

The Whole Dog Journal™



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A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

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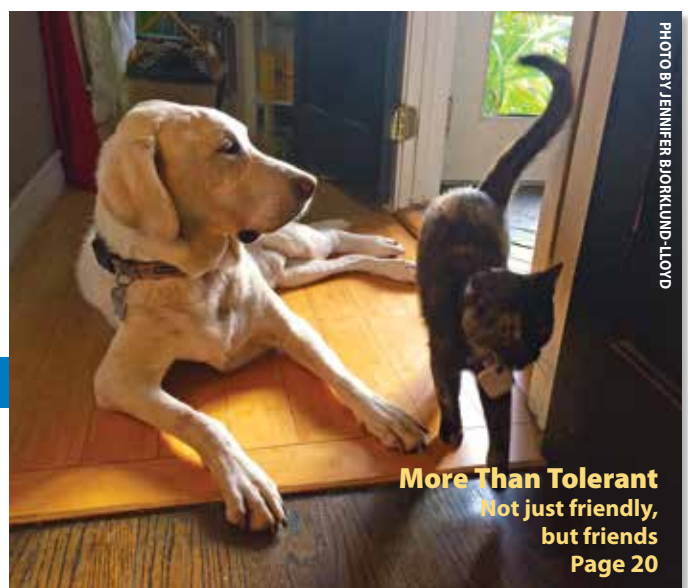


PHOTO BY JENNIFER BJORKLUND-LLOYD

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It's the Pits

Oh yeah, I'm going there.

BY NANCY KERNS

It finally hit me: I'm now a pit bull owner. I've never been able to say *those* words before. When my son heard the news, he called – from work! – to ask how I was, was I okay? A sensitive young man and a dog lover himself, he knows I've been fighting off some lingering sorrow over the numerous sad events in my life in 2015 by indulging in perhaps too much fostering. But he also knows that the bully breeds have never been my favorite, and he must have worried that my judgment has been compromised by depression.

Is it shocking to hear the editor of a dog magazine say she doesn't particularly like bully breeds? I could go farther: I'm not a fan of Boxers, Mastiffs, or Bull Terriers. I tend not to enjoy terriers of *any* kind. Yorkshire Terriers, ack! When I was a young adult, my parents had some that I honestly *loathed*, and they sort of ruined the breed for me.

That's not all! I actively avoid the company of dogs who have so much hunting instinct that hunting is all they want to do outdoors. I like to be able to walk with a dog and relax, for crying out loud! I don't like having to be vigilant every step of the way, or to have to keep a dog on leash on every walk, lest she run so far after game that she disappears (for any length of time) or threatens to harass or murder some other animal. I have so many friends who have German Wire-Haired Pointers, and I can't say I've ever liked a single one of them.

While I admire the work that some of the German Shepherd-type dogs do (GSDs themselves, as well as the Malinois, Tervuren, et. al.), I wouldn't want to live with one. I *love* Border Collies but for what specific reason I cannot say, I tend to dislike Aussies.

That's just off the top of my head. Who haven't I alienated yet?

If I *have* alienated you, I have to ask: Can you honestly say you love all breeds equally? You'd be just as happy with a pack of Chihuahuas as you would be with a Great Dane? You could give your heart to a Great Pyrenees as easily as a Chinese Crested?

I don't think it's disrespectful or insulting to admit that you have favorite breed types, as long as you respect the fact that other people have favorites (and most-disliked breeds), too. Especially if you are open to the possibility

that there may well be individuals among the breeds you say you don't like that you could absolutely *love*.

Maybe this is all just rationalization, because that's what's happened to me: I fell hard for an individual of the most maligned not-breed, the most feared and misidentified type of dog in this country, the dog that is over-represented in every open-admission shelter in the country, the pit bull *terrier*-mix.

But I haven't undertaken this adoption lightly. I happen to believe that the owners of this type of dog – and all large, powerful dogs – need to be willing to take *more* than the average amount of responsibility for the socialization, training, management, and utter control of their dogs. When someone neglects the training or socialization of a cute little poodle-mix, and the poorly behaved, fearful dog ends up in a shelter, the odds are usually pretty good he'll get a second chance at a nice home. That's just not true for anything that looks like a "pittie." Pity. There are countless reasons for this, some valid, some pure fiction, but it's true: this type of dog has cultural baggage.

My hound foster is a master of door-darting, and we've been working daily on "wait" at the door. But she caught me being inattentive the other day and darted out the front door *just* in time to accost a woman walking a Chihuahua. Yes, I became *that person*. "She's friendly!" I cried as I raced after the hound, but the lady wasn't the slightest bit alarmed; she smiled at the hound's bouncing around and goofy goodwill. That won't be true if my pit-mix does the *exact* same thing – so I will be doing *everything* possible to make sure it just doesn't happen. **NK**

Beds: When Only the Best Will Do

Results of our tests of nine of the thickest orthopedic dog beds on the market.

BY CYNTHIA FOLEY

If your dog hops out of bed, stretches, and trots off, thank your lucky stars. He's likely had a good sleep on a supportive surface. But if he rises slowly, stiff and sore, that bed might be worn out or inferior. Even an old dog shouldn't wake up stiff and sore. The time is now to spring for a good dog bed!

We gathered nine high-end, medium and large dog beds that were marketed as "orthopedic," offering full body support. We distributed them to appropriately sized test dogs, most of them in homes with more than one dog. We wanted to see what human and canine preferences emerged, and if these beds truly supported our sleeping dogs.

WHAT CONSTITUTES "ORTHOPEDIC"?

There is no legal or technical definition of "orthopedic" when it comes to dog beds. Wikipedia defines an orthopedic mattress as one "designed to support the joints, back, and overall body." We'd say that an orthopedic dog bed is one that reacts to and supports the dog's weight in a superior fashion. In our opinion, if you squeeze a dog bed and are able to flatten it, feeling the floor or your fingers on the reverse side, that bed isn't offering orthopedic support, no matter what the label says.

In search of maximum support, we dismissed "filled" beds – those products that are stuffed full of chunks of foam, fiber, or other small particles. Those beds

tend to adjust slowly (or not at all) when the dog gets up. They usually become lumpy and indented, requiring you to "fluff" them up on occasion.

Instead, we selected products with the thickest mattresses we could find. A couple of our selections have mattresses made with slabs of quilted poly fiberfill. But most of the "orthopedic" beds are made with super-thick, high-quality foam – those products being best able to evenly distribute a dog's weight and offer balanced, cushiony, firm support each time the dog gets on the bed.

A list of the foam-based beds we chose for evaluation appears on page 5; details on the only fiberfill bed we selected appear on page 7.

WE'RE ON THE FOAM

When it comes to beds with a foam cushion, thicker is usually better – and a thick mattress is an absolute necessity for a larger, heavier dog – as it offers more support and lasts longer. Some dog beds are made of thinner foam slabs that have been glued together. These tend to be less expensive than the ones made with the thickest, single slabs of foam. We noted several claims that a single piece of foam will last longer and offer more support, but the length of our trial (about six months) was insufficient to prove or disprove this theory.

Most of the beds in our trial were made of high-grade, flat, polyurethane foam. If it's thick enough, flat foam will support your dog.

Many manufacturers use egg-crate foam for dog beds. It's a top choice in human health care due to its support, shock absorption, and economical price. Egg-crate foam is usually open-cell foam, which, combined with its egg-crate shape, is meant to offer more air flow and a cooler surface than memory foam or flat orthopedic foam. However, today, *any* foam (even some memory foams) can be infused with air pockets to allow heat to escape.

Egg-crate foam adjusts to pressure immediately. The downside is that it will not have the longevity of memory foam. It can become permanently compressed with time, which means if you start to see the dog's imprint in the bed – dents and hollows – it's time to replace the foam. Only one of our selections is made with egg-crate foam.

Memory foam, invented by NASA in

The large, rectangular Quilted Super Deluxe bed from Drs. Foster & Smith offers plenty of room with firm support.



the 1970s, is a polyurethane that molds to shape and becomes more pliable as it becomes warmer, including from body warmth. It provides excellent support in thinner slabs than ordinary foam. Since quality memory foam is evaluated by its *density*, not its thickness, a good memory foam pad that is just two inches thick can offer excellent support. As your dog lies on memory foam, the surface slowly adjusts to the weight distribution, offering a well-aligned support system. Memory foam also offers the advantage of being a long-lasting choice.

The downside of memory foam is that it can retain heat more than other foams. That's because most memory foams are closed foam, which means no airflow (some of the newer memory foams have air pockets). The too-warm problem can be circumvented by placing a thicker cover/pad on top of the mattress, or even adding a "cool bed" on top during warmer temperatures. If your dog constantly gets up, circles and lays back down, or pants for no apparent reason (panting can also indicate pain, of course), or sleeps belly up, he may be too warm.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION: EASE OF WASHING

For our trial, we considered only those beds that had covers that can be removed for washing. Who wants something in their home that a dog will be spending a significant amount of time on and that can't be washed? Ick!

Happily, we were able to remove, wash, dry, and replace every bed cover in this trial without major problems. Except for the **Pet-O-Bed**, which has no zippers or closures, all the covers zipped on and off.



The dishd foam slab used in the **Pet-O-Bed** is of the highest quality.

A few of the covers were trickier than others to get back on. It was a lot of work to get everything stuffed into the **L.L. Bean** bed, for example. The

Pet-O-Bed required close attention to the instructions, but once they were understood, no problem.

The **Urban Sprawl** fiberfill mattress is the only one that can be washed in a front-loading machine. The foam mattresses in the other beds can be spot-washed or lightly sprayed with a mixture of vinegar and water to help get rid of any lingering odors.

Sun is a great antimicrobial agent, but be careful. It can also damage foam if it is exposed to intense sun rays for very long.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE PRODUCTS

The **Pet-O-Bed** product was the thickest foam bed in our trial, up to eight inches in its largest sizes. Their high-quality foam was made in the USA, and this is important. Some inferior imported foams can retain a chemical smell. While the odor will usually dissipate if you thoroughly air out the foam prior to use, we advise you to look for that USA label. A notable exception is the **Drs. Foster & Smith** bed in this trial. While imported, it proved to be a quality choice.

The **FurFighter Orthopedic Bolster** bed uses NASA-certified memory foam covered with a tightly woven fabric designed to resist dust and hair from passing through. It's a luxurious bed, and our tester, a veterinarian, believes it offers maximum orthopedic support.

We read a customer review of the **Orvis Tempur-Pedic** bed, another memory foam bed that performed very well in our trial. The review was the only one-star review online, so it drew our attention. The reviewer wrote that the bed was too hard and took too long to allow the dog to "sink" in. That gave us pause. Memory foam is naturally stiffer in cool temperatures (the review was written in November, so we assume the ambient temperature was cool).

As for the comment that dog didn't actually sink into the bed fast enough, well, that's a good thing. Quality memory foam is actually less springy than other foams. It's supposed to be slower to relax against weight and slower to recover when that weight is removed. If you press your hand on good memory foam, you will leave a handprint, and then it will gradually disappear. Remember, it's all about support.



The mattress in **Ruffwear's Urban Sprawl** bed can be washed (separately from the cover) in a large front-loading machine.

L.L. Bean's Therapeutic Dog Couch uses open-cell memory foam, which offers relief from overheating. Unfortunately, we were not able to judge if that was true, as our trial took place in the fall and winter. However, the bed is extremely durable, withstanding chewing and standing up to the demands of two large Labrador agility dogs.

The mattress in **Ruffwear's Urban Sprawl** bed is made recycled polyester fiberfill and is reversible! One side is firm, designed to keep the dog cool in warmer temperatures; the other side is soft, both for dogs with orthopedic issues and those who might benefit from added warmth. This durable bed survived a very large Goldendoodle who has destroyed every other bed he's had. He only managed to scratch a few holes in it, and the tester said "Doodle" loves his bed.

CONSIDER WHEN BUYING FOR YOUR DOG

Different dogs have different sleeping styles, although nearly every dog will relax in every position at one point or another. Before you purchase an expensive dog bed, observe your dog in his napping position at different times. If he tends to sleep most in a ball and likes to cuddle, he might like a nesting bed, like the **Pet-O-Bed** or the **Bagel Bed**. Dogs who like to "hide" while they're sleeping might enjoy the deep, luxurious **Bagel Bed** from For Your Dogs Only.



For Your Dogs Only's Bagel Bed offers maximum support and snuggling – perfect for dogs who sleep curled into a ball.

BEDS WITH FOAM MATTRESSES

BED	TYPE, ORIGIN	DIMENSIONS AND PRICES	COMMENTS
Alden Odor's Posture Pedic Pet Mats (866) 364-6367 dogodor.com	Flat, rectangular Made in the USA	Small: 12" x 17" \$25 Large: 28" x 46" \$55 (seven more sizes in between)	These mats are made with two layers of closed-cell memory foam and wrapped with a Cordura cover. Extraordinarily durable and long-lasting. Foam is 2 inches thick. This bed is not soft and cushy, but offers incredible support. This is our top choice for an inexpensive way to provide support for your dog.
Drs. Foster & Smith's Quilted Super Deluxe Dog Bed (800) 381-7179 drsfostersmith.com	Rectangular Imported	Small: 36" x 21" x 7" \$90 Medium: 42" x 24" x 7" \$140 Large: 48" x 28" x 7" \$160 X-Large: 50" x 35" x 7" \$180	The mattress in this bed is made with a 6-inch slab of orthopedic foam, covered with quilted poly fiberfill, stitched to stay in place and to offer solid support. The poly/cotton quilted cover has an extra heavy-duty zipper; replacement covers and a waterproof liner are also available.
For Your Dogs Only's Premium Bagel Bed (888) 413-0290 foryourdogsonly.com	Oval with high sides all around Made in the USA	Measurements = sleeping area, not entire bed: XXS: 13" x 21" \$50 XL: 37" x 46" \$194 (four more sizes in between)	Very cozy, nest-like bed with 100% cotton, durable cover. Can be ordered with either a polyfill or orthopedic foam mattress, or a combination. Order a size larger than you think you need. Excellent, maximum support.
In the Company of Dogs' FurFighter Orthopedic Bolster (800) 544-4595 inthecompanyofdogs.com	Bolster Made in the USA	Medium: 36" long \$250 Large: 46" long \$280	Arguably the most luxurious bed in the trial. Beautiful. The tightly woven fabric does not allow fur or dirt to penetrate to the foam beneath. NASA-certified memory foam with a poly fiberfill bolster. Provides maximum support.
L.L. Bean's Therapeutic Dog Couch (800) 441-5713 llbean.com	Bolster Made in USA with imported components	Small: 25" x 20" x 7" \$130 Medium: 36" x 28" x 9" \$180 Large: 44" x 34" x 12" \$250 X-Lg: 52" x 42" x 13½" \$290	This bed has poly fiberfill bolsters on three sides, and a durable 100% cotton denim cover. The mattress is an open-cell memory foam base insert. Nice details! Gussets ensure that the cover fits snugly, and the zipper is covered to discourage chewing. Assembly required; we struggled with it initially to get it put together. Antimicrobial treatment minimizes odors. One of the most durable choices in our trial with excellent support.
Orvis's Tempur-Pedic Deep Dish Bed (888) 235-9763 orvis.com	Bolster Made in USA with imported parts	Small: 35½" x 25½" x 3½" \$295 Medium: 40" x 26½" x 3½" \$350	The mattress in this bed is high-density foam with open-cell technology. Comes with a water-resistant breathable liner. Available covers include plush microfiber, faux shearling, or tweed bed, and replacement covers are sold separately. We ordered the tweed cover, and it is absolutely beautiful and elegant. This bed offered maximum support.
Petmate's Dig & Burrow Orthopedic Bed (877) 738-6283 petmate.com	Flat, rectangular Bed made in USA, cover made in China	36" x 37" x 3" \$90	This is the only bed we ordered with an egg-crate foam mattress. The egg-crate foam gives the bed a ripply appearance; its maker says it's designed to encourage dogs who like to dig and scratch before they lay down, and it definitely attracted that activity. We were concerned that with enough digging and burrowing, the cover would tear, but it survived well. The bed offers good support for lighter-weight dogs, and our medium-sized test dogs loved it, but it would not provide enough support for large or heavy dogs.
Pet-O-Bed (800) 738-6233 petobed.com	Rectangular with a "nest" indent in the center Made in the USA	Small: 18" x 18" x 4½" \$30 Large: 35" x 54" x 8" \$186 (five more sizes in between)	The mattress in this bed is a single slab of extremely thick foam that has a scooped-out center forming an indented nest. The water-resistant cover goes on like a fitted mattress sheet, with no zippers, hooks, or loops. As far as orthopedic support, this bed provides absolutely superior, maximum support for even the heaviest dog. However, some of our test dogs prefer sleeping on flatter surfaces and shunned the indented nest.

Snugglers might also like a bolster bed, which has at least one raised side, usually the back. Most are raised on three sides. If your dog seems to like to use a pillow for his head or rarely sleeps out in the open, preferring the security of a snuggling up against a nearby pillow or cushion, he might be a bolster bed candidate. A bolster bed can also be a good option for a dog who likes to lie on his side, as long as it's big enough.

Dogs who flop down and spread out as wide as possible are candidates for a rectangular bed, although we maintain that if you're not sure, the rectangular bed is your most versatile choice. You can place it against a wall with a couple of pillows against the wall to mimic a bolster bed or add a blanket for the "nesting" dog to scratch around on.

Actually, Petmate's rectangular **Dig & Burrow** bed was a favorite in one of our testing spots, with every canine family member using it as often as possible. They scratched on its surface,



Petmate's Dig & Burrow bed is the only product with egg-crate foam that we considered.

digging and circling for that "perfect" spot. Unfortunately, however, we had to place it in a home with lighter dogs, as its foam seemed to lack what we considered adequate support for heavier dogs. If your dog likes the "dig and burrow" concept, consider purchasing this bed and placing it on top of **Alden Odor's Posture Pedic** pad for more support.

The **Pet-O-Bed** has an inviting "nest" indent in the center of the bed, but our test dogs didn't settle into it. The Pet-O-Beds feature the thickest foam of any of the products we tested, which, one would think, should have sparked a lot of interest, but our dogs didn't stay put for long. We suspect the bed may have been too small for our test dogs. Also, the nest indent might not attract all dogs, making us wish the company produced a flat bed, too.

Size *is* a big issue. Bigger is better, even for little canines. It's the rare dog who thinks he's smaller than he is. One of our test dogs, a medium Goldendoodle, determined that one bed was simply too small for him. Once in a while, he would curl up on it, but mostly he used the bed as a pillow. When we measured the dog and the bed, the bed had a spare five or more inches in each direction for

the dog but, apparently, he disagreed.

We recommend you ignore breed and weight suggestions on websites for choosing a bed in the "right" size. Instead,



Alden Odor's Posture Pedic mats are thin, but made of high-quality memory foam, making them ideal for use in crates.

grab a measuring tape and measure your dog from nose to tip of tail, from toe to top of the withers. Then, order a bed that's at least 12 inches longer and wider than the dog's measurements.

We also advise you to check out the company's return policy. If it's a local shop, no problem. If you're mail-ordering the bed and have to return it, the return shipping cost can be a big chunk of change. Either way, for the first day or two, put a large clean sheet on the bed, covering top, sides and at least some of the bottom. You want to protect it from dust, dirt, dog hair, and any signs of use in order to be able to return it.

BOTTOM LINE

The biggest waste of money when it comes to dog beds is being cheap. Dogs are hard on beds. They scratch at the covers, nibble on zippers, and occasionally try to drag their beds to another spot. A dog bed needs to be durable, stain-resistant, and have washable covers. Every bed in our trial met this criteria.

At the start of the trial, we climbed onto each bed ourselves to get a feel for the support offered. There wasn't a bad one in the bunch. However, we felt the most support in the **Pet-O-Bed, In the Company of Dogs' Fur-Fighter, Orvis' Tempur-Pedic, L.L. Bean's Therapeutic Dog Couch, and Dr. Foster & Smith's Quilted Super Deluxe** beds.

If your dog is a chewer, meaning you know the bed has a limited lifespan in your household, an egg-crate foam bed or regular foam bed may be the

ADJUSTING TO A NEW BED

One of the biggest problems with a new bed is getting your dog to use it. Dismissing the bed, saying the dog doesn't like it before he's even gotten used to it, is a disservice to the bed and the dog.

The most important element is the location of the new bed. If your dog's old bed is beside the couch, you're going to have to place the new bed in that spot. If it's a new item, place the bed in a spot your dog often sleeps or in your bedroom if he comes in with you at night. Always place the bed away from drafts and cold areas. Some dogs prefer their beds tucked into a quiet spot they can call their own, while others like to snooze in the middle of all the household activity.

It may help to "scent" the new bed. You can do this a number of ways, but one of the veterinarians who helped test these beds suggests the dog owner curl up on the new bed and hang out there for 15 minutes or so, to make the bed smell like you and like home. You might also toss a few of your dog's favorite toys on the bed until he accepts it as his own. It's all part of introducing the dog to the new bed, helping your dog understand the bed is his to use. He'll soon figure out it's comfortable!

Finally, the cover material can make a difference. Many of the beds in our trial come from smaller manufacturers who may be willing to take the cover back in trade for a different texture. Maybe your dog doesn't like denim, but thinks microsuede is luxurious. It can be challenging to determine why your dog walks away from a comfortable-looking bed.

Of all the beds we tested, it was most difficult to put on and take off the cover of L.L. Bean's Therapeutic Dog Couch, but it's a lovely and comfortable bed.



BEDS WITH MATTRESSES THAT DO NOT CONTAIN FOAM

BED	TYPE, ORIGIN	DIMENSIONS AND PRICES	COMMENTS
Ruffwear's Urban Sprawl Bed (888) 783-3932 ruffwear.com	Flat, rectangular Made in Vietnam	Medium: 28" x 35" x 4" \$150 Large: 36" x 48" x 4" \$200	This two-sided mattress is made with recycled polyester. One side is firm and meant for warmer temperatures or dogs with orthopedic issues. The other side is softer and provides more warmth. The top of the cover is made of microsuede; the bottom is a waterproof fabric, providing a moisture barrier. Mattress can be washed (separately) in a commercial front-loading washer. This is an extremely durable bed, that provides excellent support.
Molly Mutt Bed Covers (510) 524-2900 mollymutt.com	(Not actually a bed...rather, a stuffable bed cover)	Small: 22" x 27" x 5" \$25 Med/Lg: 27" x 36" x 5" \$41 Huge: 36" x 45" x 5" \$50 Round: 36" x 5" \$19	We had to tell you about these 100% cotton, durable, well-made dog bed covers. They were designed as an environmentally friendly dog-bed option; the maker suggests that you stuff them with old clothing, blankets, towels – whatever you would like. Given that they are some of the most attractive covers we've seen, and inexpensive (especially given the quality of the fabric and the workmanship), we'd consider stuffing them with a slab of high-quality foam from an upholstery shop in order to create our own orthopedic bed, or use them as replacement covers for another bed of a compatible size.



Molly Mutt bed covers are beautiful, durable, and affordable!



The most luxurious bed in the trial, the FurFighter Orthopedic Bolster bed from In the Company of Dogs is made with super-thick memory foam, and covered with a tightly woven fabric that doesn't permit dirt or hair to penetrate to the foam.

most economical choice. If you want memory foam, choose a brand that makes replacement covers available or investigate those Molly Mutt covers.

For dogs who are kind to their sleeping quarters or have known severe arthritic/orthopedic issues, memory foam is worth the extra cost. In terms of maximum support, we found memory form offer the highest level, followed by flat foam, then the egg-crate foam.

If you're not at all sure what type of bed your dog might like, we'd go with a flat, rectangular bed just a bit larger than you think you actually need. Every test dog loved the flat beds. Of the ones we had, the **Quilted Super Deluxe** dog bed from Drs. Foster & Smith earns top

choice. While it looked "boring" to us humans, who ooh'd and ahh'ed over the fancy beds from In the Company of Dogs, Bagel Bed, and Orvis, our test dogs couldn't have cared less. During the bed-sorting and -distribution stage of the test, I more frequently found my dogs on the Quilted Super Deluxe bed than any other bed. For the actual trial, it was shared in a household of Brittanies, and the older arthritic dog – ruler of the roost – claimed it as her own, choosing it even over her owner's own mattress.

A close second is the Urban Sprawl, which truly gets points for durability and its waterproof fabric bottom.

The Posture Pedic Pet Mat is a bargain to consider, as it offers a lot of firm support. It's only about two inches thick, but even big dogs get good support when they're on it. We saw many of these mats used as "under mats" in crates at dog shows and trials with an added cushier soft top layer. Its price is tough to beat, durability is jaw-



Extra covers, in different attractive fabrics, are available for Orvis's Tempur-Pedic Deep Dish bed.

dropping, and you could combine it with the very fun Dig & Burrow bed.

Note: We didn't have a completely round bed in this trial, but be aware that if you choose a round bed it must be large enough that the dog can sleep flat out as well as curled up. 🐾

Cynthia Foley is a freelance writer and dog agility competitor from New York. Her Papillons enjoyed their time in the sea of dog beds, before they were sent to larger test dogs.

Chews Wisely

How to manage your pup's chewing habit to ensure a destruction-free home.

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA

Puppies chew. Everyone knows that. In fact, it's one of the reasons some of us choose to adopt dogs who are at least six months of age – when those nasty needle-sharp puppy teeth are gone and the worst of the chewing is over. But baby dogs are darned cute, and thankfully plenty of dog lovers are willing to suffer through damaged shoes and table legs in order to experience the many joys of puppyhood.

Why do puppies chew? They chew to explore the world, and to relieve the pain and irritation of teething. But they also chew because it's a natural, normal activity for *all* canines, young *and* old. While puppies do eventually grow up and get past the stage where they feel compelled to put their teeth on everything they see, mature dogs *also* need to chew to exercise their jaws, massage their gums, clean their teeth, and to relieve stress and boredom.

It comes as an unpleasant surprise to many owners that chewing doesn't end at the age of six or seven months, when all a dog's adult teeth are grown in. In fact, significant chewing may continue for the

first 18 to 24 months of a dog's life; given the opportunity, most dogs will happily chew into their senior years.

It's the rare puppy who makes it through the first year of his life without inflicting significant damage to one or more of his human's valued possessions. But there's a lot you can do to keep damage to a minimum.

MANAGEMENT

Ah, yes, management – the answer to so many behavior challenges. Puppies develop chew-object preferences in the early months of their lives, so the better you are at managing your pup's access to non-chew items and directing him

to desired chew objects, the sooner he will earn house freedom. If you give your baby dog the run of the house and he learns to chew on carpets, throw pillows, books, shoes, and coffee table legs, you will likely end up with a dog who chooses to exercise his jaws and teeth on inappropriate objects for years to come. You'll find yourself crating him frequently even as an adult dog, or worse, exiling him to a life of loneliness in the backyard, where he can "only" chew on patio furniture, potted plants, and the edges of your deck.

If, instead, you provide a variety of approved chew toys at an early age and manage your pup well to prevent access to your stuff, he'll earn house privileges much sooner. By the end of his first year, you may be able to leave him alone safely while you go out to dinner, shopping – even while you're away at work.

When you're home, your puppy needs to always be under your direct supervision – for housetraining as well as chew-prevention purposes. You may need to keep him on a leash or a tether, put up baby gates, or simply close the door of the room you're in so he's shut in with you and can't wander into the bedroom to shred your shoes while your back is turned. If you're too occupied to supervise, put him in his crate or exercise pen to keep him out of trouble.

Good management also requires "puppy-proofing" the house. Don't leave shoes – a favorite of most unsupervised dogs – where your pup can get them. Put all inviting objects out of his reach, just as you would for a two-year-old toddler. If you can't put electric cords out of his reach, you can slide them through a piece of PVC pipe or use a commercial product (such as the CritterCord, available from crittercord.com) to prevent cords from getting chewed. The less often you have to intervene to retrieve something from him that he shouldn't have, the better.

Puppies have a reputation for being destructive chewers, but this is often due to a lack of consistent supervision. Many adolescent and young adult dogs still have a strong drive to chew, so when a lack of supervision and management combines with large adult teeth and stronger jaws, they may actually cause far more damage than puppies.



TEACH YOUR PUPPY THE “TRADE” GAME



Start by giving your puppy something he really likes to chew, such as a peanut butter-stuffed toy. Allow him to really dig in and start chewing.



Then, offer him something even better, such as some tasty bits of chicken, doled out one by one. As he's eating, take the food-filled toy with your other hand.



When he finishes the treats, praise him – and then give him back his chew toy. This game teaches him to give up valued resources readily and happily.

SUPPLY SIDE

At the same time, give him a generous supply of “legal” chew objects to keep his needle-sharp puppy teeth appropriately occupied. The pet product industry provides an ever-growing list of fascinating chew toys for puppies and adult dogs. (See “Must-Have Chews,” page 11.) If you consistently supply your pup with desirable and acceptable objects upon which to chew, he’ll eventually develop a strong preference for chewing on those same objects. He will seek out these items when he feels the need to gnaw instead of chewing on the nearest sofa cushion, and eventually your personal possessions will be safe, even when your back is turned.

Because different dogs chew with varying intensity, it’s impossible to make definitive statements about which types of chew products are safe and appropriate for your particular dog. The safety of chew objects such as rawhide, various bones, pig ears, and cow hooves is a hotly debated topic, but the one universal truth is that you *must* observe your dog with any toy, and take it away from him if he consumes it or chews it in a particularly vigorous way.

For example, rope tugs are wonderful chew toys for some dogs, but others become bent on chewing off and ingesting the strings, risking serious gastrointestinal complications, even death. One dog may chew a dried cow’s hoof on and off for months, whereas another dog may devote himself to destroying and ingesting the entire hoof

in a matter of hours – and then spend the next few hours vomiting. A dog who chews rawhide or a pig’s ear for hours, tearing off and swallowing only tiny pieces at a time, probably won’t suffer any ill effects, but the one who tries to gobble down crunchy, sharp shards of the dried ears, or large pieces of rawhide, is bound to end up at the veterinary ER someday.

Check with your own veterinarian and follow her recommendations regarding the use of these and other chew items for your dog. Regularly check the condition of any chew toys you give your dog, and discard them when they begin to show signs of wear and tear.

If you give your dog rawhide or bully sticks, buy the largest ones you can find, even comically large, and throw them away when they get chewed down to a size that could possibly be swallowed.

A GREAT TRADE

You can reduce the risk of damage to occasional ill-gotten items by teaching your pup to exchange toys for treats, using something that he’s allowed to have and *loves*, such as a favorite chew toy, or a food-stuffed Kong.

The key to this game is teaching him that if he gives something up, he gets something *better* in return, *and* he gets the original thing back as well. Two rewards for the price of one! Then, on the presumably rare occasion that he has a forbidden object, he’s more likely to bring it to you to trade than to drag his prize to his cave under the dining room table for a leisurely chew. The rare occasion that

he doesn’t get “the thing” back won’t be enough to overcome the programming you’ve done by frequently playing the “trade” game with him.

In order for this new programming to take hold, you have to stop playing his game of “chase the puppy” when he grabs the TV remote or some other forbidden object. This is often an attention-getting behavior; he’s learned that grabbing “your” toys and dashing off with them initiates a rousing play session. Dogs and puppies who learn the trade game well can actually help protect your belongings, by bringing things they find on the floor to you, in hopes of a good trade!

Here’s how to teach your dog to trade:

1 Offer your dog a food-stuffed Kong (or another favorite toy) and say, “Take it!” Have him on a leash if you think he’ll run off with it.

2 Give him enough time to get fully engaged in chewing, and then say “Trade!” in a cheerful tone of voice and offer him a *handful of irresistible* treats, such as small bits of chicken or low-fat cheese. Hold the treats under his nose and let him sniff them.

3 It may take him several seconds to think about it, but eventually he should drop his Kong and start eating the treats. When he drops the Kong, say, “Yes!” But don’t let him eat the treats in one gulp! Hold the tidbits in your hand in such a way that he can only nibble them one by one.

4 While he is still nibbling, reach down with your other hand and pick up the Kong.

5 Let him nibble a bit longer, then offer him the Kong again.

6 Repeat the exercise several times, then end the game by giving him back his Kong and letting him chew to his heart's content.

Play this game at every opportunity, whenever he's engaged in chewing on his toys on his own, or whenever you feel like initiating the game, until he'll give up his chew object easily, on your "Trade!" cue.

The trade game doesn't always go as smoothly as you might like. Here are some of the challenges you may face:

- Your pup may not be willing to drop his toy in exchange for the treats in your hand. Try dropping the treats on the floor in a little Hansel-and-Gretel trail. Many dogs are more willing to give up their valued possession if the treats are within easy reach on the floor. Then, while he is following the trail to your hand that's still holding a reservoir of treats, pick up the Kong with your other hand.
- Your pup may lose interest in his toy after he realizes you have yummy treats in your hand. Try using less valuable treats, or a more valuable chew toy. Or simply play the game when he already happens to be chewing on one of his toys.



When it comes to chew items that are meant for dogs to consume, buy the largest ones you can find – even comically large – to prevent your dog from being able to swallow a piece that is large enough to choke him or to obstruct or otherwise damage his digestive tract.

- Your dog may guard valuable resources. If he growls, snaps, or even stiffens and looks tense when you try to trade with him, STOP practicing this exercise and seek the help of a qualified and positive training professional to help you resolve the resource-guarding challenge. Meanwhile, supervise him very closely to prevent his access to forbidden objects so you don't put yourself at risk for being bitten because you have to take something away from him.

Note: When you teach your dog to trade, he may go through a phase, as did Dubhy, my Scottish Terrier, where he *looks* for things to bring to you in order to get you to play the game. Humor him. He will probably outgrow this stage, and if he doesn't, it's *still* better to have him bring you things than to carry them off to chew on.

I continue to trade my dogs for a treat when I want something they have

throughout their entire lives; it keeps them happy and willing to give things up when I need them to.

GRADUATING

When you think your young dog is ready, start leaving him unattended for short periods of time – 5, 10, then 15 minutes. If all goes well, gradually increase his alone-time until you can trust him to stay home alone, uncrated, as part of your regular daily routine.

Like so many things worth having, your investment of time and energy will help your pup grow up to be the trustworthy and beloved family member you want him to be. You will be able to relax at work, and sleep well at night, knowing your valuables are safe from your canine's canines. Your shoes will thank you for it. 🐾

Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, is WDJ's Training Editor. She lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center, where she offers dog-training classes and courses for trainers. Miller is also the author of many books on positive training. Her two most recent books are Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance at a First-Class Life, and How to Foster Dogs; From Homeless to Homeward Bound. See "Resources," page 24, for more information about her dog-training classes, books, and courses for trainers.

If your pup grabs a forbidden item and runs into his crate with it, do not reach in and try to take it from him – you are likely to get bitten. Instead, do a Hansel-and-Gretel trail of high-value treats to entice him out of his crate, and retrieve the object while he is happily gobbling up tasty tidbits from the floor.



MUST-HAVE CHEWS

The secret to happy chewing is variety. Be creative... think rubber, plastic, rope, wood, body parts (pizzles, pig ears, cow ears, chicken feet, chicken necks), fuzzy things, leather things, carrots, oranges, and more. There are advantages and disadvantages to each – they can all break, splinter, shred, be ingested – so it pays to have a chat with your vet about what to watch for when you choose your chews.

Here are some tips on selecting the best chew toys for your own dog. For a chew toy to be effective it must meet three criteria:

1. It must be attractive to the dog. The dog must want to chew it, or it is useless.
2. It must be durable. If it only lasts 30 seconds it won't help with a long-term chewing problem.
3. It must be safe. It must not contain toxins, or easily break up (or break down) into pieces that can cause the dog to choke or suffer internal blockage or damage.

It's important to look at individual dogs when deciding which chew objects are safe. Aggressive chewers can splinter objects and swallow large pieces that can choke a dog, cause life-threatening bowel obstructions, or tear the lining of the intestines. Delicate chewers can safely be given items that would be deadly for some dogs. A veterinarian friend gives her greyhounds rawhide chips, which might not be safe for more aggressive chewers. Aggressive chewers and dogs who must be left alone with a chew object are safest with a hard rubber, hollow Kong-type toy that can be filled with something tasty to hold the dog's interest. Very large carrots can also make ideal chew objects for many dogs.

Over time, any chew toy softer than your dog's teeth will become worn down. Any chew object harder than your dog's teeth will cause wear to the teeth. It's generally preferable to have wear to the toys than wear to the teeth.

Safety requires good judgment. Many chew objects may eventually become too small to be safe and should be disposed of before they reach a dangerous size.

I was delighted to discover that in recent years, the Kong Company has exponentially expanded its line of toys. For more than two decades, they have supplied us with the basic Kong toy – that snowman-shaped, hollow, stuffable rubber toy of varying sizes and toughness (the black ones are the toughest) – high on the list of any dog owner or trainer worth her salt. I still have the very first Kong I bought, a black one from the mid-1980s. Kong and many other companies now offer a mind-boggling array of chew toys; you have to do some research to determine which are most likely to appeal to your dog.

Shop carefully at your local pet supply store; generally, the products sold in grocery stores and discount stores are of extremely low quality and won't last very long. They may also be made with materials of questionable safety. If you have a particularly strong chewer, ask the store staff for recommendations.

Here are some of our favorite sources of good chew toys:

Kong Company

Reputable toy manufacturer, does not sell toys direct to consumers. (303) 216-2626; kongcompany.com

SitStay

Online retailer that carries many products that might be difficult to find elsewhere. (402) 467-3426; sitstay.com

Clean Run

Specializes in gear for competitive dog sports; has unique toys and chews. (800) 311-6503; cleanrun.com

DogTuff

"Your source for the world's most durable dog toys and accessories from top manufacturers, all at unbeatable prices." (877) 341-0633; dogtuff.com

Tuffy Toys

Tuffy Toys are made by VIP Pet Products and sold in pet supply stores and many online retailers. They are rated by the manufacturer on a "Tuff" scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being for the most aggressive chewers. They feature a minimum of seven layers of material and extra stitching and cross-stitching. One online retailer that carries a wide variety of these toys is tuffietoys.com; (866) 478-0848.

The Kong Company makes many more toys than just "the" Kong toy!



Scoopin' for Science

Pet-food makers claim that digestibility studies are too expensive to conduct. We think most dog owners would be happy to help.

BY LINDA P. CASE, MS

I was at the gym recently, swimming laps. After my workout, I was sitting by the side of the pool and a fellow swimmer and friend stopped to chat about dogs. He has never owned a dog, but his daughter has been pressuring him and he thinks she is finally old enough to take on the responsibility of caring for a dog (good dad!). So, I was anticipating a discussion about breeds, where to look, training, feeding, etc. But that is not where this was going at all. Instead, he wanted to talk about poop:

Me: "So, does she have a breed or breed-type that she is considering?"

Him: "No . . . not yet. What I really want to ask you about is . . . the poop thing."

Me: "Um . . . what?"

Him: "You know. I see all of the people in our neighborhood taking their dogs for a walk in the morning and they all carry these bags with them and then, ugh . . . they all PICK UP THE POOP WITH THEIR HANDS!"

Me: "Well, not exactly; there is a plastic bag involved. But regardless, what is your point?"

Him: "I just find that so gross and disgusting. I don't think I could do it."

Me: "Wh . . . What??"

Him: "Ick. Yuck." (Accompanied by a squeamish expression that I have never seen on the face of a grown man.)

Me: "Okay, let me get this straight. You are a triathlete. You regularly beat the crap out of your body by swimming, running, and cycling ridiculously long distances. You have backpacked and camped all over the country, with no

'facilities' and sometimes not bathing for days . . . and you squirm at picking up dog poop in a plastic bag?"

Him: "Yeah, that about covers it."

Me (laughing): "You gotta get over that, dude. Take a class or something. All dog folks pick up poop. It's no big deal."

Him: "Hmm . . ." (not buying it).

It really is no big deal. Many dog owners are not only comfortable with poop scooping, we also regularly examine the quality of our dog's leavings as a general barometer of their health and the quality of the food that we have fed them. So, when I learned of a recent study

that asked a group of dog owners to do some "poop scoopin' for science," I was only surprised that there have not been more published studies of this nature.

■ **THE ISSUE** – Those of you who have read my book *Dog Food Logic* know that I personally advocate for increased transparency in the pet-food industry and for the need to provide dog owners with information that is actually useful when selecting foods. Without question, one of the most important measures of a food's quality is its digestibility – the proportion of the food that a dog's gastrointestinal tract is able to break down (digest) and absorb into the body for use. Digestibility correlates well with both ingredient quality and proper food-processing techniques, so this information would be helpful for dog owners to have. However, the vast majority of companies do not provide it.

The only (very rough) estimate of food digestibility that we have is what can be gleaned by regularly examining the quality and quantity of our dog's feces – a behavior that, in addition to providing little solid information, lends itself to weird looks from neighbors, such as my swimming friend. A crappy state of affairs, indeed.

■ **INDUSTRY'S POSITION** – When challenged, representatives of the pet-food industry generally deflect criticism by maintaining that current regulations do not require reporting of food digestibility. (The old, "We don't gotta so we ain't gonna" defense.) Further, not all pet-food companies regularly measure digestibility, because doing so requires them to conduct feeding trials with dogs,



You have to pick up the poop anyway . . . why not do it in the name of science? We would bet that most dedicated owners would happily participate in a digestibility study, especially if it meant they would get access to solid information about the true nutritional value of the food.

which in turn requires access to research kennels and laboratories. Such studies are expensive and may be cost prohibitive for some of the smaller companies that do not maintain their own kennels or in-house analytical laboratories.

Fair enough. However, what about using dogs who live in homes? Why not enlist everyday Citizen Scientists who are dedicated to their dogs, feed commercial dog food, are concerned about quality – and who do not squirm at picking up dog poop? This would not only lead to increased numbers of dogs enrolled in these trials (thus supporting improved accuracy of digestibility estimates), but also allow needed comparisons among breeds, ages, life styles, and activity levels of dogs. Further, accessible digestibility study results would really help consumers get solid information about food quality.

In addition, in-home studies reduces the need for kennelled research dogs, a clear animal welfare benefit.

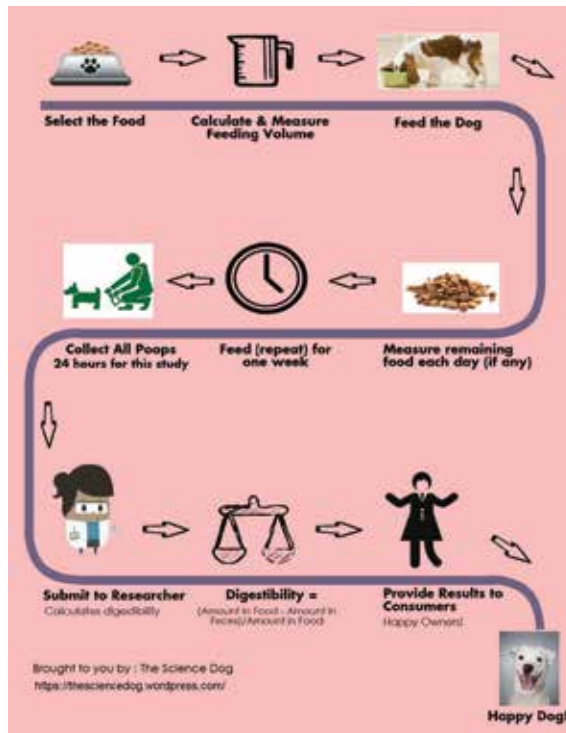
Happily, a group of researchers from two universities in The Netherlands were thinking these same things.¹

■ THE STUDY – The objective of their study was to develop a simple method of measuring dog-food digestibility that could be used with privately owned dogs living in homes. They recruited a group of 40 healthy adult dogs and asked their owners to feed a test food (and nothing else) for seven days. Amounts to feed each dog were pre-measured and the volume the dog consumed each day was recorded.

In this study, the test diet was a commercial dry (extruded) food formulated for adult dogs. After seven days of feeding, the owners were asked to collect all of their dog’s feces for a period of 24

hours. The feces were frozen and submitted to the researchers for analysis.

Here is a flow chart showing how a digestibility trial works. It is conducted in the same manner with kennelled dogs, although feeding and feces collection periods can vary:



■ RESULTS – The owners recorded the amount of food that their dog consumed each day and collected all of their dogs’ feces over the final 24 hours of the study. The researchers then analyzed the nutrient content in the food that was consumed and in the feces that were excreted. From these data, they calculated the proportion of the food that each dog digested, called a “digestibility coefficient,” and average values for the entire sample of dogs.

In this experiment, the food’s dry matter digestibility was 77.4 percent and its protein digestibility was 77.7 percent,

values that reflect a food of “low to moderate” quality. The variability among dogs (as reflected by the standard errors), was found to be low. This suggests that the dogs in the trial showed consistency in their ability to digest the food and supports the in-home trial as a valid procedure.

In addition, the study reported compliance in 39 out of the 40 homes, demonstrating some pretty dedicated poop scooping.

UP ON MY SOAPBOX . . .

Another recent study evaluated a set of eight commercial dog foods using both nutrient analysis and a set of feeding trials like the one above, but with kennelled dogs.² They found a very wide range in the overall (dry matter) digestibility and protein digestibility among the eight products and noted that these differences would *not* be reflected by information that was provided on the pet-food labels.

The authors went further, stating: “...We have to note that there is no comprehensive list of information available to the consumer to evaluate the quality of commercial diets. A combination of laboratory analyses and estimation

of digestibility coefficients is the only way to perform an accurate and complete evaluation of the quality of a commercial diet.” And yet, not all pet-food companies supply consumers with complete nutrient levels for their foods – and *no* pet food companies regularly provide digestibility coefficients.

The results of this pilot study tell us that in-home studies with privately owned dogs can provide much-needed information about dog-food quality and can allow the study of factors that may influence how well dogs utilize different foods (such as age, breed, size, health status, and activity levels). Compliance was very good; it’s possible to find owners who are willing to do their part, scooping poop for science.

Now all that we need is for pet-food companies to step up and begin to conduct in-home studies and make the information that they provide available to the dog folks who care! 🐾

Linda P. Case, MS, is the owner of AutumnGold Consulting & Dog Training Center in Mahomet, IL. See page 24 for contact information.

CITED REFERENCES:

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2. Dumas C, Paragon BM, Thorin C, Martin L, Dumon H, Ninet S, Nguyen P. “Evaluation of eight commercial dog diets.” *Journal of Nutritional Science*, 2014;3:e63:1-5.

Gear Up

More indispensable dog-care tools and toys.

In the January issue, we shared our contributors' favorite dog toys, training tools, and treats, but we didn't have enough room to include all of their recommendations for the "things they can't imagine living without" in their dog-care kits. Here are more favorite products – things that improve the health and well being of our dogs, or make our own dog-care tasks easier and more enjoyable. – CJ PUOTINEN

▼ LET'S GO DESIGN DOG WALKING JACKET



A dog lover and her fashion designer daughter have created a jacket for people like us – people who go places with their dogs, in every kind of weather, and who want to be ready for anything they may encounter "out there." The Let's Go Design K-Rosco Dog Walking Utility Jacket is actually a system of several functional garments. The fleece liner zips out and can be worn separately, and the sleeves zip off the jacket, so it can be worn as a vest. For maximum warmth in wind, rain, or snow, wear the complete combination.



The jacket features bright reflective piping for nighttime

walking; wind-resistant, waterproof, rip-stop seam-sealed fabric; and so many pockets, zippers, carabiner clips, and extra features that a user manual would come in handy. It's like a wearable Swiss Army knife! Highlights include a pocket that dispenses pickup bags through a grommet, a retractable keychain, a removable plastic liner for carrying dog treats (no more grease stains!), and a belt that doubles as a spare leash. There's plenty of room for fetch toys, a water bottle, cell phone, wallet, whistle, gloves, camera, and more. A small dog can be walked hands-free by attaching his leash to a carabiner clip.

Industrial-strength Velcro holds the jacket and wrist bands closed. This can be noisy (rip, rip, rip when you take the jacket off) and can snag on things and collect lint. This is a minor criticism, though; a slicker blade works well as a Velcro lint remover.

I bought my red jacket three years ago at a kennel club dog show and recommend it

highly. The hood deflects rain and snow, and the jacket really is waterproof. In drenching rain, my top half stays completely dry. Maintenance is easy; the jacket is machine-washable. It should not be dry-cleaned, tumble-dried, bleached, or washed with fabric softener.

This unisex jacket, originally called the LGD101, comes in sizes small to 2XL in black, red, blue, or purple, and size 3XL in black, red, or blue.

K-ROSCO DOG WALKING JACKET
– \$290

Let's Go Design
Wilson, WY
(307) 699-3121
letsgodesign.net

▼ SNUGGLE PUPPY

In 2003, when my Labrador Chloe was eight weeks old, I got a brown Snuggle Puppy, a stuffed animal that comes with a battery-operated "beating heart" and some microwaveable heat pouches, which can be inserted into the Snuggle Puppy to keep a young or sick animal warm. Before I brought Chloe home with me, I let her mother lie on the Snuggle Puppy, so it would absorb some of her fragrance. The Snuggle Puppy accompanied Chloe everywhere. We soon dispensed with the beating heart and the heat pouches, but those accessories eased her transition away from her mom and littermates and are appreciated by pups of all ages.

As the product's website explains, "Puppies are pack animals and are instinctively drawn to their mother and others in their pack. Snuggle Puppy recreates that intimacy with physical warmth and a simulated heartbeat. The result is a calmer, more peaceful pet with less loneliness, fear, and anxiety."

Chloe's original Snuggle Puppy has been washed and

repaired so many times that it's hanging by a thread. For her eighth birthday she received a new one and now, at age 12, she still carries both of them around.

A Velcro strip on the underside makes it easy to insert or remove the beating heart (which has an on/off switch) and heat packs. The heart's batteries, which are included, last for two weeks if left on.

The website describes puppies and dogs of all sizes sleeping through the night with their Snuggle Puppies, relaxing while their humans are away, or feeling less frightened during thunder or fireworks. Snuggle Puppies come with a 90-day replacement or money-back guarantee.

SNUGGLE PUPPY – \$40

Smart Pet Love
Novi, MI
(800) 463-4107
smartpetlove.com



▼ GENIUS KONG

You already have a Kong or three, but if your dog is a dedicated medium-strength chewer, consider Kong's Genius line.

Unlike the lumpy, snowman-shaped original, which comes in assorted sizes and strengths, the Kong Genius Mike (named for Michelangelo) is cylindrical and can be filled from either end. Experiment with kibble or other small cubed treats, cheese, nut butter, and other soft treats. For a more challenging experience connect Genius Mike to Genius Leo (named for Leonardo da Vinci). These toys are



designed to stimulate a dog's curiosity, hold her attention, combat boredom, and reduce separation anxiety. Both are available in sizes small, large, and extra large.



Genius Kongs are intended for use by puzzle-solving canines and are not recommended for aggressive power chewers. If a treat stays stuck inside, remove it by pushing a wooden spoon or similar object through to the other side, blast it with a garden hose, or wash with soapy water and a bottle brush, rinsing well. Kongs can be cleaned on the dishwasher's top shelf. Made in the USA.

Kong products are widely sold in pet-supply stores and through online retailers.

GENIUS KONG
\$10 - \$21

Kong Company
Golden, CO
(303) 216-2626
kongcompany.com

▼ MASTER'S PRIDE LEATHER COLLARS AND LEASHES

When a friend recommended leather worker Rick Gallione's leashes and collars, I saved up to outfit Samantha, my first Labrador. When my current Lab, Chloe, grew up, she got her own. Even now, after more than a decade of wear, her collar generates compliments and its matching harness-leather leash is still strong, flexible, and comfortable, even for small hands. These products are built to last.

Gallione launched his business 20 years ago, and today he makes buckle, side-release, martingale, and training/show collars in a variety of colors, designs, and decorations. "I am a custom leather worker whose work is done by hand," he explains. "I primarily use traditional hand tools, giving attention to the many small details that go into making a unique and quality product. I truly do take pride in my leather work and desire that my customers have their dogs wear my work with pride."

LEASHES, COLLARS
STARTING AT \$40
Master's Pride
Newport, NH
(888) 283-7575
masterspride.com

Because his is a one-man shop, custom orders take time. See his website for collars and leashes available from current inventory.



▼ ORAPUP TONGUE CLEANERS

We're supposed to brush our dogs' teeth every day, but not every dog thinks that's a good idea.

Rather than struggle, here's a solution that can be fun and lets your dog do the work. Place a little plaque-fighting enzyme-activated Lickies gel (it comes in either Beef and Bacon or Chicken flavor) on an Orapup paddle, then hold it while your dog licks and licks. The paddle's soft plastic bristles clean the tongue and the result is improved breath and oral hygiene.

I've used the Orapup "dog breath brush" on my dogs for years and notice a real difference; its regular use improves their breath! Not all dogs like the taste of the gels, the system works better for medium and large dogs than for tiny pups, and not every dog experiences dramatic results, but if you have a dog with really bad breath, it's worth a try. If they enjoy the gel's flavor (most dogs do), tongue-brushing can be a pleasant daily ritual. Hold onto the handle, though – this is not a chew toy.

Clean the Orapup by rinsing it with warm water or place it on the dishwasher's upper rack. Orapup brushes, which come in four colors, should be replaced every three or four months as bristles wear out with use. Brushes and Lickies are sold separately or in starter kits, which as a bonus include tongue brushes for humans, to

improve our own oral health and breath. (We can skip the Lickies!) 🐾

ORAPUP STARTER KIT
– \$20

Orapup
Bluffdale, UT
(844) 259-2763
orapup.com

The Meal Deal

The benefits of feeding your dog meals, rather than allowing him to “graze.”

BY STEPHANIE COLMAN

Taking responsibility for sharing your life with a dog brings many choices: How to train, what equipment to use, what are the best toys? When it comes to feeding a dog, the options are just as varied: Kibble or raw, with grain or without, meals in a crate or loose in the kitchen, free feed or meals served only at a certain time? In my years of teaching manners classes, the last question has come up a lot.

Free feeding is the practice of making food available to your dog at all times. Some people who free feed offer the dog’s full daily ration at the start of the day, while others make sure the bowl is never empty, adding more food whenever it starts to look low. It’s the canine version of a Vegas buffet – there is always something being served, at any time of day or night, and the dog can eat whenever he chooses.

Convenience is typically cited as the reason some owners choose the free-feeding method. Others believe that constant access to food can prevent food

guarding, particularly with adopted dogs who might have come from a situation where food was limited. In reality, constant access to food can create ongoing stress in a guarding-prone dog, as he potentially feels he must always be “on guard” to protect his buffet.

Choosing to be a responsible dog owner means doing what’s best for your dog, even if it’s not always the most convenient option. Most animal professionals agree that meals versus free-feeding is the better option for our dogs, for many reasons, most importantly, the following:

MEALS HELP TEACH AND MAINTAIN CLEAN HOUSE HABITS.

Simply put, if you don’t know when food is going into the dog, it’s much harder to know when it will need to come out of the dog! This is especially important when initially housetraining a puppy or newly adopted dog, but it holds true throughout the dog’s life.

When a dog is fed on a reasonably consistent schedule, it’s easy to determine his bathroom needs and develop a routine that is easy to follow. Even better than a set routine is to feed your dog in a “window of time.” This helps prevent stressing an anxious dog when life throws a curve ball and he can’t be fed at the exact time he’s used to; it also helps prevent the creation of a clock-watching, demanding, reminding dog.

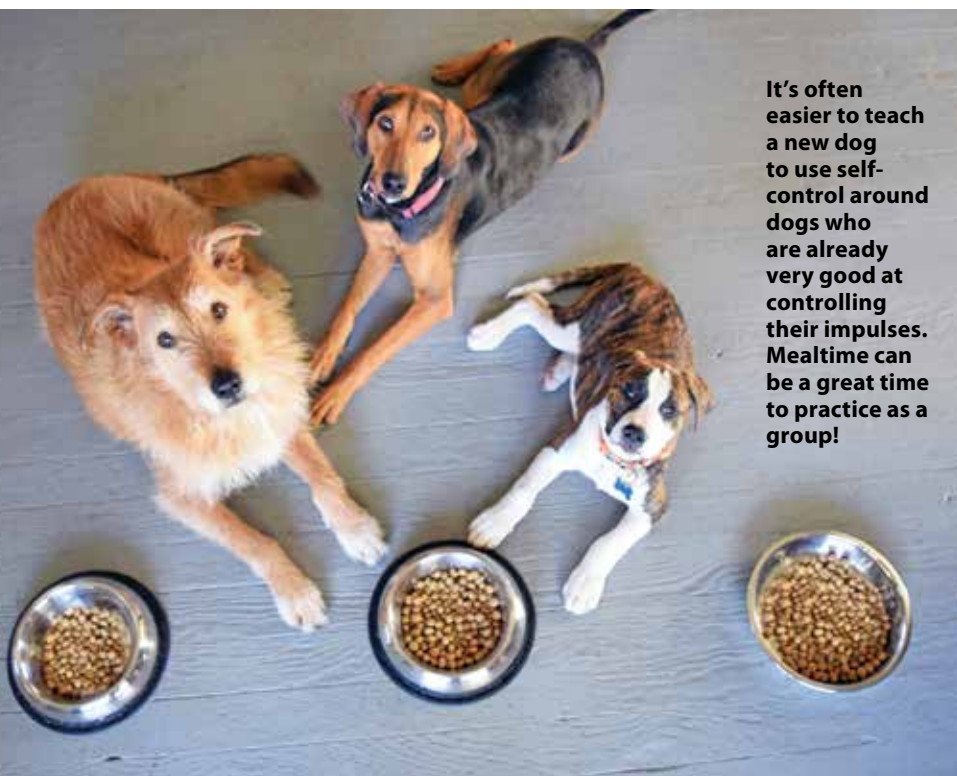
APPETITE IS AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF HEALTH.

Lack of appetite is often the first sign that a dog is not feeling well. If your dog has a habit of grazing throughout the day, it’s harder to know if he hasn’t eaten yet because he’s preoccupied by life or his stomach is bothering him.

In contrast, if your dog has been conditioned to exhibit signs of being hungry within a certain time frame, and readily eats when his meal is presented, you’ll have a reliable sign that he’s not feeling well if he turns up his nose at the bowl. At that point, the owner knows to be on the lookout for other signs of illness, and can decide if a vet appointment is warranted. Plus, if you do visit the vet, you’ll be able to accurately report how long your dog has been off his food.

MEAL MANNERS FOR MULTI-DOG HOUSEHOLDS.

In homes with multiple dogs, free feeding can make it nearly impossible to monitor each individual dog’s daily intake. It can also create situations where more assertive dogs are allowed to intimidate housemates into surrendering their portions. This often happens without the owners realizing. They may not intervene until the problem has persisted long enough that it’s noticeable due to a change in the dog’s weight. The longer a dog rehearses an unwanted behavior, the more challenging it can be to modify.



It’s often easier to teach a new dog to use self-control around dogs who are already very good at controlling their impulses. Mealtime can be a great time to practice as a group!

Saber sits patiently and offers eye contact while awaiting the “OK!” to eat dinner. When the author first adopted him, he knew to sit and wait, but his gaze was fixed on the bowl. The duration of his eye contact was shaped over a few weeks, starting with releasing him to the bowl for a quick glance the author’s direction.

When feeding multiple dogs, it’s wise to teach them to mind their own business when it comes to food bowls. We all deserve to eat in peace. Even when a dog doesn’t *seem* to mind the intrusion of a visiting housemate under normal circumstances (say he responds by calmly switching to the un-manned bowl, instead), the stress of the other dog invading his territory may lead to snarky behavior – especially if the intrusion occurs on a day he isn’t feeling well or when there are other stressful things going on in the household.

When dogs are fed meals, it’s easier for the responsible humans to gently remind everyone to stay at their own bowl and not interfere with housemates. Adopting this routine also simplifies things when different dogs are on different diets.

■ **MEALS ARE MORE HYGIENIC AND PREVENT UNWANTED PESTS.** Ants are cunning little creatures. If you’ve never lived in a place where the very thought of a dropped morsel of food would lead to an invasion, consider yourself lucky – and don’t tempt the immortal insect gods! Food left in bowls is an open invitation for ants and other insects.

■ **MEALS CAN BE USED AS VALUABLE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIFE SKILLS.** Unfortunately, the Internet is rife with bad advice when it comes to feeding rituals for dogs. Much of it centers on the ill-conceived idea that humans must somehow assert their status over their dogs by demonstrating control over food and eating. Suggestions typically range from making sure owners eat first, while the dog watches, to ridiculous – even dangerous – ideas, such as spitting in a dog’s food or randomly taking it away as he eats, in an attempt to communicate the idea that it’s really your food and you’re kind enough to share it with him.

At best, such ideas are silly and unnecessary and, at worst, they can erode a dog’s trust in the owners and create the very guarding problems people think they will prevent.



My goal is not to achieve status over my dog. My goal is to teach my dog how to handle himself, as a dog, in the human world. When a dog is motivated to eat a meal, I can use feeding time to help teach several valuable behaviors, such as:

✓ **COME WHEN CALLED.** Coming when called is the most valuable skill any dog will learn. It’s a behavior that might literally save his life. While I use several techniques to teach and maintain a strong recall behavior, simple classical conditioning is always on my list, and is something I practice during every meal.

Classical conditioning is about creating strong associations in a dog’s mind. When I know a dog loves food, and is excited about mealtime, I can easily transfer some of that love and excitement onto my recall word by saying the word a split second before reaching for and feeding a bite of food.

It doesn’t matter what the dog is doing at the time. He can be sitting, standing, etc. What matters is that he hears his recall word and food magically lands in his mouth no more than two seconds later. I can easily rapid-fire my way through 25 rounds of “Saber, here!” in about a minute, and consider this a valuable piece of our recall maintenance training.

✓ **IMPULSE CONTROL.** Some dogs really love mealtime, and, as a result,

quickly become over-excited, working themselves into a barking, spinning, jumping frenzy. This often prompts the owners to work faster in an effort to hurry up and deliver the food so as to quiet the chaos.

Unfortunately, delivering the bowl to an out-of-control dog rewards the out-of-control behavior! There are many ways to ask your dog to exhibit self-control in anticipation of receiving his meal, from expecting that he simply wait calmly and quietly, to requiring that he hold a formal stay. At the very least, I teach my dogs that overly excited behavior will backfire, causing me to put food away and walk out of the kitchen!

✓ **FORMAL STAY.** When a dog is motivated to eat, earning a bowl of food is a powerful reinforcer. After my young dogs have learned that remaining calm is the key to keeping me on-task with meal prep, I use feeding time as a prime opportunity for teaching the sit-stay.

Start small, by asking for just five seconds of self-control via a sit-stay as you hold your dog’s bowl of food. If the dog breaks position – including calmly lying down or standing up (since you specifically asked for a sit-stay) – simply set the bowl on the counter and disengage from your dog for 30 seconds or so. It’s wise to busy yourself during this time so that it’s easier to remain disengaged from a dog who might try and pester you as he works

to figure out what just happened.

Also, there's no need to reprimand or otherwise correct the dog when he breaks position. The goal is for your dog to realize that his action (breaking position) is what's causing the dinner delay.

After 30 to 60 seconds, return to the kitchen, pick up his bowl, ask him to "sit" and "stay" and try again. Chances are good that his "Ah-ha!" moment will come within three tries. When he's successful, and you reach your five-second count, be sure to use a clear release word (I like, "OK!") before inviting him to eat. The release word lets him know that this time, getting up won't result in you removing the bowl.

As he gets the hang of things, be sure to change up how long you ask him to stay, sometimes asking for more, sometimes surprising him with an easy, short stay, but always ending with the release word.

✓ **PREVENT GUARDING.** An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. I much prefer to prevent food guarding problems than to fix them. Mealtime is the perfect opportunity to condition a dog to enjoy his owner's presence while he's eating. It's easier when a dog eats at a reasonable pace, rather than inhaling his food at warp speed (which, in some dogs, is an early sign of guarding).

To buy yourself some time with an enthusiastic eater, try spreading his kibble onto a cookie sheet, adding a large obstacle to his bowl (a small, upside down terra cotta pot works well) to create a "kibble moat" of sorts, or try one of the commercially available bowls designed to slow a dog down by making it harder to inhale large mouthfuls at a time.

As the dog is eating, stand a few feet away and toss several pieces of a high-value treat on the floor near the bowl. He might not even notice at first, and that's fine. You want to be far enough away so as not to disturb the dog.

Repeat this process during every meal. If there's room, sometimes walk by, dropping the treat as you pass the dog. Don't say anything. Just toss or drop the high-value treat. Eventually, he will realize that the "good stuff" is coming from you, and you'll likely see him pause, in eager anticipation of the treat, as you walk by.

The idea is to build a positive association with a human near the dog and his food. We want our dogs to want

us nearby when they're eating – our presence becomes a predictor of good things. As he eagerly looks to you for the treat, sometimes ask him to "sit" and hand him the treat, then release him back to his bowl of food.

This method works well to prevent food-bowl guarding, or help reverse mild cases when caught early. If your dog is growling or snapping, or has already bitten somebody in proximity of his bowl, please consult a qualified, positive-reinforcement trainer before attempting to modify the behavior on your own.

SAY "BYE-BYE!" TO THE BUFFET

A little tough love is often all that's needed to transform a dog accustomed to grazing throughout the day into a dog who readily eats meals when they are offered. To begin, make sure you have a solid idea of how much food your dog actually needs. Remember that what's printed on the dog food bag is only a guide – and is usually significantly more than most dogs need. Plus, it doesn't take into consideration the calories consumed throughout the day via training treats and special chews. Your dog's individual metabolism will also greatly affect how much food he needs. For example, my previous dogs included a 30-pound Whippet and a small, 40-pound Golden Retriever who ate the same amount of food thanks to the Whippet's fast metabolism.

Once you've decided on a quantity, split it into as many portions as you plan to feed meals. In general, puppies should be fed three (or even four) times per day until they are about 4 months old, at which time they can be fed twice a day. Most adult dogs seem to do best on two meals per day, but some people find that their dogs do better on one meal a day.

When it's time for a meal, present the food and set a timer for five minutes. Your dog now has five minutes to

eat his meal. If he eats a bite or two and walks away, that's his choice, but you'll pick up the bowl at the five-minute mark, and he won't be offered food again until the next meal. (The only exception here is for young puppies or underweight dogs, in which case I will offer food again in an hour – but only for five minutes. You want the dog to understand that the buffet has closed and he needs to eat when food is offered, or it will disappear.) You can usually safely store what wasn't eaten after only five minutes, but wet food should be refrigerated or thrown away.

When the adult dog chooses to walk away from the food bowl, he has effectively made the choice to skip a meal. That is his choice. If you have a second dog who is an eager eater, try letting your picky dog watch the eager eater happily eat his left-overs! (Then cut back on the eager eater's next meal so as not to over-feed him.)

When dealing with a picky eater, it's tempting to try hand feeding or augmenting the food with table scraps or other toppers, but that can actually encourage pickiness. A little warm water can often jump-start a picky eater by enhancing the smell, and it's OK to decide on a healthy additive such as a little plain yogurt, but you don't want

to keep changing things up in an attempt to entice your

For reasons listed in the text, this sort of feeder should not be used for dogs; some would argue that it shouldn't be used for cats, either!



dog to eat. Now is when you need to be strong in your commitment to some necessary tough love. No healthy dog will starve himself when you are offering food at regular intervals.

While a healthy dog won't starve himself, some take longer than others to understand the new game plan and decide to eat when you offer a meal. The longest I've seen it take is three days. Yes, three days! Thankfully the owner hung in there, resisting the temptation to offer training treats and other snacks throughout the day (or caving in all together), and we were all excited to see the dog finally choose to eat dinner on that third day – and all offered meals that followed. Her dog wasn't being stubborn when he walked away from an offered meal – he was just getting used to the new routine. Just like any new behavior, learning to eat at a specific time, when the dog is used to free feeding, can take time.

After you've gained your dog's cooperation when it comes to meals versus free feeding, how you fine-tune the feeding routine is up to you. Some people stick with the five-minute mark, allowing the dog to come and go from the bowl as he pleases, but only for a set amount of time.

I prefer that my dog stays on-task when at the bowl, so if something catches his attention and he leaves the kitchen, I pick up the bowl right then. So, as long as you've established a willingness to eat when a meal is presented, we see no harm in making minor adjustments to fit your lifestyle with your dog's.

If you find that your dog isn't consistently finishing a portion, you might be offering more food than he needs. Remember to factor in training treats or portions of kibble that are delivered throughout the day. Try reducing his meal portion by 25 percent and see what happens. If he mows through a meal and seems like he's starving, it's wise to observe for a couple of weeks to see if he's losing weight – in which case, maybe he needs more food, or a different food – or if the hunger is all in his head.

With a little patience and persistence, your dog should soon understand that his buffet lifestyle has ended, and you'll both begin to enjoy the benefits of daily meals. 🐾

Stephanie Colman is a writer and dog trainer in Los Angeles. See "Resources," page 24, for contact information.

WARNING SIGNS: RESOURCE-GUARDING THE FOOD BOWL

When a dog snaps or bites, the behavior is often described as "coming out of the blue." Dogs are masters of communication, but there's a definite language barrier between dogs and humans. As a result, many of a dog's early attempts to communicate his concern over a situation are missed or misunderstood. When it comes to resource guarding the food bowl, knowing what to look for is a key step to catching developing issues before they become more serious problems.

It's a safe bet we all agree that a dog who snaps at or bites a human when near the food bowl is saying, "Get away from my food!" But fortunately, most dogs are willing to employ a variety of communication tactics prior to the flash of teeth. They include:

- ✓ Eating faster. Some dogs always eat fast – it's just part of their personalities. But a dog who feels threatened when a human approaches his bowl will start eating even faster. "This is MY food! I'm going to eat it all before you can get it!" Some dogs will also try to position themselves between the owner and the bowl, attempting to body-block the owner's access.
- ✓ If the perceived threat persists, a dog will typically change tactics. Now, rather than eating faster, he often freezes. In his mind, there's definitely something to be concerned about, and he's trying to decide how best to proceed. The freeze is typically accompanied by what trainers call a "hard eye." It's a dirty look that means business. "No, really. This is MY food. I'm not messing around."
- ✓ If the dog still feels threatened, he may decide it's time to escalate his behavior to include threats of violence. This usually includes a lip-curl and/or growl. Mentally sound dogs do not choose to engage in violent behavior when threats of violence will do. Aggression is costly. It requires extreme amounts of energy and puts the animal at risk. When a dog curls his lip or growls, understand that he's doing so in an effort to keep from having to escalate further.
- ✓ If the early communication is ignored, and the dog still feels threatened, a snap or bite is next in the communication protocol. The previous three tactics can happen quickly and are easily missed when you don't know to look for them. This makes it more likely that people believe the snap or bite has happened "out of the blue." For this reason, it's important that people learn to read dog body language. The earlier we can accurately interpret a dog's attempt to communicate with us, the better the prognosis when it comes to modifying behavior problems.

A final note: Remember that growling, while undesirable, is an important piece of information. It's a dog's way of telling us he's uncomfortable with something. Many people are quick to punish a dog for growling. Such actions address the symptom (the growl – which is communication), rather than the problem (what's causing the dog to feel concerned enough to growl).

Unfortunately, punishment can teach a dog not to growl, but does nothing to change his underlying emotional state. As a result, these dogs sometimes *do* bite without warning ("out of the blue!") because the warning has been punished out of them. This creates a much more dangerous and difficult behavior to modify.

For more information, see "Resource Guarding and What to Do About it," WDJ August 2015, and "The Gift of Growling," October 2005.



PAW TRAINING AND BEHAVIOR PAW

Cats and Dogs, Living Together

How to cultivate a good, safe relationship between the species.

BY STEPHANIE COLMAN

There are lots of aphorisms that address the cultural rift between dogs and cats. “Cats have staff, dogs have family.” “Cats rule, dogs drool!” “Cat people vs. dog people.” “Fighting like cats and dogs.” While society likes to humorously polarize dog lovers and cat lovers, plenty of dog lovers share, or want to share, their homes with feline friends. A little planning and a lot of patience can lead to a less hair-raising experience.

How readily will your dog accept a cat friend? And vice versa?

You might remember your childhood dog accepting a feline friend no questions asked, but not all dogs will be as accommodating, nor will all cats be as cooperative.

Breed type often offers insight into the likelihood of peaceful acceptance between species. Although there are exceptions, breeds developed to chase and catch animals (such as terriers

and sighthounds) often display natural proclivities that challenge calm co-existence. Age plays an important role, too; it’s often easier to teach young animals to accept each other.

It’s important to be realistic as to the likelihood of your dog safely sharing his home with a cat. It goes without saying that homes with dogs who have previously chased and killed small animals are not likely considered a safe space for feline friends – at least not

This sort of trusting relationship doesn’t happen overnight; it’s built in stages. Good management (with the cat’s safety in mind), training, and counter-conditioning (if needed) will foster improved relations between most family pets.

without a considerable amount of skilled behavior modification paired with carefully crafted, consistent management protocols. Chasing by itself isn’t always a deal-breaker. Many dogs chase stray cats and squirrels for fun while still learning to respect the cats with whom they live.

The cat’s personality matters, too. Cats who are more naturally timid or skittish, or who have previously had negative experiences with dogs, will be harder to successfully introduce to a new life alongside a canine companion.

When considering adopting an older cat, if possible, look for one who has been observed around dogs in a foster situation. A cat whose first instinct is to run will be harder to acclimate into a home with dogs than a cat who is largely unimpressed by dogs or who reasonably stands his ground. We say “reasonably” because a cat who aggressively goes after dogs can engender expensive vet bills just as quickly as a dog who aggressively goes after a cat.

BACK TO BASICS

When considering adding a cat to a household with a dog, it’s wise to make sure that the dog’s simple good manners behaviors are well established. A few basics – such as a quick response to his name (useful for redirection), a solid “leave it,” a relaxed “settle” or “stay” on a mat or dog bed, and respect for baby gates – are extremely useful for keeping the peace when helping a dog and cat learn to live under the same roof. It’s wise to spend some time brushing up on these basics before the cat arrives. Cats can be very exciting distractions for dogs!

PLAN TO PREVENT UNWANTED BEHAVIOR

The best way to teach a dog and cat to accept each other is to prevent the rehearsal of unwanted behavior. You’ll want to have several management strategies in place to make it nearly impossible for the dog to launch into an excited chase sequence, which is extremely self-rewarding.

It’s also important to understand that even reprimanding a dog – once he’s

already initiated a chase – usually does little to prevent him from giving chase at the next opportunity. Why? Because the thrill of the chase outweighs the reprimand. With positive reinforcement training, the goal is *not* to find a more effective reprimand. Rather, we want to manage situations in ways that help our dogs make the choices we prefer, which we can then reward. Behaviors that are rewarded are more likely to be repeated. Make sure you reward the behaviors you want, and avoid reinforcement for the behaviors you *don't* want.

Preventing the unwanted behaviors will require a combination of management and supervision. The more exciting your dog finds the cat, and the greater his natural tendency to chase, the slower you will progress. Be patient. You should expect that the dog and cat will not be able to have unmanaged or unsupervised access to, or encounters with, each other for several months. If things improve faster (and they often do with young animals), great – but don't rush it!

CREATE A CAT-SAFE ADJUSTMENT AREA

There's no reason to rush introductions. It's important to remember it's stressful for any animal to transition into a new home. Establishing a "cat zone" that is off-limits to the dog gives the cat a safe space to decompress from the initial stress of the change, while allowing both animals to begin acclimating to the scent of their new housemates.

Encourage the cat to stay in the cat room by filling it with her necessities (food, litter box, perch, etc.). Close the door to prevent accidental encounters that might trigger a chase. Of course, you'll want to spend adequate time in the cat room with your new animal friend.

While giving the cat a few days to relax, you can begin helping your dog associate the scent and, in some cases, the sound of the cat, as well as the new routines surrounding the new family member, with good things. Gently rub the cat with a clean, dry dish towel and place it in your dog's resting area, out of reach, where it can't become a toy. If your dog knows how to quietly work a well-stuffed Kong or similar toy while on his bed, having the cat-scented cloth

nearby can help pair the scent of the cat with the positive feelings he already has about the delicious treats in his Kong.

Be on the lookout for moments when your dog calmly acknowledges the presence of the cat. For example, if he's lying at your feet and suddenly hears the cat vocalize from the other room, immediately offer a treat. Ideally you'll be able to feed before the sound piques his interest so much that he gets up and goes searching. Feed multiple treats to keep him with you and redirect his attention away from the cat. You are trying to teach him two things: That the presence of the cat means good things: treats! (classical conditioning), and paying more attention to you, even when the cat is nearby, pays even better (operant conditioning).

Some dogs get so interested in (or distracted by) the idea of a cat behind closed doors that you can't keep them from obsessing about what's on the other side of the doorway. In this case, you'll need to increase your management strategies to include keeping him far enough from the "mystery door" that he can still choose to pay attention to you. This might require a second baby gate or outstretched exercise pen to restrict his access to the hallway leading to the cat room. Yes, this sometimes feels inconvenient, but remember: it's only temporary, and a wise investment in creating a harmonious relationship between animals you hope will be with you for many years.

If your living space doesn't allow you to create a designated "cat room," it's still wise to set up some initial, temporary separation. If your dog understands how to stay behind a baby gate (an incredibly

useful life skill), a gate in your bedroom doorway gives the dog a familiar place to spend some time while the cat explores the main living area. I recommend giving cats a tall cat tree as both an enrichment activity and escape route where the cat can perch out of reach of the dog. Use a leash when you need to lead the dog through the room to go out for potty breaks and when you're ready to set up training sessions.

STRUCTURED INTRODUCTIONS

Initial introductions should be done at a distance and focused on creating positive associations with each other. There's no need to go nose-to-nose right out of the gate. With the cat safely perched atop a cat tree or other tall surface, bring your leashed dog into the room and feed a steady stream of high-value treats. If a helper is available, have her offer the cat high-value treats, too.

If the cat panics and tries to run, don't force him to stay in the room. Quickly get your dog's attention with a handful of treats, moving away from the action if necessary, and ask him to sit. If your dog is so excited by the presence of the cat that he refuses even high-value treats (for example, cooked chicken), he's not ready for this step. In either case, it's wise to give everyone several hours to recover from the excitement before trying again. If either problem persists, consider finding a qualified positive reinforcement-based (or force-free) behavior consultant who is experienced in facilitating dog and cat introductions.

If things go well, continue feeding the dog while he and the cat are in the same room for a few minutes, then leave the room with the dog, or ask the helper to remove the cat. When the dog can no longer see the cat, stop the delivery stream of food treats. Repeat this process several times, giving both animals a break from each other between sessions.



This arrangement isn't sufficient to keep the cat (or her food!) safe from an overinterested (and tall!) dog. Using a gate that the cat could jump over or go through to keep the dog out of the room where the cat eats and has a litter box is a valuable precaution in most multi-species homes.

While it might seem like the treats serve as a simple distraction, they are far more powerful. When the free-flowing treats are contingent upon the dog seeing the cat, you are classically conditioning the dog to associate the cat with the treats. This helps change (counter-condition) a dog's initial, aroused response to the sight of a cat (which could easily result in the dog initiating a chase) to happy anticipation of the treats, instead. The dog starts to view the cat less as prey and more as a source of pay (treats) from you.

MANAGE RELAXED INTERACTIONS

As your dog begins to offer attention to you (in anticipation of treats) when the cat is present, you can begin to ease into regular relaxed routines with the two animals in the same room. Remember, chasing is a huge reward. Use as much management as is necessary to prevent your dog from being able to chase the cat. One great option is to tether the dog to the leg of the sofa as you watch television and the dog enjoys a stuffed Kong toy; this should prevent him from becoming overly interested in the cat.

Maintaining a "cat room" with a gate in the doorway also allows the cat and dog to get used to each other through a safe barrier.



If your cat is a pest, relentlessly stalking your dog for her own amusement, she may need to be redirected to another activity or room. Cats can learn just as well as dogs can!

be mindful of the cat's role, too. If your cat is doing her best to get the dog's attention and your dog is uninterested – or if the cat is flat-out harrasing the dog for her own amusement – it's wise to step in and redirect the cat just as you would the dog. All members of the family are entitled to personal space and some peace and quiet when they want to relax!

WHEN PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE ARE NOT ENOUGH

All animals are unique. Your cat and dog's individual personalities and behavioral and training histories have a lot to do with how well they will adjust to a life together. While we want to think in terms of months, not weeks, when looking at training time (especially in challenging cases), it's also important to realize that, sometimes, rehoming one of the animals might become the most humane option.

This decision should never be made lightly. Nor should it be made as a way to avoid investing the time needed to teach both animals how to peacefully co-exist. Part of responsible pet ownership is a willingness to teach our animals how to succeed in our human world.

Sometimes, though, despite our best efforts, we can't successfully acclimate a new animal into the home. If several months have passed and an animal is constantly in distress, or in cases where someone's life is literally at risk, rehoming, while difficult, is the best choice.

With careful planning, a little management of the home environment, and a commitment to thoughtful training, most dogs can learn to accept feline friends and a harmonious household can prevail. 🐾

Stephanie Colman is a writer and dog trainer in Los Angeles. See "Resources," page 24, for contact information.

MAINTAIN ACCESSIBLE ESCAPE ROUTES

As your dog and cat learn to navigate a successful inter-species relationship, and you begin to feel confident in your dog's behavior around the cat, you can reduce the amount of physical management (leashes, tethers, etc.) used. Continue to reward your dog's good choices and immediately interrupt any lapses in judgment that might lead to high-intensity chases.

That said, your cat should always have access to escape routes via tall surfaces or through cat doors leading to dog-free rooms. Many pet gates include small cat-size doors that allow cats to access an area that's off-limits to the dog. A small cat door can also be installed in a standard door to limit access by dogs. Both options not only provide important escape routes, but also work well for restricting your dog's access to the cat's litter box and food bowl.

MUTUAL RESPECT?

We often focus on the dog as the antagonist in the struggle for harmonious dog-cat interactions, but it's important to

This type of gate, with a "small pet pass-through," enables a cat to quickly escape unwanted attention from a dog – faster and safer than jumping over the gate.

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- ❖ Linda P. Case, MS, is author of *The Dog: Its Behavior, Nutrition, and Health; Canine and Feline Nutrition; Canine and Feline Behavior: A Complete Guide to Understanding Our Two Best Friends*, and the very recently published *Dog Food Logic: Making Smart Decisions for Your Dog in an Age of Too Many Choices*. Her blog can be read at thesciencedog.wordpress.com. You can find all of her books at Dogwise, (800) 776-2665; dogwise.com
- ❖ 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

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

- ❖ **Linda P. Case**, MS, AutumnGold Consulting and Dog Training Center, Mahomet, IL. Linda Case is a canine nutritionist, science writer, and companion animal consultant who uses positive reinforcement and shaping techniques to modify behavior in dogs in basic level through advanced classes. (217) 586-4864; autumngoldconsulting.com
- ❖ **Stephanie Colman**, Caninestein Dog Training, Los Angeles, CA. Offering training for basic through advanced obedience, competition dog sports, problem-solving, and more! Private lessons and group classes. (818) 414-8559; caninesteintraining.com
- ❖ **Pat Miller**, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Fairplay, MD. Group and private training, rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. Miller also offers a variety of dog training academies and instructors' courses. (301) 582-9420; peaceablepaws.com

WHAT'S AHEAD ...

❖ **NATURE'S VARIETY**

Profile of a pet food company.

❖ **BLOOD PRESSURE**

When should this test be added to your dog's regular health exams?

❖ **APARTMENT DWELLERS**

Training and managing dogs who live close to many others.

❖ **GET OUT OF JAIL, WITH ME**

Prison-based dog training program saves lives, changes others.

❖ **RAW OR COOKED?**

Pros and cons of both types of homemade diets.



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