

Your complete guide to natural dog care and training

Whole Dog Journal™



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Bidding War

How would you describe the ideal temperament for a dog?

I had an interesting conversation with a trainer friend the other day. She had gone to meet a breeder she had never met before, as a potential buyer of a puppy from a future litter. She told me about a little glitch in their conversation that she couldn't stop thinking about.

She said, "Nancy, I kept using the word 'trainable' to describe a trait I look for in a puppy, and every time I said it, the breeder would respond that her dogs are very 'biddable.' At first, I wasn't sure what word she was using; I asked her to repeat it. Even when I realized I had heard her correctly, I wasn't sure what it meant; I had to come home and look it up. And it turns out that it's absolutely *not* what I'm looking for in a dog!"

I was pretty certain I knew the definition of the word "biddable," but I'll share the Dictionary.com definition with you, in case you don't know it:

BIDDABLE: adjective

1. meekly ready to accept and follow instructions; docile and obedient.

SYNONYMS: obedient, acquiescent, compliant, tractable, amenable, complaisant, cooperative, dutiful, submissive.

I agree with my trainer friend; this is not a trait I look for in a dog, either. I like dogs who are curious, friendly, and ready to be engaged and attentive *if* I hold up my end of the "conversation" and *I also* behave in a friendly, engaged, interesting way.

I can imagine that there are some people who don't want an inquisitive, independent dog. Some people truly do seem to want their dogs to be "submissive."

But my trainer friend and I agreed; that's the farthest thing from *our* minds. Personally, I don't want a submissive husband, child, grandchild, or friend, nor a "docile" dog, cat, or chicken. Why would I need that? Why would I want someone around me to "submit" to my every whim? Meek? That's not my thing at *all*.

I asked my friend, "You told the breeder you wanted a 'trainable' dog. How would you define that?"

She said, "Smart. Motivated to work with me. One who values rewards that I can deliver. Willing to experiment to get things right."

I started wondering: Perhaps those of us with a special interest in animal behavior and the methods of influencing behavior value smart, creative dogs more than the average dog owner might? Do you want a particularly docile, submissive dog? Are these traits attractive to you? I'm curious to know what traits you look for in a dog.



NK



Freeze-Dried Diets

These tend to be high-quality, high-cost foods. Because they are light-weight and shelf-stable, they are particularly handy to bring on road trips with your dog.

Are you looking for the most expensive way to feed your dog? Probably not – but if price is no object, the products we’ll describe here are *very* high-quality foods that are extremely shelf-stable (in many cases, without the use of any preservative, or with a natural preservative only). Many are made with organic ingredients; many are made with certified humanely raised and/or grass-fed meats. All of the diets are made with a high inclusion of meat; some contain as much as 95 percent animal muscle meat, organ meat, and raw ground bone.

Most of the other ingredients in freeze-dried diets are raw and/or *very* lightly processed. All the freeze-dried raw diets we reviewed are grain-free – not because *we* think grains are inappropriate in these foods; it’s the food manufacturers who seem to have decided that raw feeders won’t buy a product that contains any grain.

Many people who feed home-prepared or commercial raw diets to their dogs when they are home replace this diet with a freeze-dried raw food when they travel, or when the dog is left with a sitter who doesn’t want to deal with a fresh or frozen raw diet.

BENEFITS OF FREEZE-DRIED

In addition to being raw and lightly processed, freeze-dried diets offer other benefits:

- Very low-moisture foods such as these products can be stored at room temperature (in unopened packages) without spoilage or rancidity – much longer than kibble. That’s because most freeze-dried diets contain about three to five percent moisture; conventional kibble generally contains about 10 percent moisture. The less moisture there is in a food, the less biological activity can occur.

- When rehydrated, these foods are highly palatable to most dogs. It may be due to the concentration of flavor in freeze-dried food

ingredients or their minimal processing. Dogs with poor appetites (like very senior or chronically ill dogs) may accept these foods when nothing else appeals.

- As a generalization, the makers of these products are targeting the top end of the market and have an extraordinary commitment to sourcing top-quality ingredients.

REALLY RAW

Though it should be obvious, it bears repeating that all of the products included in this review are made with freeze-dried *raw* meats. Raw diets aren’t for every dog or owner. Cooked foods may be safer for immune-compromised individuals. Some dogs digest cooked foods better.

That said, freeze-dried foods don’t seem as “raw” as raw-frozen or fresh raw foods, but it’s important to understand that they are, in fact, uncooked. Freeze-drying removes so



Freeze-dried foods can serve as really powerful and very handy training rewards, as they are super palatable and yet not greasy or smelly (so they can be hidden in a handler’s pockets without staining).

Note About the Reviewed Products

Please note that we are including only products that are made with freeze-dried meat in this review. In previous years, we examined diets that contain freeze-dried and dehydrated meats in the same review. There are so many of these products now that we will review them separately this year.

Also note that we are discussing only diets that are “complete and balanced” as per the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) guidelines. Products that are meant for “supplemental or intermittent feeding only” are not included in this review.

much moisture from the ingredients that it stops the biological action (decay) in the food, with less damage to the meat's natural enzymes or vitamins than cooking temperatures cause. When the foods are rehydrated, the biological activity of any pathogenic bacteria that might be present in the food can resume.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) of 2011 contains zero-tolerance policies for products that test positive for pathogenic bacteria. For this reason, some of the manufacturers of freeze-dried raw foods subject their products to a “kill step” known as high-pressure processing (also known as high-pressure pasteurization, and in any case abbreviated as HPP); they don't want to risk increased surveillance or recalls from food control officials.

The owners of some companies, however, believe so strongly in the benefits of raw foods, that they refuse to use a kill step. Instead, they rely on the quality of their ingredients and their own food “hazard analysis and critical control points”(HACCP) plans to prevent selling contaminated products. They understand that the FSMA policies are present to protect dogs and their owners, and that today's *human* food supply does sometimes contain pathogens – but they also have

observed that most healthy dogs can thrive on raw foods that may contain some pathogens (few healthy dogs have trouble with *Salmonella*, for example, though *Listeria* and *e. Coli* are another story). And, importantly, they engage and educate their consumers about these facts.

There are food-industry experts who feel strongly that HPP is a very safe technology, and others who worry that it may alter foods on a molecular level. We feel fine about HPP; we've been to HPP plants and observed the products before, during, and after treatment and have confidence that they are not harmed or made unsafe to feed (see “HPP and Raw Dog Food,” WDJ April 2015). On the other hand, we respect the right of owners to feed raw foods that have not undergone a kill step – as long as they are informed about the risks to which they are subjecting themselves and their dogs.

Some of the companies utilize a “test and hold” program whereby finished products are tested for pathogens and not released for sale until results indicate the products are uncontaminated.

VARIETY IN CATEGORY

The freeze-dried foods on the market are diverse in content, appearance,

and form. Some are *very* high in protein and fat – there are even products that contain more fat than protein! – while others compare in these respects to high-end kibble. Always check the guaranteed analysis when switching to a product in this category, particularly when feeding a dog who needs to be on a lower-fat diet.

Most of these products are meant to be rehydrated with water before serving, though the products that come in small cubes can be fed as treats without rehydrating. In general, though, adding water will bulk up the food, making it more filling for your dog, as well as easier to digest.

Some of the products are very powdery, which makes them turn into a sort of mush (or gruel, depending on how much water you add) when rehydrated. Some are powdery with large chunks of identifiable dehydrated meats, fruit, and/or vegetables – either an advantage (if your dog enjoys the contrast in taste and mouth-feel) or a disadvantage (if your dog seeks out only the chunks or mush and eschews the other).

INGREDIENTS

On the table that starts on the next page, we have listed the ingredients for one variety of each company's food. When a chicken variety was available, we used the ingredients of that variety, so you could compare relatively similar product offerings.

PRICES

We've listed prices for the largest size of the products that are available; the larger sizes are generally the most economical (if that can be said at all of this category).

Because the cost of these products is so high, we imagine that few people feed them full-time, especially if their dogs are large or many. We would most likely use them only for a small dog, on a short-term basis while traveling, as training treats, to jump-start the recovery of a sick dog, or to extend the life of a chronically ill dog. 🐾

Nancy Kerns is Editor of WDJ.

Have you tried freeze-dried foods?


When they have been rehydrated, freeze-dried foods that are sold as human treats (such as strawberries, bananas, and papayas) taste remarkably similar to (or even better than) their fresh, moist counterparts. This is due to the speed and low temperature of the freeze-drying process, as compared to any sort of dehydration process; freeze-drying concentrates the flavor of foods.

Does this matter to your dog? You'd have to offer him different products to find out, but our guess would be that he will enjoy them very much. In our experience, even sick, fussy, and stressed dogs get pretty enthusiastic about freeze-dried foods very quickly. We know many trainers who use freeze-dried meats as training treats in their classes; the products tend to draw out even highly stressed or distracted dogs.


We regard these products as our “ace in the hole” when nursing sick foster puppies back to health. Sick puppies often stop eating, which causes low blood sugar and endangers them further, so if you can find something that will tempt them into eating even just a few bites, they have a better chance of recovering. When a pup won't eat even canned food or formula, often they will eat a few bits of rehydrated freeze-dried foods.



WDJ'S APPROVED FREEZE-DRIED DOG FOODS 2018

PRODUCT NAMES Company Information	Notes	Ingredients of Highlighted Product	Price
BRAVO HOMESTYLE Bravo Pet Foods Manchester, CT (866) 922-9222 bravopetfoods.com	<p>Three grain-free varieties are available: beef, pork, and turkey.</p> <p>All the varieties contain 38% protein and 8% to 13% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p> 	Bravo Homestyle Beef variety contains: beef, beef liver, sweet potatoes, chickpeas, beef hearts, beef kidney, beef spleen, green beans, cranberries, dried eggs, tricalcium phosphate, calcium carbonate, choline chloride, dried kelp, turmeric, rosemary, parsley, thyme, oregano, salt, mixed tocopherols (preservative), zinc proteinate, iron proteinate, copper proteinate, manganese proteinate, sodium selenite, calcium iodate, vitamin E supplement, thiamine mononitrate, niacin supplement, calcium pantothenate, biotin, vitamin A supplement, riboflavin supplement, vitamin B12 supplement, pyridoxine hydrochloride, vitamin D3 supplement, folic acid, rosemary extract	\$76 to \$104 / 6 lbs
LIBERTY FREEZE-DRIED Buckley Pet Boulder, CO (303) 666-1070 buckleypet.com	<p>Three grain-free varieties are available: beef, chicken, and lamb.</p> <p>All the varieties contain 45% protein and 36% to 42% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p>	Liberty Chicken variety contains: chicken, chicken liver, chicken heart, chicken gizzard, squash, chicken necks, apples, carrots, broccoli, eggs, ground flaxseed, inulin, blueberries, cranberries, apple cider vinegar, dried kelp, potassium chloride, sodium chloride, salmon oil, fish oil, iron proteinate, zinc proteinate, vitamin E supplement, copper proteinate, manganese proteinate, mixed tocopherols	\$35 to \$40 / 20 oz
ORACLE GRAIN-FREE ORACLE WHOLE GRAIN Dr. Harvey's Atlantic Highlands, NJ (866) 362-4123 drharveys.com	<p>Oracle Whole Grain comes in beef, chicken, and fish varieties. Each contains 27% protein and 16% fat.</p> <p>Oracle Grain-Free also comes in beef, chicken, and fish varieties. They range from 27% to 29% protein and 12% to 14% fat.</p> <p>All of these products are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p>	Oracle Whole Grain Chicken formula contains: chicken, sweet potatoes, carrots, potatoes, flaxseed, whole egg, rolled oats, barley, spelt, tricalcium phosphate, broccoli, green beans, spinach, beets, cabbage, celery, pumpkin, kelp, coconut, blueberries, bananas, parsley, dried yeast, lecithin, alfalfa, fenugreek, fennel, ginger, peppermint, zinc proteinate, iron proteinate, vitamin E supplement, manganese proteinate, vitamin A acetate, d-calcium pantothenate, thiamine mononitrate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin supplement, biotin, vitamin B12 supplement, vitamin D3 supplement, folic acid, rosemary extract, mixed tocopherols	\$65 - \$77 / 6 lbs \$70 - \$80 / 6 lbs
FRESH IS BEST Fresh is Best Milwaukee, WI (866) 617-7735 freshisbest.com	<p>Three grain-free varieties are available: beef, chicken, and turkey.</p> <p>All the varieties contain 42% to 52% protein and 21% to 30% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p>	Fresh Is Best Freeze-Dried Chicken variety contains: chicken, chicken hearts, chicken livers, chicken gizzards, yams, apples, kale, collards, bone meal, dried kelp, vitamin E supplement, zinc amino acids chelate, manganese amino acids chelate, copper amino acids chelate, thiamin mononitrate, vitamin D3 supplement	\$14 / 8 oz
ARTISAN MACANNA PUREFORMANCE VALOR Grandma Lucy's Rancho Santa Margarita, CA (800) 906-5829 grandmalucys.com	<p>Grandma Lucy's has four lines of grain-free, freeze-dried foods. Each line features a unique carb source or carb combination: Artisan: potatoes, celery, and carrots; Macanna: pinto beans, hemp hearts, and carrots; Pureformance: chickpeas; Valor: quinoa. Each line has two to five varieties, and each product contains 25% to 37% protein and 13% to 17% fat.</p> <p>All the Grandma Lucy's products are complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages, with the exception of the Pre-Mix Formulas; these are for supplemental feeding only.</p>	Artisan chicken formula contains: chicken, potatoes, flax, carrots, celery, apples, blueberries, cranberries, garlic, vitamin A supplement, vitamin D3 supplement, vitamin E supplement, niacin supplement, iron proteinate, calcium carbonate, phosphorus, zinc proteinate, riboflavin supplement, thiamine mononitrate, potassium chloride, manganese proteinate, copper proteinate, magnesium chloride, pyridoxine hydrochloride, cyanocobalamin	<p>The least expensive varieties are \$80 / 10 lbs.</p> <p>The ones with more exotic protein sources (i.e., bison, salmon) are \$146 / 10 lbs.</p>
K9 NATURAL K9 Natural Christchurch, New Zealand (855) 596-2887 k9natural.com	<p>Five grain-free varieties are available: beef, chicken, lamb, and venison, and a puppy variety.</p> <p>All the varieties contain 23% to 33% protein and 37% to 43% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages. (Note: Each variety contains more fat than protein.)</p>	K9 Natural Chicken Feast variety contains: chicken, eggs, flaxseed flakes, hoki oil, brown kelp, New Zealand green mussel, pumpkin, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, potassium sulphate, dried kelp, apples, pears, salt, vitamin E supplement, zinc proteinate, iron proteinate, sunflower oil, magnesium oxide, selenium yeast, copper proteinate, manganese proteinate, beta-carotene, thiamine mononitrate, vitamin D3 supplement	 <p>Chicken: \$100/ 2.75 lbs Venison: \$140 / 3.3 lbs Beef, Lamb: \$196 / 8 lbs Puppy: \$110 / 3.5 lbs</p>

Company Information	Notes	Ingredients of Highlighted Product	Price
BACKCOUNTRY RAW MEAL MIXERS Merrick A div. of Nestlé Purina, Amarillo, TX (800) 664-7387 merrickpetcare.com	<p>Three grain-free varieties are available: beef, chicken, and salmon.</p> <p>All the varieties contain 40% protein and 10% to 18% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for adult dog maintenance.</p>	Backcountry Raw Chicken variety contains: deboned chicken, chicken liver, dried potatoes, potato protein, chicken broth, gelatin, dried kelp, salt, mixed tocopherols, potassium chloride, apples, carrots, blueberries, minerals (zinc amino acid complex, iron amino acid complex, potassium chloride, copper amino acid complex, manganese amino acid complex, sodium selenite, calcium iodate), vitamins (vitamin E supplement, vitamin A supplement, niacin, thiamine mononitrate, d-calcium pantothenate, riboflavin supplement, vitamin D3 supplement, pyridoxine hydrochloride, vitamin B12 supplement, folic acid), choline chloride	\$28 / 12.5 oz
INSTINCT RAW MARKET Nature's Variety St. Louis, MO (888) 519-7387 instinctpetfood.com	<p>Instinct recently discontinued its Raw Market Blends and Raw Market Nuggets in packaging meant to supply meal-sized amounts. It will continue to sell the Blends in a 5.5-ounce package, for use as a treat or as something you can mix into your dog's meal; though the products are complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages, they won't be priced for daily use.</p> <p>These foods range from 34% to 35% protein and 26% - 28% fat.</p>	Instinct Raw Market Blend Chicken variety contains: chicken (including ground chicken bone), chicken liver, chicken heart, apples, sweet potatoes, peas, pumpkin seeds, blueberries, salmon oil, montmorillonite clay, organic carrots, organic pears, tricalcium phosphate, organic butternut squash, potassium chloride, cod liver oil, salt, dried kelp, yeast culture, choline chloride, taurine, organic cranberries, zinc proteinate, mixed tocopherols, vitamin E supplement, copper proteinate, rosemary extract	Price not yet available / 5.5 ounces
NORTHWEST NATURALS Northwest Naturals Portland, OR (866) 637-1872 nw-naturals.net	<p>Like many of the other companies here, Northwest Naturals also makes frozen raw diets for dogs. Its freeze-dried products are made by freeze-drying, rather than freezing, its frozen products. All recipes are grain-free and complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p> <p>Six varieties of patties are available, and range from 41% to 63% protein and 15% to 34% fat.</p>	Northwest Naturals Chicken variety contains: chicken, ground chicken bone, chicken liver, chicken gizzard, cantaloupe, carrots, broccoli, romaine lettuce, egg, ground flaxseed, fish oil (a blend of wild caught Alaskan fish oils from salmon, herring, and pollock), apple cider vinegar, blueberry, cranberry, inulin, dried kelp, potassium chloride, sodium chloride, ginger, parsley, garlic, zinc proteinate, iron proteinate, vitamin E supplement, copper proteinate, manganese proteinate, mixed tocopherols, vitamin D supplement	\$21 / 12 oz
NULO FREESTYLE FREEZE-DRIED RAW Nulo Austin, TX (512) 476-6856 nulo.com	<p>Five grain-free varieties are available: beef, duck, lamb, salmon & turkey, and turkey. Many organic ingredients are included.</p> <p>All the varieties contain 40% to 44% protein and 26% to 29% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p>	Nulo Freestyle Freeze-Dried Turkey variety contains: turkey necks, turkey heart, turkey liver, cranberries, apples, sweet potato, broccoli, carrots, kale, spinach, parsley, apple cider vinegar, ground flaxseed, dried kelp, inulin, salt, dried bacillus coagulans fermentation product, potassium chloride, salmon oil, zinc proteinate, iron proteinate, mixed tocopherols, vitamin E supplement, copper proteinate, manganese proteinate, vitamin D3 supplement	\$34 / 13 oz
OPEN FARM FREEZE-DRIED RAW Open Farm Toronto, ON (833) 399-3403 openfarmpet.com	<p>Four grain-free varieties are available: beef, chicken, salmon & beef, and turkey. Many organic ingredients are included and only certified humanely raised meats are used.</p> <p>All the varieties contain 41% to 42% protein and 31% to 33% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p>	Open Farm Freeze-Dried Chicken variety contains: Chicken with ground bone, chicken livers, chicken necks, chicken hearts, carrots, blueberries, squash, montmorillonite clay, sunflower seeds, cranberries, salmon oil, spinach, kale, pumpkin seeds, chicory root, dried kelp, coconut oil (preserved with mixed tocopherols), apple cider vinegar, cinnamon, turmeric, mixed tocopherols, spirulina, vitamin D3 supplement, vitamin E supplement, thiamine mononitrate, folic acid, choline, zinc amino acid chelate, copper amino acid chelate, selenium yeast	\$30 / 13.5 oz
PRIMAL FREEZE-DRIED Primal Pet Foods San Francisco, CA (866) 566-4652 primalpetfoods.com	<p>Eight grain-free varieties are available: beef, chicken, duck, lamb, pork, rabbit, turkey & sardine, and venison. Many organic ingredients are included.</p> <p>All the varieties contain 37% to 59% protein and 22% to 38% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p>	Primal Pet Foods Chicken variety contains: chicken, chicken necks, chicken gizzards, organic kale, organic carrots, organic squash, chicken livers, organic broccoli, organic apples, cranberries, blueberries, organic pumpkin seeds, organic sunflower seeds, montmorillonite clay, organic parsley, organic apple cider vinegar, salmon oil, organic coconut oil, organic quinoa sprout powder, dried organic kelp, alfalfa, vitamin E supplement, mixed tocopherols	\$31 to \$39 / 14 oz
SOJO'S COMPLETE SOJO'S WILD Sojourner Farms, LLC Minneapolis, MN (888) 867-6567 sojos.com	<p>Sojo's Complete comes in five varieties; Sojo's Wild comes in two. All of the varieties except for the Complete Puppy variety are complete and balanced for the maintenance of adult dogs only. The Puppy variety is complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages. The Complete products range from 24% to 28% protein and 12% to 16% fat. The Wild products range from 38% to 40% protein and 16% to 21% fat.</p>	Sojo's Complete Turkey variety contains: turkey, sweet potatoes, whole egg, broccoli, apples, flaxseed, cranberries, celery, turkey liver, tricalcium phosphate, basil, pumpkin, ginger root, dried kelp, zinc sulfate, vitamin E acetate, ferrous fumarate, copper sulfate, d-calcium pantothenate, riboflavin, vitamin D3 supplement, pyridoxine hydrochloride, folic acid	Sojo's Complete \$90 / 7 lbs Sojo's Wild \$82 / 4 lbs

Company Information	Notes	Ingredients of Highlighted Product	Price
STELLA & CHEWY'S FREEZE-DRIED PATTIES STELLA & CHEWY'S MEAL MIXERS Stella & Chewy's Oak Creek, WI (888) 477-8977 x 100 stellaandchewys.com	<p>Stella & Chewy's makes its grain-free, freeze-dried diets in patties (nine varieties), "Meal Mixers" (grape-sized nuggets, available in five varieties), and "Super Blends Meal Mixers" (like Meal Mixers, but with additional "superfoods" added). All of the products are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages. These foods range from 36% to 50% protein and 24% - 40% fat.</p> <p>S&C's uses humanely raised, cage-free birds, grass-fed animals, and many organic ingredients.</p>	<p>Chewy's Chicken Dinner Patties variety contains: chicken with ground bone, chicken liver, chicken gizzard, pumpkin seed, potassium chloride, organic cranberries, organic spinach, organic broccoli, organic beets, sodium phosphate monobasic, organic carrots, organic squash, organic apples, organic blueberries, choline chloride, dried pediococcus acidilactici fermentation product, dried lactobacillus acidophilus fermentation product, dried bifidobacterium longum fermentation product, taurine, tocopherols, zinc proteinate, zinc sulfate, iron sulfate, iron proteinate, vitamin E supplement, niacin, copper sulfate, copper proteinate, manganese sulfate, sodium selenite, manganese proteinate, thiamin mononitrate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, vitamin D3 supplement, folic acid, calcium iodate, vitamin B12 supplement</p>	<p>"Meal Mixers" \$38 - \$39 / 18 oz</p> <p>Patties \$46 - \$50 / 25 oz</p>
STEVE'S FREEZE-DRIED Steve's Real Food for Dogs Cottonwood, UT (801) 432-7478 stevesrealfood.com	<p>Three varieties (beef, pork, and turkey) are available.</p> <p>All varieties contain 49% to 51% protein and 31% to 37% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p>	<p>Steve's Freeze-Dried Turkey variety contains: ground turkey, turkey necks, celery, turkey liver, romaine, watermelon, turkey hearts, bell peppers, raw goat's milk, flaxseed, dried kelp, cod liver oil, coconut oil, inulin, sesame seeds, sea salt, mixed tocopherols, eggshell membrane, dicalcium phosphate</p>	<p>\$33 / 1.25 lbs</p>
STEWART RAW NATURALS Stewart Pet Moraine, OH (800) 635-2044 stewartpet.com	<p>Seven nugget varieties (beef, bison, chicken, chicken & salmon, lamb, turkey, and "puppy") and two patty varieties (beef, chicken) are available.</p> <p>All varieties contain 30% to 47% protein and 26% to 44% fat and are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p>	<p>Stewart Raw Naturals Chicken variety contains: chicken, ground chicken bone, chicken liver, chicken gizzard, cantaloupe, carrots, broccoli, lettuce, egg, ground flaxseed, inulin, salmon oil, apple cider vinegar, blueberry, cranberry, dried kelp, potassium chloride, sodium chloride, whole ginger, whole parsley, whole garlic, zinc proteinate, iron proteinate, vitamin E supplement, copper proteinate, manganese proteinate, mixed tocopherols, vitamin D supplement</p>	<p>Nuggets: \$18 - \$25 / 12 oz</p> <p>\$31 - \$36 / 24 oz</p> <p>Patties: \$14 - \$17 / 11 oz</p>
TRUDOG Trupet LLC Oldsmar, FL (800) 476-8808 trudog.com	<p>Two grain-free varieties are available (beef and turkey).</p> <p>The products contain 41% to 46% protein and 15% to 28% fat. They are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p>	<p>Trudog Turkey variety contains: ground turkey with bone, turkey heart, turkey liver, herring oil, mixed tocopherols</p>	<p>\$26 - \$30 / 14 oz</p>
VITAL ESSENTIALS Vital Essentials Green Bay, WI (800) 743-0322 vitalessentialsraw.com	<p>Vital Essentials makes its grain-free freeze-dried diets in patties (beef), mini patties (beef, chicken, duck, turkey), nibblets (beef, chicken, turkey), and "mini-nibs" (beef, chicken, duck, turkey).</p> <p>The products contain 45% to 51% protein and 22% to 27% fat. They are formulated to be complete and balanced for dogs of all life stages.</p>	<p>Vital Essentials Mini Patties Chicken variety contain: ground chicken with bone, chicken heart, chicken liver, herring oil, mixed tocopherols, d-alpha tocopherol</p> 	<p>Patties: \$50 / 1.875 lbs</p> <p>Mini patties: \$21 - \$26 / lb</p> <p>Nibblets: \$24 - \$26 / lb</p> <p>Mini-nibs: \$24 - \$28 / lb</p>
TRUFOOD MAKE IT FRESH Wellpet Tewksbury, MA (800) 225-0904 wellpet.com	<p>Four grain-free varieties are available (beef, lamb, salmon, and turkey).</p> <p>The products contain 21% to 25% protein and 8% to 13% fat. They are formulated to be complete and balanced for the maintenance of adult dogs.</p>	<p>Trufoods Turkey, Sweet Potatoes, and Cranberries variety contains: turkey, sweet potatoes, whole egg, chickpea flour, flaxseed, carrots, cranberries, potatoes, apples, turkey liver, tricalcium phosphate, fenugreek seed, pumpkin, kelp, parsley, rosemary, coconut, kale, ginger root, broccoli, zinc sulfate, vitamin E supplement, ferrous fumarate, copper sulfate, d-calcium pantothenate, riboflavin, vitamin D supplement, pyridoxine hydrochloride, folic acid</p>	<p>\$80 / 7 lb</p>
WHOLELIFE LIFEBITES Whole Life Pet Products Pittsfield, MA (877) 210-3142 wholelifepet.com	<p>Three grain-free varieties are available (chicken, duck, and salmon).</p> <p>Each of the products contain 49% protein and 25% fat. They are formulated to be complete and balanced for the maintenance of adult dogs.</p>	<p>Wholelife Lifebites Chicken variety contains: chicken, sweet potato, chicken liver, peas, carrots, apples, blueberries, pumpkin, yogurt, tricalcium phosphate, flaxseed, chia seed, vitamins and minerals (zinc proteinate, vitamin E supplement, copper proteinate, potassium iodide, thiamin mononitrate, vitamin D3 supplement)</p>	<p>\$15 - \$20 / 16 oz</p>



Shaping the Perfect Sit

How to reward your dog for increasingly correct approximations of a behavior, until you have just the behavior you want.

Learning to perform a behavior through incremental but consistently rewarding steps often helps cement that behavior in a dog's repertoire.

Shaping – taking a desired behavior, breaking it into small steps, and reinforcing the steps until you build the final behavior – has become a standard dog training tool, especially in the force-free world. Those who are familiar with shaping regard it as invaluable for teaching and refining behaviors.

If you don't yet have experience with shaping, try this exercise with your dog. It will help you realize how subtly and precisely you can

influence the movement of virtually any part of your dog's body.

1 Pick a body part and a desired movement: a head turn to the left or right, head raised or lowered, or a wave of a front paw. The latter is very easy, since dogs move their front paws a lot and seem to be highly aware of their movement. But you could also pick an ear, tail, hind foot, eye – really any body part.

2 Sit on a chair in front of your dog with a clicker and a generous supply of treats.

3 Wait and watch your dog carefully. The instant she moves the selected body part, even the tiniest bit, click and treat.

4 Be selective. If you chose a turn of the head to the right, click only those movements, even tiny ones, in that direction. If you opted for a lift of the right paw, don't click any left paw movements.

5 In short order, you will see your dog get the idea, and start offering deliberate movement for you to click. You can build the movement into whatever behavior you would like – a spin, a nod of the head, a high-five, or shake of the paw – by continuing to click and treat your dog for increasingly “correct” approximations of the behavior.

THE PERFECT SIT

You can shape your dog to do pretty much anything she's physically capable of doing. Trainers often use shaping to teach complex behaviors – tricks, service dog tasks, and more. But it can also be used for simpler, more basic behaviors. For example, a straight, fast sit in perfect heel position is very desirable for obedience and rally competitions, and for some musical freestyle routines. You can achieve that perfect sit, too, through shaping. Here's how:



As with any training, remember not to overdo it - keep your sessions to a reasonable length, take short breaks as needed, and always end the session with your dog wanting more. This can vary depending on the dog - some will happily work for 20-30 minutes or more, others do best with five-minute sessions. Shaping a perfect sit can take days or weeks, perhaps even months, depending on your canine training partner.

Let's assume you've already taught your dog to do an automatic sit at your left side when you halt, through luring (holding a treat over her head to encourage her to sit) or capturing (clicking and treating when she offers to sit of her own volition). But her sit is crooked and not as fast as you would like it to be. We'll start with just one of those qualities; if you shape for both at once it will confuse your dog. Let's start with straightness.

Do 10 practice sits. Take several steps forward and halt. When your dog sits, click and treat, and note her angle of crookedness. Let's say her first sit angle is 45 degrees off perfect. ("Perfect" is parallel to you.) Repeat 10 times, clicking and treating each time, and noting how crooked she is. Now average the numbers. Let's say her average is 30 degrees from perfect. Thirty degrees is now your baseline criterion for shaping a straighter sit. That means that now she must sit only 30 degrees crooked or straighter in order to get a click and treat.

Now count out several sets of 10 treats. Each time she meets the "30 degrees or straighter" criterion, click and treat. Each time she misses (her sit is more than 30 degrees crooked) set a treat aside. When she meets the straightness criterion 80 percent of the time or better (she gets to eat at least eight of the 10 treats) you can raise the bar; now she has to sit 25 degrees or straighter to get a click and treat. Continue gradually increasing the criteria (requiring straighter and straighter sits in order to earn the click and treat) with your sets of 10 treats, until she is sitting perfectly straight at least 80 percent of the time.

Then you can work on speed. You will need to lower your "straight" criteria while you work on "fast." To

A crooked sit doesn't matter in day-to-day life, but if you want to compete in obedience or rally, a quick, straight sit is a worthy goal. A formal shaping strategy will speed up your results.



Thanks to Sarah Richardson, owner/trainer at the Canine Connection, a full-service training/boarding/daycare facility in Chico, CA, for demonstrating with foster dog Annie.

determine your baseline speed, ask your dog for 10 sits, but this time, count the seconds between your halt and your dog's completed sit (one thousand-one, one thousand-two, etc.) and then figure the average.

Let's say the baseline speed of your dog's sit is four seconds. Now do several sets of 10 sits, clicking and treating only for sits that are four seconds or faster. Set aside a treat for each sit that is slower than four seconds. When she is meeting her four-second criterion at least 80 percent of the time (eating eight out of 10 treats), raise the criterion to three seconds, and continue.

When your dog is consistently giving you nice, fast sits (say, one-second sits), you are ready to combine straight and fast. Relax both criteria slightly at first - perhaps you will click for sits that are two seconds and 10 degrees or better. When you are getting 80 percent performance for both speed and straightness, gradually raise criteria for both, until you reach your final desired criteria for both.

MOST DOGS LIKE SHAPING

This may sound tedious, but most dogs respond amazingly well to shaping. This system - measuring some degree of criteria and monitoring an 80 percent success rate - keeps communication to the dog crystal clear and helps her understand and "get" the task much more quickly than if her handler just guesstimates and randomly clicks some sits more than others. It also gives *you* a much better understanding of the process of setting and raising criteria for shaping, and significantly enhances your skills as a trainer. 🐾

Author Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, is WDJ's Training Editor. She and her husband Paul live in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. Miller is also the author of many books on positive training. Her newest is Beware of the Dog: Positive Solutions for Aggressive Behavior in Dogs. See "Resources," page 24, for information on her classes for dog owners and trainers and book purchasing.



Paw Cuts and Scrapes

Five things to do when your dog injures his paw pad.

Your dog's paw pads act much like the soles of sneakers, protecting your dog's foot and cushioning each step. Paw pads are tough, but they can still be cut by sharp objects or worn off if your dog runs hard on rough terrain. What should you do when your dog cuts or tears a pad?

1 Clean the wound. Gently flush the wound with water or an antiseptic, such as diluted chlorhexidine solution. If there is obvious debris, such as rocks or glass, remove it carefully. Don't force anything that is lodged deep into the foot.

2 Control bleeding. Apply pressure to the wound to stop any bleeding. Use a clean towel and an ice pack if available to encourage blood-vessel constriction. If only the outer layer of the pad has been worn off, there may not be much bleeding, but deeper wounds and punctures can bleed heavily. The time it takes for bleeding to stop will vary with the severity of the wound.

3 Evaluate the damage. Minor paw injuries can be managed at home, but more severe ones require veterinary attention.

Uncontrolled bleeding is an emergency - if your dog's foot continues to bleed after several minutes of pressure, call your veterinarian and head for the clinic. Deep or jagged cuts may require sutures for optimal healing. Your dog may need to be sedated for sufficient cleaning of the wound if there is persistent debris, such as little bits of gravel, and something that is firmly lodged in the foot will need to be surgically removed. Your dog may also need antibiotics to protect against infection. If you are at all unsure, err on the side of a vet visit - your veterinarian can give you peace of mind and can give your dog the care he needs.

4 Bandage. Place nonstick gauze or a Telfa pad directly over the cut. If available, a dab of triple antibiotic ointment is a good idea to prevent infection. This can be secured with paper tape. Then wrap your dog's foot using roll gauze, Vetrap, or an elastic bandage. The bandage should be snug enough to stay on, but also needs to be loose enough to allow for proper circulation to your dog's foot. You should be able to slide two fingers under the bandage. To prevent the bandage from slipping off, wrap all the way up to and including the next joint on your dog's leg: carpus or wrist in front, hock in back. You can also place more tape around the top of the bandage.

Keep the bandage dry. Moisture provides an entrance for bacteria to get through the bandage and into the wound. You can use a commercial bootie to protect the bandage when your dog goes outside or just tape a plastic bag over it. Most paw bandages need to be changed daily, especially if there is still bleeding or a discharge present.

For minor scrapes that look like a rug burn, a liquid bandage can be used to cover the exposed nerve endings without needing a full traditional bandage. Keep the foot elevated while the liquid bandage dries, and don't let your dog lick it.

5 Allow time for healing. Your dog's paw will heal faster if it's protected until fully healed. Keep him quiet, and prevent him from running or chewing at the bandage (this may require the use of an Elizabethan collar). Even after your dog's pad has healed enough that it isn't painful to touch, it will still be tender and vulnerable to reinjury. Avoid activities that could damage the healing pad, or use a bootie to protect the foot. Healing time will vary depending on the size of the cut. 🐾

Kate Eldredge is a licensed veterinary technician from Plattsburgh, New York. She also trains, shows, and breeds Belgian Tervuren and is working on her canine-rehabilitation certification.

Keeping your dog from licking a cut or scrape on his paw pad can be a challenge. In addition to bandaging material, you may need to use a bootie or an Elizabethan collar to prevent him from working to remove the bandage.



Photo credit: Dreamstime.com

1

PRODUCT
REVIEW

The Mudbuster

A great tool for cleaning muddy feet, treating dogs with yeasty feet, or rinsing salt or other ice-melting chemicals off your dog's paws.

I first saw the Mudbuster at a pet products trade show a couple of years ago. I was intrigued by the vaguely medical, playful look of the device: a deep plastic tumbler, lined with soft silicone bristles. “What the heck is that?” I asked, and the guy in the booth said, “It’s the Mudbuster! It’s for cleaning your dog’s feet!”

It took me only a moment to dismiss the product’s intended use as ridiculous. Who needs a special device just to clean a dog’s paws?

Recently, though, I saw one on display in my favorite local pet supply store and made a scoffing noise, the manager told me, “Don’t laugh! You know what it’s great for? Dogs who have a yeast infection in their feet. It’s a perfect way to soak their feet in a solution of half apple cider vinegar and half water, and lightly debride the funky tissue. I’ve recommended it as a solution to a number of clients and everyone who has tried it has had very good results!” she said.

I immediately bought one. Neither of my dogs have yeasty feet, but I’ve heard of many dogs that do and this seemed like the perfect tool and an effective treatment for the chronic condition. I told the manager that I would recommend the product for this purpose in WDJ.

AN EASY FOOT BATH

Before I had a chance to do this, however, I ended up finding a non-medical use for the product after all. I recently moved to a new house, one with white tile floors in the entry and kitchen. And the property, it turns out, is absolutely infested with gophers; new gopher hills appear on the front lawn and in the back field daily.

And Woody, my two-year-old pit/Lab-mix, has become *obsessed* with digging up the gopher holes. He runs to each new mound, gives each one a few quick swipes of his paws, and shoves his whole head down into the gopher hole, absolutely *huffing* the the gopher scent. He hasn’t *seen* a gopher yet, but I am

hopeful that when he does, he will figure out a way to dig up, catch, and kill some of the pests, so I don’t have to resort to setting traps or other elaborate ways to save the lawn and garden.

Significantly, the prevalence of new gopher mounds and my dog’s interest in them has meant that I *do* have to clean his feet every time he goes outdoors and then comes back inside, at least five times a day – that is, unless I don’t mind looking at dirt-red footprints all over my white floors. For the first few weeks after I moved, I used my old “dog towels” to wipe Woody’s feet clean every time he came inside – and ended up washing an insane number of dog towels; there were some in every load of laundry I did! Then I realized I had the Mudbuster in my office and brought it home to try.

Using this tool to clean Woody’s feet has dramatically cut down the number of towels I go through. Instead of needing a separate towel each time I have to clean all four feet (but especially his front/digging feet), I half-fill the Mudbuster with water and dunk each paw into the device a few time. Then I can use the same towel all day to quickly and simply *dry* his freshly cleaned feet. To finish, just pour out the muddy water and rinse the Mudbuster in the sink. (It can be run through the dishwasher for a more complete cleaning.)

I think this would also be a great tool for people who live in areas where salt and other chemicals are used to melt ice and snow on sidewalks. The Mudbuster would rinse the harsh chemicals off dogs’ feet much more thoroughly and much more easily than trying to hose or wipe them off.

The Mudbuster comes in three sizes; the “Medium” is shown here. It’s available for \$15 to \$23 from many pet supply stores, online retailers, Target, and Bed, Bath, & Beyond stores. 🐾



The Mudbuster is made by Dexas International, of Coppell, Texas. See Dexas.com for more information.



It just takes a couple of dunks in the water-filled Mudbuster to clean and rinse even very muddy paws.





The Doctor Orders Calm

How to keep your dog quiet and physically inactive during recovery from surgery or injury.



Recovery/quiet time is a great time to practice behaviors that require the dog to be relatively quiet or still, such as "Wait," "Stay," and "Leave It." One can also work on increasing the duration of these behaviors at this time.

We dog owners spend a lot of time coming up with ideas to keep our dogs exercised, entertained, and socialized. "Do more with your dog!" is a mantra that keeps us on our toes and looking for ways to ensure our pooches lead an active, fulfilled life.

Then one day, should our dog be injured or undergo surgery, we're instructed by our vet to keep Fido quiet – maybe even immobile! – during a recovery period that can range anywhere from a few days to weeks or (gasp) months.

When our own doctor gives us strict orders to take it easy for two weeks while we recover from surgery or an injury, we understand that doing so is for our own good. We know that going against instructions can land us back in the doctor's office with a secondary problem and can make our recovery time even longer. That's often incentive enough to do what we're told to stay out of trouble!

Our dogs, though, don't follow the same rationale. When they start to feel better, they want to resume their daily activities immediately. They're ready to jump and run and chase and play. It's our responsibility to keep them quiet, and this can become an exercise in frustration for everyone involved.

So what can you do when your dog needs to chill against his will? These tips should help you get through your dog's recovery time:

■ **Your vet may prescribe a tranquilizer for your dog.** Seriously consider it. As someone who's just recently gone through a week with a highly energetic post-surgical dog (we're on Week Two as I type), I can vouch for the benefits of accepting that prescription with glee. I'm not talking about something that will knock your dog out cold, but something that can help take the edge off.

We were prescribed Trazodone, a tricyclic antidepressant that has the added effect of a mild sedative. Without it, Bennigan, my Border Terrier, would have felt ready to resume his twice-daily "zoomies" routine far too soon – up and down the stairs, on and off the couch, usually while barely touching the floor.

While medicated, Bennigan is able to walk around as normal. He's not staggering or "out of it." He's just much more serene and will happily curl up and snooze for most of the day – which is exactly what the doctor ordered. When he's awake, he is perfectly alert and enjoys playing brain games. His appetite for treats is alive and well, making training sessions more than possible.

As a bonus, his tranquil state makes it far easier for him to accept wearing his Kong Cloud "donut" (an alternative to the classic plastic Elizabethan collar or "cone of shame"). He's also taken more easily to wearing his post-surgical onesie pajama, designed to prevent him from licking his wound or pulling at his stitches



Toss your dog's kibble onto a "snuffle mat" to increase the amount of time it takes him to sniff out and consume each nugget. These washable mats are easy to make or can be store-bought.

around. A temporary enclosure can be created with an exercise pen.

■ **Ongoing training.** There are still plenty of training activities you can engage in while keeping your dog relatively quiet. Naturally, all the high-energy sports are out of the question, but what about those that are low-key?

Jessica Hekman DVM, PhD, recently needed to adjust her dog's training activities. Dash, an 18-month-old English Shepherd, is an active dog whose recurring issues with one of his shoulders has led Jessica to explore the possibility of orthopedic surgery. While they wait several weeks for their meeting with the orthopedic surgeon to discuss the next steps, Dash needs to stay quiet and can't participate in his usual activities like agility practice.

But how do you minimize the physical activity of an athletic dog like Dash without driving him stir-crazy?

"Dash now does Rally with my husband at the same venue where we used to train in agility. We are also doing an online nose-work class through Fenzi Dog Sports Academy," says Jessica.

Even though Dash can't participate in high-impact sports, he and Jessica have managed to stay plenty busy by

– activities he's proven he can't resist.

Bennigan is particularly sensitive to two things he finds very aversive: Confinement (like a crate) and having something on his body like a harness (which we've been working very hard to address, successfully!). The prescribed medication completely eliminated the need to physically confine him in a crate in order to control his movements (which would cause him undue stress), and it also erased any sensitivity to the onesie on his body. He wore it happily, which proved to be an immense help (in addition to being absurdly cute).

■ **Mentally tiring, low-key activities.**

We know that engaging your dog's nose is an activity that doesn't require much (if any) physical exertion. We also know that scent work can be immensely satisfying and tiring for your dog.

If your dog has permission from your vet to move around quietly, you can hide his food or some treats around an area in your home that's safe for

him to maneuver and encourage him to sniff out the goods. You can also hide some treats or kibble in a snuffle mat – an ideal solution for a dog who should move around as little as possible. With the snuffle mat, he can stay in one place while engaging his nose.

Weather permitting, you could sprinkle kibble in the grass in an enclosed area small enough to prevent your dog from running or jumping



Dr. Jessica Hekman uses trick training and scent-work exercises (seen here) to keep her usually busy English Shepherd, Dash, occupied and focused while a treatment strategy for his injured shoulder is planned.

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learning lots of tricks. They've even earned Dash his AKC Novice Trick Title while on "rest"!

"We practice our toy play, food play, and personal play. Coincidentally, we have some guest cats staying with us for a few months. Dash is overly excited by them, so they live in their own room. A couple of times a day, I let him interact with them and reward for calm behavior. This is great enrichment for him and hopefully will lead to more freedom for the cats. We're making great progress!"

"I've also taken him to pet supply stores or Home Depot/Lowe's on leash and let him meet interested people. He gets a stuffed frozen Kong daily, but this was always the case. It's just more important now."

■ **Advanced brain games.** Some of the low-energy training exercises mentioned above are terrific ideas for the dog who's at least able to move around, but what about the dog who should be as immobile as possible?

That's when you and your dog both really need to use your brains. Object discrimination games – while lots of fun – can be very intellectually demanding for the dog. It's a great way to challenge and tire out a stir-crazy dog who needs to be on complete rest.

With discrimination games, the idea is to teach your dog to differentiate between various objects. You can teach him the "name" of a few objects and ask him to target them with his paw or his snout, or to pick them up on cue. It's a great way to teach your dog what his toys are called! This game can be played without your dog needing to move at all, so it's perfect for the canine patient who's supposed to be on strict rest. (For more brain games, see "Are Canines Cognitive?" WDJ October 2017.)

■ **Impulse control exercises.** Take advantage of your dog's needing to stay calm by practicing behaviors that require him to be immobile, like Stay, Wait, and Off (aka Leave It). It's a perfect time to practice handy behaviors, all while continuing to rest!

■ **Learn canine massage techniques.**

I don't know about you, but a good massage will put me in a zen state of mind that will last for several hours. Your dog can experience the same relaxing sensation with proper massage techniques.

Keep in mind the location of his injury – depending on the nature of it – you may want to avoid it or target it! Choose a quiet spot in your home, play some relaxing music, and spend some one-on-one time massaging your dog. You'll find it's relaxing for both of you!



■ **Keep his mouth busy.** If he can't move his body, let him work on something with his mouth. A frozen Kong is an easy choice, since you can stuff it with low-calorie ingredients. You'll want to watch your dog's food intake while he's less active. Putting on extra pounds can make recovery harder.

PLAN AHEAD

Recovering from an injury or surgery isn't an easy process, and it's made more difficult by the fact that we can't simply explain to our dogs why they need to lay low for a while. But with a little creativity and some planning, you'll both get through it!

Even if your dog is currently in excellent health, take the time now to practice a few things that will come in handy later. Play games to help him make a positive association with a crate, an Elizabethan collar (the plastic cone or equivalent), a body wrap (like a onesie), or a sock on a limb. 🐾

Nancy Tucker, CPDT-KA, is a full-time trainer, behavior consultant, and seminar presenter in Quebec, Canada. See page 24 for contact information.

Teaching Object Names

Teaching your dog to differentiate between objects is a fun brain game that can be stretched out over days or weeks. He doesn't need to learn it all on the first try! Keep sessions short and fun, making sure your dog gets plenty of reinforcement to keep him interested.

1 PREPARE A FEW OBJECTS IN ADVANCE. If you think using toys will get your dog too excited, pick some items that mean nothing to him, like maybe a strainer, a paperweight, and a flashlight (I've randomly chosen these items simply by looking around my kitchen and picking things my dog has never interacted with). Choose items that would be difficult for him to put in his mouth if you want to avoid inadvertently triggering a game of chase. Larger items can easily be targeted with his nose.

2 GET INTO POSITION. Have your dog sit or lie down and then sit on the floor facing him.

3 START WITH ONE ITEM. Place one of the items on the floor in front of him, close enough that he can reach it with his snout. The instant he leans towards it to sniff it, click or say "Yes!" and give him a treat. Deliver the treat away from the object, but close enough to your dog so he doesn't need to stand up. When he's done eating the treat he will probably turn his head back toward the object to check it out again. Click or say "Yes!" and reward him again.

If your dog has done target training with his nose before, he should pick up on the game quickly and touch the object with his nose easily. If he's new to target training, be patient and mark and reward even the slightest movement of his nose towards the object. You want to encourage curiosity and interaction with the object.

4 GIVE THE FIRST ITEM A NAME. When your dog reliably targets the item with his nose, give that item a name. Say the name just as he's leaning toward it. For example, say "Strainer" just before he touches the strainer with his nose. Mark and reward. Repeat this several times so that he gets to hear the word "Strainer" often. We want him to begin to associate the word with the object.

5 BRING IN A SECOND OBJECT (BUT DON'T NAME IT YET). After many repetitions of saying the name of the object and marking/rewarding your dog for touching the object with his nose, it's time to bring in a second object. You will now have both the strainer and the new object on the floor in front of your dog. He will likely explore the new object with his nose. Ignore that; don't mark and treat. Say "Strainer" (or the name of the original object), give your dog a moment to think about it, and mark/treat for touching the first object.

If your dog is able to comfortably and safely take a few steps, move the two objects to a new location, even if it's just a few feet away from where you were a moment ago. Place the objects about two or three feet apart and cue your dog to "Go touch the strainer." Mark and reward if he gets it right!

6 ADD ANOTHER ITEM. Increase the level of difficulty by adding a third item, but continue to ask your dog to identify and target the *first* object.

7 NAME ADDITIONAL ITEMS. To name another item, start the process over again with only the new item to be named in front of your dog. Refer back to #4; say the name of this new object just before he touches it, mark and reward when he does. Repeat several times so he associates this object with its name (for example, "flashlight"). With practice, you'll be able to place more than one named item on the floor and ask your dog to touch each object by name ("touch the strainer"). Mark and reward when he gets it right! Learning to discriminate between items by name can take time and lots of repetition. Enjoy the process – there's no hurry!



Start with one item. When your dog consistently targets the item, start saying the "name" of the item just as he's about to touch it.



Introduce another item, but don't respond if he targets the new item. Give the cue for the first item and click/reward when he targets the first item.



Another item has been introduced, but only the cue for the first item is given. The handler doesn't respond as Otto targets the wrong item.



Make sure you change the position of the objects, to ensure that your dog associates the cue with the item, not its relative position.



Marvelous Mutts

Check out this troupe of performing canines, all former rescue dogs, trained without force or fear – just fun!



Just part of The Marvelous Mutts crew – a troupe of rescue dogs who perform all over the country. The owners of the MM look for high-energy, toy-motivated dogs who love to play. Photo courtesy of The Marvelous Mutts, photo by Maggie Fan Photography.

on the Purina Incredible Dog Challenge Team, Kara’s advocacy work with National Canine Research Council on behalf of pit bulls, and Nadja’s participation in the Animal Farm Foundation’s Shelter Dogs Can Fly program.

Prior to that, they operated a small dog supply store, Hooked on Dogs, in Red Hook, New York. They also used the store as a base for some local rescues to hold adoption clinics. After they decided to close Hooked on Dogs in 2010, partially in response to the economic downturn, they created The Marvelous Mutts, which binds together their shared love of dog sports and rescue.

I spent an afternoon with Nadja, Kara, and all The Marvelous Mutts on a late fall day at their Columbia County, New York, “base lodge.” As we spoke under a gnarled oak tree that sits in a field on the property, two of the stars of the MM show, Shazam and Boo-Ya, came barreling out of the home to see what’s happening – happy, lean, and ready for action.

On any given weekend, you can go to many places in the country to observe a variety of canine competitions, such as agility or dock diving. These are often organized by groups such as the American Kennel Club, Canine Performance Events, or United States Dog Agility Association.

At a performance by The Marvelous Mutts, as the name suggests, you won’t see any pedigreed dogs, but you will definitely witness focused owners and competitive dogs! Looking at a photographic gallery of The Marvelous Mutts, one could easily be confused with having found the listing for a rescue promoting their mixed-breed adoption candidates. Instead, it’s an inspiring model, both for what rescue dogs can do and what highly motivated dog owners can do for shelter and rescue dogs.

The Marvelous Mutts was founded in 2011 by Nadja Palenzuela and Kara Gilmore, two dog-obsessed women who competed in various dog sports with their own mixed-breed rescue dogs while pursuing their law and architecture careers. This started with Nadja’s participation

and Boo-Ya, came barreling out of the home to see what’s happening – happy, lean, and ready for action.

THE SHOW

The Marvelous Mutts split up into two or three teams, each comprised of eight to 12 dogs, and travel in recreational vehicles to county and state fairs, trade shows, and schools. They put on more than 700 shows in 2017! The dogs show off their energetic skills in agility, disc dog, and dock diving in what they describe as a “high-energy action-packed family friendly show.”

As part of the show, Nadja, Kara, and other handlers answer questions, invite children to assist, and have after-show meet-and-greets with the dogs. Their message is to promote rescue: encouraging people to get their next dog from a shelter.

THE DOGS

All of the MM dogs were rescued and trained by the two women or by one of the trainers they

work with, such as Christina Curtis, who has been performing with MM since 2011. The women stress in speaking to audiences that The Marvelous Mutts athletes are not necessarily the type of dogs one wants as a pet. These high-energy dogs are chosen for their strong interest in playing with toys and interacting with people; they thrive on training and performing.

No force is used to train the dogs; they are motivated to work for toys and, to a lesser extent, food treats. Because they get so much training, conditioning, and attention, they do not bounce off the walls for lack of mental stimulation or physical exercise (as many of our pet dogs do), and are happy to chill out until their next meal or workout.

Nadja and Kara beam as they speak of The Marvelous Mutts' original performers, Bandit and Clementine, who were the best man and maid of honor at their wedding in December 2013. Clementine passed away in May 2014, and Bandit is retired at age 15-plus.

All the MM dogs have permanent homes with the two women. "Once we adopt a dog, we are committed to him or her for life, whether or not the dog ends up in the show," Nadja tells me. "We have one dog who has been with us for more than six years, and who still hasn't made it into a show," she says, laughing. "Some people who have traveling-dog acts treat their dogs like equipment. Our dogs are family members for life."

Once a dog ages out of performing, they are welcomed into the slowly growing pack of semi- and full retirees who stay at the MM home base.



The Mutts have fun between road trips at The Marvelous Mutts' base, but also enjoy being on the road. When they see the RVs being loaded, they make it known that they want to go, too!

Kara now spends more time at home with these dogs than on the road with a performance team, and the women are planning to start a home-based training and boarding facility to help support the retired dogs.

Nadja and Kara no longer have to seek out new performers; some of the shelters and rescues they have worked with know what kind of temperament would be a match with MM and provide certain dogs' bios and video to the women (in case you have such a rescue, the MM has a full house at this time!).

Nadja and Kara sometimes agree to take on a foster dog at the request of one of their contacts and the use of social media, they have a good success rate of helping to place these dogs.

Most recently, the women adopted a three-legged dog from Arizona Cattle Dog Rescue. Cha-Cha-Cha is the third dog they adopted from that rescue and has turned out to be a great disc and agility dog. Audiences love to see her – and often don't realize until the end of a show that she has only three legs.

The women spend lots of time with new dogs; those with less than three years in the program have daily training sessions. Those with more experience are exercised daily with

fetch and other games, but are not drilled in the sports they perform. This daily conditioning keeps the dogs happy and fit, to prevent injury. On the road, their performance time is limited in order to avoid overwork and soft-tissue injuries. This program enables the dogs to continue to perform well into their senior years.

Kara and Nadja showed me their dog kitchen, where a white board tracks the supplements, individually tailored for each dog, that are added to the high-quality raw and kibble diet. Their veterinarian, Dr. Tina Aiken, is an integrative practitioner who supports the team at home and on the road with both conventional and complementary modalities.

Nadja and Kara are helped by a number of dog-trainer friends who have their own rescue dogs that compete in agility, disc dog, and dock-diving. These guest performers are added to the show in different parts of the country.

The women also continue to build their own training skills by continuing to take classes (mainly online) with trainers such as Denise Fenzi (of Fenzi Dog Sports Academy), and manage to enroll in some local classes to keep themselves and the dogs tuned-up during the slow periods.

If you are attending a county fair or other event and hear about a performance by The Marvelous Mutts, be sure to check it out! You can't help but be inspired by seeing what can be done by and for rescue dogs of all shapes and sizes. 🐾

SEE THE MARVELOUS MUTTS FOR YOURSELF!

Places to see the Marvelous Mutts in 2018: themarvelousmutts.com/events/

See the dogs' biographies: themarvelousmutts.com/the-mutts/

2017 Highlights: youtube.com/watch?v=rmNx4Om27xl

2016 Highlights: youtube.com/watch?v=GJbYQRFu7q4

2015 promotional video: youtube.com/watch?v=1Qm_jvK8bkQ

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It's Okay to Cry

Losing a beloved pet to age, injury, or illness is supremely stressful – right up there with the loss of any other family member. It's wise to avail yourself of some coping strategies.



Author/trainer Pat Miller recently suffered the loss of her Corgi, Lucy, a small dog with an oversized personality and zest for life. Even after a lifetime of loving and losing dogs, it hurts, says Miller. And each loss can trigger the pain of past losses, too.

Those of us who have long shared our lives with non-human animal companions know all too well that, in the end, the joy they bring to our world is tempered by the impossible, unbearable pain of loss when they leave this earth. Our canine and feline companions tend to live between 10 and 20 years – never long enough.

We know, of course, when we adopt a new animal companion into our family, that there will a day when we have to say good-bye, but the oxytocin rush of our new love causes the awareness of that knowledge to dim. Until one day, there it is. The inevitable. Time to say good-bye. Time to cry.

During my 20 years at the Marin Humane Society, it was a frequent occurrence for me and other staff members to comfort and commiserate with owners who brought their beloved companions to us for euthanasia. We often cried with them – and we always assured them that it was okay for them to cry, too. We also cried for the ones who were ownerless, who had no options, and for whom we provided

caring, gentle deaths in the euthanasia room.

In addition to my animal-shelter work, I have had the joy and privilege of sharing my heart with more than 80 of my own animal companions across my lifetime, including dogs, cats, horses, goats, a sheep, a pig, and a host of small companions – mice, rabbits, and birds. Many tears have been shed over those years. Most recently, we said good-bye to our Lucy.

MY MOST RECENT LOSS

Lucy was 14. Many of you have followed her exploits over the years in my WDJ articles, from her feisty, vocal, Cardigan Corgi adolescence when we adopted her at the age of six months, through her resource-guarding conflicts with our other canine family members,

her sound sensitivity, her separation distress, and more.

We knew Lucy was slowing down in recent years. She stopped jumping up on the bed a couple of years ago, and in the past year declined to jump up on the sofa except for rare occasions. She no longer chased the water droplets when we emptied horse buckets in the arena, and she declined to chase sticks on our hikes around the farm. We did her annual well-pet checkups every year. She still seemed alert, ruled the canine members of the household, and willingly assisted as a neutral dog for client consults and for our Reactive Rover workshops.

In mid January, though, she started vomiting and developed diarrhea over a weekend, and she had no interest in eating. The vet's exam on Monday found a tumor in her vulva – probably metastasized from elsewhere in her body. Lucy had well-advanced cancer. The vet gave her injections of pain medication, antibiotics, and an anti-inflammatory, and said, "We'll see." But the next morning, Lucy couldn't even stand. We called the hospital to let them know we were

coming in and prepared ourselves to say good-bye. It was Tuesday, January 16, her 14th birthday. With hugs and tears, as Lucy lay on the exam room floor, we held her and watched as our vet delivered the euthanasia solution and give her the gentle death that she deserved. And we all cried.

THE FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF

I am now, still, grieving our sudden loss of Lucy, as well the unexpected death of our pot-bellied pig, Sturgis, just one week before that. It's hard – very hard – even though I'm familiar with and understand the stages of grief.

The “five stages of grief” were first identified by Swiss-born Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross in her book, *On Death and Dying*, published in 1969. Initially relating to awareness of one's own pending death, over the years, the concepts have been applied by health care professionals to anyone suffering the loss of something of vital importance. Of course, we know that includes the loss of beloved animal companions.

Not everyone experiences all five stages of grief, and the stages may be experienced in a variable order. Grieving is a very individual process. Often, however, the first reaction to grief is denial.

1 Denial. This reaction frequently occurs when you first receive the diagnosis of a terminal illness or injury, while your animal companion is still alive. The more sudden the impending death, the harder it may be to accept, because you have had little or no time to prepare. You refuse to believe your veterinarian is correct. There must be some medical advance or alternative treatment that will fix this. Indeed, there are legions of anecdotes about terminally ill pets who have been miraculously cured by natural therapies when their lives had been written off by Western medicine.

Eventually, however, unless you are one of the rare, fortunate few, the diagnosis becomes a reality, and you can no longer deny that your companion is gone – or soon will be.

2 Anger/Blame/Guilt. Rational or not, you may be angry that your companion is dying; angry that your veterinarian can't save her; angry at the driver of the car that hit her; angry at yourself for letting her slip out... This, too is normal.

Guilt is self-blame. Sometimes your guilt has a rational basis. Perhaps you are the one who let your dog slip out the front door and then she got hit by a car. Sometimes, despite knowing you have provided the best care you could for your companion, you still feel guilty that she had developed cancer. If only you had fed her a better quality diet for her entire life, instead of just the past five years. If only you had taken her to the vet hospital sooner when you noticed she wasn't quite right, instead of waiting a few days...

If you must make the difficult decision have your dog euthanized, your guilt may be compounded by the fact that you are choosing to end her life. Even though you know that she is suffering, and that euthanasia is the final act of kindness after a lifetime of kindnesses, it can be hard to get beyond the moral sense that taking her life is wrong. You are killing your dog.

It does no good for people to tell you not to feel guilty – you will feel what you feel, and it is a perfectly appropriate and normal part of the grieving process.

3 Bargaining. At some point during your grief you may try bargaining. If you promise to go to church every Sunday for the rest of your life, maybe God will let her live. If you commit to volunteering at your local animal shelter, maybe your dog who has been missing for two months will miraculously appear in a kennel at the shelter. In any case, when you finally begin to accept the reality of your loss, you may become depressed.

4 Depression. This is a time when you intensely experience the sadness of your loss, and feel hopeless and helpless to recover. You may cry, withdraw, stop eating, or not want to get out of bed. Daily tasks may seem impossible. Some people may feel there is no reason to go on with their lives, and may even become suicidal. Professional assistance can be invaluable for someone who is having difficulty with this stage.

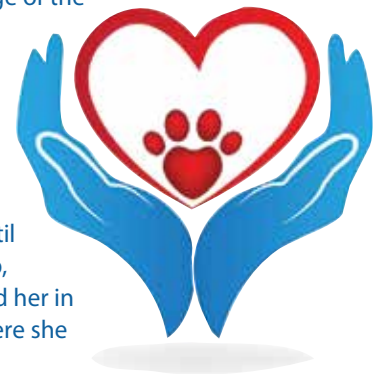
Visualization exercise

When I was in sheltering work, we paid a lot of attention to grief counseling, and to compassion fatigue for our shelter staff. At some point I came across this lovely visualization exercise, which I find very comforting in times of loss. I regret I don't remember the source, and hope I do it justice:

In a quiet darkened room with gentle music and soft lighting, perhaps candles, make yourself comfortable on soft cushions, breathe, and relax. Close your eyes, and imagine yourself in a peaceful place – perhaps a sunny meadow, or a quiet wood next to a trickling stream. Breathe.

Now imagine your dog appearing at the edge of the meadow and running happily to you. You greet her joyfully, and the two of you spend many minutes together, remembering happy times together.

When it's time to go, you reach down and put your hands against her sides. As you watch, she becomes smaller and smaller, until she is small enough that you can pick her up, cupped in your hands. Now pick her up, hold her in your hands, and place her in your heart, where she will stay with you, forever.



5 Acceptance. This is the final stage of the grieving process. When you can accept the loss of your companion, you are ready to begin your return to normal functioning. You will still feel pain and sadness, and there may be times when feelings of anger, guilt, blame, and depression reappear, but they will likely return with less intensity.

In time, they will increasingly be replaced with happy memories of the times you and your dog spent together. The sadness may never go away completely, but it will become more bearable.

IT'S OKAY TO CRY

It's important to remember that grieving is normal, natural and healthy. It's okay to cry, scream, yell, get angry, and be depressed and sad, as long as you aren't harming yourself or anyone else. If at any time you feel overwhelmed and unable to cope, or feel that you are "stuck" in one of the stages, you can seek help from pet-loss hotlines, grief counselors, and other health professionals who specialize in helping people through the grief process.

Rituals can help you move along the difficult path of grieving. Memorial services including burials or scattering of ashes, donations in your dog's name, an announcement in the newspaper, and other similar activities can help diffuse the pain of your loss. Lucy is buried on our farm, next to one of the Christmas trees that she loved to help us plant every year after the holidays. Bonnie and Kai, our remaining two dogs, were in attendance for the ceremony.

I still cry for Lucy. I also wonder whether we should have noticed, sooner, that her appetite wasn't as sharp as it used to be. That the sparkle in her eyes was gone.

The tears slide down my cheeks as I dump water buckets in the arena and envision her happily

dashing after the droplets ... as I take hikes around the farm with Bonnie and Kai, and desperately miss Lucy's stick-chasing enthusiasm ... as I remove clothes from the dryer and she's not there on sentry duty to snatch up any overlooked treats that fall out of the pockets ... As I fix the dogs' dinner and only fill two bowls instead of three, I remind myself that it's okay to cry. 🐾

Author Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, is WDJ's Training Editor. She and her husband Paul live in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. Miller is also the author of many books on positive training. Her newest is Beware of the Dog: Positive Solutions for Aggressive Behavior in Dogs. See "Resources," page 24, for information on her classes for dog owners and academies for dog trainers, and book purchasing details.

Grief resources

There are many resources available to those who are struggling with the loss of a beloved animal companion. Here are a few of our favorites:

BOOKS

Pet Loss: A Thoughtful Guide for Adults and Children,
by Herbert A Nieburg and Arlene Fischer

I Heard Your Dog Died: Imaginings for Those Who Have Lost a Pet,
by Bonnie Kreidler

The Loss of a Pet: A Guide to Coping with the Grieving Process When a Pet Dies,
by Wallace Sife

Coping With Sorrow on the Loss of Your Pet,
by Moira Anderson Allen

SUPPORT GROUPS

The Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement
aplb.org/support/groups/

Pet Loss Support Hotline; Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine
vet.tufts.edu/petloss/

Pet Loss Support Hotline, College of Veterinary Medicine, Washington State University: vetmed.wsu.edu/outreach/pet-loss-hotline

Grief Recovery Method
griefrecoverymethod.com

FACEBOOK GROUPS

Pet Loss Support Group
facebook.com/Petloss/

Pet Loss Grief and Terminal Illness Support Group: facebook.com/groups/398689173802654/

Rainbow Bridge Pet Loss Grief and Support
facebook.com/groups/423903057974943/





Seeing a Spot?

Skin lesions may turn out to be a harmless hemangioma, or a deadly hemangiosarcoma. A trip to the vet and a biopsy are needed to determine the best course of further action.

It usually happens when you're grooming or bathing your dog: You notice a strange little lump you haven't seen before. The first thing to pop in your mind is the C-word. It can't be cancer, can it? Chances are it's just a hemangioma, but don't ignore it.

A cutaneous hemangioma is a benign neoplasm (growth) on the skin that looks a lot like a blood blister (angiokeratoma). That makes sense, because hemangiomas are vascular lesions, formed by endothelial cells, which are the cells that form blood vessels. The color can vary from red to black, and the lesion can ulcerate. A hemangioma can grow, making it prone to bruising, laceration, and infection.

The cause of hemangiomas is idiopathic (unknown). These growths usually don't appear until at least middle age. Thin-skinned, light-colored breeds often experience hemangiomas. You'll most likely find a hemangioma on the dog's trunk or legs, especially hairless areas like the lower abdomen.

Having your veterinarian remove the hemangioma via surgical excision or cryosurgery is often the best option.

"Because these are very vascular, they may ulcerate and drain. In those cases, you need to keep the area clean and consult with your veterinarian on a topical antibiotic or wound cream," advises Debra M. Eldredge, DVM, a veterinarian in Vernon, New York.

GETTING THE DIAGNOSIS

It is debated in veterinary literature whether hemangiomas are more accurately categorized as a neoplasm or simply a vascular malformation. One thing is certain: Hemangiomas are not malignant. The problem, however, is that they closely resemble an aggressive cancer called hemangiosarcoma. By the time a hemangiosarcoma is seen in the skin, the cancer has usually spread to the dog's organs.

A veterinarian will *not* be able to tell you if the growth is a hemangioma or a hemangiosarcoma just by examining it; a biopsy, or at least a cytology, is required. "To be completely sure

which type of tumor you are dealing with, a biopsy is best. In most cases your veterinarian will do an 'excisional biopsy,' totally removing the growth," says Dr. Eldredge.

In a cytology, cells from the neoplasm are removed with a needle, sent to the laboratory, and examined under a microscope by a pathologist. While a cytology is less invasive than a biopsy, the results aren't as conclusive and can be misleading, so a biopsy is preferable for diagnosis.

Depending on the size, location, and depth of the lesion, the biopsy may be done with a local anesthetic and a sedative, or it may require the dog to be fully anesthetized. "A local is fine," says Eileen Fatcheric, DVM, owner of Fairmount Animal Hospital in Syracuse, New York. "They just can't be on a super sensitive or movable part of the body, like near the eyes. Some areas, like a toe, can be difficult with just a local."

The lesion will be sent to pathology for an analysis. The biopsy results will confirm or rule out the presence of cancer.

Waiting for a lump to go away on its own can prove to be a costly mistake. The sooner a diagnosis can be made, the better, especially if you have to move forward with treatment. 🐾

Cynthia Foley is a freelance writer and dog agility competitor in New York.



Hemangiomas: Don't ignore them; a biopsy is in order.

Skin Cancer Signs

Any new lump or growth on your dog is a call for an immediate veterinary exam. While chances are greater that it's benign, there's still a strong risk that it is not. Because some cancers appear on the skin only after invading internal organs, time is of the essence. While the classic sign of skin cancer is a lesion that just won't heal, other symptoms to watch for include bleeding, change in color, crusty look or layer, inflammation, itchiness, swelling, or a wart-like appearance.

Letters and Corrections

Training Editor Pat Miller writes:

I would like to make a few comments regarding the article “Excitable Boy” in the March issue of WDJ. For starters, kudos to author Jill Breitner for her excellent work with Indy. Highly aroused dogs can be frustrating to live with and challenging to work with. The significant improvement in his behavior is clear evidence that she was doing all the right things.

That said, there are many very energetic dogs who can and *do* benefit from an increase in appropriate types of exercise, and I would encourage dog owners to not rule out exercise as a possible solution to their highly energetic dog. There are different ways to exercise, and sometimes it’s a matter of finding the *right* way to exercise your dog. For example:

1 If I use a fetch-game of some sort for an energetic dog, I also build in various impulse-control elements, such as having the dog sit or lie down in order to prompt me to throw the ball, and teaching a “Wait” after the ball is thrown until she gets the release cue. Eventually I may even teach the dog a “release/down/wait/release again” sequence.

2 For dogs who do get too aroused for fetch – or for those who won’t play fetch – an off-leash hike (or a hike on a long line) can be a less-arousing but still highly effective way to provide adequate exercise.

3 Finally, exercise doesn’t have to be highly physical. Scent work is surprisingly good exercise for dogs. Because they are so good with their noses, we tend to think scent work is easy for them, but it is, in fact, *very* tiring – which is why wild dogs, despite having excellent noses, will use vision to hunt as much as possible. Shaping and other mind games can also be



very effective at tiring out a dog who is bouncing off the walls.

In my experience, many dogs deemed “hyperactive” can and do thrive on an increase in appropriate exercise. I have had numerous clients successfully help their high-energy dogs by doing so and have fostered a variety of shelter dogs labeled “hyperactive” who settled nicely after a few weeks here on the farm.

In fact, I don’t even use the term “hyperactive” with my clients’ dogs unless I am seeing the *rare* dog who truly appears clinically, pathologically, unable to control their level of activity. My concern is that it gives humans an excuse for having an out-of-control dog, as opposed to one who just needs more of an investment of their humans’ time and energy.

Author/trainer Jill Breitner responds:

Indy was labeled hyperactive by his owners, who increased and increased his exercise in an effort to tire him out and calm him down. In his case, it was the wrong thing to do, because the label was wrong to begin with.

Indy actually isn’t hyperactive *or* over-energetic. He was in a constant state of hyperarousal, and that’s why *more* exercise wasn’t what he needed, though it often is what other highly active dogs need. Physiologically, Indy was in a state of chronic stress. He

needed *less* exercise and more rest, so that he could destress and find some peace and calm in body and mind.

I agree with Pat that exercise is crucial for dogs and that highly energetic dogs will usually benefit from increased exercise. However, the thing that many people get wrong is to increase exercise at the expense of mental stimulation and training. As Pat points out, *appropriate* exercise is key.

I still threw a flying disc for Indy and I still hiked with him, but I didn’t let him get “over threshold” – the point at which a dog goes from showing no anxiety to showing signs of anxiety: panting, agitation, inability to focus, inability to settle.

Pat’s suggestion of using scent work, shaping, and other “brain games” to help tire out highly energetic dogs is great. Scent work is particularly good for mentally and physically tiring out energetic dogs, as well as hyperaroused dogs like Indy. Indy loves scent work and is able to stay under threshold when engaged in this task.

There are many ways to add mental stimulation to a simple game of fetch. For example, we can ask the dog to jump onto a platform and lie down before we throw a disc for him. We can ask him to go through an agility tunnel before catching the ball. The important thing to recognize is when the dog is getting over threshold and stopping the game or reducing its intensity until the dog calms down. If you know the signs of hyperarousal, depicted in the infographic in the original article, then you will be more able to help your dog.

Every dog benefits from exercise, but it must be looked at as *part* of a program of meeting the dog’s mental, physical, and emotional needs. 🐾

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