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# New or Used?

## *Pondering the purchase of a well-bred, perfectly raised pup.*

BY NANCY KERNS

**R**ecently, one of my friends bought a puppy. Don't judge! She did everything right: She is familiar with the breed, she researched the breeder thoroughly (including references from past puppy buyers), and had the results of veterinary exams and xrays in hand before picking up the pup.

It was immediately apparent that the breeder had done everything right, too. Super socialized and well-adjusted, the puppy settled into my friend's home like he had lived there his whole life, handling his interactions with her mature dogs, cat, livestock, and human visitors with confidence and grace. Yes, grace. He is calm, friendly, playful, and inquisitive. He learned basic behaviors like "sit" and "wait" quickly and easily. His new owner is thrilled with him, as she should be.

This isn't to suggest that *all* well-bred and well-raised puppies are without issues – that's just not possible. Any puppy can have a frightening experience that undermines his confidence and sets a lifetime of fear or anxiety into motion. And even pups from the best bloodlines in the world can be born with a genetic predisposition to fearfulness or anxiety.

But the odds of this happening with a well-bred, perfectly raised pup are far lower than they are with poorly bred or randomly raised dogs. After volunteering for years in a shelter, and fostering one misfit dog after another – and taking weeks or months to help each of them develop into a better-behaved, better-adjusted dog and find an appropriate home for each – I have to say that my friend's smooth, joyful experience with her well-bred pup is, well, damned attractive.

And, though my dog is from a shelter and I fully expect each of my next dogs to come from a shelter, too, I have to admit: Part of me is jealous. If you know how to raise and train a "damaged" dog, do you know how easy it would be to raise and train a well-bred puppy who has been brought up in ideal conditions?

Well, it might not be perfect – again, adverse events can negatively affect even the best, most emotionally healthy dog – but wow, would it ever be easier than trying to train an adolescent dog who has been rehomed three times already, or erase the fear of humans from an older dog who has been abused or neglected, or socialize a puppy who has spent his first eight weeks in a dirty garage, rarely catching sight of a human.

I'm happy for my friend; if *everyone* did things this well, there wouldn't *be* dogs in shelters! By extension, I'm happy for *all* educated, responsible dog owners who "do things right" with their dogs from day one. And I'm more than a bit jealous to hear reports about the pup's super-fast progress. It sounds like an exquisitely enjoyable doggie dream.

But then I go to the shelter and see what we've got there. A perfectly mannered but grey-faced Chihuahua. A gorgeous, calm American Bulldog who is predatory to cats and other small animals. A whip-smart Border Collie who has been returned to the shelter three times for three different reasons. A litter of Lab-mix pups who barely know what a human is. A Boxer-mix who is eager to engage and play any sort of training game once she's with a handler outside, but barks in the kennel all day, every day. And so on. I think to myself, "Could I really buy the purebred puppy of my dreams when all these worthy dogs need homes – especially homes with people who are experienced and educated enough to cope with their problems?"

So far, the answer is no. But that doesn't mean the answer will always be no.

NK

Many people feed canned food at critical times in their dogs' lives, such as when their dogs have lost their appetite due to prolonged illness or advanced age. It's doubly important at that time that the choice of wet food be a good one.



# Canned Food Review

*How to choose a good wet food for your dog (and why you should feed at least some wet food if you don't already).*

BY NANCY KERNS

Recently, a neighbor asked me for advice about her dog, who was vomiting and subdued. As part of our discussion about the dog's upset stomach, I asked what kind of food she fed to the dog. She responded that she fed him high-quality wet food, "not the cheap stuff." When I pressed her for the name of the brand, she said it was Beneful. Thankfully, her dog recovered quickly from whatever malady caused his vomiting, but our conversation haunted me for days. How does a person get the idea that Beneful is a high-quality food?

She's not alone. There are apparently millions of people who buy Beneful and other pet foods made by Nestle Purina Petcare; the company is second on the list of highest grossing pet food manufacturers on the planet. Purina's global retail sales in 2010 (the latest year for which complete figures are available) exceeded \$14 billion. They must be doing something right, right?

In our opinion, what they are doing right isn't optimum nutrition, however. The company may excel at marketing and manufacturing efficiency, but none

of their well-known, popular wet foods are what we would consider healthful (we'll explain why in a minute). But then, what global corporate behemoth makes truly healthy food? Companies with gargantuan production volumes can't use ingredients of the highest quality in their foods; there isn't a large enough global supply of ingredients of that quality!

Seriously, ingredient sourcing is a hot topic in the pet food industry right now. Increasingly educated and ever-more emotionally connected owners want to feed their pets foods with high-quality

ingredients. Pet food makers that utilize top-quality ingredients have to compete with human food producers for those ingredients, and prices for all types of foods are rising dramatically. Drought in the U.S. has severely impacted corn production; high temperatures in Russia have affected its wheat crop. Both of these things affect the price of cattle, pork, and poultry feed, and thus the price of dairy products, beef, pork, eggs, and poultry. And yet, somehow, the price of the lowest-cost pet foods don't seem to rise much, while the price of the highest-cost foods seems to spiral ever-higher. What's up with that?

The answer is ingredient quality. While the price of a product shouldn't ever be considered the sole indicator of a quality food, you have to keep in mind that products that contain high-quality ingredients will necessarily be priced a lot higher than bargain brands. If that can (or pouch or plastic tray) is inexpensive, what's in it can't possibly be "what's best for dogs," which is meat.

## MIGHTY MEAT

We strongly believe that there is nothing more nutritious and healthful for dogs than a well-formulated, home-prepared diet containing fresh, "human-quality" ingredients. If you're not up for home-preparation, however, there are some compelling reasons to feed canned food to your dog as part or all of his diet.

The main reason is that good canned foods contain far more meat than any kibble can be manufactured with. Dogs have absolutely no nutritional requirement for carbohydrates – they can not just live, but can thrive on diets that contain only protein and fats. The fact that they are wondrously able to make use of just about any type of food we give them, grains included, doesn't mean that grain-heavy diets are what's best for them. Many holistic practitioners believe that the canine obesity epidemic and rising incidence of canine diabetes and allergies are due to the biologically inappropriate

diets we feed to dogs. Animal proteins (meat, fish, and eggs) are what dogs have evolved to eat; we're asking for trouble, many believe, by feeding them such an unnaturally carbohydrate-rich diet.

## OTHER BENEFITS

It's also unnatural for dogs to eat such a *dry* diet. Most kibble contains about 10 percent moisture. Meat and fish contain anywhere from 50 percent to 80 percent moisture. Feeding canned foods, which contain (on average) about 78 percent moisture, is therapeutic for dogs who have any sort of kidney ailment, and may be beneficial for *all* dogs.

Most dogs digest wet foods with far fewer digestive problems (such as excessive gas, diarrhea, or constipation) than dogs who eat dry kibble.

Wet food is far more palatable to most dogs than dry food. This is a huge benefit to any dog who needs to gain weight, whether due to illness, age, or high activity. (It can be a hazard, though, to dogs who are fat or prone to becoming overweight. Most canned foods are much

higher in fat than most dry foods, so if your dog is fat or at risk of pancreatitis, look for canned foods with lower percentages of fat.)

Canned foods (the term describes all wet foods that are cooked inside a sealed container, whether it's a can, pouch, or plastic tray) enable us to feed a diet that is biologically appropriate (with a high moisture content and a high inclusion of animal protein) and yet is shelf-stable – without the need for artificial *or* natural preservatives. (That stability lasts longer than even artificially preserved kibble, too.) When vitamin/mineral supplements are added to ensure the diets are “complete and balanced,” the overall benefits of canned food are compelling.

## SELECTING A GOOD ONE

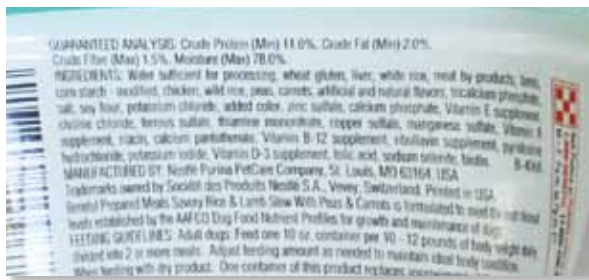
If you're sold on the idea of canned food, great! Now it's time to look for good ones. As always, the best way for a consumer to do this is to examine the label, skipping the pretty pictures of steaks and the marketing verbiage. Don't allow yourself to work up an appetite by descriptions

of spring vegetables, rosemary chicken, seared beef, grilled lamb, and other phrases; trust us, none of those things appear in the food in the form you envision when you read those words. The only thing you should pay attention to is the fine print of the ingredients list and the guaranteed analysis. You need to know what is actually in the food, and how much protein and fat will it deliver to your dog. Ingredients appear on the label in order of their presence in the formula by weight. And the protein and fat content appears in the “guaranteed analysis” portion of the label.

What should the food contain? What ingredients are less-than-desirable? See the chart below for a guide to the traits of top-quality and low-quality foods.

What about the products in the middle, the ones that contain some good and some undesirable traits? That gets trickier, but your budget – and most importantly, your dog's response to the foods – may tip the balance for you one way or the other. Let's look at some labels and do some comparing.

TRAITS OF A GOOD WET DOG FOOD	TRAITS OF LOW-QUALITY WET FOODS
<p><b>The highest possible inclusion of top-quality animal proteins.</b> Look for a whole, named source of meat as the first ingredient (meaning the product contains more of that ingredient by weight than anything else). There are some good foods that list water or broth as the first ingredient and a meat ingredient second – but we'd choose a product with meat first on the label over one that listed meat second.</p> <p><b>“Named” sources of any animal protein or fat</b>, whether it's a muscle tissue (in which case it will appear as chicken, beef, buffalo, etc.) or an organ meat (in which case it should specify which species it came from, for example, “beef liver”).</p> <p><b>Whole grains or vegetables</b> (if any are used in the formula).</p> <p><b>Limited (if any) use of grain or vegetable by-products.</b> For example, a food containing potato starch as the sixth ingredient would be preferable to one with the same ingredient in the third position on the ingredients panel. And a food that contained just one grain or vegetable by-product (such as oat bran) would be preferable to a product containing several (such as potato starch, oat fiber, and tomato paste).</p> <p><b>The words “complete and balanced.”</b> Some manufacturers produce a few wet food products that are meant for “supplemental or intermittent” use only. These products do not meet the specifications for a “complete and balanced diet” as defined by the model regulations developed by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) and adopted by each state. While these “supplemental” foods may be useful as part of a varied diet, they can't be relied on to provide all the nutrients your dog needs.</p>	<p><b>Unnamed animal sources</b>, such as meat, meat by-products, poultry, poultry by-products, or animal fat.</p> <p><b>Meat by-products or poultry by-products.</b> There is a wide range in the quality and type of by-products that are available to pet food producers. And there is no way for a dog owner (or anyone else) to find out whether the by-products used are kept clean, chilled, and used fresh within a day or two of slaughter (as some companies claim), or are comprised of ingredients that were literally swept off a floor, dumped down the floor drains at the processing plant, and kept for hours or days on unrefrigerated loading docks and trucks. Because you can't know, avoid by-products.</p> <p><b>Wheat gluten.</b> Wet foods often contain some sort of thickener or binder. Various types of “gum” (such as guar gum, from the seed of the guar plant, and carrageenan gum, from seaweed) are common thickeners. Whole grains, potatoes, and sweet potatoes also can be used to thicken wet food. But wheat gluten (and some other glutes) are generally used in wet foods both to augment the protein content of the food (albeit with lesser quality amino acids) and to act as a binder, to hold together artificially formed “chunks” so that they resemble chunks of meat. In other words, it's a signal that the real meat content of the product is less than ideal. If chunks of meat are present in a wet dog food, they should be <i>actual</i> chunks of meat.</p> <p><b>Sugar or other sweeteners.</b> A food that contains quality meats shouldn't need additional palatants to entice dogs.</p> <p><b>Artificial colors, flavors, or added preservatives.</b> Fortunately, these are rare in wet foods!</p>



**Not recommended: Nestle Purina's Beneful**

**This one is easy.** This is Beneful's "Savory Rice & Lamb Stew," and it's chock full of the "traits to avoid." We won't hold the fact that water is the first ingredient against the product; there are good foods with water as the first ingredient, too. But wheat gluten is the second ingredient. WOW. Think about that: By weight, there is more wheat gluten in this food than meat – which is crazy, because meat is full of moisture, which is heavy!

There are more "traits to avoid," too: meat by-products (could be anything); "liver" (no species named); artificial and natural flavors (if the food contained a lot of meat, the maker wouldn't need to add flavors to make it palatable); and added color (to make it pretty for you!).



**Not recommended: Iams Proactive Health Chunks**

Any "desirable traits"? Lamb and chicken are in there, but since they appear 6th and 8th on the label, their contributions are actually not very significant. Same goes for wild rice, peas, and carrots; appearing in the 9th, 10th, and 11th spots on the label, they aren't contributing much.

**Here is one of those mixed bags of good and undesirable traits.** This is Iams' "Proactive Health Chunks with chicken in Gravy" and the ingredients start out nicely: Water (okay), chicken (great!), and then meat by-products and chicken by-products (sigh). Check out the addition of broccoli and spinach, way down under all the vitamins and minerals. Why bother, at that level of inclusion? (We can't even imagine what such a tiny amount of broccoli and spinach would look like in a cooking vat full of this food!)



**WDJ-approved: Natural Balance Limited Ingredient Diets**

**This next one is one of our "approved canned foods."** It is Natural Balance's "Limited Ingredient Diets Chicken & Sweet Potato Formula." It has a lot going for it, including the fact that chicken appears first on the ingredients list, and the moisture (2nd) that's been added for processing purposes is chicken broth: nice! Look what's next, however: sweet potatoes, potatoes, and dehydrated potatoes. By the time you add up all that potato, does it outweigh the animal protein (even with chicken liver and chicken meal in 6th and 7th positions)?

One more thing. Look a little lower on the label, at the guaranteed analysis: The fat content is just 3.5 percent. That may make it highly appropriate for dogs who need a lower-fat food. And this is why you need to be aware of how much fat and protein you currently feed your dog, whether or not he needs to gain, hold, or lose weight, and given those factors, what effect this product may have if added to his diet.

**Here is another one of our "approved canned foods."** This is Natura Pet Product's Innova. We love that there are two whole, named meats first on the ingredients list, and that the moisture that has been added (3rd) is chicken broth. There are more carbohydrates in here than there needs to be (brown rice, potato, carrot), but they are all whole and not repetitious (like when you see brown rice and white rice in the same formula), so as long as they work for the dog we are feeding, we're fine with that.



**WDJ-approved: Natura Pet Products Innova**

However, look sharp: Check out that fat content, a whopping 8.5 percent! That might be super for your working Border Collie or field hunter, or a major problem for your Poodle with pancreatitis. Always read the label!

**On the following page is a list of companies that make foods that meet all of our selection criteria for healthy, high-quality canned foods.** Again, they all make great foods, but not all of the foods they make are appropriate for every dog, so check the ingredients panel and guaranteed analysis for every variety you consider feeding to your dog. The list is ordered alphabetically by the manufacturer, so if you don't see the name of your favorite food, look at the label of the food to see what company makes it! As you try different products, keep track of your dog's weight, and adjust the type and amount of food you feed accordingly.

# WDJ'S APPROVED WET FOODS OF 2012

Products highlighted in red are new to our list.

**ARTEMIS PET FOOD COMPANY, INC.** — Carson, CA; (800) 282-5876; artemiscompany.com

**BLUE BUFFALO COMPANY** — Wilton, CT; (800) 919-2833; bluebuffalo.com

**BREEDER'S CHOICE PET FOODS** — Irwindale, CA; (800) 255-4286; apdselectchoice.com, avodermnatural.com, pinnaclepet.com

**CANIDAE CORP.** — San Luis Obispo, CA; (800) 398-1600; canidae.com

**CANINE CAVIAR PET FOODS** — Riverside, CA; (800) 392-7898; caninecaviar.com

**CASTOR & POLLUX PET WORKS** — Clackamas, OR; (800) 875-7518; castorpolluxpet.com

**DIAMOND PET PRODUCTS** — Meta, MO; (800) 442-0402; chickensoupforthepetloverssoul.com; tasteofthewildpetfood.com

**DOGSWELL** — Los Angeles, CA; (888) 559-8833; dogswell.com

**DRS. FOSTER & SMITH** — Rhinelander, WI; (800) 562-7169; drsfostersmith.com

**EVANGER'S DOG & CAT FOOD COMPANY** — Wheeling, IL; (847) 537-0102; evangersdogfood.com

**FROMM FAMILY FOODS** — Mequon, WI; (800) 325-6331; frommfamily.com

**KENT NUTRITION GROUP (formerly Blue Seal Feeds)** — Muscatine, IA; (800) 367-2730; bynaturepetfoods.com

**LOTUS NATURAL FOOD** — Torrance, CA; (888) 995-6887; lotuspetfoods.com

**MERRICK PET CARE** — Amarillo, TX; (800) 664-7387; merrickpetcare.com

**MULLIGAN STEW PET FOOD** — Jackson, WY; (888) 364-7839; mulliganstewpetfood.com

**NATURAL BALANCE** — Pacoima, CA; (800) 829-4493; naturalbalanceinc.com

**NATURA PET PRODUCTS** — Fremont, NE; (800) 532-7261; naturapet.com

**NATURE'S VARIETY** — Lincoln, NE; (888) 519-7387; naturesvariety.com

**PETCUREAN PET NUTRITION** — Abbotsford, BC, Canada; (866) 864-6112; petcurean.com

**PETGUARD** — Green Cove Springs, FL; (877) 738-4827; petguard.com

**PET-TAO** — Fairview, TN; (615) 934-3832; pettao.com

**SOLID GOLD HEALTH PRODUCTS FOR PETS, INC.** — El Cajon, CA; (800) 364-4863; solidgoldhealth.com

**SPRING NATURALS** — Mitchell, SD; (866) 868-0874; springnaturals.com

**THREE DOG BAKERY** — Kansas City, MO; (800) 487-3287; threedog.com

**VERUS PET FOODS** — Abingdon, MD; (888) 828-3787; veruspetfoods.com

**VET'S CHOICE** — Melville, NY; (800) 992-9738; vetschoice.com

**WELLPET** — Tewksbury, MA; (800) 225-0904; wellpet.com; wellnesspetfood.com; holisticselect.com; eaglepack.com

**WERUVA** — Natick, MA; (800) 776-5262; weruva.com

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# Take Your Lumps

*Can (or should) anything be done about lipomas (also known as fatty tumors)?*

BY CJ PUOTINEN AND MARY STRAUS

**U**h-oh. What's this lump? Any growth on your dog's body deserves attention, especially one that wasn't there last time you checked. It could be a sebaceous cyst (a sac filled with sebum, a cheesy or oily material, caused by clogged oil glands in the skin), an abscess (a pus-filled swelling caused by infection), or – everyone's worst nightmare – a cancerous tumor. But in most cases, the lumps we discover as we pet and groom our dogs are lipomas, which are benign (non-cancerous) fat deposits, also known as fatty tumors.

An estimated 1.7 million dogs are treated in the United States for lipomas every year, and according to one survey, American veterinarians average 25 lipoma removals annually at a cost to owners of \$635 million.

Lipomas tend to emerge as dogs reach middle age and increase in number as dogs get older. A dog with one lipoma is likely to get more. Lipomas are most often found on the chest, abdomen, legs, or armpits (axillae). These fatty lumps aren't painful and they usually stay in one place without invading surrounding tissue. Dogs aren't the only animals with lipomas, as they are common in humans and parakeets, and they occasionally develop in cats and horses.

While canine lipomas are frequently associated with overweight females, their greatest risk factor may be genetic. "I've heard all kinds of theories," says Tia Nelson, DVM, of Helena, Montana. "Some veterinarians are convinced that lipomas are the result of over-vaccination, commercial pet food, grain-based diets, and exposure to environmental toxins. Although most dogs with lipomas fit

that description, I can show you plenty of lumpy dogs who were holistically raised on grain-free raw food and minimal vaccinations, including some of my own. The simple fact is that some dogs are going to develop lipomas no matter what you do."

Any dog can be affected, but lipomas seem most common in Labrador Retrievers, Doberman Pinschers, Miniature Schnauzers, Cocker Spaniels, Dachs-

hunds, Poodles, Terriers, and mixed breeds.

## WHAT TO DO

Most lipomas are subcutaneous (occurring just beneath the skin's surface) and are moveable, not attached to skin or underlying muscle or tissue. They are usually small and either round or oval, the size of a marble or marshmallow, and soft or rubbery to the touch. A few feel more solid due to fibrous tissue or inflammation. Some grow to golf-ball size, and very large lipomas can resemble baseballs. A few grow long and wide.

Because there's no way to tell whether a lump is a lipoma just by feeling it, veterinarians remove and inspect fluid from inside the lump in a biopsy procedure called fine-needle aspiration to confirm that the growth contains only fatty cells. Some are concerned about the potential for fine-needle aspirate to spread cancer if the lump is not benign, and this concern is reasonable for tumors in the abdomen or heart (especially if they are filled with fluid, which can be determined with ultrasound) or in the urinary tract, including bladder and prostate. When aspirating subcutaneous solid tumors that might be confused with lipomas, however, the risk is small and outweighed by the advantages of having an accurate diagnosis.

**This 10-year-old dog had several lipomas surgically removed a few years ago, but most of them grew back, including a large one on his right shoulder/neck, one behind his left elbow, and the prominent one on his left side.**





**Gus was adopted after being diagnosed with an infiltrative lipoma in his shoulder that could not be removed. Fortunately, it does not bother him at all.**

The usual recommendation for fatty tumors is to wait and watch. Sometimes lipomas develop rapidly but in most cases their growth is slow. They rarely cause problems unless they become exceptionally large or their location creates mechanical problems. For example, a lipoma in the armpit can affect a dog's gait, while one in the sternum (chest area) can cause discomfort whenever the dog lies down, and a lipoma in the neck area, if it grows large enough, can interfere with breathing and proper collar fit.

"I never do surgery on benign lipomas unless they are physically impeding ambulation or other function," says Stacey Hershman, DVM, of Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. "I never remove a lipoma for cosmetic reasons since I have seen dogs get ill or go into liver failure after lipoma surgery even though their pre-op bloods were normal. Therefore I recommend to my clients that we leave them alone unless there is a medical reason to remove them. A few years ago a dog came in with such a huge lipoma under his armpit that he could not walk, and I removed it for functional reasons."

Some lipomas grow so rapidly that they might be something else, such as a liposarcoma. This rare, malignant fatty tumor usually does not metastasize (spread to other parts of the body) although it can be aggressive and fast-growing. Other tumors that occur on or under the skin that could be mistaken for lipomas include sebaceous adenomas, mast cell tumors, hemangiosarcomas, and hemangiopericytomas. If there is any question about diagnosis, removal may be the safest option.

Occasionally lipomas invade connective tissue between muscles, tendons, bones, nerves, or joint capsules. Called infiltrative lipomas, these usually occur in the legs but can affect the chest, head, abdominal body wall, or perianal region. Infiltrative lipomas can cause pain, muscle atrophy, and lameness by interfering with movement. Unlike normal lipomas, infiltrative lipomas can be difficult to remove completely and often regrow. Infiltrative lipomas are most common in Labrador Retrievers and Doberman Pinschers.

Not all infiltrative lipomas cause



problems. Suzi Faulkner is president of the Atlantic Rottweiler Rescue Foundation (ARRF), which rescued Gus, a 3-year-old Rottweiler, in January 2011. "Gus was pulled from a shelter in Tennessee," she says. "When our volunteers picked him up, they discovered a cluster of lumps around his shoulder blade. A veterinarian removed the small lumps, but the large lump had infiltrated Gus's shoulder and removing it would mean removing part of the shoulder. It tested benign, so it was left alone."

Faulkner feared that his lipoma would prevent Gus from finding a home, but Scott Adelman of Owings Mills, Maryland, fell in love with Gus and adopted him as soon as he recovered from surgery. A year and a half later, Adelman reports that Gus is able to run and play normally, and he is not in pain. "Gus is the best dog in the world," he says.

## **MEDICAL TREATMENT**

Some lipomas can be removed with just a sedative and local anesthetic. Surgery for large, inconveniently placed, or multiple lipomas requires general anesthesia. Ordinary lipomas rarely grow back after removal, but others may occur. Surgery for infiltrative lipomas is more complicated and these growths often recur within 3 to 16 months. Radiation therapy may prevent or delay their recurrence, while chemotherapy provides no benefit.

Small lipomas used to be injected with a 10-percent solution of calcium chloride, which caused the tumors to

become smaller, but this treatment is no longer recommended because of the irritation and severe skin damage it causes.

Liposuction, the same procedure that vacuums fat out of humans in cosmetic surgery, is in many cases less invasive, less painful, and faster healing than surgical removal.

In 2006, a 12-year-old Kelpie-cross named Patch made headlines in Sydney, Australia, for being the first Australian dog to undergo liposuction. Patch had several lipomas, one of which, on his hind leg, threatened to cripple him within months. Remembering a European veterinarian who performed liposuction on a dog using the suction tool normally used to clean up fluids during surgery, an Australian vet suggested trying this approach on Patch. The hour-long procedure removed six fatty tumors weighing two kilograms (4.4 pounds, or 10 percent of Patch's body weight). He was soon happy and playful again.

In January 2007, the *Journal of Small Animal Practice* reported the liposuction removal of three giant lipomas from a dog in Leipzig, Germany. The extremely obese patient suffered from arthritis and hind-leg lameness plus irritation caused by an armpit lipoma. Previous treatment involving dietary weight loss and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs had failed. Liposuction of the three lipomas resulted in a three-kilogram weight loss (6.6 pounds, or 10 percent of the dog's body weight).

In a retrospective study published in

July 2011, the *Journal of Small Animal Practice* reviewed the use of liposuction on multiple lipomas from 20 dogs. The treatment successfully removed 73 of 76 lipomas (96 percent). Simple, encapsulated lipomas measuring less than 6 inches in diameter were the easiest to remove and resulted in minimal risk of complication. Giant lipomas contained fibrous material that interfered with the removal of fat and had a high risk of bruising, hematoma, and seroma (fluid-filled swelling), especially in the groin area. Regrowth occurred nine months to three years later in 28 percent of the lipomas. Liposuction is not recommended for infiltrative lipomas.

The newest lipoma treatment for dogs and humans is the injection of collagenase, an enzyme that breaks the peptide bonds in collagen, the fibrous protein that connects body tissues. Developed by BioSpecifics Technologies Corporation and marketed as XIAFLEX® in the U.S. and XIAPEX® in Europe and Eurasia, collagenase is being tested in clinical trials.

One preliminary trial tested three healthy dogs with multiple subcutaneous lipomas that were benign, superficial,

and easily measurable. One lipoma on each dog was injected with collagenase and another was left untreated for use as a control. Ninety days after injection, a CT scan showed that the treated lipomas on two of the dogs had disappeared completely and the third dog's treated lipoma was only 7 percent of its original size. By contrast, the control lipomas had grown. Altogether, the treated lipomas showed a 97-percent reduction in size while the untreated controls increased by 23 percent.

BioSpecifics has initiated a placebo-controlled, single-injection randomized Phase II clinical trial to evaluate the efficacy of XIAFLEX for treatment of benign subcutaneous lipomas in 32 canines in a study to be completed in 2013. This will be followed by a Phase III clinical trial before the product becomes commercially available. (See "Resources," page 13, for details.)

## COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

Because lipomas are so common in overweight dogs, one obvious treatment is weight loss. In some cases, diet and exercise have reduced the size of existing

lipomas and may have helped prevent new ones from developing. Even if your dog's lipomas don't shrink as a result, helping an overweight dog trim down should help her feel better and be more active.

Switching to a raw, grain-free diet has been said to help some dogs, although most raw diets are high in fat, which may be counterproductive.

Limiting vaccinations may help some dogs, especially if lipomas tend to occur after vaccination.

"In my practice I have been following numerous dogs who are now 6 to 14 years old," says Judith K. Herman, DVM, of Augusta, Maine. "So far these dogs, all of whom received minimal vaccinations and are fed raw, have not developed any lipomas. Most are Jack Russell Terriers, Belgian Tervurens, Labrador Retrievers, and Golden Retrievers."

## ■ ACUPRESSURE

While acupuncture involves the insertion of needles along the body's meridians, acupressure applies finger touch or massage to the same points. As Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis explained in "Truly

## NOT TOO OLD FOR SURGERY

Some are reluctant to perform surgery on old dogs because of anesthesia risks or complications, but these risks are minimal in the case of most lipomas. Modern anesthesia protocols are far safer than they used to be, and complications are generally minor, usually limited to superficial infection or delayed healing. There is no reason not to remove lipomas from older dogs when they interfere with their quality of life.

Tia Nelson examined a 12-year-old Lab whose owners had made the painful decision to put her down because she just couldn't get around any more. But her problem wasn't old age, it was a five-pound lipoma on her side just behind and partly under her shoulder blade. "I removed it," says Dr. Nelson, "and the dog enjoyed another two years."

In a report published on his blog "Your Pet's Best Friend," Everett Mobley, DVM, of Kennett, Missouri, describes the case of Ling Ling, a 15-year-old Collie-mix who developed a large tumor in front of her left shoulder. "It was about 6 inches long, 3 inches wide and 1.5 inches thick, which is pretty big, even for a 57-pound dog," he says. "We did a fine-needle aspiration and it turned out to be a lipoma. Because Ling Ling was so elderly and the tumor was large enough to require lengthy surgery, plus it didn't seem to bother her, we decided it was something

she would probably die with, instead of something she would die from."

But in May 2012, Ling Ling lost weight while her tumor grew. "It grew so much," says Dr. Mobley, "that it appeared to have disrupted its own blood supply. There was a nasty-looking bulge that looked like it would soon die and rot and burst open. Not so good. She made it through 90 minutes of surgery like a champ. The tumor was so big it was like delivering a baby. It weighed three pounds and was as big as her head."

Because the mass had disrupted the attachment of Ling Ling's shoulder muscles, Dr. Mobley re-attached them. She made a full recovery.



**ABOVE: The mass on Ling Ling's shoulder before surgery. RIGHT: Two months after surgery, Ling Ling is far more comfortable.**





**Oak started forming lipomas when he was just two years old. They continued to develop throughout his life, though his owner was able to resolve most of them with acupressure.**

with acupressure massage, also called *Tui Na* in Chinese, as a way to increase the movement of *chi* and body fluids through each lipoma.”

For six years, Snow resolved Oak’s lipomas with these techniques. After age eight, although they remained small, his lipomas became a management issue and were not completely resolved. At age 11, one had to be removed because it hindered walking. The following year, Oak passed away with only a few minor lipomas.

“Lipomas are relatively superficial, just beneath the skin, and so are the meridians,” says Snow. “That’s why working along the meridians that pass through a lipoma works. If people use acupressure around a lipoma but not on meridian points, it will not be as effective and in fact may not be effective at all. Graduates of the Tallgrass Animal Acupressure Institute training program have shown the guardians/owners of dogs with lipomas how to perform some of these procedures on a consistent basis. Applying acupressure massage every day for six days, then taking a one-day break, then continuing for another five or six days and repeating the pattern until the lipoma is resolved seems to be an important element in ridding dogs of lipomas.”

Healing Touch,” (WDJ, March 2009) and other WDJ articles, the basic principle underlying the healing process is that vital substances nourish the body while moving harmoniously through it. Two of these vital substances are *chi* (or *qi*), which is life-promoting energy, and blood, a nutrient-rich body fluid. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, “blood” includes other body fluids, such as synovial fluid in the joints or the nutrient-rich fluid within the spinal column.

“My dog Oak was a lipoma creator of great dimension,” says Snow, “and acupressure worked to resolve them for most of his life. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, a lipoma is a stagnation of body fluids. The challenge is to bring *chi* through the area to move or disperse the fluids. The longer they stay, the more difficult it is to resolve them because they become ‘cold.’ Additionally, the younger the dog, the more quickly lipomas can be resolved. As the dog ages, his system naturally slows down and this slowing leads to an increase in developing lipomas.”

Even as a 2-year-old, Oak, who was an affectionate, easy-going Golden Retriever, created lipomas. “I’d run my hands over him almost every day to see if there were any new ones,” she says. “I had him checked for hypothyroidism to see if his metabolism was normal, and it was. Oak’s lustrous coat often hid the lipomas until they were obvious. But I did my best to locate them and get to work

**To treat Cayman’s arthritis, his owner fed him curcumin – and found that it also helped reduce Cayman’s lipomas. When the curcumin was stopped, the lipomas returned.**

For best results, consult a canine acupressure practitioner who can show you exactly which acupoints affect energy flowing through a specific lipoma, or practice on your own with the help of *Acu-Dog: A Guide to Canine Acupressure* (see “Resources,” page 13).

## ■ HERBAL MEDICINE

Herbs have been used for millennia to treat every type of condition, and today’s science confirms the effectiveness of many ancient remedies. Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), the root that gives Indian curries their distinctive color and flavor, has a long history of use in Ayurveda, the traditional medicine of East India, especially for digestive disorders and arthritis. Curcumin is the active ingredient responsible for turmeric’s anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Andrew Stowe of Fairfax, Virginia, gave turmeric root powder to Cayman, his 13-year-old yellow Lab/hound-mix, as part of a treatment for arthritis. Cayman had developed six large and medium-sized lipomas, and while he was taking turmeric, three of them disappeared and the others shrank. After six months the arthritis treatment stopped working (Cayman began limping again), so Stowe discontinued the treatment. The dog’s lipomas returned and he developed even more. Stowe thinks the turmeric may have suppressed their growth.

The protocol Stowe followed for 80-pound Cayman combined turmeric





**Zippity has three lipomas. Her owner believes that a Traditional Chinese herbal remedy is helping to limit the growth of the lipomas.**

powder with other supplements, beginning with a four-week dose of ¼ teaspoon turmeric powder morning and evening; then two weeks at ½ teaspoon twice per day; then ¾ teaspoon twice per day.

It's a good idea to begin any herbal treatment with small doses and increase gradually to the recommended amount, which in the case of turmeric is often ¼ teaspoon for small dogs, ½ teaspoon for medium-sized dogs and 1 teaspoon for large dogs daily. Give with food to prevent stomach upsets. Be sure your turmeric is *Curcuma longa* (verify the herb's Latin name) and not an inexpensive substitute, and, because turmeric dyes everything yellow, wash your hands after handling.

Curcumin extract is much more concentrated than the powdered root. Recommended dosage varies, but one product made for dogs suggests giving 20 to 60 mg per 10 pounds of body weight daily. Higher doses, up to 2,000 mg twice a day for a large dog, are used to treat dogs with cancer. Combining curcumin with bromelain may increase absorption.

Herbalist Ingrid Naiman developed "Stone Free" Herbal Support for Kidney and Gallbladder using turmeric and other herbs. "It emulsifies fat," she says. "We have seen it completely remove fatty deposits under the skin."

Alyssia Greiner of Manassas, Virginia, tried a Chinese herbal treatment for her 9-year-old Border Collie, Zippity, when she developed a large lipoma on her right shoulder, another on her right ribcage, and a small one inside her left leg. Her vet prescribed "Cluster Dissolving," a traditional blend of 11 Chinese herbs.

"Zip has been on it for about six months," says Greiner, "and there is a definite difference in size and softness. The one on her shoulder used to feel like a softball and people would freak out when they felt it, but several people familiar with her think it feels smaller, softer, and more pliable. The one on her leg felt like a large marble but is now softer and smaller. The rib cage lipoma feels very loose and fluid now. I don't think they will dissolve completely, but as long as they are not getting bigger, I'm happy."

#### ■ HOMEOPATHY

Although homeopathy is often recommended as a support therapy for lipomas, many veterinary homeopaths report little or no success with homeopathy as a stand-alone treatment for fatty tumors.

Dr. Judith Herman in Augusta, Maine, is a veterinary homeopath, former president of the Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy, and chair of its certification committee. Classically trained homeopaths such as Dr. Herman use single remedies (not combinations) in response to their patients' specific symptoms. "The correct remedy is the one that matches the patient's whole picture," says Dr. Herman. "Lipomas are part of the chronic disease picture, not single entities."

In 2004, Dr. Herman treated Anna, a 1-year-old Golden Retriever, for masticatory muscle myositis, an inflammatory muscle disease that produces jaw pain or an inability to open the jaw. At the time, Anna was eating grocery store kibble and taking prednisone. "Because she had diarrhea and her owners weren't ready to forego allopathic treatment," she says, "I suggested changing her food to a raw, home-prepared diet."

Prednisone was discontinued after symptoms resolved, but when they returned, Dr. Herman treated Anna homeopathically. Within two months, her mouth functioned normally, but Anna later returned with a soft lump on her chest, which was diagnosed as a lipoma, and she again showed mild signs of myositis. She received the same homeopathic remedy as before but at a higher potency. One month later her mouth was back to normal and the lipoma had disappeared.

"Anna has had normal yearly visits since then without any sign of illness," says Dr. Herman. "In 2010 she developed a yeast infection in her ears and I treated her with the same remedy as in 2004 because her symptom picture still matched the remedy. Her ears were fine within a month, and she is still doing well."



**The same homeopathic remedy was used to successfully treat Anna's lipoma, masticatory muscle myositis, and a yeast infection in her ears.**

Stephen Blake, DVM, of San Diego, California, reports, "I had a case at a no-kill shelter where an 8-year-old Shepherd-mix had a lipoma almost the size of a basketball on his back, hanging over his side. It was so big that the dog had problems running. I treated him

once with homeopathic Thuja 10M and within a month it dissolved. After two months all that was left was a large sack of skin hanging on the dog's back.

"My reasoning for prescribing the Thuja was the fact that he had been vaccinated prior to the appearance of the lipoma. Homeopathic Thuja is a good

choice in cases like this, where a lipoma appears after a vaccination.”

## ■ AROMATHERAPY

Aromatherapy’s essential oils (see “Essential Information,” WDJ January 2005) may help lipomas in some cases. Dr. Blake says, “As part of the healing protocol for all tumors, I use a combination of frankincense (*Boswellia spp.*), sandalwood (*Santalum album*), and Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) to aid the body in its detoxification and healing process. I have the owner massage a small amount of these oils into the tumor daily until the body has no need for it.”

Canine aromatherapist Frances Fitzgerald Cleveland of Littleton, Colorado, uses full-strength grapefruit essential oil (*Citrus x paradise*), which is not a distilled essential oil but rather cold-pressed from the peel of fresh fruit. “This is a very cooling, cleansing, and decongesting oil, like lemon,” she says. “Grapefruit oil helps the body eliminate excess fluids and break down fats, plus it promotes a lightness of spirit. It is my first choice when working with lipomas. I find it aids in clearing the lymphatic system, helps with congestion of the skin, and is a tonic to the system. I have used it on two of my dogs with great success in keeping their existing lipomas from getting any larger and shrinking some to a smaller size.

Essential oils are usually diluted before being applied to dogs, but one or two drops of therapeutic-quality frankincense or grapefruit essential oil can safely be applied to an adult dog’s lipoma once or twice per day.

## NO TREATMENT NEEDED

While lipomas can be unsightly, they are generally harmless and rarely cause problems. This is one situation where doing nothing is a completely acceptable option, once the diagnosis has been verified. Be thankful knowing that your dog has nothing worse than a lump of fat and not a cancerous tumor. 🐾

*CJ Puotinen lives in Montana. She is the author of The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and other books and a frequent contributor to WDJ. See page 24 for book purchasing information.*

*Mary Straus is the owner of DogAware.com. She lives with her Norwich Terrier, Ella, in the San Francisco Bay Area.*

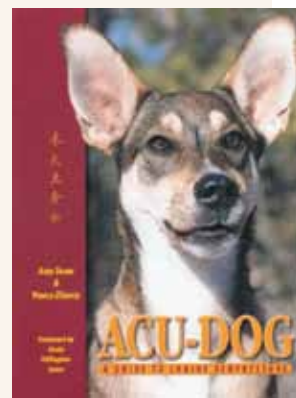
## RESOURCES

### For further reading:

- ❖ **“LIPOSUCTION FOR REMOVAL OF LIPOMAS IN 20 DOGS”**  
by GB Hunt, et al. Journal of Small Animal Practice, 2011 Aug;52(8):419-25.
- ❖ **“LIPOSUCTION: REMOVAL OF GIANT LIPOMAS FOR WEIGHT LOSS IN A DOG WITH SEVERE HIP OSTEOARTHRITIS”**  
by P. Böttcher P, et al. Journal of Small Animal Practice, 2007 Jan;48(1):46-8.
- ❖ **“TOO OLD FOR TUMOR SURGERY?”**  
by Everett Mobley, DVM. [www.yourpetsbestfriend.com/your\\_pets\\_best\\_friend/2012/07/too-old-for-tumor-surgery.html](http://www.yourpetsbestfriend.com/your_pets_best_friend/2012/07/too-old-for-tumor-surgery.html)
- ❖ **ACU-DOG: A GUIDE TO CANINE ACUPRESSURE**  
by Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis. Tallgrass Publishers, 2011, paperback, 188 pages, \$33

### Products and Practitioners:

- ❖ **STONE FREE, BY PLANETARY HERBALS**  
Ingrid Naiman, (800) 606-6226; [planetaryherbals.com](http://planetaryherbals.com)
- ❖ **CLUSTER DISSOLVING, BY KAN HERB COMPANY**  
(800) 543-5233; [kanherb.com](http://kanherb.com)
- ❖ **CURCUVET, BY THORNE RESEARCH**  
(800) 228-1966, [veterinary.thorne.com](http://veterinary.thorne.com)
- ❖ **XIAFLEX (INJECTABLE COLLAGENASE), BIOSPECIFICS TECHNOLOGY**  
(516) 593-7000, [biospecifics.com](http://biospecifics.com). Dogs with benign subcutaneous lipomas may be eligible to participate in a clinical trial conducted in Carlsbad, CA, by California Veterinary Specialists. For info, contact Dr Sarit Dhupa, [sarit.dhupa@gmail.com](mailto:sarit.dhupa@gmail.com), or Janette Velez, [jvelez@calvetsspec.com](mailto:jvelez@calvetsspec.com); (760) 431-2273
- ❖ **CANINE AROMATHERAPY PRODUCTS, BY FROGWORKS**  
Frances Fitzgerald Cleveland, Littleton, CO. (877) 973-8848; [frogworks.com](http://frogworks.com)
- ❖ **TALLGRASS ANIMAL ACUPRESSURE INSTITUTE, LARKSPUR, CO**  
Amy Snow, Nancy Zidonis, and practitioner referrals. (303) 681-3033; [animalacupressure.com](http://animalacupressure.com)
- ❖ **ATLANTIC ROTTWEILER RESCUE FOUNDATION (ARRF)**  
Mooresville, NC. (704) 929-2304; [arrfnc.com](http://arrfnc.com)
- ❖ **STEPHEN BLAKE, DVM.** San Diego, CA. (858) 566-3588; [thepetwhisperer.com](http://thepetwhisperer.com)
- ❖ **JUDITH K. HERMAN, DVM**  
Augusta, ME. (207) 623-1177; [mainehomeopathicvet.com](http://mainehomeopathicvet.com)
- ❖ **STACEY HERSHMAN, DVM**  
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY. (914) 478-4100; [www.naturalvetforpets.com](http://www.naturalvetforpets.com)
- ❖ **EVERETT MOBLEY, DVM**  
Kennett, MO. (573) 888-2255; [www.yourpetsbestfriend.com](http://www.yourpetsbestfriend.com)
- ❖ **TIA NELSON, DVM.** Helena, MT. (406) 442-0188; [tdbhelena.com](http://tdbhelena.com)



# In Pursuit of a Loose Leash

*How to get your dog to walk politely on leash – and have fun doing it.*

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC

I'm sure I'm not the only dog trainer who sometimes shakes her head in frustration and dismay at her students' apparent lack of success with teaching their dogs to walk politely on leash. Oh, they can do it just perfectly in the training center as I coach them to click and treat at random intervals. But when I stand at the window and watch them walk to their cars after class, the majority of dogs are leaning on the ends of their leashes as they strain to sniff enticing odors on their way back to their cars.

"Where have we failed?" I may think to myself – and then stop to remind myself that perhaps we haven't. At this moment our students aren't asking their dogs to walk politely, therefore no one is failing anything.

I'm reminded of a cartoon I saw a while ago, of a dog marching by his owner's side in perfect heel position, looking perfectly miserable while a stream of fascinating stimuli pass by that the dog would obviously love to investigate and can't. The thought balloon over the dog's head says, "Whose walk is this, anyway?"

## WHOSE WALK IS THIS?

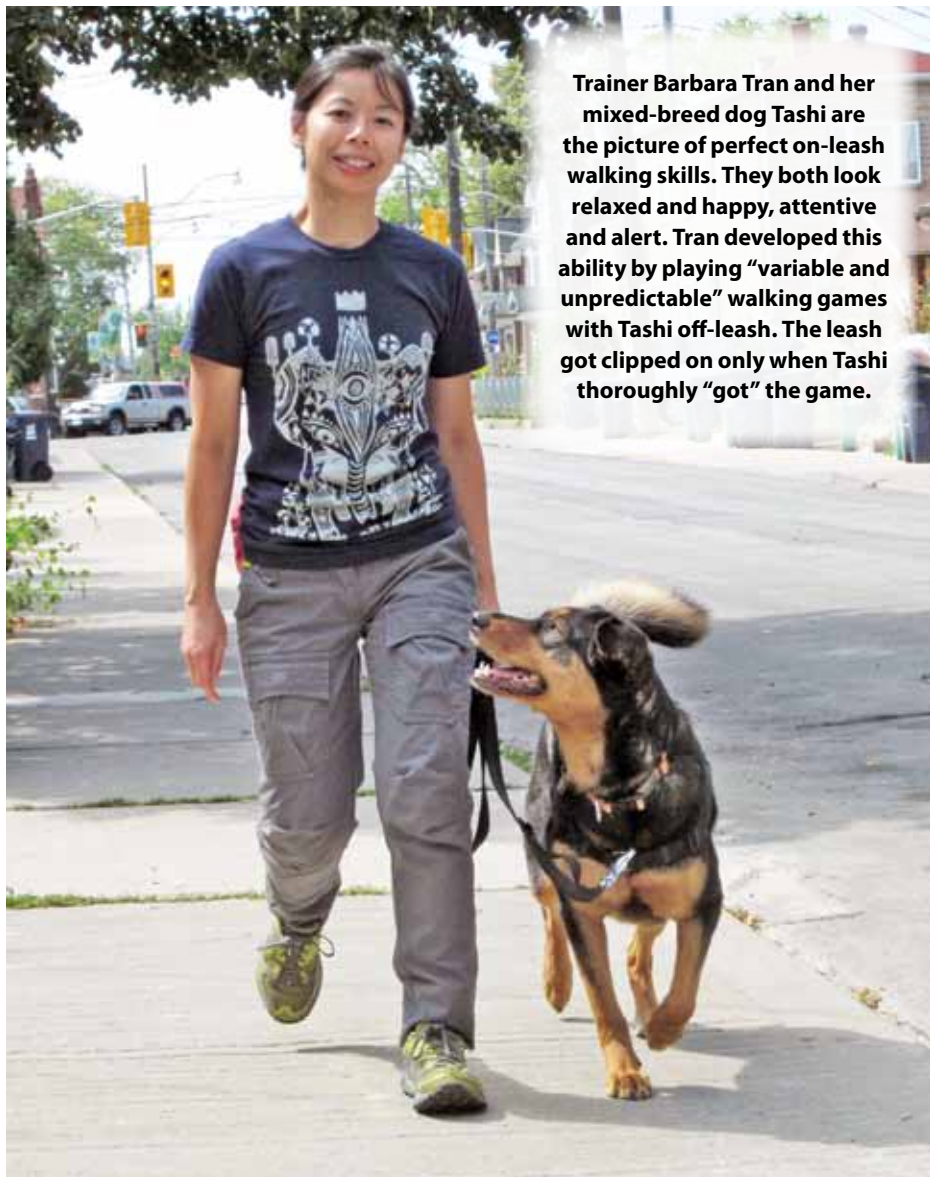
There are, in fact, a variety of ways to walk on leash. The perfect-heel-position *pas-de-deux* dance required for obedience competition, while head-spinningly beautiful when performed well, requires focused concentration at both ends of the leash, with a high rate of some kind of reinforcement – treats, praise, or eye contact from the owner.

It's good for dogs and their people to know how to do this when requested, but unreasonable to expect them to walk this

way *all* the time. Humans don't want do that on a casual walk around the block, nor do their dogs. My own dogs, like those of my students, are quite capable of doing this when they know the perfect-heel game is on, but they're not about to walk glued to my side when we're strolling – or hiking – around the farm.

In addition to the "Heel!" walk that we do in the training center (gaze with concentration into my eyes in perfect heel position, a.k.a. *my* walk), my dogs know two other ways to walk on when we're on *their* walks. "Let's walk!" is the cue I use to mean "You need to stay close to me but you can wander, sniff, and pee," while "Be a dog!" means "You can range to the end of the leash in any direction, just don't drag me."

Each type of walking is taught according to the same basic formula: the dog is reinforced for being where I've asked her to be. The less freedom the



**Trainer Barbara Tran and her mixed-breed dog Tashi are the picture of perfect on-leash walking skills. They both look relaxed and happy, attentive and alert. Tran developed this ability by playing "variable and unpredictable" walking games with Tashi off-leash. The leash got clipped on only when Tashi thoroughly "got" the game.**

dog has – the closer I want her to be by my side – the higher the rate and value of the reinforcer I use to train the behavior. When I want her to be in heel position, *all* the reinforcement comes from me, in the form of high-value treats and silly chatter. When the dog is fluent at walking by my side, I begin decreasing the rate of reinforcement, so she can walk politely for longer and longer stretches between reinforcers.

When I offer more freedom on our walks, I can make use of the environment to reinforce my dog by doing “penalty yards” when the leash tightens. “Want to sniff that tree? Oops, the leash is tight, the tree goes farther away!” (We back up). “Now there is slack in the leash – look, the tree is getting closer!” (We move forward).

### DOGS GOTTA HAVE FUN

Still, unless you’re a training junkie, practicing polite leash walking can be, well, let’s face it, pretty boring. If, however, you can make it a game, it suddenly becomes more fun for you *and* your dog. Play enough games, and your days spent on the other end of a tight leash may be over. Positive reinforcement training encourages creativity and fun.

My own favorite approach is simply to be variable and unpredictable. If my dog never knows when I might toss a high-value treat on the ground, pull out a favorite toy, or head off on a tangent, she has to keep half an eye on me at all times. My goal is to happily surprise my dog; often enough that she decides it’s well worth her while to stay close to me.

There is no limit to the training tactics that can be used to teach leash walking in an enjoyable manner. Just leave it to a bunch of positive reinforcement trainers to come up with games designed to make leash walking fun. Here are a few examples:

■ **BARBARA TRAN**, CPDT-KSA, PMCT, in Toronto, Canada, takes “variable and unpredictable” to a new level with her leash-walking game, “Catch Me If You Can!” With this method, you “capture” the desired behavior (dog staying close to you) and the leash goes on only *after* the dog has been reinforced for staying near your side so much that she *chooses* to stay there.

Tran describes how she played this game off-leash with her dog, Tashi. “Heeling doesn’t need to be dreadfully

**Trainer Lisa Waggoner uses a modified dance step to teach her dogs to follow her lead! She frequently reinforces the dog for staying in position at her side, with the treats delivered right at her side, too.**

boring. I tried to dodge Tashi; if she got within a few feet of me, I marked her success with a clicker and fed her a treat. There was no force. It was completely her choice. Tashi chose to try and catch me because it was fun.

“At first, we did this always at a fast pace and with lots of changes in direction, so it was truly a job for her to keep an eye on me. I released the treats beside my left leg, so she was always receiving her food rewards in proper heel position. Gradually, I began to introduce brief (initially, just a step or two) snippets of heeling at a normal pace. I clicked and rewarded her for paying attention to me while walking and then, we resumed our fast-paced game. Very gradually, and in an unpredictable pattern, I extended the periods of normal walking, so that sometimes there was little to no running.

“Sometimes, I used running rather than food as a reward for attentive heeling. Sometimes, I threw a toy and released Tashi to go get it. Fun, fun, fun! Walking side by side became a predictor that we might play the ‘Catch me if you can’ game, or I might throw a toy, or I might supply a tasty treat.”

■ **LISA WAGGONER**, PMCT2, CPDT-KA, of Cold Nose College, in Murphy, North Carolina, says, “I like to get the dog accustomed to the ‘leash clasp hanging down’ (which means the leash has to be loose). I click/treat while the dog is standing still, clasp down/leash loose. The dog has to think, ‘It can be this easy?’ After a few rounds of this, we do what we call ‘the Box Step.’ We have fun with our clients talking about all those dancing lessons (we have mostly 60-80 year old clients).

“The Box Step involves taking a tiny step to the right. The dog may or may not move with us, but as long as the clasp is hanging down and the leash is loose, we click/treat. Then take a tiny step to the left; click/treat. Then a tiny step back; click/treat. Step forward; click/treat.

“Before long, the dog decides that staying very near is quite fabulous. Once the dog follows me in the small steps right/left/back/forward, then I transition, with the dog at my left, to taking



### What you can do . . .

■ Remember that a walk is supposed to be fun for you and your dog. Select the games described here that you think will work for you, and go play with your dog!

■ If your dog pulls you unmercifully, you may need an added boost from training equipment that can help you maintain control. Front-clip control harnesses are great for this (see product review, page 18).

■ If nothing you’re doing works to convince your dog to walk politely with you, seek the help of a positive-reinforcement-based training professional. Referral lists of these can be found at [peaceablepaws.com](http://peaceablepaws.com), and at [trulydogfriendly.com](http://trulydogfriendly.com).





**Trainer Dawn Kalinowski teaches her dogs that pulling on the leash just delays or prevents them from being able to reach what they want, via a “penalty yards” walking game.**

exercise teaches the dog that a loose leash allows him to get closer to the prize but a tight leash causes him to lose ground.

She suggests, “Start in a quiet room in your house. For this exercise, have a handful of tasty treats, or a toy if your dog is motivated by toys. Using a six-foot leash, tether your dog to something in a place where he can watch what you’re doing. Show him the yummy treat or toy. Walk about 8 to 10 feet away and place the treats or toy on the floor.

“Walk back to your dog and pick up his leash. Holding your leash hand close to your body, walk very slowly toward the ‘goodies.’ When your dog pulls toward the goodies (thus tightening the leash), give a ‘no reward marker’ (NRM) such as ‘Oops!’ and take him back to the starting place. When he is calm, again start your slow walk toward the goodies. When he pulls again say “Oops!” and once again go back to the starting position.

“Continue this exercise until your dog can reach the goodies without any tightening of the leash. Ask him to wait, pick up the treats or toy and give him the goodies. Once your dog catches on, bring in exciting new goodies for him and change locations to different rooms in the house.”

two or three steps forward, clicking as the dog moves with me, taking treats at my left knee.”

See the link in “Resources” (next page) to see Waggoner and Leia, a busy Boston Terrier, doing the Box Step.

■ **DAWN KALINOWSKI** of Poised Pups, LLC, in Norfolk, Virginia, takes the “penalty yards” technique mentioned previously and goes one step further, turning it into an training exercise. This

■ **SUSAN KAMINSKY**, CPDT-KA, PMCT, of The Country Dog, LLC, in Norwalk, Connecticut, utilizes “luring” to help the dog find opportunities for reinforcement in the desired walking position.

She explains, “I work first with ‘follow me’ – in the house, a fenced-in yard, or on a long line – and I point a finger down in front of the dog’s nose, initially with a strong-smelling treat in that hand. Eventually I just use my finger. It is a fun game and the dog learns to pay attention to me without the restraint of a leash. I start walking at a fast trot, which also helps gain the dog’s attention, and I change direction frequently. This idea developed from a Patricia McConnell technique, but I added the pointing finger as I like having a visual cue.”

■ **TRICIA LUDE**, of Manassass, Virginia, is a dedicated dog hobbyist who competes in agility. Having her dogs work at her side while running is vital to her competitive success – and she takes her competition seriously.

Lude says, “I do a lot of foundation work/games to get my dogs to love being at my side because in agility (which is my main focus), I need them driving along my side and not turning into me. I never actually train them to heel. After doing all these games, all they want to do is be at my side. Whenever I give them a treat or reinforcement, I turn so that they are at my side. When I cue them to sit, I have

## MORE QUICK TIPS FOR LOOSE LEASH WALKING

**Joan Morse**, CPDT-KA, CA-P1, CNWI, of Tailwaggers Canine Campus in Newark, Delaware, recommends Leslie McDevitt’s “Pattern Games” when teaching loose-leash walking. She describes one of those games:

“The Two Step: drop a treat on the ground. Take two steps forward while the dog eats the treat. The moment he looks up at you, click, drop another treat right by you and take two more steps. This game develops a pattern or rhythm for the dog that will keep his attention on the handler and keep him moving as she moves. You usually get a nice loose leash walk quickly.”



← **Jackie Moyano**, of Wholistic Hound in Alexandria, Virginia, suggests targeting. “If the dog can target the end of a stick, the walker can hold the stick at knee level and have the dog target during the walk.” →

**Viviane Arzoumanian**, CPDT-KA, CBCC-KA, PMCT-2, of PumpkinPups Dog Training in Brooklyn, New York, likes the tried-and-true “treat-spitting” method: “Teach your dog to catch tossed treats, and teach yourself to spit treats for the dog to catch (I use string cheese). Practice walking with the dog first without distractions, spitting treats to the dog for eye contact and being at your side. →







**Tricia Lude teaches her dogs to stay at her side even if she rotates 180 or 360 degrees.**

them at my side instead of in front of me. Since they get so much reinforcement at my side they tend to stick there.

I also do the same thing when playing fetch or other such games. I have them sit at my side and wait before I throw the ball, and then I release them. Sometimes I just drop the ball, as if I was tossing a treat into their mouth, while they are at my side.

“I also do ‘perch work’ with them to get them to want to love to be at my side. I shape them to put their paws on a phone book wrapped up in duct tape or some other type of small perch type object. I click and reward them a lot for having their front paws on the perch, standing next to me. Next, I have them sit-stay a few feet to a few yards behind me and then release them to run to the perch by my side. I’ll start to add distractions by putting a food bowl about 10 feet in front of me. They have to run to the perch at my side, then I release them to get the treat or get a lick of peanut butter in the bowl.

“I also shape them to spin in a circle around the perch. I add myself into the picture when they have learned to rotate around the perch. They then rotate into me. My dogs get so much reinforcement for being at my side that they that they want to be at my side no matter where I am. I can walk into the ring at an agility trial and they are glued to my side. I can walk backward, forward, or spin in circles, and they stay right there even without a leash. I fade the perch fairly quickly by using flatter books and then a piece of paper. In no time, they are running to my side and walking with me off leash with no problem.”

## MORE IDEAS

So there you have it. Boring leash-walking is out; *fun* leash walking is in. One of the marvelous things about positive reinforcement training is that there is no “one right way” to do things. There are as many ways as there are creative trainers to think them up. We’re betting there are a lot more leash-walking games out there that we haven’t heard of. We’re challenging you, again – this

time to come up with more fun ideas for keeping your dog walking happily with you on a loose leash. Submit your ideas to [WDJEditor@gmail.com](mailto:WDJEditor@gmail.com) and we’ll post our favorites on our WDJ Facebook page. In the meantime, keep on having fun walking with your dog! The exercise and fresh air is good for both of you. 🐾

*Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC, 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. Pat is also author of many books on positive training. See page 24 for more information about her books and classes.*



**This owner had a good idea: When the puppy became distracted and started pulling, she made herself more interesting and rewarding than their environment with a tug toy.**

## RESOURCES

- ❖ **BARBARA TRAN, CPDT-KSA, PMCT**  
Toronto, Canada. [facebook.com/seespotsshine](https://www.facebook.com/seespotsshine)
- ❖ **LISA WAGGONER, PMCT2, CPDT-KA**  
Murphy, NC. (828) 644-9148; [coldnosecollege.com](http://coldnosecollege.com)  
Video link: Waggoner doing the Box Step: [youtube.com/watch?v=fiZ55OAA87U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiZ55OAA87U)
- ❖ **DAWN KALINOWSKI, POISED PUPS, LLC, PEACEABLE PAWS LEVEL 1 ACADEMY GRADUATE**  
Norfolk, VA. (757) 705-7286; [facebook.com/poisedpupsllc](https://www.facebook.com/poisedpupsllc)
- ❖ **SUSAN KAMINSKY, CPDT-KA, PMCT**  
Norwalk, CT. (203) 434-2884; [thecountrydog.com](http://thecountrydog.com)
- ❖ **TRICIA LUDE, PEACEABLE PAWS LEVEL 1 ACADEMY GRADUATE**  
Manassass, VA. (703) 330-3250; [K9pawprintz@aol.com](mailto:K9pawprintz@aol.com)
- ❖ **JOAN MORSE, CPDT-KA, CA-P1, CNWI**  
Newark, DE. (302) 547-1437; [tailwaggerscc.com](http://tailwaggerscc.com)
- ❖ **JACKIE MOYANO, PEACEABLE PAWS LEVEL 1 ACADEMY GRADUATE**  
Alexandria, VA. (703) 300-5155; [wholistichound.com](http://wholistichound.com)
- ❖ **VIVIANE ARZOUMANIAN, CPDT-KA, CBCC-KA, PMCT-2**  
Brooklyn, NY. (917) 476-8315; [pumpkinpups.com](http://pumpkinpups.com)



PAW PRODUCT REVIEW PAW

# No-Pull Harnesses

*These products harness your power, and are best used to help teach your dog not to pull.*

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC

I'm sitting at my desk, which is piled high with control-type walking harnesses for dogs, and reveling at how this market niche has expanded since the introduction of the first front-clip model, the SENSE-ation Harness, more than a decade ago. It's hard evidence of the growth of positive reinforcement-based training, and confirms a robust desire on the part of dog owners to find gentler and more effective ways to work with their canine companions.

Once upon a time, a harness was the last thing you wanted to use for a dog who pulled, because they were designed to make pulling comfortable. By distributing pressure evenly across the chest they removed pressure from the throat, where damage could be done to a dog's trachea – sometimes even to the point of tracheal collapse. Harnesses are better for the dog from a health perspective,

but from a training viewpoint, a standard harness actually *encourages* pulling. There's a reason sled dogs wear harnesses!

Head halters were introduced in the late 1990s as a gentle control tool. While they did, indeed, work well to control a dog's head (and where the head goes, the body follows), some trainers noticed that a significant number of dogs found head halters to be fairly aversive, requiring, in

**It's difficult to hold your own against any dog whose pulling has helped him reach something he wants (especially if he's as strong as this dog). These harnesses return the advantage to you; use it wisely!**

many cases, extensive conditioning to convince the dog to accept them. Thus, the SENSE-ation Harness was introduced by the folks at Softouch Concepts, Inc., as a more dog-friendly walking tool, while still following the “control-the-front-end” concept. Reception from the training community was lukewarm at first, but trainers eventually began test-driving them and discovered that they were, indeed, an effective tool, and that most dogs accepted them easily, with little or no conditioning needed.

A clear sign of the success of the product was the advent of a slew of imitators. Within a few years several competing products arrived on the shelves, and the market has continued to evolve. There are several brands for the training harness aficionado to select from, each with its own variation on the no-pull theme.

We recently acquired samples of eight models of training harnesses and evaluated them on construction and materials, ease of use, effectiveness, and cost, to arrive at our “Top Pick” choices. Our findings appear on the following pages, from least to most expensive (prices may vary from different sources).

## PROPER USE OF NO-PULL HARNESSSES

Some trainers scoff at the use of tools such as control harnesses, claiming that you are simply “managing” a problem behavior rather than training the dog.

A well-designed control harness, properly used, *does* give you a physical advantage so that you can prevent your dog from dragging you around (and reinforcing himself by reaching the thing(s) he wants). If that’s all you use it for, then you *are* using it solely as a management tool. While that may work for some dogs, others may eventually learn to pull hard enough to defeat

the physical advantage, and you’re back to square one, now with a dog who can pull you around on his control harness.

To make the best use of these tools, be sure to take advantage of the opportunity the harness gives you to prevent your dog from self-reinforcement for his pulling, and reinforce your dog *very well* for his polite walking. If you do, eventually you may not need your control harness, or if you do choose to continue using it, it will continue to effectively allow you to control your dog if or when he does pull.



**Petco Non-Pull Mesh Harness**  
Available in Petco stores, via phone orders (877-738-6742), and online at [petco.com](http://petco.com)



### PETCO NON-PULL HARNESS, \$20

Discourages pulling with straps that go under the dog’s armpits and tighten when tension is put on the leash. The leash attaches to a ring at the dog’s back.

#### ■ CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS:

This harness seems reasonably solid, although “Made in China” can sometimes indicate poor construction. There are no snaps to accidentally pop open, but the plastic adjustment buckles and the metal hardware appear to be made of low-grade materials. An elastic piece across the chest improves the comfort. The flat nylon straps are a nice medium weight and moderately soft. We like the fleece tubes covering the leg straps to protect the dog’s armpits from chafing, but the straps themselves are narrow (skinny straps inflict more discomfort if the dog pulls) and not particularly strong. A dog whose owner is inattentive could bite through them in a hot second. Three sizes.

■ **EASE OF USE:** To put on the dog, you slide this harness over his head, then guide his legs through the straps. This is difficult with the high-energy dogs who need a control harness! Instructions included are minimal, and make no suggestions for training, other than a small-print caveat “intended for short-term training use only.”

■ **EFFECTIVENESS:** We’re not fans of the Petco No-Pull harness. While the novelty of the under-the-leg pressure can inhibit the dog’s movement (and therefore, pulling) initially, many dogs quickly habituate to the sensation and thus the harness rapidly loses effectiveness. Also, having the single point of contact in the middle of the dog’s back allows for little control, especially if he spins.

■ **COMMENTS:** I would not choose this harness for my dogs or recommend it for my clients’ dogs.

## HALTI HARNESS, \$20

Don't confuse this with the Halti Head Halter! This is a standard front-clip style harness made in the United Kingdom.

### ■ CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS:

The nylon straps of this harness are a nice weight, and softer than the Petco No-Pull, while the hardware, both plastic and metal, also appears to be better quality. We especially like the padding stitched in for extra comfort at the joining of the chest and belly straps. A nice feature unique to this harness is the metal clip on the chest strap, which can be used to attach to the dog's regular flat collar – both to help keep the harness in place as well as act as a "safety belt" attachment should the dog manage to wriggle out of the harness. We also like the addition of a ring on the back strap, which provides two points of contact and allows for greater control.

However, we find the martingale loop on the chest strap (which provides a tightening or squeezing action when the dog pulls and the leash tightens) to be unnecessary and bulky. Three sizes.

■ **EASE OF USE:** The single snap style makes this harness relatively easy to put on – just slip the belly strap over the dog's head with the ring on top, and connect



**Halti Harness**  
Widely available in  
pet supply stores.  
The Company of  
Animals LLC,  
Bridgeport, CT  
(203) 345-1234;  
[companyofanimals.com/us](http://companyofanimals.com/us)

TOP PICK:  
MOST  
ECONOMICAL

the snap underneath the dog. When connected the snap is low enough on the strap to avoid chafing under the arm. Buckles adjust easily (three points of adjustment provide a good fit for all shapes of dogs), and a detailed booklet offers good instructions for use.

■ **EFFECTIVENESS:** This harness worked well for us, other than a little annoying bunching of the small martingale loop, and an overlong strap that



wanted to dangle when its loose-fitting nylon keeper failed to do its job. If we were using this harness on a regular basis we would cut the strap to shorten it, and stitch it down.

■ **COMMENTS:** I would use the Halti harness.

## SENSE-IBLE HARNESS, \$23 +/-

## SENSE-ATION HARNESS, \$25 +/-

The folks at Softouch Concepts, Inc. were the creators of the original front-clip harness design, and we owe them our heartfelt thanks for that. The SENSE-ation was their first product; they added the SENSE-ible, using less-expensive material and offering fewer size and color choices, so they could offer a harness at a lower price point.

### ■ CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS:

Both harnesses are made of good quality, soft nylon, and good quality plastic and metal hardware; they are made both in the U.S. and in China. Both styles are available in multiple sizes; price varies slightly, with smaller sizes costing less.

■ **EASE OF USE:** Again, a single snap design makes this an easy harness to put on the dog; just open the snap, slip the harness over the dog's head, and connect the snap underneath. The snap is low enough on the strap to avoid chafing under the dog's front legs. Three points of adjustment provide a good fit for all shapes of dogs. The plastic slide buckles on the slightly more expensive



TOP PICK:  
SIMPLE &  
ECONOMICAL

SENSE-ation  
Harness

Softouch Concepts, Inc.,  
Union City, CA  
(866) 305-6145;  
[softouchconcepts.com](http://softouchconcepts.com)

SENSE-ation adjust easily; the metal slide buckles on the SENSE-ible required a bit of struggle. A multi-page packet of information came with these harnesses, offering in-depth information about fitting and proper use.



SENSE-ible  
Harness

■ **EFFECTIVENESS:** The first time I used a SENSE-ation harness, I was speaking at a seminar, and a shelter brought a strong, adolescent Doberman on a prong collar for me to work with. I asked the handlers to remove the prong collar, and it was suggested that

I would not be able to hold him. They were correct; he could drag me on his flat collar. I just happened to have a SENSE-ation harness with me, and I put it on the dog. I was able to finish my talk while holding the dog's leash with one finger.

These are very effective at controlling a dog who tries to pull.

■ **COMMENTS:** I would use either of these harnesses, but prefer the SENSE-ation for ease of adjustment.

## WALK YOUR DOG WITH LOVE, \$27

This is simplest of the harnesses we reviewed. It's a front-clip style, made in the U.S.

### ■ CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS:

This harness is made of a different material than any of the other products; instead of using some form of nylon, the maker uses polypropylene citing its resistance to stretching under tension and its lack of absorbency of moisture. (When a nylon harness gets wet, it becomes heavy with moisture; polypropylene does not. Also, supposedly, polypropylene does not absorb odorous oils from the dog's coat, and won't require frequent washing to keep it from getting smelly.) Owners who are used to softer nylon products (like myself!) may not like the feel of this stiffer material.

The straps are wide, to prevent them from being too severe or cutting into the dog's flesh. However, I am concerned that the stiffness of the material, as well as a buckle placed near the dog's elbow, could cause chafing problems. I didn't test the harness for long enough to determine if this occurs; the manufacturer, of course, says he has not found this to be the case.

There are bits of reflective tape on both side straps and the front strap of the harness, which provide visibility during nighttime walking – a nice touch. The harness is meant to be minimalist, and can be adjusted in just two places: the dog's girth and on the front of the chest. However, I found that if the dog isn't one



of the bulkier breeds, and the chest strap had to be tightened a lot in order to fit the dog snugly, the strap in the front dangled so much as to be awkward. The harness is available in multiple sizes.

■ **EASE OF USE:** This harness is easy to put on the dog, with the one-snap over the head style common to several of the harnesses. The belly strap was easy to adjust; the front strap, with two layers of nylon, was a little harder, but still easier than the SENSE-ible's metal buckles. Only very perfunctory fitting instructions, and direction to the product website, were provided with the harness.

■ **EFFECTIVENESS:** Other than the extra length of strap in front, which we

found annoying, this harness worked well to discourage our test dogs from pulling.

■ **COMMENTS:** WDJ Editor Nancy Kerns and I were evenly split about recommending this harness. I found the polypropylene straps to be very off-putting; I have seen enough chafing issues even with softer materials to expect problems with this one. However, Nancy Kerns has been using the harness for walking shelter dogs who pull, and appreciates the simplicity and ease of adjustment specifically for use on a variety of dogs (where she needs to make quick adjustments from dog to dog) and for very short distances (where chafing is not an issue).

## FREEDOM HARNESS, \$30+/-

Full disclosure: This is the harness I currently use and sell at my training center. A front-clip style, it has several unique features and options that I like.

### ■ CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS:

This harness is made in the U.S. of good quality material – a wide but soft nylon webbing, covered with velveteen where

the strap passes under sensitive armpits – no chafing here!

This harness has two points of contact: a ring on the front of the dog's chest, and one with a martingale loop on the top of the dog's back, which offers a slight tightening sensation effect to the front-clip function. The hardware is robust and sturdy, with two plastic snaps rather than one; the snaps

TOP PICK:  
ADDED  
FEATURES &  
OPTIONS



sit well above the dog's elbow. Available in multiple sizes.

■ **EASE OF USE:** Much as we like this harness, we have to admit that it is more complicated than several of the others. The two-snap design invites confusion, and some of my trainers tell me it's too complicated for some of their students. This harness was accompanied by a well-written brochure with easy-to-follow instructions. The maker will replace up to two chewed straps for just the cost of shipping.

■ **EFFECTIVENESS:** This harness fits well and works well. If you use the

double-ended leash that you can purchase with it (optional) it's almost like holding the reins of a horse – although, again, some owners find that too complicated, especially if they are also trying to hold onto a clicker and treats.

■ **COMMENTS:** I love this harness for myself. While I'm not usually a fan of martingale straps (seen in the photo at right – the loop at the top of the dog's back), this one performs well and does not bunch up as it tightens (when the dog pulls) and relaxes (when the leash is slack). We get mixed reviews from clients because of the increased complexity of the harness.



**Freedom No-Pull Harness**  
Wiggles, Wags & Whiskers,  
Indian Trail, NC  
(866) 944-9247;  
wiggleswagswhiskers.com

### EASY WALK HARNESS, \$30

Brought to you by Premier Pet Products and made in Taiwan, this was another early entrant to the control-harness market. There are two clips on the girth strap (one above the chest strap and one below it) and a martingale loop in the front chest strap.

#### ■ **CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS:**

The nylon used here has a slightly harder edge than the two SENSE-harnesses or the Freedom. The plastic snap attached to the belly strap sits immediately under the dog's right elbow and may chafe. Available in multiple sizes.

■ **EASE OF USE:** Although this harness has two snaps, it's designed so that you only undo one – allowing you to undo the bottom snap to slip it over the dog's head to put it on and take it off easily, or if you choose, undo the upper snap and have your dog step in or out of it. Still, having two snaps always complicates things, and increases the odds that someone will get confused. Personally, I have always found the front martingale

strap (a loop that tightens if the dog pulls) to be a bother. As you can see from the photo, when fitted tightly enough to keep it from sagging down the dog's chest, it pulls the girth strap forward, which interferes with the dog's shoulder action and pinches behind the elbow. A detailed instruction pamphlet was included in the packaging with this product.

■ **EFFECTIVENESS:** If properly fitted, this harness works well, although you must be on guard for chafing.

■ **COMMENTS:** Not one of my favorites, in large part because of the martingale loop. (Note: Runs small. The "medium" size was far smaller than the other products' "medium.")



**Easy Walk Harness**  
Widely available in pet supply stores.  
Premier Pet Products, LLC, Midlothian, VA  
(800) 933-5595; premier.com

### DEAN & TYLER NO-PULL, \$55

As the price suggests, this harness is in a class of its own. The nylon straps are two inches wide (compared to ¾ to 1 inch on all the others), and the entire piece looks like it's made for Cane Corsos and larger; the company's website indicates that it specializes in "products for medium, large, and very large dogs."

#### ■ **CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS:**

Made (according to the company) in eastern Europe, the quality of materials and construction is exceptionally sturdy – to the point of being bulky. The metal and plastic hardware are heavyweight, and there are several rings for leash or pulling options. There might be some chafing concerns with the extra-wide straps; however the rolled nylon handle on the top of the harness is convenient

for when you might need to grab and restrain a lunging dog. Comes in larger sizes only.

■ **EASE OF USE:** The two plastic snaps on this harness offer the same options as described for the Easy Walk harness – over the head, or step-in and drop off.

■ **EFFECTIVENESS:** While this harness is set up so that it works well as a front



clip control harness, with additional rings for attaching a leash (or a double-ended leash) on the dog's back and on each side, it's clearly a multi-function tool. No instructions were included with this harness, but we found information about the options for its use online.

■ **COMMENTS:** This is way more harness than I can imagine needing for my dogs, or my clients for theirs. However, if

you had especially an large, strong dog, or wanted multiple points of leash attachment for some reason, this could be a useful tool. 🐾

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

## HARNESS FITTING AND USE TIPS

Here are some trade secrets to getting your control harness to work better for you and your dog:

- ✓ With several of the simpler styles (SENSE-ation, SENSE-ible, Easy Walk) if you can't get the harness to fit quite right, try putting it on upside down. (Doesn't work with any of the "two-points-of-contact" harnesses.)
- ✓ If the front strap still slips down, clip your leash to the front-clip ring and the collar ring. This may diminish the effectiveness of the harness a little, but it will keep the front strap up and in place.
- ✓ If your dog seems worried when you attempt to put the harness on him, use high-value food treats to give him a positive classical association with the harness, and do several sessions of "harness = food" before putting it all the way on him. If his eyes light up when he sees the harness, you're ready to proceed. (Many dogs take to the harness right away and don't need the conditioning step.)
- ✓ When attached to the front of your dog's harness, make sure your leash comes directly to you in the shortest line possible (not around the dog's other side and over his shoulders).
- ✓ Do several practice sessions with the harness in low-distraction environments so the two of you can, together, figure out how it works, before trying it in the real world.
- ✓ Keep slack in the leash when your dog is not pulling. If he starts to pull, stand still to brace yourself, and put gentle pressure on the leash to turn his front end back toward you. Mark (click or "Yes!") and give him a treat, and walk forward again. Remember to reinforce him often for walking politely!

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❖ WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of *Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog; Positive Perspectives 2: Know Your Dog, Train Your Dog; Power of Positive Dog Training; Play With Your Dog;* and *Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance at a First Class Life*. Available from [dogwise.com](http://dogwise.com) or [wholedogjournal.com](http://wholedogjournal.com).

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