogs and smelled strongly of urine. I knew there would be no house freedom for this Kelpie for at least a few days, until we got to know him better.

The leash stayed attached to Kai's collar at one end, and to me at the other end, for the first two days, except when he was in the barn, the backyard, or crated (the umbilical cord method). Fortunately he was happy to tag along after me, or curl up on a blanket at my feet beneath my desk, and Lucy, who generally considers my office to be exclusively hers, was willing to share. Also fortunately, over those two days, Kai showed no inclination to lift his leg in the house.

At the end of two days I began dropping the leash, still keeping a close eye on our new boy. The drag line would enable me to corral him quickly if necessary. It wasn't necessary. After a day with the drag line, I took the leash off, and Kai joined the family, a full-fledged free dog. Almost.

Kai is proving to be representative of the Kelpie breed: smart, attentive, and friendly. He enjoys any training game and learns new behaviors daily.

Because of his love affair with raised surfaces, we keep the door to the laundry room closed. We have a small freezer in that room, the top of which is cluttered with containers of dog treats, some of them open – no doubt too much of a temptation for our levitating lad. We don't leave food unattended on kitchen counters, so there's no temptation there, and we haven't even seen him try to make that leap. He hasn't tested the meager three-foot baby gates, thank goodness. However, we did discover that he likes to raid trash cans. Our kitchen receptacle is already covered, as is the one in my office, but we are keeping the living room off limits to Kai unless we are with him, until we get another covered can for that room. It's already ordered.

Kai quickly fit into the rest of the Miller household routine. He was easily enticed into a crate for a few bits of cheese the first few days, and was soon running into his crate on cue. (He is crated at night and when we are not home.) He didn't know the "Wait" cue, but with a just few repetitions on the first day he was waiting with Bonnie and Lucy on the stairway landing until I reached the bottom of the stairs and invited them to follow – our standard precaution to prevent the dogs from accidentally tripping us on the stairs. He very quickly generalized the "Wait" cue to doors (barn and house), his food bowl, and other useful opportunities.

He was pleased to discover that dogs are allowed on furniture in the Miller home. From the first day he waited politely for my invitation to jump up and snuggle next to me on the sofa (on my left side – Bonnie gets my right side). I love dog snuggling, so he gets invited a lot.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:
Do-Over Dogs
by Pat Miller
(2010, Dogwise Publishing)

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The biggest challenge about the great outdoors is convincing your dog that he wants to come back to you when you ask him to. There are so many good things to



sniff and chase! A solid recall gives you and your dog much more freedom and many more options when you venture out. I started practicing recalls with Kai his first day home.

Confession: I did fail to follow my own excellent advice about fences. I knew that our four-foot fence wouldn't contain Kai if he decided to go over, but didn't even think about the fact that most of the fence was in pretty poor repair.

During his first week with us, probably about the fifth day, I had stashed Bonnie and Kai in the yard after morning farm chores while I went to the lower barn to feed our chickens. Suddenly I heard a ka-thump sound, and a brown streak was racing across the yard. Kai was loose! I had several days of practicing recalls with him in the barn, but he was loose! Fortunately, he did one lap around the yard and then came directly to me. Of course I showered him with the treats that I always carry in my pockets.

I prayed he had found a loose board, and not jumped the fence. It would be much easier to fix the fence than raise it. Fortunately that proved to be the case. Paul fixed the fence that day, and Kai hasn't escaped since.

I have, however, taken him on many hikes around the farm, to one field in particular that is surrounded on three sides by a healthy creek. I discovered that Kai doesn't like to get his feet wet, so this field is effectively fenced on three sides for Kai. I started with Kai on a long line, doing lots of recalls, then worked up to dropping the long line while we hiked around this field, still keeping him close to me by calling him back frequently, and rewarding with high-value treats. Eventually I was comfortable allowing him free run of this field, off-leash. He is proving to have a pretty reliable recall, and we are about to take the next step:

off leash in slightly less-protected areas of the farm. I am confident that in short order we will be comfortable having Kai accompany us off leash anywhere on the farm.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:
"Rocket Recalls"
WDJ, September 2012

Really Reliable Recall
by Leslie Nelson
(2004 DVD or Booklet,
Healthy Dog Productions)

TRAINING

Of course I would enroll Kai in a training class . . . but where? We had a new seven-week Basic Good Manners Class starting here at Peaceable Paws with trainer Jill Friefeld, CPDT-KA, just a week after Kai came home, so I signed him up. We graduated last week, and earned honors for the "Fastest Recall." A past Peaceable Paws trainer, Laura Nalven, CPDT-KA, PMCT, has just opened up her own training business in nearby Hagerstown, and we're signed up for her first class starting June 3rd, at Atta Pup! Dog and Puppy Training. We're also attending her Canine Games Night once a month, for added fun and social exposure. It's far too easy for a farm dog, even one at Peaceable Paws, to lose sight of all the stimulation and entertainment the rest of the world has to offer.

After that, who knows? He has passed his first days with flying colors. Maybe we should do Herding. Or Rally. Or Freestyle. Or Agility. Maybe we'll delve deeper into Imitation Training. It's still early days (exactly two months since the little red Kelpie joined our family), and with a dog as brilliant and solid as Kai, the sky's the limit. We'll keep you posted. But even more important... even if he never does anything more than live on the farm, we are totally, completely and utterly smitten with our new boy. Which is how it should be. 🐾

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:
The Power of Positive Training
by Pat Miller
(2008, DogWise Publishing)

Pat Miller is WDJ's Training Editor. See page 24 for contact information.

Wingaing It

The Winga is a great tool for flinging discs farther, increasing your dog's fetching distance.

BY NANCY KERNS

Recently, I found myself with too many dogs who needed exercise, and not enough time to put in the miles that could have worked off all that excess energy. I rooted through the dog-toy baskets in my office, looking for things I could throw for the pack to fetch. I used to have a Chuckit! tennis ball launcher, but some puppy or other chewed up the part that holds the tennis ball, so I threw it away and hadn't yet replaced it. Then I remembered that I had bought a very similar device that is used for launching small rubber discs for dogs to chase: the Winga.



The product on the left is a thrower for clay shooting targets. The product on the right is the Winga, which enables you to throw rubbery discs far for your dog.

The Winga is made by Kurgo, a company that I'm more familiar with as the maker and seller of travel-related products for dog owners. I wasn't aware they had branched out into toys until I saw the Winga in a pet supply store and thought I would give it a try. The device had been sitting on my kitchen table for weeks; I hadn't yet been inspired to take it to the large open space that I imagined was required to properly use it.

Sitting next to the Winga on my table was a product my husband had dug out of a trunk in the closet: a hand-held clay pigeon thrower. When he had seen the Winga, he commented that it looked similar to a device he used ages ago to throw clay pigeons into the air for trap shooting. (Please note that clay "pigeons" are small discs made out of clay.)

My husband has a good memory; the clay pigeon thrower was remarkably similar to the Winga – and the discs

included with the Winga were near replicas (except for being made out of a rubbery material, rather than clay) of his old targets. It appears that someone at Kurgo had the idea that the clay pigeon thrower could be repurposed with very few design changes, and used to throw toys a long way for dogs to chase.

FLINGING THE WINGA

I was a tad skeptical that the rubber discs could be flung out of the Winga with as much speed and distance as the clay pigeons; I was certain that the rubbery texture of the discs wouldn't allow them to fly out of the thrower as cleanly or quickly as hard clay discs. I was especially skeptical after loading one of the discs into the Winga; they fit *very* snugly.

On the other hand, I have problems with my shoulder that prevent me from throwing a ball or disc very far, so I grabbed the Winga and the two discs it came with, and headed with the dogs to an open grass playing field.

My first throw or two seemed to confirm my suspicions that the rubbery discs wouldn't be able to leave the thrower cleanly enough to make its use worthwhile. I said to the dogs, "Ready?" and I used a gesture similar to the one I'd used

with the Chuckit!. The disc barely flew 10 feet. My dogs said, "Seriously? That's it?"

I looked at the package for hints. Included in the directions (which of course I hadn't read first) was this: "Swing your arm as if you were swinging a tennis racket . . ." Despite the fact that there are a *lot* of ways to swing a tennis racket (forehand, backhand, overhead . . .), something finally *did* light up in my brain. I realized that I should be swinging my arm sideways, in a swing like a tennis player's *forehand*. And it only makes sense, because if you think of the disc as a Frisbee, you would want to throw it from a position in which the disc was parallel to the ground, so it flies flat and fast. When you do it like that – Winga! – the little discs really fly far.

THE DISCS

We've written about worrisome materials in dog toys before (see "Why Vinyl Stinks," WDJ April 2008), so I called Kurgo to find out what the discs are made of (the package says only that they are "nontoxic"). A representative told me that the material is a BPA-free thermoplastic elastomer (TPE) – a safe rubber-like material. I looked for information suggesting that this sort of material is actually unsafe, and couldn't find anything credible. But, as with any plastic or rubber toy that your dog will have in his mouth, I'd warn dog owners to use these discs just for games of fetch; don't allow your dog to chew or consume pieces of the disc.

If you happen to have one of those old clay pigeon throwers laying around, buy some discs from Kurgo and use the thrower you have. If you don't, buy a Winga with its two discs – and maybe some spares; they are small enough that they can be hard to find if your dog doesn't see where they landed. Then, head out for a big, open field with your fetchaholic dog, and have a blast! 🐾

Winga

WINGA – \$20

(comes with thrower and two discs)

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(877) 847-3868 ; kurgo.com

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- The easy fix for boredom barking (p. 41)
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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

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