

The Whole Dog Journal™



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A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

JANUARY 2016

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The Whole Dog



Journal™

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PAW EDITOR'S NOTE PAW

Behavior-Changer

Everyone, me included, could use some training.

BY NANCY KERNS

Have you ever had the experience of getting incredibly “stuck” with your dog, unable to teach him a certain new behavior? And then an experienced trainer steps up, and has your dog happily performing the behavior again and again within a *minute*? At that moment, part of you is happy because your dog “got it,” but part of you may be seething, too. What the heck, dog?

That scenario was running through my head as I sat and worked in one room, while in the next room, someone was trying to coerce a willful three-year-old through dinner, a bath, pajamas, story time, and bed. The adult kept threatening various punishments (a time-out, *not* getting treats the next day, having a favorite toy taken away), but never quite delivered on any of them. I was *dying* to go in there and give advice (or even take over), because I knew I could make it all happen, and *without* threats or a raised voice, tight with exasperation. I know this because I’ve finessed the same toddler through the same routine without eliciting his tears, anger, and frustration. But unlike a human student and her dog in a training class, this person didn’t sign up for my advice. So I just sat there unhappily, wishing I could put some “dog training” to work.

For the 19 years that I’ve been editing WDJ, I’ve been studying animal trainers – mostly dog trainers, but other trainers, too. I’ve watched them work (in person and on video), photographed them, interviewed them, read what they’ve written, and taken lessons from them. I’ve learned a *ton* about influencing the behavior of other animals, and successfully used what I’ve learned on my own dogs, foster dogs, shelter dogs – and yes, I’ve even used what I’ve learned to help “train” my son. He’s 23 now, long past needing any intervention to change his behavior, but I have to say, what I learned from all the animal trainers I’ve studied worked with him, too! He’s a great dog – um, successful young man!

What have I learned? For starters, I’ve learned that a good trainer doesn’t yell at or physically menace her pupil, intimidating or threatening him into compliance. Because – what if the dog *still* won’t do the behavior? Then what?

A dog trainer also knows that rewards need to be palpable and immediate. If a handler fails to reward – or even notice – the behaviors that a dog does after being cued to do them, and they are behaviors that are not particularly enjoyable in and of themselves for the dog – why should he keep doing them? Failing to reinforce good behavior *with something that is valuable to the training subject* is a sure-fire way to get that good behavior to stop.

As I sat there, listening to the parent/toddler struggle in the other room, I was dying to jump in and “train the dog.” And then it occurred to me: This must be *exactly* what it’s like for dog trainers when their *human* students struggle to get their dogs to do something that is ridiculously easy for the trainer to accomplish. They must also be thinking, “Why doesn’t this person just do it like *this*?”

And so, like any of the really great trainers I’ve met and admire, what I really need to do is figure out how to reach out and teach the “amateur handler,” not the “dog.” I need to notice and reinforce the things *she’s* doing right, so she not only learns a better way to get the behavior she wants, but enjoys the process, too.

Dog training *rocks!*

NK

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Gear of the Year

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

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

▼ NOXGEAR LIGHTHOUSE



Of all the products featured here, this is my favorite. I can't walk even a single block at night without someone calling out from the opposite sidewalk, a porch, or a passing car, "What a cool light!" or "Hey, look at that dog!" – or "Please tell me where you bought that!" The attention itself isn't something that appeals to me (though Otto seems to like it!), but the fact that I am 100 percent confident that anyone who

goes by can see him, even on the darkest, rainiest night, makes me deliriously happy. The Lighthouse was developed with help from Kickstarter funders, who, by all accounts, are thrilled with the product they helped into production!

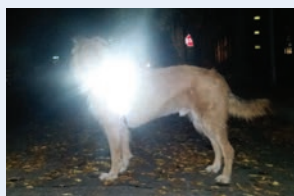
Noxgear was founded "with a mission to deliver innovative, well-designed gear to all nocturnal athletes" (they make products for humans, too). Its Lighthouse is a lightweight harness, made of durable, washable Cordura, with 3M Scotchlite microreflective piping (which reflects in headlights at distances greater than 1,000 feet). Both the strap that goes around the dog's neck and the one that goes around the dog's girth are highly adjustable. The Lighthouse has no leash attachment; it's meant to be worn by your dog in combination with whatever other gear he's wearing.

Here's the fun part: With the press of a button, the Lighthouse can be lit up with your choice of six different solid colors (aqua, orange, lime green, pink, red, or yellow) or one of six flashing modes. There are slow and flashing modes, and some great color-changing modes that cycle through different colors (check the WDJ Facebook page for a video of this).

LIGHTHOUSE – \$50

Noxgear
Dayton, OH
(937) 317-0199
noxgear.com

Highly visible, beautiful, and fun! The rain-proof unit that illuminates the vest can be easily removed so the vest can be washed – and get this: the rechargeable lithium battery that powers the unit is charged via a USB connection, and keeps the vest flashing or glowing for 12 hours! – *Nancy Kerns*



This photo, taken with a flash, shows how the vest looks when car headlights shine on it.

▼ NITE IZE NITE DAWG LED COLLAR AND BALL

Fewer hours of daylight do not deter my two young, high-energy dogs from action; they are ready to run, sun or none. After years of crawling through bushes with a head lamp searching for lost balls, only to emerge and wonder where the dogs wandered off to (always inches past my light, giggling, I'm sure!), I discovered the Nite Ize LED dog products.

The Nite Dawg collar comes in red or orange and houses a flexible, light-transmitting polymer core that illuminates when the collar is turned on with a firm press of a button (orange offers the longest-range visibility). The collar has two modes, flash and steady glow. By far, it beats any light-up collar attachment that you can only see when your dog is facing a specific direction, which mine seem to never do. It's powered by a long-life, easily replaceable battery; one usually lasts all fall/winter on my dogs.

Nite Ize sells other light-up products for dogs, but this

NITE DAWG COLLAR – \$18
METEORLIGHT LED BALL – \$13
Nite Ize
Boulder, CO
(800) 678-6483
Niteize.com

collar is my favorite, closely followed by the Meteorlight K-9 LED Ball, another must-have during the dark days of winter. It's endlessly entertaining to watch the nighttime game of fetch (especially in light-up Disc-O color) and great exercise given that the ball is made of durable, extra-bounce rubber. This ball is beloved by all the four-legged fetch nuts at our house, which may be why we've had to replace these batteries more than once per season of darkness. (Note that because of these batteries, the ball is for fetching only; no chewing allowed!) – *Kathryn Socie Dunning*



▼ SEXY BEAST LEATHER DOG COLLARS AND LEASHES



My mom used to have two sets of towels – “one for show, and one for blow.” I have a similar ethic about dog collars: Some are fancy enough that you want to save them for special occasions.

The irresistibly named Sexy Beast makes beautiful, limited-edition leather dog collars and leashes – and crafts absolutely gorgeous, custom collars and leashes to your exact specifications. The craftsmen owners of the company started this unique business in 2009 to raise money for cancer research after losing both of their Rhodesian Ridgebacks to that disease.

Among their fashion-forward designs: “Candy Heart,” inch-wide latigo leather studded with colorful cabochons, crystals, studs, and a heart concho (seen here), and “Dragonfly,” completely hand-tooled, dyed, and painted with your choice of color scheme to bring these pond-flitters to life. There are a variety of closure styles available, most of them variations on the martingale, which is designed to prevent a dog from slipping his collar. All of Sexy Beast’s cow and bull hides are sourced in the United States, and are cut, beveled, and conditioned by hand. Every design can be customized – you can choose the width and type of leather, as well as add a soft leather lining and nameplate, which is also a one-of-a-kind creation. Be patient; the wait time for the custom creations can be lengthy, but the product, we assure you, will be worth it.

– Denise Flaim

SEXY BEAST DOG COLLARS – \$50 to \$150

Sexy Beast Dog Collars
Glenmoore, Pennsylvania
(267) 222-2910
sexybeastdogcollars.com

▼ DOGGIE TAIL TOY



I’m not sure the Doggie Tail has the best name – it looks more like a faceless rabbit head with one ear. But dogs don’t care, especially when it is in their mouth and it’s making their entire head vibrate.

This unique poly fake fur-covered ball with an 8-inch tail contains a mechanism that produces frenetic motions: a hopping scurry when on a flat surface, or, when held, a robust vibration. It moves! And makes noises, too: a small-dog-like bark, followed by a whine. These activities are initiated whenever the ball’s power switch is turned to “on,” and then when the ball is bumped. The sound and movement features last about 10 seconds, and then the toy goes still. Until your dog whacks it and it goes off again, and again, and again... keeping him entertained and (I hope) not driving you crazy.

DOGGIE TAIL – \$13

Hyper Pet
Wichita, KS
(800) 456-5778
Available at
Amazon.com and
many pet supply
stores

While toy-savvy dogs usually love the Doggie Tail, the very nature of the toy – a simulation of a small, noisy, furry, moving creature – would not be appropriate for dogs whose interest in prey has been something you have been trying to dampen. It might also be a bit scary for sensitive or fearful dogs, so use care when introducing it for the first time.

The Doggie Tail should always be enjoyed with supervision and you should never allow your dog to chew on it. While it is sturdy, it is *not* indestructible and it *does* contain batteries; inspect it frequently and throw it away if it is damaged.

Finally, it does not come with the three AAA batteries it requires, and the battery compartment is difficult to access in the 4” diameter ball. And it requires a screwdriver to open! But knowing dogs, I’m glad for that. – Barbara Dobbins

▼ PET TUTOR

Whether human or canine, it's easy to get addicted to the Pet Tutor, the newest high-tech treat-dispensing system on the market. After hearing all the buzz about it from several of my trainer friends, I purchased the device a few months ago, and after a quick, easy setup, my dog, Cody, was addicted to it in less than three dispenses (and so was I)!

The Pet Tutor from Smart Animal Training Systems is a patented, smart, wireless training, feeding, and game system for your pet (dogs, cats, birds, or other animals) that gives you new and innovative ways to remotely reward your animal for any number of desired behaviors. Need to teach your dog to love her crate? Stop barking? Help your dog go to a mat and stay there? Slow down your dog's pace of eating? Provide more mental stimulation for your animal? Pet Tutor to the rescue.

Lightweight, very well made, and durable, the Pet Tutor bridges the gap between positive training and high technology. Developed by Wes Anderson, an electrical engineer and a passionate positive dog trainer, the device is amazing in its multiple capabilities, and the company has excellent customer service. Here are only a few of the attributes of this amazing new device:

- ❖ Can be triggered manually with the remote or programmed automatically to dispense food at specific times or intervals.
- ❖ The feeder can be turned on its base to either dispense food to the floor or into the tray on the base. If you think your dog might spend the day trying to destroy the device to get the food out, you can put it up on a counter or high cabinet, and turn the dispenser so that the food rolls out onto the floor rather than into the tray. You can also put the device on top of a wire crate and have the food fall directly into the crate.
- ❖ The feeder holds up to five cups of food and is nearly jam-proof. All manner and sizes of treats easily move through the dispensing unit, including odd shapes and various sizes of kibble, but also moist things like bits of hot dog or chicken.
- ❖ There is a silent dispensing mode for animals sensitive to sounds.
- ❖ It's easy to take apart to clean and is dishwasher safe.
- ❖ You can hang it from above, stand it on any flat surface, or mount it on a crate or kennel door with the optional crate attachment.
- ❖ You can trigger multiple devices via one remote control.
- ❖ The remote control contains movement sensors (tilt mode), enabling it to be placed into a toy (such as a Kong Wobbler). Movement of the remote triggers the base to dispense a treat, so the dog is rewarded each and every time she interacts with the toy. (Once your dog understands the game, you can position the toy at greater and greater distances from the base, so your dog has to travel back and forth to get his treats!)
- ❖ The remote also contains a microphone, and can be fastened to the dog's collar or placed on top of the crate; as long as the dog is quiet, the Pet Tutor will dispense treats at random moments, but if the dog barks, the remote senses the sound and withholds treats until the dog is quiet again for at least five seconds.
- ❖ The Pet Tutor is available with customizable computer software; it's also iPhone and Bluetooth compatible.

PET TUTOR – starting at \$349
Smart Animal Training Systems
Indianapolis, IN
(877) 250-2694
smartanimaltraining.com

I've only scratched the surface of the Pet Tutor's capabilities with my own dogs. No matter your level of skill or ability, you'll find the Pet Tutor a welcome addition to your home for training and feeding or playing games with your dog. But its price might limit its sales to professional trainers, exceptionally motivated owners, and owners of dogs who have separation anxiety (its uses for keeping these dogs occupied are limitless). – *Lisa Lyle Waggoner*



▼ EARTH RATED WASTE BAGS

Goodbye, plastic grocery bag. Earth Rated's green-hued poop bags contain an additive that helps them break down in landfills, and they smell nice, too – the company uses a formulation of “spice plants, flowers, and fruits” to make for a pleasant olfactory experience. (They also have unscented ones, if you'd prefer.)

Scooping for a big-un? Earth Rated has a bag with handles that opens wider for bigger messes, and can accommodate kitty litter and pick-me-ups from multi-dog households. Picking up a *lot* of poop, more than your average bear? Earth Rated sells a 300-bag roll that dispenses nicely out of a recycled cardboard box.



EARTH RATED BAGS \$3 to \$13

Earth Rated
Montreal, Quebec
(888) 354-2818
earthrated.com

Available from
Amazon.com, and
other online
sellers, and some
pet supply stores.
To find local
retailers, visit the
website or call.

Even though its business is “waste,” the company takes its environmental impact and good citizenship seriously. Excess production material is recycled – reused for future production. And finished products that don't meet its standards are donated to shelters.

Though they're more environmentally friendly than plastic, technically the bags aren't “biodegradable” because, the company explains, “they cannot be proven to break down within a regulated time frame in every type of landfill environment.” If you want to totally allay your landfill angst, Earth Rated also sells white, unscented bags that are made out of a vegetable starch base. These can be disposed of in municipal compost environments where pet waste is accepted. – *Denise Flaim*

▼ THE TURDLE BAG

We're really going to have an entire page devoted to poop? Yes, I'm afraid so. But, look – we all have dogs, so we all have to deal with poop, and we may as well have the best gear available to deal with it. Agreed?



The Turdle Bag is genius because of its name alone! Even better, though, is the concept behind it: a dog poop bag carrier. I want to buy a bunch and give them to fellow hikers with dogs while enjoying one of my favorite dog-friendly open spaces. The hiking trails there have become littered with filled dog-waste bags. And while I'm thankful that the trail hazard has been minimized, these “trail markers” are unsightly and environmentally unfriendly. I know that most people have good intentions, and think they will retrieve the bag on their way out, but rarely do they exit by the same trail, and so the poop remains.

I don't know how many times the items in my pack have shared the same space as odiferous dog poop, but it was just the price I had to pay to pack it out. Now the poop has a bag of its own! Available in red, forest green, and navy, the 8½- by 6-inch bag is small enough so as not to be a burden to carry, and large and sturdy enough to handle a large and stinky deposit.

TURDLEBAG \$18

Turdlebag
Portland, OR
(971) 269-7856
turdlebag.com

The top of the bag is wide, making it easy to receive a full bag. Then it rolls down, becoming smaller, and buckles to close, keeping odors trapped. A strap on the back secures the bag to a leash, belt, or pack. A handle on the bottom of the pack makes it easy to dispose the contents into a garbage can. A pouch on the front stores a supply of pet waste bags. And it can be machine washed and dried! – *Barbara Dobbins*

▼ POLAR BOWL

It's a bit ironic that I'm writing about products that keep things cool as I try to stay warm. But it wasn't that long ago though that the temperatures were soaring over 100 degrees. My Border Collie, Duncan, was never an avid drinker of water and even less so when his water was warm. But he didn't like ice cubes. What's a dog mom to do to encourage hydration?!

Get him a Polar Bowl! This stainless steel bowl by Neater Feeder (Neater Pet Brands, LLC) features double-walled stainless steel surrounding a non-toxic gel core and comes in three sizes:

- small = 14 ounces
- medium = 28 ounces
- large = 58 ounces

Simply place the empty bowl in the freezer for a few hours, remove, and then fill it with water. The frozen gel core keeps the water cold for hours. For outings and traveling, I freeze one and keep it in a cooler. It's dishwasher-safe, but the same element that keeps it cold (the gel core) will also retain heat, so use caution when removing it from dishwasher. Made in the USA.

– Barbara Dobbins



POLAR BOWL
\$10 - \$20

Neater Pet Brands, LLC
Malvern, PA
(877) 917-7387
neaterpetbrands.com



▼ PAW PUDDING

Developed and tested through the seasonal extremes found in the western Rocky Mountains, Paw Pudding promotes healing

of the inevitable cracks and splits that arise from all canine adventures, big and small, in the great outdoors. Whether you and your hound head out hiking in the hot and dry summer months or skijoring in the wicked cold of deep winter, this non-toxic, preservative-free goodness will keep paws happily on the move. It's also free of chemicals and artificial colors, making it perfectly safe for your four-legged friend to have a lick, should she be so inclined.

Paw Pudding is made by The Scent Project, a small, Montana-based business. Their products benefit both dogs and people; the one works wonders on hard-working hands, too! Rub some on after a long day digging in the garden or pounding nails building Fido his dream home. It's made with anti-microbial and anti-bacterial lavender and calendula, as well as olive oil.

Small, hand-blended batches are made to order, and since a dab will do, a small jar will last a long time. All the paws, palms, heels, hands in your home deserve it!

– Kathryn Socie Dunning

PAW PUDDING
1 OZ JAR, \$5

The Scent Project
Bozeman, MT
(406) 522-1558
thescentproject.com

▼ INVINCIBLES SNAKE

All the toys made by Outward Hound are high-quality, well-made toys, though the Invincibles Snake is the number one "go to toy" for our own two high-energy Australian Shepherds.

The Snake is made of super-tough fabric and contains large, special squeakers that make two different sounds – one sound when the squeaker is depressed and another sound when released, quite different from a traditional squeaker. The Snake also features a special inner lining the company calls "Dura-Tuff" and double-layered seams. The squeakers are designed so that even if punctured by a hard chewer, the toy will continue its wonderful noise-making capability. The Snake comes in a three- or six-squeaker option.

The Invincibles Snake entered our home eight years ago, and our dogs have played hard and tugged together with this toy between them time after time with no damage to the toy. It's provided years of enjoyment for them and a ton of laughs from me.

– Lisa Lyle Waggoner

INVINCIBLES SNAKE
\$11 to \$15

Outward Hound
Centennial, CO
(800) 477-5735
outwardhound.com



Herbs Help Animals Help Themselves

A holistic approach to using herbs for your dog.

BY GREG TILFORD

I sat in wonder as I watched the coyote nibbling twigs from a wild rose plant, just 100 feet away. It was late September and the rose hips were red, ripe, fat, and juicy. Delicious, in fact, whether it be for tea or to tuck into one's mouth as a tart boost of vitamin C in the course of a long day afield. What made me wonder wasn't that the wily, scruffy-smallish dog was dining at a wild rose bush; that is typical foraging behavior. Everything in the forest eats and relishes rosehips – even me! But this guy wasn't eating the fruit. Instead, he was selectively nibbling from the end twigs of the bushy plant. The coyote was, like so many other animals I have observed, using plants – herbs – as something other than food. He was taking medicine.

As an herbalist I already knew rose twig tea is an internal astringent, helpful for relieving inflammation in the lower gastrointestinal tract. It can also help reverse diarrhea or inhibit minor cases of internal bleeding. Externally the tea works well to relieve mosquito bites – a common malady in these parts. I learned these uses from books and other herbalists, but Wile E. Coyote didn't learn from anything but his own intuition. He had a specific need that he was trying to address through pure instinct, a natural

gift that humans have largely lost.

I spent a total of 10 years living atop a remote ridgetop in the Bitterroot Mountains of Montana, studying plants and the wildlife that lives among them. During that time there were countless occasions when I would see coyotes, deer, elk, and moose nibbling on the bitter blossoms of knapweed, or chewing the seed tops of cow parsnip – a native member of the parsley family that early settlers and Native Americans used to alleviate gastric bloating and cramping. I even once witnessed a mountain lion as it rolled like a giant house cat in a pungent stand of wild valerian, utilizing the calmative, relaxing effects of the pungent herb through unique olfactory receptors – the same nose-direct-to-brain connection by which housecats enjoy a dose of catnip.

I learned through my research during the writing of *Herbs for Pets* that I wasn't the only one who had discovered

No one knows why most dogs are drawn to eat grass, but holistic practitioners believe that the impulse is an instinctive effort to address a deficiency or imbalance.

the amazing abilities of how animals can self-medicate from nature's wild pharmacy. In 1993, Eloy Rodriguez, of the Phytochemical and Toxicology Laboratory at the University of California, Irvine, collaborated with Richard Wrangham of Harvard University's Department of Anthropology to produce *Zoopharmacognosy: The Use of Medicinal Plants by Animals*, a fascinating study of how wild animals use tropical plants to self-medicate.

Several studies followed, all with a similar conclusion: wild animals know not only know which plants to select and ingest, but also exactly how much to take and when to stop their herbal therapy.

Plants are the most universally accepted form of medicine of all life on Earth, and it is quite clear that the foundations of modern internal medicine came from early man's observation of wild animals. Animals are Earth's original herbalists, and our first teachers of internal medicine.

DOGS CAN HELP THEMSELVES, TOO

There is evidence to support the theory that dogs and other domesticated animals also possess the innate ability to self-medicate from nature's bounty.

At least one person has devoted her life to researching this ability. Caroline Ingraham, founder of the Ingraham Academy of Zoopharmacognosy in the United Kingdom, has been studying how to help connect captive and domestic animals with plant-based medicines that they themselves can select and utilize.

Ingraham recently described a case involving a 3-year-old Jack Russell Terrier named Mouse, who ripped a deep hole in his chest muscles while climbing through barbed wire. She claims that Mouse was presented with a variety of herbs and other natural healing materials, and selected (likely by pawing or sniffing) a combination of yarrow and green clay, a wound-healing combination that has been used by human herbalists to heal wounds since the Dark Ages. The poultice was applied to Mouse's wounds at regular intervals, and within a couple of weeks he was completely healed.

This is just one of many cases cited by Ingraham, whose work was born purely out of true love of animals and a deep respect of their choice of medicine. Which brings me to the work I wish to share with you in WDJ in the future.



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Regardless of how far removed they may be from their wild canid ancestors, the dogs in our lives are metabolically and energetically designed by nature to utilize plants as their primary medicine. We see their struggle to access their choice of medicine all the time, from the eating of grass, to nibbling the ends off the household aloe plant, or a ravenous yet unusual craving for melon. But most people fail to see these behaviors as the cues that they really are: instinctive attempts to utilize the healing powers of plants. Grass for long fiber, and silica and other nutrients to maintain gut health. Aloe, for its healing and sometimes laxative properties. Melon, to cool the liver and help inhibit parasites.

My goal in the months to come is to share what I have learned about the safe and effective use of herbs in dogs. But more importantly, I want to help you take into heart and mind the importance of your role as an animal guardian, and the value of using herbs. The dogs who touch our lives, bring us smiles, and heal us every day do not have immediate access to the herbs they need, nor do most retain enough of their ancestor's instincts to survive in the wild. It's up to us to bring nature to them – to bring the right choices of their medicine into their lives.

To me, the deepest meaning and greatest rewards of using herbs is not with how we can exploit their chemistries, but with the deep connections they offer to the natural world around us. Herbs stand as living, healing entities that are here to serve all who walk above them or crawl beneath their roots. The goal of the holistic herbalist is not to suppress symptoms or crush what we recognize as a form of “disease,” but to help bring the body into a balanced state of wellness within itself, through utilization of a healing system that has been serving all life on Earth since the first mammal emerged more than 100 million years ago. It's about honoring and trusting the nature that lives within and without all of us – and the rewards of this approach go way beyond disease prevention and reduction of veterinary expenses.

To use herbs at their greatest potential we must learn more about the true nature of the recipient. How does our dog's body differ from ours? What constitutes optimum nutrition for a dog? How does his body deal with illness? What can be done, through the supportive chemistries and energies of herbs, to help the body do what it is naturally designed to do for itself – heal and stay healthy? These are questions from a holistic herbalist.

It has been sixteen years since I left my mountain ridge home in Montana. Since then I have traveled the world to speak, share, and learn – and I've learned so much. I look forward to sharing the answers I have found, so that you may share in the nature of your dog. And I promise: In pursuit of finding these answers we will not only find healthy solutions for the dogs we love, but new insights that can lead us onto a path of healing for our dogs, ourselves, and Earth as one. 🌿

Greg Tilford is the author of five books on botanical medicine for animals, including the acclaimed Herbs for Pets, the Natural Way to Enhance your Pet's Life (i-5 Publications, 2nd ed. 2009). Tilford is a charter member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the National Animal Supplements Council (NASC), and founded and currently chairs the Animal Products Committee of the American Herbal Products Association, with a mission to promote and protect responsible commerce of herb products intended for use in animals. Tilford is also the CEO and formulating herbalist for Animal Essentials, Inc., a company that produces natural supplements for companion animals, and lectures about herbs to veterinarians and owners worldwide. See page 24 for contact information.

BRING SOME ROSES TO YOUR DOG!



Coyotes aren't the only canines that can benefit from the healthy attributes of *Rosa* species, and in fact, wild roses aren't the only varieties with healing powers. In fact, *all* species of rose are useful, including domestic varieties in the garden. The astringent tannins contained in the twigs, bark, and roots of the plant help reduce minor

inflammations of the skin and digestive tract, making the herb useful in a broad variety of applications.

My favorite use for the herb is a soothing, healing skin rinse, ideal for relief from flea and insect bites as well as virtually any other case of itchy skin.

To make a skin rinse: First, be absolutely certain that the bushes you are harvesting from have never been sprayed with a pesticide or other chemical agents. Then clip a handful of three-inch twigs from the tips of several stems.

Cut them into small (¼-inch to ½-inch) pieces and place in a glass or ceramic saucepan. Cover them with water and place over a medium flame on your stovetop. Heat the mixture until it comes to a low boil, then remove from the heat immediately and allow to stand for at least one hour until cool. Strain the cooled mixture through a sieve, into a measuring cup or other vessel that will be easy to pour from.

The strained mixture, which should be a light yellowish-brown, is then poured liberally over the pooch until the skin and coat are thoroughly soaked. Allow to drip dry; do not towel off. This can be done daily, if necessary, to bring down the heat and itch.



To add a wonderful, rosy aroma to your companion's coat that may also lend a calming effect, add a handful or two of freshly plucked rose petals to the mixture, just as it is removed from the heat.

The Puppy Conundrum

“Stay home!” says your vet. “Socialize!” says your trainer. Where can you take your puppy?

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA

You have a new puppy in your family. Hurray! What fun! It’s an exciting time, and one you want to share with your friends and family. And puppies are just adorable, so of course you want to take him everywhere with you! But according to your veterinarian, you shouldn’t take your puppy anywhere for a few months, until all of her “puppy shots” have been administered. On the other hand, you’ve *also* been told that it’s critically important for you to take your puppy to *all kinds* of places in order for her to become a well-adjusted, mentally healthy adult dog. What’s a good dog mom or dad to do?

Before you plop your little fluffball into his crate in the back seat of your car as you head out to run errands, you should consider these important dog-owner responsibilities:

- **PROTECT YOUR PUPPY FROM DISEASE RISK**
- **CONSIDER YOUR PUPPY’S PHYSICAL SAFETY**
- **PRESERVE YOUR PUPPY’S PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH**

Taking your puppy to the wrong place at the wrong time can result in him becoming ill, injured, or fearful, sometimes with life-long consequences. Conversely, keeping him home, wrapped in cotton wool until he’s five months old, can create a dog who is socially unskilled and/or fearful for the rest of his life.

Because sick dogs are often found at veterinary clinics, carry your puppy when you take him in for his vaccines, and hold him on your lap in the waiting room.

fully immunized. This advice is not only outdated, but in the view of most trainers, also poses a greater danger to the dog’s life. Carried to its conclusion, it results in more adult dogs who are physically healthy but behaviorally very damaged due to lack of socialization.

The middle ground is to take your puppy only to places where he’s less likely to run into disease-carrying dogs, or where lots of potentially disease-carrying dogs have been. Don’t take him to public dog parks, animal shelters, rescue adoption events, pet supply stores, and any other environment that receives a lot of dog traffic. (Ironically, one of the places your pup is most likely to encounter contagious diseases is a veterinary hospital, where owners bring sick dogs to be treated!)

■ PHYSICAL SAFETY

Keep in mind that puppies are babies, and like all babies, are more vulnerable than adult dogs to injury from the environment, other dogs, animals, humans, and machinery. They can’t be expected to know which way to dodge if a guy on a skateboard suddenly comes toward them on a sidewalk. They might scramble in fear at the sound of a motorcycle or truck approaching – right off a sidewalk and into the path of oncoming traffic. Their feet are tender – so walking on very cold or very hot sidewalks may freeze or burn

■ DISEASE RISK

When she tells you to be careful about where you should and should *not* take your puppy, your veterinarian’s greatest concern is the risk of contagious disease. Some vets tell their clients not to take their puppies *anywhere* until they are



WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH ALL THOSE "PUPPY SHOTS"?

You might be surprised to know that dogs don't actually need a "series" of shots in order to be immunized against canine diseases. That said, paradoxically, there is a good and compelling reason to follow your veterinarian's directions for the commonly administered "puppy series" of shots. Here's why:

Puppies are born with immune systems that are not fully functional. In their first weeks, they are protected from disease by antibodies they received from their mothers' blood in utero and (even more important) antibodies they received from the colostrum they drank when they first started to nurse. Present in the first 36-48 hours of milk flow following birth, colostrum is a highly concentrated mixture of antibody molecules, vitamins, electrolytes, and nutrients. After about 48 hours, the colostrum is all gone and the mother's body makes only milk, without any more agents of immunity. Orphan puppies who don't get to nurse for the first two days of their lives miss out on this vitally important colostrum and are at great risk of becoming ill before their own immune systems and vaccines can take hold.

The strength of the protection a puppy gets from his mother is dependent on her own immune status. The higher her antibody levels, the stronger the protection she passes on to her pups. This sounds great, and it is, up to a point.

When we vaccinate puppies, we give them doses of disease agents (antigens) that are either killed, weakened, or modified in such a way that they can no longer cause disease. If strong maternal antibodies are still circulating in the pup's body at the time he is vaccinated, those antibodies can recognize and destroy the antigens in the vaccine before the puppy's immune system can learn to recognize them and form its own protective antibodies. In other words, like an overprotective mom, the maternal antibodies will "fight" the vaccine and render it useless.

Fortunately, the mother's maternal antibodies last only so long. At some point, usually when the puppy is between 6 and 18 weeks old, the agents of the mother's immunity fade away. Ideally, we would vaccinate the puppy just once, when he was old enough to develop his own agents of immunity, and his mother's immunity had faded enough to allow his own immune system to respond to the vaccine.

The problem is, the age at which this happens varies a *lot*. And there is a period when the agents of the mother's immunity are no longer protecting the puppy from disease,

Puppies are usually vaccinated several times, with the first vaccine given when the puppy is about 6 weeks old and the last given when he's about 18 weeks old. Then, the vast majority of puppies will be fully immunized.



but still too high to allow the vaccine to work. This period is called the window of susceptibility, during which time a puppy *could* contract a disease. We vaccinate puppies several times in an effort to shorten that window, hoping to vaccinate and protect the puppy as soon his immune system can respond appropriately to the disease antigen. We cover our bet on this timing, so to speak, by vaccinating the puppy several times – *and* by keeping the puppy away from places that might be frequented by sick dogs.

The age at which puppies are able to respond to a vaccine and develop protection (become immunized) covers a wide period of time. Studies have shown that at 6 weeks of age, about 25 percent of the puppies are protected by the vaccines they received. At 9 weeks, 40 percent of the puppies were able to respond to the vaccine and are protected. The number increased to 60 percent by 16 weeks, and by 18 weeks, 95 percent of puppies are successfully immunized. (For more about the final 5 percent, see "Vaccine Titer Tests," in the June 2014 issue of WDJ.)

So, yes, you need to protect your puppy until he has completed his "puppy series" of shots – but that doesn't mean keeping him in bubble wrap. You *also* need to socialize him well, taking reasonable precautions to keep him safe. I would be willing to bet that far more dogs die in animal shelters due to lack of early socialization and training than puppies who die as a result of disease exposure by conscientious owners doing appropriate puppy socialization.

There are many reasons why it's a terrible idea to bring a puppy to a dog park – even a park with a separate section for small dogs. Even if he doesn't get physically roughed up by older dogs, he may be exposed to contagious diseases before he's fully immunized.

their paws, even if your adult dog's paws are just fine.

Though many people don't learn this until it's too late, public dog parks pose *enormous* risks to puppies – not just from disease transmission, but also from dogs who might attack and gravely injure (or even kill!) a vulnerable, socially clueless pup. Dog owners don't always make wise choices, and sometimes bring dogs who are dangerously inappropriate with other dogs to public dog parks. *Puppies don't belong at public dog parks.*

Puppies carefully leashed a safe distance from large animals at a horse barn are fine. Puppies running loose around the deadly hooves of horses are not. Puppies meeting children and other humans under supervision are fine. Unsupervised puppies being picked up, dropped, and roughly manhandled by neighborhood children and other humans are not. You get the picture.

■ PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

"Dogs learn through repetition." You've probably heard that before, and to some degree, it's very true. If you want to teach your puppy to sit on cue, repeat the sitting lesson, many times, in many places.

But dogs can *also* learn from a one-time exposure to an aversive, fear-causing stimulus. It's all about survival. If a dog had to endure repeated exposure



to scary stimuli to learn to stay away, he would likely not live long. Hence your dog is programmed to quickly learn to avoid things he perceives as threatening.

During a dog's early developmental stages, he is likely to go through several "fear periods," where aversive experiences can have an even greater and longer-lasting impact than normal. The first of these periods is believed to be when the puppy is 8-10 weeks. Then, at any time between 6 and 14 months, your dog may suddenly show an increased fear response to stimuli that he was previously unafraid of. Fortunately, our dogs don't read the books; I would suggest that you simply assume your pup is vulnerable to developing strong fear associations any time during the first 18 months of her life, and avoid places that are very likely to induce fear, such as fireworks displays, street fairs, and loud parties.

WHERE YOU SHOULD TAKE YOUR PUPPY

It may seem like there are unlimited places and situations you should avoid with your puppy, but there are just as

many beneficial places to take her to, including:

- Well-run puppy training classes. Your instructor should require that owners present proof of vaccination prior to bringing puppies into the classroom.
- Pre-arranged play dates and puppy parties with other puppies of known health status and vaccination history.
- Small family gatherings with other dogs of known health status and vaccination history, and who are known to be friendly with other dogs.
- Public places and calm events where dogs are required to be leashed and owners are generally compliant.
- Places of business where dogs are required to be leashed and owners are generally compliant.

Speaking of leashed dogs, while it's important to have a leash on your puppy when you are in public together, to prevent her from getting scared and running into the path of something dangerous, you'll quickly discover that puppies don't know much about walking in a straight line, much less walking politely on a leash. So now that you know where to go and where *not* to go with your pup, let's talk about how to teach her to walk nicely on leash! (See next article on facing page.) 🐾

It's incumbent on you to protect your puppy as much as possible from disease, physical harm, and frightening experiences. This means avoiding places where strange dogs could accost him – especially strange dogs who are not completely under their owner's control.

TO SUBSCRIBE, CALL (800) 829-9165



Start Leash-Training Without a Leash

The no-pull, no-drag method for puppies.

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA

Did you know that the best way to teach a puppy to walk politely on a leash is to *not* use a leash? If you think that sounds like an inscrutable Buddhist koan, fear not – you are not alone. It’s far more common to see people either dragging their puppies around, or being dragged around by their puppies, than it is to see a calm, happy puppy trotting along by her owner’s side.

A lot of people seem to have the misconception that a leash is a handle for pulling your dog wherever you want him to go – or for him to pull you! The evidence for this starts in puppyhood, when you see the reluctant (often tired or scared) baby dog being tugged along behind the human who is intent on

getting somewhere faster than the puppy can, or wants to. The leash, they believe, is supposed to make the puppy come along, regardless.

They couldn’t be more wrong. The true function of a leash is simply to keep the puppy from *leaving*. The motivation to get the pup to walk happily

alongside you should come from *you!* The challenge, then, is to teach your pup to walk with you without a leash – and it’s actually much easier than you might think. Here’s how:

1 In a low-distraction, safely enclosed environment, equipped with plenty of treats, a squeaky toy, and/or a tug toy in your pocket, engage your off-leash pup by talking happily to him and feeding him a treat.

2 With your treat hand hidden behind your back, take a step, cheerfully inviting your puppy to come with you. When he does, “mark” this desired behavior with the click! of a clicker or a verbal marker (such as the word, “Yes!”), and give him a treat.

3 Now take another step, and click and treat when he comes with you.

4 Gradually increase the number of steps you take, remembering to use *variable* reinforcement. That is, sometimes you give him a treat after several steps, and sometimes after one or two steps, to keep him guessing – and enthusiastic.

This shelter pup, in her very first training session, is walking as beautifully with the leash on as she does without it (see photos on the next page). The leash is being used appropriately here – simply to prevent the pup from wandering off, not as a “handle” to coerce the pup into coming along with the handler.



5 Make it a fun game. Take bouncy steps. Use a happy voice. Sometimes reinforce with a squeaky toy or a game of tug instead of treats. Make yourself the most fun, interesting, and reinforcing thing in the room so he chooses to stay close to you.

6 When your puppy is a rock star at walking with you *without* a leash, attach the leash to his collar *but don't change anything else*. Keep practicing your fun-walk games. If at any time the leash tightens, resist the temptation to pull him toward you – just stop, happily engage him, wait until he loosens the leash by coming toward you, and walk again.

7 Now you're ready to fun-walk with your pup in more distracting environments – i.e., the real world. Take higher-value treats and more-enticing toys if necessary, but always remember it's our job as the supposedly more

intelligent species to get our dogs to want to do what we want them to, including walking with us, rather than forcing them to do it.

COME WHEN CALLED

The same procedure works for teaching your pup to come when called. I shudder when I think of the way we used to teach it in old-fashioned obedience classes: Leave your dog on a sit stay, walk to the end of the leash, then call your dog and jerk on the leash to teach him to come quickly in order to avoid being yanked off his feet. Talk about giving a negative association with the word, "Come!" No wonder so many dogs got "leash-wise" and refused to come when they were called in wide-open spaces.

Instead, teach your pup the fun-come game, in the same way as the fun-walk game. With high-value treats and enticing toys, convince your pup that the word "Come" means "You better get over here, because we're about to have

the most fun ever!" Get in the habit of running away from your pup when you call him to take advantage of his natural response to chase things that move, incorporated with treats and games when he gets to you, and you've got a sure winner!

In fact, if you apply this fun-training philosophy to everything you teach your pup, you may be amazed at your training success. Dogs are fun-lovers, and this engaging, rewarding approach will preserve your dog's interest in working with you on any training project. 🐾

For more tips on teaching your pup to come when called, see the September 2012 and September 2015 issues of WDJ.

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



It's hard to do with smaller pups, but try to feed the treats by your side, neither behind you nor in front of you, and at the height of their muzzle.



It's also difficult at first to find a position for your hands that is natural, so that a pup who is as food-focused as this one is not just fixating on her next treat.



At first, the puppy lagged behind and would walk at Christine's side only as she reached for a treat. But within minutes, she caught on and stayed "glued" in place.



Yay! The puppy barely noticed when the leash was added. A few times, when she was distracted by something, she stopped at the end of the leash, but readily returned at the sound of a kiss or chirp.



This puppy has been held in a local shelter for more than a month – it's the first time she's been outdoors and on grass in weeks – and we "borrowed" her not 30 minutes before this session. Even so, she is far more engaged by Christine (and Christine's treats, playful manner, happy voice, and toys) than anything else. When Christine initiates the "fun come" game, the puppy is delighted, and races to stay with her new best friend.

PUPPY EQUIPMENT

“Does this collar make me look fat?” This is not a question your dog is likely to ever ask, even if he spends time gazing at himself in the mirror. Style, while important to us humans, is far less important for your dog than function. With all the choices on the market, how’s a puppy owner to know which equipment she should choose? Here are some tips.

PRODUCTS TO CONSIDER:

Flat Collar with a Buckle or a Quick-Release Snap –

Great for hanging ID tags and licenses, and for walking dogs who have learned to walk politely, without pulling. Not great for dogs or puppies who pull; too much pressure on the throat can cause a collapsed trachea. (Note: For safety, we strongly prefer collars with quick-release snaps.)



Martingale/ Limited Slip Collar –

Same as flat collar (above), but with an added advantage: if properly fitted, these collars tighten enough to prevent the collar from slipping over the dog’s head if he pulls back, without choking the dog. However, if improperly fitted, these *can*

tighten too much, and choke the dog like a choke collar.

Regular Walking Harness – On a “regular” harness, the leash attaches to a ring behind the dog’s shoulders, so if the dog pulls, the pressure is on his chest, not his throat. This is great for avoiding trachea damage for a dog who pulls, but really *not* great for *controlling* a dog who pulls.

Front-Clip No-Pull Harness – On this type of harness, the leash attaches to a ring in front of the dog’s chest (some also have a behind-the-shoulders attachment option). This prevents trachea damage and helps manage a dog who pulls. Our favorite brands are the Freedom Harness from Two Hounds Design (2houndsdesign.com; 704-234-0228) and the Sense-ation and Sense-ible Harnesses from Soft Touch Concepts (softtouchconcepts.com; 866-305-6145).

Note: Some professionals suggest that the pressure exerted on a dog’s shoulders by these harnesses can cause physical problems. Teaching your dog to walk properly without pulling is your best alternative.

Head Halters – A halter goes over the dog’s head and face, with the leash attaching to a ring under his chin or behind his head, depending on the brand. While these are often considered



a “positive” training tool, many dogs aren’t fond of halters, and it can take a fair amount of counter-conditioning to convince dogs to like them. For dogs who do well with them, they are a good tool for managing a dog who pulls. Our favorite brand: Perfect Pace Bold Lead Designs (boldleaddesigns.com; 303-856-3012). **Note:** There is at least one documented case of a dog who was instantly paralyzed when he hit the end of his leash running while wearing a head halter with a leash clipped below his chin (he eventually recovered). Teaching your dog to walk properly without pulling is still your best alternative.

PRODUCTS TO AVOID - NOT RECOMMENDED:

Choke Chains/Nylon Slip Collars – Also called “training collars,” these collars work by inflicting pain when the leash is jerked, and have a high likelihood of causing trachea damage. They can be effective when used with care and perfect timing by a professional – and they can cause fear, pain, and learned helplessness in some dogs when used “properly” or improperly.

Prong or Pinch Collars – These collars work by inflicting pain when the leash is jerked or when the dog pulls. They are less likely to cause trachea damage than a choke chain, as the pressure/pain is distributed evenly around the dog’s neck, but they are still very aversive and not recommended.

Shock Collars – Also called “electronic collars” and “e-collars” in an attempt to make them more palatable, these collars inflict an electric shock to the dog’s neck either when a button is pushed (training collar), or when the dog crosses an electronic field (underground fence). Proponents argue that the shock is a “tickle,” “tingle,” or “stim” and that it doesn’t really hurt. It’s a shock and it’s aversive – which is why the collars *can* work! However, some dogs develop negative behavioral fallout from the use of these collars – such as fear, generalized anxiety, phobias, and/or aggression – and it’s impossible to predict which dogs may experience this until it’s too late. After punishment with these collars, especially at the hand of someone with poor observation skills or poor timing, the dog may give up and lose interest in training, develop negative feelings about his handler, the training environment, or something present in his training environment, and/or develop defensive aggression. We never recommend the use of shock collars.

Scoot Away

Anal-sac problems are not just annoying, but also potentially serious if neglected or ignored.

BY DENISE FLAIM

Let's be honest: Some areas of veterinary study are sexier than others. The functioning of complex organs such as the thyroid, the treatment of behavioral aberrations like separation anxiety, the risk factors for hip dysplasia – all these topics have had their share of academics willing to question, probe, and publish their findings. But anal sacs? Very few researchers in veterinary medicine find themselves called to explore the nuances of this grape-shaped pair of pouches.

Very likely this has to do with their location at the puckered inside edge of the anus, or their contents, which is an oily, semi-liquid substance that smells like a dead mackerel . . . on a good day.

Also dampening academic enthusiasm is the fact that there is no biological corollary in humans: Unlike some other mammals, including bears and sea otters, we humans simply don't have anal sacs. (Conversely, dogs don't get hemorrhoids, so maybe we're even.) And if our species doesn't have to contend with something so gross, why go out of your way to study it?

One good reason is that so many dogs have minor but annoying problems with their anal sacs – and some dogs have required surgery to repair or improve the situation.

WHAT ARE THESE THINGS?

Many dog owners are oblivious to the existence of these two sacs, whose openings are positioned at four and eight o'clock as the clock ticks around the dog's anus, and are not obvious to the untrained eye. In dogs, anal sacs are considered vestigial, sort of like the human appendix. When marking and defending boundaries were crucial for canine survival, they likely had a key role, adding a dog's unique and identifying scent to his excrement; today, salutatory butt-sniffing might very well be an evolutionary remnant of that

territorial imperative. Another theory is that the liquid in the anal sacs lubricates hard stool, making it easier for the dog to eliminate.

Located between the internal and external anal sphincter muscles, and lined with oil and sweat glands, each anal sac is connected to the outside world via a short, narrow duct. Occasionally, when these ducts get plugged up, anal sacs can get impacted or, if left untreated, infected, leaving the dog uncomfortable and the owner befuddled at why her furry co-habitator is now dragging his bottom across the living-room rug.

"Most people don't know that anal sacs exist, until their dogs start scooting," says Jennifer Schissler, DVM, MS, DACVD, an assistant professor of dermatology at Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences in Fort Collins.

The fact that dermatologists are the specialists under whose purview anal sacs usually fall tells you just how much of a veterinary stepchild these obscure little cavities are. "In veterinary medicine, dermatologists are a catch-all for things related to glands," Dr. Schissler shrugs. "Nobody really is an expert in anal sacs."

SIGNS OF A PROBLEM

Along with "scooting," or dragging their rears across carpets and floors, dogs can exhibit a variety of signs of an



Many dogs are delighted, and all owners are dismayed, to discover that carpet is the perfect surface to rub against in order to relieve pressure in the dogs' anal sacs.

anal-sac problem, including licking or biting at their anus; painful or prolonged defecation, or avoiding it altogether; and, in severe cases, an abscess or draining tract around the anus. (Sudden fear or excitement can also sometimes prompt a dog to empty his sacs involuntarily, which is entirely normal – and particularly nasty if he happens to be on your lap or in your arms at the time.)

A full physical examination, including a rectal exam, can determine if anal sacs are the problem. "I might do a fecal exam to see if there are any internal parasites, because tapeworms can cause perianal itch," Dr. Schissler explains. "Flea-bite hypersensitivity can be a cause, too."

She ticks off other sources of irritation around the rectum that may not be related to impacted anal sacs: Some dogs can have an allergy that manifests around the anus and is not an anal-sac problem at all; still others might have a tumor or polyp in the rectum or anal sac.

If all of the above are ruled out and the anal sacs are dilated and inflamed, then the veterinarian will usually evacuate (empty) them. "Some veterinarians will do cytology and look at the material

under a microscope,” Dr. Schissler says. Inflammatory cells might suggest infection and a subsequent prescription for antibiotics.

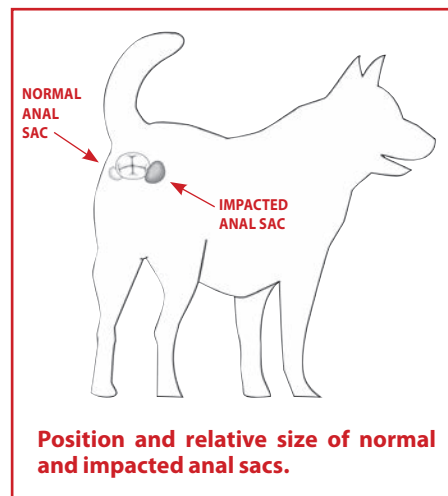
DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

Emptying anal sacs by manually manipulating and squeezing them is not something that Dr. Schissler recommends to the average dog owner. If a dog's anal sacs are working normally, they will express themselves on their own when the dog defecates; there is no regular need to manually empty them.

If the dog has a problem with her anal sacs that requires manual expression, some brave souls prefer to do it on their own rather than bringing the dog back to the vet once the problem has been diagnosed. “Some people do it successfully,” after having been shown the proper procedure by their veterinarian, Dr. Schissler concedes. “But one of the things that's likely to cause a dog discomfort and anxiety is handling around his anus. If a dog is going to bite you, he's going to bite you if you're touching his rear end.” In addition, to do a thorough job of evacuating the sacs, “you need to do it digitally, with a finger in the dog's rectum, and most clients are not comfortable with that.”

The anal sacs can be expressed externally, by squeezing the anus at the four and eight o'clock positions. In fact, many groomers empty the sacs this way as a routine part of a grooming visit. But Dr. Schissler stresses that this will not empty the sacs entirely. And some experts argue that manipulating the sacs may cause damage and create the very problem that you're trying to avoid in the first place.

If your dog is having ongoing anal-



sac problems and you want or need to learn to empty them yourself, have your veterinarian show you how to do it. Make sure your dog is restrained properly, and be sure that other problems, such as a tumor, polyp, or abscess, have been ruled out. “If the anal sac starts to abscess and you squeeze internally, you'll make it worse,” Dr. Schissler cautions.

But, she says, if it ain't broke, don't fix it: “If a dog's not having a problem, I'd just leave them alone.”

TREATMENT AND COMPLICATIONS

While some studies estimate that as many as 12 percent of dogs have had problems with their anal sacs, there is no clear understanding of the cause. One theory suggests that some dogs have very narrow anal-sac ducts that are more prone to obstruction; inflammation from allergies may also block the ducts. Smaller and toy dogs have a greater likelihood of developing anal-sac problems, as do certain breeds, including Cocker Spaniels, Basset Hounds, and Beagles.

“As a dermatologist, I see a lot of dogs with anal-sac issues,” Dr. Schissler says. “My guess is that there are several different causes, but the reality is that it's not a glamorous thing to study, so there are few studies about what's normal.”

Regardless of the cause, ignoring anal-sac problems can lead to unpleasant complications: The accumulated material in the sac eventually will begin to thicken, impacting the sac. If infection results and remains untreated, the anal sac can abscess and rupture, allowing the infection to spread into the tissue around the anus and the back of the thigh.

In such serious cases, the veterinarian might prescribe steroid and antibiotic therapy. But unless signs of infection are definitely present, “treatment with antibiotics is not usually indicated,” Dr. Schissler says. And diagnosing a brewing infection doesn't just mean the presence of bacteria, as all normal anal-sac excretions contain those organisms; the secretions will also contain many inflammatory cells.

While uncommon, anal-sac adenocarcinomas can metastasize aggressively, and are also signaled by high levels of calcium in the blood. If physical examination rules out a tumor, and an infection is not suspected, Dr. Schissler says a veterinarian might opt to empty the anal sacs and monitor the situation.

Though studies are few and far between, Dr. Schissler says that allergies are suspected to play a role in anal-sac problems. If an allergic response is suspected, a veterinarian might opt to put the dog on a hypoallergenic diet or one with a novel protein, though Dr. Schissler finds that anal-sac problems don't always respond to a diet change or allergy therapy.

Some anecdotal evidence suggests that an increase in dietary fiber can help resolve anal-sac problems, the theory being that the firmer stool expresses the glands naturally. (Some owners report that raw diets, whose natural-bone content produces very hard stools, are particularly helpful in this regard.) While Dr. Schissler has found that high-fiber diets do not always help, “they can't hurt,” she says.

The most drastic treatment for repeated, chronic anal-sac infections is surgery to remove the sacs. Not a minor surgery, anal saccullectomy runs the risk of intraoperative bleeding (because the area is so vascular), post-operative infection, and – the outcome that concerns most owners – fecal incontinence. Dr. Schissler notes that when the surgery is done appropriately, by an experienced, board-certified surgeon, the risk of the latter is low.

And she stresses that surgery is very much a last resort. “I've been practicing vet medicine for 10 years, nine of them dermatology related, and I've only sent two dogs to surgery,” Dr. Schissler says. “It's not common, and the vast majority of cases can be managed.”

She says she will consider surgery under one of two circumstances: Repeated infections have created so much suspected scar tissue that there is no longer an opening for the anal sacs to empty, or the anal-sac problem is so severe, and has been so unresponsive to medical treatment over time, that the dog's quality of life is negatively impacted.

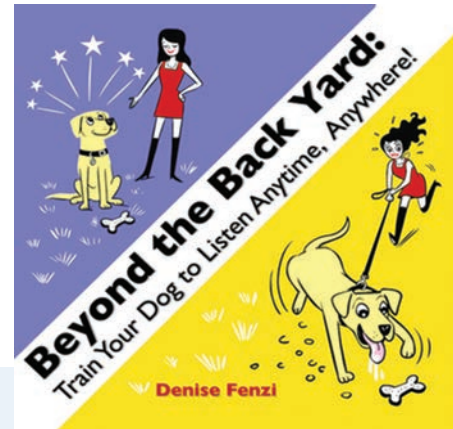
With the constant “scooting” and seemingly endless carpet-cleaning that they bring, anal-sac problems are no fun for anyone. Being diligent about noting symptoms and seeking out early veterinary care can ensure that your dog – not to mention that antique Aubusson – both get the relief they need. 🐾

A regular contributor to WDJ, Denise Flaim raises Ridgebacks in Long Island, New York.

How Dogs Learn

An excerpt from *Beyond the Back Yard*

BY DENISE FENZI



Editor's note: Denise Fenzi is the founder and head trainer at the Fenzi Dog Sports Academy, an online school dedicated to providing high-quality instruction for competitive dog sports, using only the most current and progressive training methods. Denise has competed in a wide range of dog sports, titling dogs in obedience (AKC and UKC), tracking (AKC and schutzhund), schutzhund (USA), mondioring (MRSA), herding (AKC), conformation (AKC), and agility (AKC). Although Denise has found success as a competitor, her real passion lies in training dogs – and teaching people how to train their dogs. To that end, she's written a number of books on dog training, including a series on dog sports skills (co-authored by Deborah Jones, PhD, and previously warmly reviewed in WDJ). The book we have excerpted here is Fenzi's first title aimed exclusively at pet dog owners and pet dog trainers. We are grateful for the opportunity to share its first chapter here. If you are interested in purchasing this or any other of Fenzi's books, see "Resources," page 24. – Nancy Kerns

While dog training does not require a degree in animal behavior, it is useful to understand how dogs learn. If you understand how your dog learns, you will be able to teach her more than what's presented in this or any book, magazine, or class. You'll also be better able to solve problems that arise.

All animals, including humans, will maximize their well-being in the process of learning – which is just a fancy way of saying that animals do what works best for them. This includes getting things like food or desired objects as well as a sense of emotional well-being, such as feeling safe, happy, or engaged.

Animals avoid things that make them uncomfortable and seek out things that they like, want, or need. So if you want an animal to do something for you (called a behavior), then either provide a pleasant consequence when she cooperates, or an unpleasant consequence when she doesn't.

Sometimes an animal is consciously thinking about what is happening around her. At other times, she is learning without any thought at all. In both cases, the animal is learning. Let's take a moment to look at each of these scenarios, because they are important to understand.



When your dog is making choices and is aware of what she is learning, you are using *operant conditioning*. Although you probably didn't realize it at the time, you were using operant conditioning when you taught your dog to perform some basic behaviors. Operant conditioning simply means that your dog makes an association between doing something and the resulting consequence. Nothing more, nothing less.

There are three basic ways you can use operant conditioning:

1 Your dog learns that when she does something you want, something awesome happens. For example, you may have taught your dog to sit by using a cookie.



Each time you give dogs a cue, they weigh the possible benefits of the act with the negative consequences they are aware of, and choose whether or not to comply – just like people do! If working with you is likely to be rewarding to them in some way, they will likely comply.

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2 Your dog learns that if she doesn't do what you want, something unpleasant happens. Some people teach their dogs to sit by pulling up on the collar.

3 Your dog learns through a combination of each of the above. Cookies when she sits, and receiving a collar correction when she doesn't.

Each time you give your dog a cue to do something, she makes a choice. She can calculate the sum of the possible motivators with the possible punishers and choose whether or not to comply. If complying with you works in her favor, she'll likely obey. Same as with people.



There's another form of learning, and this one is a bit more subtle. It's called classical conditioning. Unlike operant conditioning, where the animal is making choices, classical conditioning doesn't require any conscious effort at all to learn. It just happens.

Animals are learning all the time, whether we are aware of it or not. When you were teaching your dog to sit – no matter how you did it – she was learning more than just how to sit. She was learning about training in general; is it fun and something to look forward to, or something unpleasant and best avoided? She learned how much she enjoys (or doesn't enjoy) your company. She learned if the world is a safe, predictable place, or if it's unsafe and anxiety-provoking.

As you may have already guessed, people have the same experiences with classical conditioning. If you're ever had a really super teacher who was patient, kind, and consistent, yet held you to high expectations, you know how hard you worked to learn and to please her, and how much you wanted to be in her company.

On the other hand, if you've ever had a teacher or an employer who was grumpy, demanding, unreasonable, or unpredictable, you know how anxious you felt in her presence. You may have even discovered that under her supervision, you were unable to do even simple tasks because your nervousness blocked your ability to learn or to perform correctly. That is because fear overwhelms rational thought. Again, this is true in all animals, including dogs and humans.

Since classical conditioning isn't



Operant conditioning has been used to teach these dogs to perform an extended down/stay behavior. At the same time, classical conditioning is always at work! Happily, they all appear relaxed and comfortable as they comply with the cues they were given.

conscious, you might find yourself feeling anxiety and unpleasantness well after the event that caused those reactions in the first place. Many parents who did not enjoy their school years have reported feeling upset or anxious when they first walked into their child's school classroom, even twenty years later! Long after they have forgotten exactly what it was about school that was unpleasant, they still harbor the negative feelings. That's classical conditioning at work.

Just as the dog was learning without realizing it, it is quite likely that you were teaching these lessons without realizing it either. It is critically important for your dog to learn that training time is pleasant, because fear and anxiety block effective and efficient learning. The more your dog is able to relax and look forward to her lessons, the more quickly she will master them and work to please you. If you want your dog to be an engaged learner, then make it a priority to set up training sessions that are short, positive, and rewarding for your dog.

In contrast, if you express disappointment in her work or use physical manipulation to get the desired responses, you'll erode your working relationship by creating unpleasant classically conditioned responses to training.



I teach and use positive training methods for several reasons:

1 We want to condition our dogs to enjoy working with us so that they can learn more quickly.

2 We want our dogs to respond even when they are out of our physical reach. Dogs are smart. If compliance is gained primarily through methods that involve corrections, they quickly learn when you can and cannot enforce your cues. If your dog complies only when he is on a leash or when he is wearing a special collar, you need to consider how this relates to your training goals. How often do you need a recall on a six-foot leash? Probably never; he's already with you! All dogs can figure out if they are wearing a leash, but it's a rare dog who knows if you have access to a cookie. (Note that I said "access to." Most dogs know if you have a cookie in your hand or pocket!)

3 While residual fear and the generally easygoing nature of dogs might allow for cooperation even when enforcement is not possible, it's not much fun to have a dog cooperate because she is afraid of you. The purpose of having a dog is to enjoy the mutually beneficial relationship that can exist across species. Why create a relationship based on fear when it's not necessary?



Good training plans take both operant conditioning and classical conditioning into account. You and your dog should both enjoy the process! If you aren't both having fun, go back and look at why this might be. What are you teaching your dog without meaning to? Are you doing something to scare her, even if you don't mean to? Find ways to make the process enjoyable for you both! 🐾



🐾 **PRODUCT REVIEW** 🐾

Read More!

More recommended dog books to get you through these long, cold nights.

BY CJ PUOTINEN

Last month, I described my favorite dog books – at least, those that have been published in the past year or two. Once I started listing them, I couldn't stop! Here are more of the books I find myself thinking about, going back to read (or in the case of a few photography books, just look at and enjoy), and buy for friends. I'll start with the coffee-table worthy photo books.



**The Black Dogs Project:
Extraordinary Black Dogs
and Why We Can't Forget Them**

by Fred Levy
Race Point Publishing, 2015
Hardcover, 128 pages, \$26

We love looking at great photos of dogs, but The Black Dogs Project aspires to more than just entertaining dog lovers. When animal photographer Fred Levy

learned that black dogs in shelters are often the last to be adopted and first to be euthanized, he didn't believe it. But when he investigated, he learned that the bias against black dogs is real, and it's a serious problem. This led to a series of elegant, somber portraits of black dogs, complete with their stories.

Originally a Tumblr blog that went viral (caninenoir.tumblr.com), the photos support the adoption of black dogs. In a March 2014 Huffington Post interview, Levy explained, "I thought this project would be a good graphic challenge. . . . I want to bring awareness to this issue and remind people who are searching for the perfect dog that black dogs have great personalities, too." Levy is donating a portion of the proceeds to a group called Labrador and Friends in support of the adoption of black dogs.

**The Dogist:
Photographic Encounters
with 1,000 Dogs**

by Elias Weiss Friedman
Artisan, 2015
Hardcover, 304 pages, \$25

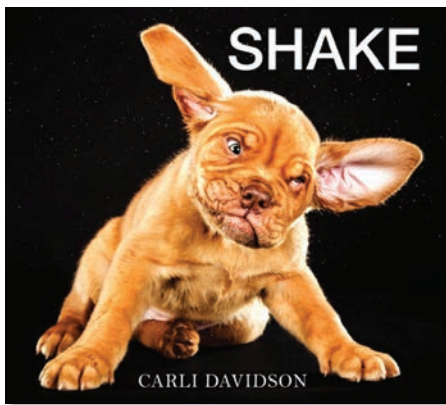
Photographer Elias Weiss Friedman, who launched his blog and Instagram feed (@TheDogist) in 2013, captures the personalities of a thousand dogs of all breeds, shapes, ages, sizes, and attire in a coffee-table book that reviewers and fans call endearing, delightful, emotional, spontaneous, caring, and can't-put-down wonderful.



**Shake
Shake Puppies**

by Carli Davidson
Harper Design, 2013 and 2014
Hardcover, 144 pages, \$18

Photographer Carli Davidson captures dogs and puppies in the middle of that magical moment: mid-shake. Their eyes bulge and their ears, tongues, and bodies go in all directions in vivid colors and perfect focus. You've watched your dog shake a million times, but the action is simply too fast to see. Take a look at these dogs of every breed and size and your own will look different next time. Better

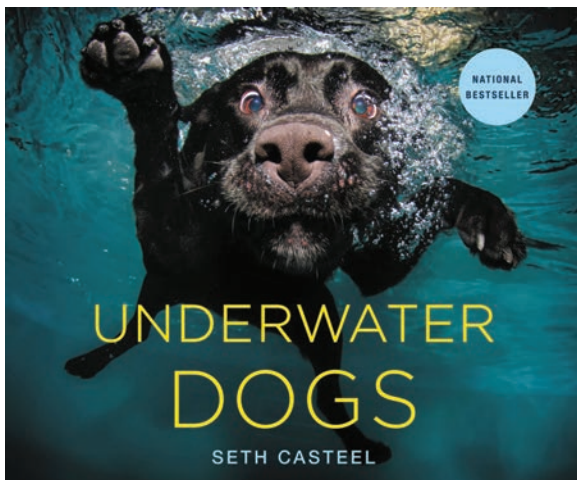


yet, try to capture your dog in mid-shake with cell phone or camera, and you'll appreciate Davidson's skill.

After the initial success of *Shake*, Davidson focused solely on puppies for a follow-up book, *Shake Puppies*; her newest work is *Shake Cats!* Most animal lovers call these books fun, uplifting, adorable, hilarious, personality-capturing, and stress-reducing.

Underwater Dogs
Underwater Puppies
 by Seth Casteel
 Little, Brown and Company,
 2012 and 2014 respectively.
 Hardcover, 132 and 128 pages, \$21

Self-taught photographer Seth Casteel was working with Buster, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, in the dog's backyard when he wondered what the enthusiastic swimmer would look like underwater. He left to buy an inexpensive underwater camera and Buster became the first in a series of bug-eyed, ball-chasing, fang-showing, bubble-surrounded swimming dogs. Casteel then maxed his credit card buying a camera housing designed for surf photographers, and the investment paid off when the world noticed his startling, entertaining underwater



photos. Casteel's pictures are featured in annual calendars, children's books, address books, and other products.

Underwater Dogs was followed by *Underwater Puppies*, *Underwater Dogs Kids Edition*, and (to be fair) *Underwater Babies*.

Casteel also photographs homeless pets for shelters and rescue organizations around the world, in order to help animals find forever homes. See his blog at sethcasteel.com.

Man's Best Hero:
True Stories of Great American Dogs
 by Ace Collins
 Abingdon Press, 2014
 Paperback, 208 pages, \$16

Who doesn't love a good dog story? These hero dogs – mostly household pets – rose to the occasion when their humans were drowning, on fire, about to be run over, or simply discouraged and depressed. They are all sizes, ages, and conditions, and their stories are old (Stubby, the most decorated dog of World War I) and new. This straightforward, entertaining collection can be read in small sections or straight through, and it's appropriate for all ages. Best of all, though it mentions Lassie, Rin Tin Tin, and other famous canines, the book's main focus is the everyday family dog.



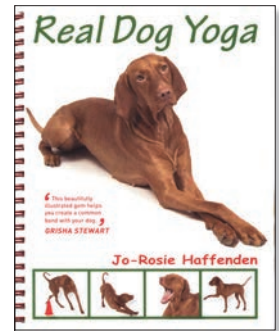
Real Dog Yoga
 by Jo-Rosie Haffenden
 First Stone Publishing, 2015
 Paperback, 128 pages, \$17

This English import offers step-by-step instructions for enhancing the human-animal bond with exercises that come naturally to dogs.

Author Jo-Rosie Haffenden is not a fan of Doga, the yoga-for-dogs classes in which small dogs are lifted into the air, pinned to the floor, or propped on the owner's back. Instead, she combines 30 canine postures (safe and comfortable positions), 15 expressions (slow and calm actions), and 10 communication expressions (mostly facial or vocal) with

force-free training and respect for dogs.

Detailed instructions for clicker training, verbal cues, and shaping are organized into sessions and sequences that combine body consciousness with mental focus. The result: calm, relaxed dogs, enhanced overall health, and improved dog-handler communication.



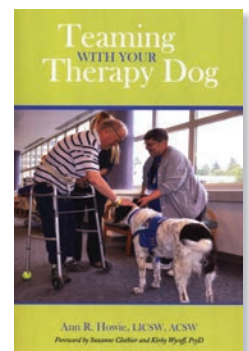
Teaming with Your Therapy Dog
 by Ann R. Howie, LICSW, ACSW
 Purdue University Press, 2015
 Paperback, 161 pages, \$17

If you're at all interested in animal-assisted therapy, you've probably heard of Ann Howie. For the past 30 years she has incorporated animals into acute-care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health and hospice care, in-patient psychiatry, and the ever-expanding world of therapy pet training and registration.

A popular conference speaker, Howie focuses on positive training methods and a strong bond between dog and handler in which the dog is an equal partner.

Her 13-point "Therapy Dog's Bill of Rights" begins with "As a therapy dog, I have the right to a handler who obtains my consent to participate in the work." Too often, she says, therapy dogs are put to work with little regard for their wants and needs.

The Bill continues, "As a therapy dog, I have the right to a handler who provides gentle training to help me understand what I'm supposed to do; is considerate of my perception of the world; helps me adapt to the work environment; guides the client, staff, and visitors to interact with me appropriately; focuses on me as much as the client, staff, and visitors; pays attention to my nonverbal cues; takes action to reduce my stress; supports me during interactions with the client; protects me from overwork;



gives me ways to relax after sessions; provides a well-rounded life with nutritious food, medical care, physical and intellectual exercise, social time, and activities beyond work; and respects my desire to retire from work when I think it is time.”

In addition to elaborating on these points, Howie describes different ways of handling therapy dogs, the importance of being fully present on visits, and how to understand a dog’s behavior, maintain close proximity to your dog on visits, improve your observation skills, support your therapy dog with touch, speak conversationally, and combine all of these ingredients for effective, satisfying results. A dog behavior checklist and resources complete this readable, thorough, and very useful book.

What the Dog Knows: The Science and Wonder of Working Dogs

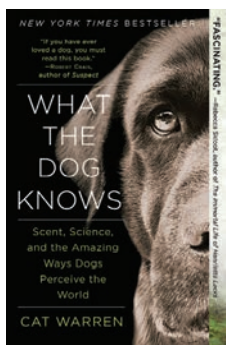
by Cat Warren

Touchstone, 2015

Paperback, 343 pages, \$16

Dogs have all kinds of jobs, but the ones we call “working dogs” are the most physical. These include military, police, bomb-sniffing, drug-sniffing, search and rescue, and cadaver dogs. They need stamina, strength, intelligence, good handlers, and excellent training.

Thanks to Cat Warren, we bystanders can have an intimate, inside view of cadaver dog training and handling, along with insights into the training of all working dogs. Warren, who lives in North Carolina, describes every aspect of her development as a handler and the training her dogs received, with



important help from experts who were generous with their time, advice, and attention to detail.

“I blame Solo, my third German Shepherd, for this book,” she explains at catwarren.com. “The dog didn’t eat my homework. He became my homework. I finally stopped making excuses to colleagues about the time I spent working and learning with Solo and conceded that I had become a sniffer-dog nerd.”

Some of Warren’s most interesting descriptions involve the ways in which we humans interfere with our dogs’ training by projecting our own expectations, which are often wrong and which easily mislead our dogs. She explains how the illegal and unethical actions of a few dog handlers caused innocent people to be arrested and, when the errors were discovered, resulted in expensive exonerations and a general discrediting of canine testimony.

Readers involved in scent tracking and nose work should find Warren’s descriptions of blind and double-blind training methods interesting. Correct and careful training from the beginning can help prevent both dog and handler from making serious mistakes.

The research that went into this project (several pages of acknowledgments detail the participation of leading trainers) makes *What the Dog Knows* far more than a personal memoir. This is an exciting book full of useful information.

A Wolf Called Romeo

by Nick Jans

Manner Books, 2015

Paperback, 288 pages, \$15

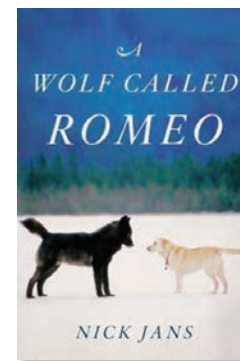
Though wolves are more common in Alaska than the rest of the U.S., it was still thrilling when Nick Jans and his wife saw a black wolf in December 2003, as they walked with their yellow Lab, Dakotah. Suddenly the wolf ran straight at them,

stopping 40 yards away, stiff-legged, tail raised, in a dominant posture. Dakotah, who was half the wolf’s size, moaned and broke away from her humans, ignoring their cries as she skidded to a stop by the wolf. “She stood tall, her own tail straight out,” writes Jans, “and as we watched, mouths open, the wolf lowered his to match.” Then the wolf bowed, lifted a paw, and the two animals watched each other intently while Dakotah sidled closer and circled.

So began a relationship between the wolf and Jans’ dogs, and through them with Jans himself, one that lasted for the rest of Dakotah’s life and beyond. For six years the gentle black wolf returned to play with Juneau’s dogs, follow cross-country skiers, and nap near his friends in the sun.

At first a handful of residents and their dogs were the only ones who knew about the wolf, but word – and publicity and controversy – soon spread. It wasn’t long before curious or uninformed people were putting their dogs and themselves at risk by getting close or even pushing their dogs toward the wolf for play. To his credit, Romeo, as he came to be called, was well behaved. By all accounts intelligent, curious, and in excellent health, the black wolf captivated photographers and animal lovers, and he inspired Jans and others to study the history and nature of wolves in detail.

Alas, Romeo’s story has a sad ending, one that still frustrates Jans. You may learn more than you wanted about politics and the legal aspects of wolf management, but Jans’ breathtaking photos and haunting descriptions of Romeo will stay with you. 🐾



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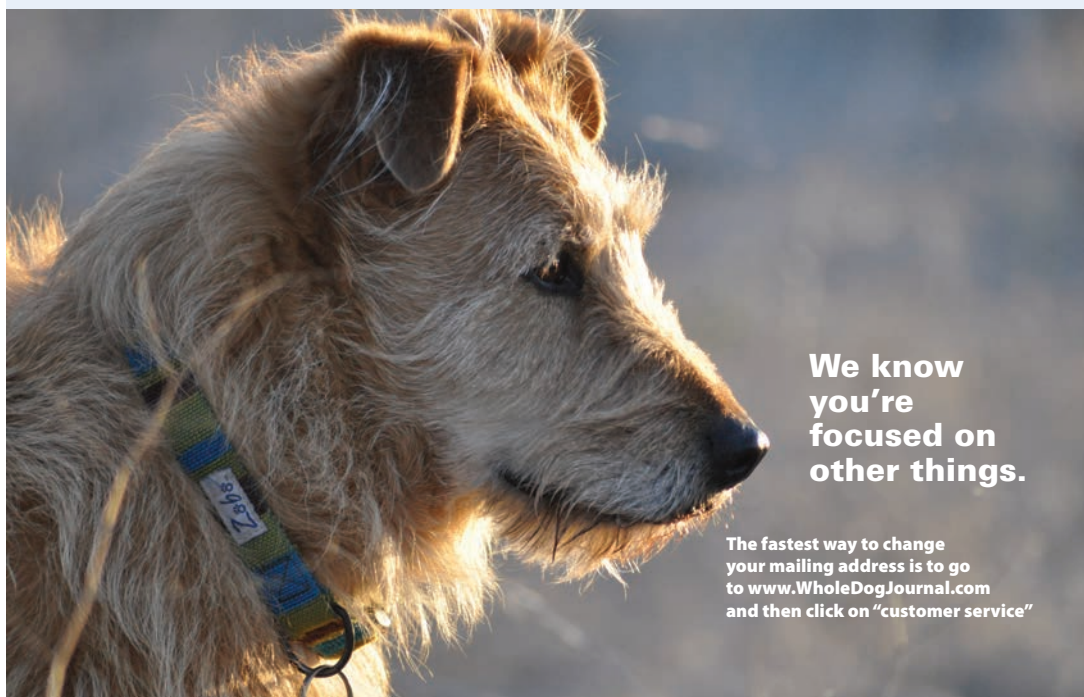
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- ❖ WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of *Positive Perspectives; Positive Perspectives 2; Power of Positive Dog Training; Play With Your Dog; Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance at a First Class Life*; and her newest book, *How to Foster Dogs: From Homeless to Homeward Bound*. Available from dogwise.com and wholedogjournal.com
- ❖ Denise Fenzi is the co-author (along with Deborah Jones, PhD) of *Dog Sports Skills, Book 1: Developing Relationship and Engagement; Dog Sports Skills, Book 2: Motivation*; and *Dog Sports Skills, Book 3: Play*. She also has a new book, excerpted in this issue, *Beyond the Back Yard: Train Your Dog to Listen Anytime, Anywhere*. These books are available from thedogathlete.com

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- ❖ **Denise Fenzi**, Fenzi Dog Sports Academy. The Fenzi Dog Sports Academy is an on-line school devoted to training dog and handler teams at the highest levels of competition in a range of sports. Owner Denise Fenzi's passions are competitive obedience and no force (motivational) dog training. Denise travels throughout North America teaching seminars on topics related to dog obedience and building drives and motivation. fenzidogsportsacademy.com
- ❖ **Pat Miller**, CBCG-KA, CPDT-KA, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Fairplay, MD. Group and private training, rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. Miller also offers a variety of dog training academies and instructors's courses. (301) 582-9420; peaceablepaws.com



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