

The Whole Dog Journal™



VOLUME 14 | NO. 9 | \$5.95

A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

SEPTEMBER 2011

FEATURES

3 Found a Hound?

Five ways to do right away if you rescue a stray or lost dog.

4 More Than a Friend

Increasingly, dogs are being used as valued therapeutic companions for children with autism.

10 Be Brave

How to help your timid dog find the courage to go out into the world with confidence.

14 Talking About the “F” Word

In dog training, that’s “frustration” – and all the attendant anger and temper tantrums that might go along with it!

18 Hell’s Nails

Symmetrical Lupoid Onychodystrophy (SLO) is a painful condition that causes a dog’s nails to slough. Plus, a reader shares her Greyhound’s story of recovery.



They can go anywhere now:

North Star’s Charlie, and his boy with autism, Tim
page 4



Don’t swear!
page 14



When running away is smart . . .
page 10

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Editor’s Note
- 21 Letters From Readers
- 22 Update on Resistant Heartworms
- 24 Product and Expert Resources

The Whole Dog



Journal™

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – Nancy Kerns
TRAINING EDITOR – Pat Miller
PUBLISHER – Timothy H. Cole
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR – Greg King

EDITORIAL OFFICE

E-MAIL: WDJEditor@gmail.com
ADDRESS: 1655 Robinson Street
Oroville, CA 95965

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

PHONE: (800) 829-9165
INTERNET: whole-dog-journal.com/cs
U.S. MAIL: PO Box 420235
Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235
CANADA: Box 7820 STN Main
London, Ontario N5Y 5W1

BACK ISSUES, WEBSITE INQUIRIES

PHONE: (800) 424-7887
E-MAIL: customer_service@belvoir.com
INTERNET: whole-dog-journal.com
U.S. MAIL: PO Box 5656
Norwalk, CT 06856-5656

REPRINTS

For price quote, contact
Jennifer Jimolka at (203) 857-3144.
Minimum order 1,000

NEWSSTAND

Jocelyn Donnellon, (203) 857-3100

WHOLE DOG JOURNAL DOES NOT ACCEPT COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

B THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL (ISSN #1097-5322) is published monthly by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 800 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Executive Vice President, Editorial Director; Phillip L. Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Executive Vice President, Marketing Director; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Vice President, Circulation. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, CT and at additional mailing offices. Copyright ©2011, Belvoir Media Group, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited. Printed in U.S.A. Revenue Canada GST Account #128044658. Canada Publishing Agreement Number #40016479.

THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL makes every effort to provide information on dog health, care, and treatment that is authoritative, reliable, and practical. It is not intended, however, to replace diagnosis or treatment from a veterinarian or other qualified dog professional. THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL does not assume any legal responsibility. Readers should always consult qualified healthcare providers for specific diagnosis and treatment.

Subscriptions: \$39 annually (12 issues). Bulk rate subscriptions for organizations and educational institutions available upon request.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL, PO Box 420234, Palm Coast, FL 32142

THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL, PO Box 39, Norwich, ON, N0J 1P0



PAW EDITOR'S NOTE

Finally Fall

Summer days may be long, but we still can't get everything done!

BY NANCY KERNS

I think I may make this announcement every fall: I'm sorry that some of the articles that we've been promising (seen in the "What's Ahead" column on the back cover) have not yet appeared. And other, unheralded ones have popped up. Even after nearly 50 years on earth, I can't seem to manage my summer schedules properly.

It's not all my fault. July was a terrible month for many of the people I know and rely on to help me with WDJ. Many of us took informal family leave breaks from our work to deal with sick or dying pets or other family members. I've been unable to devote as much time as I need to finish my research for the wet food review. Two articles (the one that will discuss chemotherapy for dogs and the one describing giardia and other water-borne, parasitic infections) have been delayed by their writers' need to look after extremely ill family members. I'm not an extreme enough editor to insist that these articles come in on time, no matter what – but I do apologize for the delays. They will appear soon, I'm certain.

Also crummy for me personally is that the writer of the giardia article is also my agility instructor, and her family emergency is taking her out of state! Cindy Rich and her husband are moving hundreds of miles away in order to care for a family member. I have total empathy for her situation – but I'm also more than just a tad selfishly bummed; Otto and I were just starting to get somewhere with agility. I was even entertaining fantasies of actually going someplace to compete in a fun agility event. Ack! I'll really miss Cindy and our classes.

I'll have to find a new instructor or club – or just develop some self-discipline and

practice on our own. I still have an informal goal of competing somewhere before the end of the year.

It's not that I'm eager to appear in public with my scruffy dog and my dirty sneakers. It's just that Otto has so much fun doing agility; his eyes just *light up* when it's our turn to run. He approaches the whole task with exuberance and creativity – although I suspect that last trait is maybe not going to be rewarded at agility trials anytime soon. When I'm less than clear about giving him direction, or just too darn slow, he'll often "freelance" along the way, taking an extra obstacle in order to let me catch up, or just in case it was *that* one I wanted him to jump, instead of *this* one. Or maybe he's just having fun being athletic – like when we're supposed to run past the A-frame to the tunnel, and he runs up a third of the A-frame and leaps off the side of it into the tunnel. He's also apt to jump *over* the tunnels he's supposed to run through; he really likes jumping.

Anyway, I'm hoping September sees everyone I know recovering. I also hope we'll see cooler temperatures around the country; I know that would help this un-air-conditioned editor think and work faster and get back on track. And maybe into an agility show ring, too.

NK

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

Found a Hound?

Five things you should do if you find a stray dog.

BY NANCY KERNS

I don't know a single dog owner who hasn't, at some point (or quite frequently), spent an inordinate amount of time trying to capture a stray or lost dog. I know I've caught more than my share in the small town, or its rural surroundings, where I've lived for the past five years. I've caught burr-covered, obviously lost hunting dogs; dogs whose injuries suggested they'd tumbled from the back of a truck; as well as some fluffy little lap-escapees who looked like they were just out for an adventure.

If the dog is wearing a collar and tags with current contact information for his owner, you're in luck – and the rest of the information in this article isn't relevant. But out of maybe 20 dogs I've scooped up in the past five years, exactly one was wearing a collar and current ID tag. It certainly seems like the people who keep collars and tags on their dogs at all times are also the ones who manage to keep them safely contained – but accidents can happen to any owner. Here's what you should do with an unidentified dog.

1 Take him to your local shelter. Don't panic; you don't have to leave him there if you are concerned that your local shelter is unsafe, unclean, or poorly managed. But there are a few things you should do at the shelter (see # 2 and # 3).

If the dog has an owner who is actually trying to find the dog, the owner will most likely come to the shelter to look for the dog. Few people, except the most dedicated owners, think to read the ads in the classified section or on craigslist.

2 Ask the shelter staff to scan the dog, to see if he has an implanted microchip ID. If he does, the staff should be able to help you track down contact information for the dog's owner.

This seems like a no-brainer, but it only recently occurred to me that my 14- or 15-year-old cat, who was a stray found by a friend and then given to me 12 long years ago, was never scanned. I actually

took her to my local shelter and had her scanned just the other day; I hate to think I could have returned someone's beloved lost cat years and years ago. I don't know why it never occurred to me to check before. (She had no chip, thank goodness.)

3 If he does not have a microchip, and you don't want to leave him at the shelter, **you should at least file a "found dog" report at the shelter.** This protects you in case you end up deciding to keep the dog (or you give the dog to a friend); it shows that you made a reasonable effort to find the dog's owner. If an owner shows up some time later and wants his dog back, you'll need to be able to prove that this attempt was made in order to protect your rights to the dog.

Some shelters take a photo of the dog for their "found dog" reports and file these online; others simply keep a binder full of the reports, sans photos, on a counter at the shelter. Few people are aware that shelters keep these reports; most people just check the shelter kennels and/or website. It's uncommon, but reunions *have* been facilitated through these reports.

4 Take a photo of the dog and make a "found dog" flier; post it in as many places as you can in the area where you found the dog. Most dog owners look at posters for lost or found pets, and many of us are more familiar with our neighbors' pets than their owners! This way, you are recruiting a small army of people who might be able to help reunite the dog and his owner.

5 If you bring the dog home, **take immediate steps to protect your pets.** Check to see if the dog is infested with fleas; if he is, you'll want to use some sort of potent flea control product immediately, before the fleas can populate your car or home. If your dogs are not fully vaccinated, or are immune-suppressed, you may want to keep the stray dog as far from your dog as possible for at least a few days, so you can make sure he's not sick with anything transmissible. Wash your hands well after handling the stray, and clean up his waste immediately.

You also need to protect all of your family members from being attacked by the stray, until you're certain that no attack is forthcoming. When your own dog is great with kids, cats, and your parakeet, it's easy to forget that other dogs may be highly predatory.

Don't take *anything* for granted; be careful at feeding time, and the first time he finds a nice chew bone or toy that he likes, because he may have resource-guarding issues. Keep the dog on-leash, or control his access to certain parts of the house with baby gates until you have a chance to see what he's like. 🐾



There is nothing like the moment when a microchip ID is located in a dog.

Six-year-old Prudence snuggles with her service dog, Kaiya, a graduate of Blessings Unleashed, of Bowling Green, Kentucky, an organization that trains and places autism assistance dogs.



More Than a Friend

Increasingly, dogs are being used as valued therapeutic companions for autistic children.

BY CJ PUOTINEN

Kids and dogs. Everyone agrees they go together, but for children with autism, dogs can be far more than best friends. They can be therapists, comforters, mood stabilizers, and conversation starters. They can help wandering children stay home, help distracted children stay focused, improve a child's communication and social skills, and help everyone in the family relax.

Wisconsin residents, Rachel and Terry, knew their daughter, Prudence, was different. Two years ago, at age four, she was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Prudence didn't interact with other children, had a short attention span, struggled to express herself, was easily distracted by sounds, tastes, smells, and movement, often felt anxious, and found comfort in repetitious behaviors and language.

"The autism diagnosis scared us but it made sense," says Rachel. "We searched for anything that could help her."

Rachel discovered Blessings Unleashed, a nonprofit organization that pairs autism service dogs (also called autism assistance dogs) with children. In early 2011, a yellow Labrador Retriever named Kaiya officially became Prudence's service dog. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, service

dogs have been trained to do work or perform tasks that benefit individuals with disabilities and must be allowed access to businesses and organizations that serve the public.

As soon as the two met, Prudence lay next to Kaiya and didn't want to leave her side. At the family's initial orientation at Blessings Unleashed, Prudence said without prompting, "Kaiya makes me feel better."

Now, six months later, Rachel and Terry are amazed at how in tune Kaiya is to Prudence's needs. "If Prudence cries or screams," says Rachel, "Kaiya is immediately at her side to provide comfort. Kaiya sleeps on Prudence's bed every night and we often wake to hear Prudence talking to Kaiya, which is wonderful for her speech development and pragmatic language skills. One day we went to a party where we couldn't take Kaiya, and the experience was difficult for Prudence. As soon as we returned home she ran to the dog and said, 'Kaiya, I wish you were at the party – I missed you so much!'"

Kaiya's most significant impact may be her calming effect. "Prudence is much more present and less anxious with Kaiya around," says Rachel. "We have noticed less scripted speech and more spontaneous conversation. An added benefit is the improvement we have seen in Prudence's awareness of others. Because she's responsible for feeding and brushing Kaiya, she has started to show a greater interest in others. She now plays with baby dolls. She feeds them, holds them, sings to them, walks them in a stroller, and puts them to bed every night. She showed little interest in this before Kaiya arrived. She also plays and talks with her little sister. We couldn't be more thrilled with these new interests!"

Six years ago at the Southeast Regional Facility of Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), an organization that breeds, raises, and trains service dogs for children and adults with disabilities, Xander Rousseau met his service dog for the first time. "It took three days of working with several different dogs be-

fore we had our official ‘match,’” recalls his mother, Adrienne Levesque, “and Xander had his heart set on a black Lab named Woody. The entire class cheered when his wish was granted.”

On their first Friday night at CCI, Woody slept in the family’s dorm room. “It was the first night in Xander’s illness history that he slept through the night,” says Levesque, who is a founding and current board member of the National Autism Association. “It was a miracle! At the conclusion of the two weeks, Xander was answering simple questions about ‘his dog’ and he hugged Woody’s trainer! Wow! In two short weeks we rejoiced over major milestones!”

For the past six years, Woody has pro-

vided Xander with constant acceptance and affection, accompanying the boy to hospitals where he underwent tests and surgeries as well as to grocery stores, Walmart, and other places that had previously been overwhelming.

“He made it possible for us to navigate a parking lot without the fear that Xander would run away. Woody visited school at the beginning of each year so that Xander could transition successfully, and he became Xander’s motivation to work hard in the various therapy programs we used.”

With Woody’s help, Xander moved from the nonverbal, self-stimulating world of rocking and moaning to a life less dominated by ASD symptoms. “Is he cured? No,” says Levesque. “We still face communication and social hardships. We still battle digestive and seizure disorders. Hopefully we will continue to prevail, battle by battle, until we can say we have completely defeated autism.”

Today 13-year-old Xander is heading into eighth grade, where he is enrolled in academically advanced classes, enjoys the swim team, and plays year-round soccer. “We rejoice over the fact that he has many friends,” says Levesque, “the best of which remains his faithful Lab, Woody.”

AUTISM DOGS

Although the demand for autism dogs has created many approaches to this type of therapy, the field’s established foundations focus on careful breeding, raising, training, placement, follow-up, and support for these special animals and the families who adopt them. The traits that make good service dogs are well documented and can be tested for at a young age. Because of their stable temperament and intelligence, Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, and Golden Retriever-Labrador Retriever crosses are widely used.

These dogs can be trained to go after a child who is running away and return the child to the parent, interrupt repetitious or self-harming behaviors, calm a child who is having a tantrum

by crawling onto the child’s lap, alert parents if the child wakes at night, and improve the child’s verbal skills by responding to spoken commands.

Her mom says Prudence wasn’t interested in dogs before Kaiya. At their first meeting, an orientation, Kaiya lay down next to Prudence and didn’t want to leave her side. Unprompted, Prudence said, “Kaiya makes me feel better.”



WHAT IS AUTISM?

The term Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) describes a group of complex developmental brain disorders whose symptoms may appear in infancy or later in childhood, affecting speech and behavior. ASDs affects an estimated one out of every 110 children, with boys outnumbering girls three or four to one. In the United States, an estimated one out of every 70 boys is diagnosed with autism.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the symptoms of autism include:

❖ LACK OF SOCIAL SKILLS

Failing to respond to one’s name, having poor eye contact, appearing not to hear conversation, resisting cuddling and holding, being unaware of others’ feelings, playing alone, and retreating into one’s “own world”

❖ LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

Developmental delays, starts talking later than age two, unable to make eye contact when making requests, speaking

with an abnormal tone, rhythm, singsong voice, or robot-like speech, unable to start a conversation or keep one going, and repeating words verbatim without understanding how to use them

❖ BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Performing repetitive movements, such as rocking, spinning, or hand-flapping, developing specific routines or rituals, becoming disturbed at the slightest change of routine or ritual, moving constantly, being fascinated by parts of an object (such as a toy car’s spinning wheels), and being unusually sensitive to light, sound, and touch but oblivious to physical pain

❖ HAVING TEMPER TANTRUMS OR MELT-DOWNS

Screaming, crying, striking out, hitting, etc.

While there is no cure for ASDs, educational and behavioral interventions, medications, and other therapies have been shown to improve symptoms, especially if intervention takes place early.



Nine-year-old Xander and his autism service dog, Woody, had been a team for three years when this photo was taken. Woody is a graduate of Canine Companions for Independence.

At Blessings Unleashed, Kaiya was trained to lean or “snuggle” on Prudence when the girl is having a meltdown, interrupt repetitive behaviors by nudging or licking her hand to break the cycle, and to track and find her if she becomes separated from her family.

Eighteen years ago, in what she calls the “dark ages” of autism, Patty Dobbs Gross turned to Canine Companions for Independence on behalf of her son, Danny, whom the organization paired with Madison, a Golden Retriever. “Madison helped Danny grow into the emotionally balanced and socially confident young man he is today,” she says. “He is currently a graduate student at the University of Southern California’s School of Cinematic Arts.”

Madison so inspired Gross that she went on to create North Star Foundation, which during the past 10 years has placed over 100 unique assistance dogs with children who face social, emotional, and educational challenges. Her program differs from that of most service dog or-

ganizations because instead of placing trained adult dogs with children, North Star places carefully screened puppies with carefully screened families. Puppy and child grow up together, and the entire family participates in the puppy’s training.

“We educate parents carefully over a long period of time to be sure they provide the necessary supervision and training,” says Gross, “and we screen out children who lash out physically when upset. Having this happen is the only reason besides neglect for which we would remove a dog from a home; we once went

to court to do this. In a service dog/child team it is very important to meet the dog’s needs as well as the child’s to keep the placement safe as well as effective. Our dogs ‘work’ for their children, not just the parents, but this is because we actually breed specifically for dogs who take a shine to children, and then we socialize them for children in general and for their own child specifically.”

Gross and her trainers use positive reinforcement training methods exclusively, so North Star dogs are never punished. Instead, they are encouraged to think and act independently.

“We strongly disapprove of programs that use ‘tether dogs’ or ‘babysitter dogs’ that are physically tied to children with autism,” she says. “That’s cruel to the dog and dangerous for both. On five separate occasions, North Star dogs have kept their children safe from wandering, once by delivering a warning bark when the child was taking off, once by nudging the child homeward, and three times by simply following the wandering child until someone noticed the team, read the dog’s collar, and notified the family. But safety is not our primary goal. Our primary focus is meeting our children’s social, emotional, and educational needs.”

SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT

For years reports about the benefits of canine companionship for children with

Today, Xander is 13. He happily posed with Woody for this photo, saying, “Other people should know about how awesome Woody is.” When asked what therapy has been most useful for helping Xander, his mom says, “The most amazing miracles God has given us came with the assistance of a beautiful black Lab named Woody.”



autism were considered heartwarming anecdotes of no scientific importance.

Then researchers began taking a closer look. In 2008 the *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* described challenges faced by families with autistic children paired with service dogs, including public-access issues, learning to understand canine behavior, the extra work involved, training commitments, financial responsibilities, and the dog's impact on family dynamics. "Despite the effects and consequences of these challenges," researchers concluded, "parents overwhelmingly reported that having a service dog to keep their child safe and to provide companionship was well worth the many inconveniences of service-dog ownership."

At Maryville College in Maryville, Tennessee, Ariane K. Schratte, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychology, developed an ongoing community-based research partnership with Wilderwood Service Dogs to study the effects of using specially trained dogs for children with autism.

"After the first year with their service dog," says Dr. Schratte, "parents tended to report decreased problem behaviors such as aggression, fear, and arousal, and an increase in adaptive behaviors, such as eye contact, joint attention, and social inhibition. Many of the children showed improvement in their overall level of functioning."

"The dogs likely elicit positive social interactions in public, helping children with autism successfully interact with others. The dogs' presence may also reduce physiological arousal at the root of some problem behaviors while providing clear and consistent nonverbal communication cues that children with autism can interpret, thus increasing their adaptive skills. The data suggest that the innovative use of specially trained service dogs may be an important tool for helping the social and language behaviors of children with autism."

One of the most widely reported benefits of canine-child interaction is reduced anxiety. Now researchers think they know why dogs have such a calming effect. In September 2010, the medical journal *Psychoneuroendocrinology* published a study that compared levels of the stress hormone cortisol in 42 children with ASD before and during the introduction of a service dog into their

families and after the dogs were removed for a short period.

"We found that the introduction of service dogs translated into a statistically significant diminished Cortisol Awakening Response (CAR)," they reported. "Before the introduction of service dogs, we measured a 58 percent increase in morning cortisol after awakening, which diminished to 10 percent when service dogs were present. The increase in morning cortisol jumped back to 48 percent



In contrast to "service dogs," who spend their lifetimes with their client/partners, "therapy dogs" provide occasional visits to their clients, usually as part of a therapeutic program. Journey and her owner Mary Domes (seen here with Joshua, who has autism) participate in the READ program in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin.

once the dogs were removed from the families.... These results show that the CAR of children with autism is sensitive to the presence of service dogs, which lends support to the potential behavioral benefits of service dogs for children with autism."

THERAPY DOGS AT WORK

Service dogs aren't the only four-legged therapists that help children with autism. Therapy dogs make a difference, too. Unlike service dogs, which are permanently paired with their human partners, therapy dogs belong to volunteers who take them to nursing homes, hospitals, schools, and other facilities, usually for an hour at a time. Their visits are considered Animal Assisted Activity or Animal Assisted Therapy depending on whether

the visits have specific therapeutic goals and are documented.

For more than 10 years, Reading Education Assistance Dogs® (therapy dogs participating in the READ® literacy program) have visited schools and libraries, where children read out loud to them.

Seven-year-old Joshua (seen in the photos below) had trouble making sense of human emotions until one of his therapists started taking him to read to a dog in the READ program named Journey. "Until then," says his mother, Ginger Rasmussen, "he was indifferent to animals, as though they were a piece of furniture or a stuffed animal. But after he began reading to Journey, he started petting his own dog and cat, started talking to them and interacting lovingly with them, and before long he began caring and asking why the baby was crying or why mom was happy. He began to feel empathy. Reading to Journey gave Josh the last piece of the puzzle to make



him whole. The quiet patience of a READ dog opened a door that we thought was locked forever."

As reported in the *New York Times* in November 2010, visits from therapy dogs have become part of the curriculum at the Anderson Center for Autism in Staatsburgh, New York. One nonverbal 11-year-old boy who at first hid from Shadow, a black Labrador Retriever, now asks to walk, pet, and feed her, interactions that help him communicate with teachers and fellow students.

A California teacher who brings her therapy dog to school tried for years to teach one boy to say hello and goodbye. He began greeting the dog, then the

RECOMMENDED READING

❖ FOR AN EXCELLENT OVERVIEW OF THE SUBJECT, SEE

The Golden Bridge: A Guide to Assistance Dogs for Children Challenged by Autism or Other Developmental Disabilities, by Patty Dobbs Gross (Purdue University Press, 2006, paperback, \$25)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Breeders, trainers, and prospective puppy raisers who are interested in providing, raising, or training service dogs for children with autism can contact the organizations mentioned here, search online for similar programs, or contact autism support groups. Look for programs that use positive training methods, carefully screen applicants, and provide ongoing support and training.

❖ AUTISM SERVICE DOGS OF AMERICA, PORTLAND, OR

(971) 285-4547, autismservicedogsofamerica.org

❖ BLESSINGS UNLEASHED FOUNDATION, GLASGOW, KY

(270) 678-5908, blessingsunleashed.org

❖ CANINE COMPANIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE, SANTA ROSA, CA

Through national office or website, contact nearest regional office (north central, northwest, northeast, southwest, southeast): (800) 572-2275; cci.org

❖ HEELING AUTISM: GUIDING EYES FOR THE BLIND SERVICE DOG PROGRAM

Guiding Eyes for the Blind, Yorktown Heights, NY. (800) 942-0149 or (914) 243-2228. guidingeyes.org; healingautism@guidingeyes.org

❖ NATIONAL AUTISM ASSOCIATION, NIXA, MO

(877) 622-2884, nationalautism.org

❖ NORTH STAR FOUNDATION, STORRS, CT northstardogs.com

❖ READING EDUCATION ASSISTANCE DOGS (READ), INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS, UT

(801) 272-3439; therapyanimals.org

❖ WILDERWOOD SERVICE DOGS, MARYVILLE, TN

(865) 660-0095, wilderwood.org

REFERENCES

❖ "CHALLENGES OF SERVICE-DOG OWNERSHIP FOR FAMILIES WITH AUTISTIC CHILDREN: LESSONS FOR VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS"

K.E. Burrows and C.L. Adams. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, 2008 Winter;35(4):559-66

❖ "FACTORS AFFECTING BEHAVIOR AND WELFARE OF SERVICE DOGS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER"

K.E. Burrows, C.L. Adams, and S.T. Millman. *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, 2008 Jan-Mar;11(1):42-62

❖ "EFFECT OF SERVICE DOGS ON SALIVARY CORTISOL SECRETION IN AUTISTIC CHILDREN"

R. Viau, et al. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 2010 Sep;35(8):1187-93

teacher, and now he says hello and good-bye to his classmates.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

It would be wonderful if dogs improved the lives of all children with autism – and if all dogs paired with children lived happy, relaxed, fulfilling lives of their own. But service dogs aren't for everyone, and not every child is a good match for a dog. Here are some factors for parents to consider before applying for an autism service dog.

■ **EXPENSE.** Because of their successful fund-raising, Canine Companions for Independence and Guiding Eyes for the Blind provide service dogs to children with autism at no cost, but most service dog organizations ask families to pay part or all of the considerable cost of raising and training these special animals.

North Star asks families to raise half of a service dog's \$10,000 placement cost (\$5,000). Wilderwood Service Dogs requires families to raise the full cost of each service dog (\$12,000), as does Autism Service Dogs of America (\$13,500). Blessings Unleashed asks families to pay the full cost of a service dog (\$10,500) or companion dog (\$5,500). Companion dogs provide emotional support and do not require the extensive training that service dogs receive.

When Prudence's parents began raising money to pay for Kaiya, they reached their goal in less than two months. "Fund-raising may seem like a daunting task," says Rachel, "but it helps to just tell



your story. People often feel helpless and don't know what to say or do for a family affected by autism. Our supporters were excited about Kaiya and most had no idea that service dogs were being utilized to help autistic people."

■ **COMMITMENT.** Bringing a service or companion dog into a household requires commitment. In addition to basic care, these dogs need ongoing training with the entire family, close supervision from parents, and ample play, exercise, and down time. In many ways bringing a service dog into the family is like adopting a child. Families with canine experience, a fondness for animals, and good organizing skills have a head start.

As Rachel explains, "Our responsibilities for Kaiya include working on her service dog-skills daily, keeping her well groomed, feeding her a high-quality dog food, and keeping her in peak physical condition. When Kaiya is not working it is important for her to be a regular dog, so when she is at home we make time every day for her favorite game – Frisbee! We will also have to take yearly public access tests that demonstrate Kaiya's service dog-skills in order to be re-certified as Kaiya's handlers. Having a service dog is definitely an added responsibility with two small children, but the rewards have been many, and we are so thankful to have Kaiya in our lives."

■ **THE RIGHT CHILD.** Not every child with autism can be successfully paired with a service or companion dog, such as children who are afraid of dogs, whose



The North Star Foundation, based in Storrs, Connecticut, trains and places service dogs – and provides educational resources to those interested in learning more about these amazing dogs. Here, North Star's Angel helps with a school presentation that educates children about autism as well as assistance dogs.

uncontrolled actions may harm a dog, whose families are not able to adjust to the needs of a dog, or whose parents expect the dogs to perform magic.

As K. Burrows, C. Adams, and S. Milman reported in the *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science* in 2008, "There is a tendency for parents, especially those with little experience with dogs, to fall victim to 'Lassie syndrome' and the belief that real dogs are capable of the sorts of things that fictionalized dogs do, that they are capable of reasoning as humans do, and are qualified to babysit children."

■ **THE RIGHT PROGRAM.** Researching autism dog programs can be exhausting, especially for those who are new to dogs, but informed parents are better equipped to make good decisions. The Burrows study, which examined 10 children and 11 dogs from a program that tethered dogs to children with autism, revealed problems that had not been addressed prior to the dogs' placement.

No one can be "on duty" 24/7, and service dogs are no different. Kaiya's family makes sure she gets time off for recreation and exercise (with her favorite toy, a Frisbee), and to just be a dog.

Most of these children showed no interest in their dogs during the first six months of placement. Dogs bonded primarily with one of the parents and some showed signs of separation anxiety when forced to sleep in the child's room at night or when sent to school without the parent. One dog was returned because it ran after another dog, dragging the child to whom it was tied. These dogs showed evidence of stress and fatigue, especially when sent to school with children because of the long hours and lack of down time, and dogs experienced stress when their child had a tantrum and aggressively struck at the dog.

Programs that emphasize family education, give parents realistic expectations, provide extensive training, follow-through, and support, select appropriate dogs for this type of work, prevent their dogs from suffering stress or abuse, and utilize positive rather than punitive training methods are most likely to generate positive results. 🐾

Freelance writer 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 "Resources," page 24 for book purchasing information.



Be Brave

How to help your timid dog find courage.

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

There are a lot of things in our world that have the potential to frighten our dogs. How is it that some dogs deal with these stimuli without batting an eye, while others cower behind their owners with little or no apparent provocation? The Cowardly Lion in the Wizard of Oz seems to say it all in one simple word: “Courage!” But it’s really not so simple. Why do some dogs seem to be consistently brave, while others are timid? Even more important, absent Dorothy and a wizard, how does one go about helping their timid dog get brave?

We’ve written (a lot!) in the past about using counter-conditioning and desensitization to help dogs change their association with fear-causing stimuli in order to change their emotional response. (As just one example of step-by-step instruction for a counter-conditioning program, see “Fear Itself,” WDJ April 2007.) That’s still good information, and I urge you to review the article to refresh your understanding of that important behavior modification protocol. This article, however, is going to introduce you to several other complementary exercises you can do in addition to counter-conditioning, to help your timid dog learn to cope with a scary world.

Some of the exercises that follow we’ve introduced in other training contexts. Some come in the “change behavior to change emotional response” category by doing fun stuff your dog loves; some have more to do with management; and some do both. If you’ve already taught some of these to your dog it will be easy to apply them in situations where he’s acting fearful. If you haven’t already taught them, there’s no time like the present!

BASIC GOOD MANNERS TRAINING

You don’t have to do a lot of fancy stuff to help your dog become more confident in his world. Simply teaching

him basic good manners – to respond appropriately to your cues – will make his environment more predictable. It builds confidence to understand what you’re asking of him, and to understand the consequences of his behavior. Of course it goes without saying that you will use positive reinforcement-based training with him so the consequences are happy ones. Nothing can destroy a timid dog’s confidence faster than the application of verbal or physical punishment; this will convince him he’s right to think the world is a scary and unpredictable place.

Combine his positive reinforcement good manners training with structure in his routine and stability in his life and you will have taken a large step toward increasing his confidence. But of course, you want to do more to help your dog get brave. Happily, you can do that simply by doing fun stuff with him, such as:

■ TARGETING

Targeting means teaching your dog to touch a designated body part to a designated target. (For in-depth information on teaching a dog to target, see “Right on Target,” February 2006.) That description doesn’t do it justice; targeting is tons of fun! Many dogs love targeting, partly because it’s easy to do, and partly because it pays off well – “push the button (the target spot), get a treat.”

Since dogs naturally explore the world with their noses and paws, nose and foot targeting are the two easiest. Nose-targeting draws your dog’s eye-contact and attention from a worrisome stimulus to a pleasant one, so that’s the one I find most useful for timid dogs, although foot-targeting can work too.

It’s an embarrassingly simple behavior to teach. Hold out your hand in front of your dog, at nose level or below. When he sniffs it (because he’s curious!), click your clicker (or use a verbal marker, such as a mouth click or a word) and feed him a treat. Remove your hand, then offer it again. Each time he sniffs, click and treat. If he stops sniffing (boring – I’ve

This Aussie – hiding behind his owner, ears back, worried expression on his face – could benefit from some confidence-building. Giving him something easy and fun to do would help distract him from what’s making him anxious.





Offer your hand, then click and treat when the dog sniffs it. Targeting is a useful exercise to teach to keep your dog happy and focused on you in the presence of a scary stimulus.



Say "Find it!" Toss a treat. Your dog eats it. Training doesn't get any easier than this. Don't dismiss the exercise as too simplistic. Imagine if someone was tossing \$20 bills; you'd enjoy that game!

already sniffed that!), rub a little tasty treat on your palm, to make your hand smell intriguing, and try again.

You're looking for that wonderful "light bulb" moment – when he realizes he can make you click and treat by bumping his nose into your hand. His "touch" behavior becomes deliberate, rather than incidental to sniffing your hand. When you see him deliberately bumping his nose into your hand, add the "Touch!" cue as you offer your hand to him. Encourage him with praise and high-value treats. Make it a game, so he thinks it's the most fun in the world. You want to see his eyes light up when you say "Touch," and you want him to "bonk" his nose into your hand, hard! Start offering your hand in different places so he has to move to touch it, climb on something to touch it, jump up to touch it.

When he loves the touch game, occasionally ask him to touch twice; tell him he's a good dog after the first one, and click and treat only the second one. Gradually decrease your rate of reinforcement, until he'll touch several times before he gets his click and treat. Then click and treat several in a row. Mix it up, so he never knows when the click will happen – but the click and treat always happen eventually!

Now try playing touch when your dog is a little bit nervous about something. Scary man with a beard and sunglasses passing by on the sidewalk? Hold out your hand and say "Touch!" so that your dog takes his eyes – and his brain – away from the scary thing and happily bonks his nose into your hand. Click and treat. He can't be afraid of the man and happy about touching your hand at the same

time. He also can't look at the target and stare at the scary man at the same time.

Ask him to touch several more times, until the man has passed, and then continue on your walk. If you do this every time he sees a scary man, he'll decide that men with beards and sunglasses are good because they make the touch game happen! By changing your dog's behavior – having him do something he loves rather than acting fearful – you can manage a scary encounter, and eventually change his emotional response to and association with something previously scary to him.

■ FIND IT

Like targeting, "Find it" is a behavior many dogs learn to love, and another game you can play to change your dog's behavior in the presence of a fear-causing stimulus, eventually changing his emotional response. This is also another ridiculously easy and delightful game that any dog can play.

Start with your dog in front of you, and a handful of tasty treats behind your back. Say "Find it!" in a cheerful tone of voice and toss one treat a few feet to your left. When your dog gets to the treat, click just before he eats it. When he comes back to you say "Find it!" again and toss a second treat a few feet to your right. Click – and he eats the treat. Do this back and forth, until your dog is easily moving from one "find it" treat to the other. Then toss them farther each time until your dog happily runs back and forth.

Now if a scary skateboarder appears while you're walking your dog around the block on his leash, play the find it game, keeping the tossed treats close to

you. Your dog will take his eyes off the scary thing and switch into happy-treat mode. You've changed his emotions by changing his behavior.

Targeting and find it can also work to walk your timid dog past a scary, stationary object, like a manhole cover, or a noisy air-conditioning unit. Play touch and treat as you walk past, or toss find it treats on the ground ahead of you and slightly away from the scary thing, to keep him moving happily forward.

What you can do . . .

- **Select a menu of strategies from those offered in the article, and start working with your dog.**
- **As you try them out, determine which strategies work best for the two of you, and discard the ones that don't.**
- **If you don't seem to be making progress, seek the help of a qualified, positive behavior professional.**
- **If your dog is extremely anxious and fearful, through discussion with your behavior professional and in consultation with a veterinary behaviorist, explore the use of anti-anxiety medications to help improve your dog's quality of life.**





Thanks to Sarah Richardson, CPDT-KA, CDBC, of The Canine Connection in Chico, California, for demonstrating these games with foster dog, Charlie.

Your dog's happy association with the "run away fast" game gives you a great emergency-escape tool to use when you need to make a fast, graceful exit!

The "get behind" game establishes you as a human safety shield for your dog. It's good to use when you are unable to escape the proximity of something that might otherwise scare your dog.

■ EMERGENCY ESCAPE

An emergency escape game gives you a "run away" strategy when you know an approaching stimulus will be too much for your worried dog. However, because you've taught it to your dog as a fun game, he's not running away in panic; he's just playing one of his favorite "get brave" games that just happens to move him farther away from the scary thing.

Teach this game to your dog in a safe, comfortable environment when he's not being afraid of something. As you are walking with him on-leash, say your "Run away!" cue, then turn around and run fast, encouraging your dog to romp with you for a squeaky toy, a ball, a handful of high value treats at the end of the run, or a rousing game of tug – whatever

your dog loves most. The key to success with this exercise is convincing your dog that the "run away" cue is the predictor of wonderful fun and games. Again, you're teaching him a new, fun behavior – "Run away!" – that you can use to change his emotional response in a scary moment.

■ PLAY

You can use any behavior your dog already loves – a trick, a toy, a game, anything that lights up his face – to convince him that good things happen in the presence of something scary. If he loves to roll over, ask him to do that. If he delights in snagging tossed treats out of the air, do that. High five? Crawl? Do those.

The key to making any of these games work to help your dog be brave is to be

sure you keep him far enough away from the scary thing, at first, that his brain is able to click in to "play" mode. You will always be more successful if you start the games when you see low levels of stress, rather than waiting until he's in full meltdown. (To learn to recognize how dogs show stress, see "Stress Signals," June 2006.)

If he's too stressed or fearful, he won't be able to play. If he'll start to play with you while the scary thing is at a distance, you'll be able to move closer. If he stops playing and shuts down, you've come too close. Depending on your dog and how fearful he is, you may find some of these play-strategies work well enough to walk him past scary stimuli the first time you try, or you may have to work up to it.

CODDLING AND CUDDLING

There is an unfortunate myth floating around in some parts of the dog training world that if you give reassurance to a fearful dog you will reinforce his fearful behavior. Therefore you must ignore your dog when he's trembling at your feet in fear.

Hogwash. Think back in your own life to a time when you were very frightened or upset. Did it help (or would it have helped) you feel better to have someone you trusted come and put his or her arm around you and calmly reassure you that everything was going to be alright? Of course it did. Our dogs are no different.

At times when emotions run high, we are more concerned with helping our dogs get those emotions back under control. In fact, when a dog is very afraid, the emotional part of the brain – the amygdala – takes over, and the thinking part of the brain – the cortex – doesn't work well. The over-threshold dog isn't even capable of connecting his behavior to reinforcement, which is why we try hard in our behavior modification protocols to keep the dog below threshold – so learning can happen. If he is shaking in fear, your calm voice and slow, gentle petting can be hugely reassuring to him; fast rubbing and an anxious tone, however, are not.

■ GET BEHIND

"Get behind" is more of a management strategy. Timid dogs often try to hide when they're afraid. If you teach your dog a cue that means "hide behind me," your "body shield" can help him get through scary moments. To teach this behavior:

- 1** Have your dog in front of you, with an ample supply of small, high-value treats in your treat pouch, or in a bowl on a nearby table.
- 2** Say "Get behind!" and lure your dog behind you and into a sit. Click and treat.
- 3** Repeat several times, until he lures easily into position.
- 4** Now say the cue and pause, to give him a chance to think about it and

respond. If he moves even slightly, click, lure him into position, and treat. A tentative movement is sometimes a question to you – “Is this what you want?” If you answer with a hearty “Click (Yes!!)” and treat, you can move the training forward more quickly.

5 Keep repeating the cue/pause, gradually reducing how much you lure, until he’s moving into position on his own when you give the cue.

Alternatively, you can shape the “get behind” behavior by clicking and treating small movements toward your final goal. (For more information about shaping, see “The Shape of Things to Come,” March 2006.)

You can start applying this strategy in real-life situations early on in the training, even if before your dog fully grasps the concept, simply by luring him into his safe position as the scary thing passes.

■ TREAT AND RETREAT

“Treat and retreat” is a procedure to help timid dogs get brave. Its development is attributed to two well-known trainers: Dr. Ian Dunbar, veterinary behaviorist and founder of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, of Berkeley, California; and Suzanne Clothier, who trains in St. Johnsville, New York. While Dr. Dunbar claims credit for introducing the concept, Clothier is generally credited with popularizing the procedure under the “Treat and Retreat” appellation.

To use treat and retreat, start with your dog at a safe distance from a person who worries him. Have that person toss a piece of low-value kibble over your dog’s head. Your dog will turn and walk away to get the kibble, then turn back to look at the scary person. When he turns back, have the person toss a high-value treat in front of the dog, in the approximate place the dog was originally. (You may want to use some kind of marker to help your tossing-person’s aim.)

When the dog comes forward and eats the high-value treat, have the person toss another low-value treat behind the dog, then another high-value treat in the original spot. As your dog gets more relaxed about coming forward for the high-value treat, have the tosser gradually decrease the distance, so the dog is going closer to the scary person to eat the treat. If you see increased signs of reluctance with the decreased distance, you’ve decreased the distance too quickly. Go

BE VIGILANT; PROTECT YOUR DOG

During the confidence-building period, you must protect your dog from becoming overwhelmed by things that scare him. If, for example, you force your timid dog to accept the attentions of bearded men while he is still fearful of them, or you stay at an event that turns out to be noisy with your noise-phobic dog, he may become sensitized to the scary stimuli, making his behavior worse, instead of better.

as slowly as necessary to keep your dog happy about this game; you want him moving toward the person tossing the treats happily and voluntarily.

■ ALPHABET SOUP: CAT/BAT/LAT

In addition to counter-conditioning, there are other well-developed protocols available to help timid dogs gain confidence. We’ve written about the Constructional Aggression Treatment (CAT) at length (“Build Better Behavior,” May 2008; and “Revisiting CAT,” December 2009).

CAT, developed by Kellie Snider and Dr. Jesus Rosales Ruiz at the University of North Texas, uses operant conditioning and shaping (dog does deliberate behavior to operate on his environment) to convince a dog that his old behavior, in this case acting fearful, no longer works to make a scary thing go away. In the presence of a scary stimulus, the smallest sign of relaxation or confidence now makes the scary thing go away – until the dog learns that acting confident (and becoming confident as a result) is a better behavior strategy.

BAT is similar to CAT in some ways, but focuses on having your dog move away from the scary stimulus rather than having the scary thing move away from the dog. Developed by Grisha Stewart, CPDT-KA, CTP, of Seattle, Washington, BAT uses desensitization together with a functional reward for calm behavior. You begin at a distance where your dog can see the fear-causing stimulus (scary man with beard) without reacting to it. When your dog offers any form of calm body language you move away from the bearded man as the functional reward.

BAT defines “functional reward,” as “what your dog wants to happen in that moment.” In the case of a fearful dog, what the dog wants is for the scary thing to be farther away. According to Stewart, a good functional reward for a dog’s calm behavior can be to move away from the scary thing. Similar to CAT, if you teach

your dog that calm behavior makes scary things get farther away, your dog will learn to be calm, confident, and not fearful in the presence of those things.

LAT stands for “Look At That” – a protocol developed by Leslie McDevitt, CPDT-KA, CDBC, author of *Control Unleashed*, at her training center outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In LAT, the key is to keep your dog below threshold (quiet and calm) while teaching him to look at a scary stimulus, then rewarding him for looking at it. To train LAT, click and reward your dog the second he looks at the bearded man, as long your dog doesn’t react adversely. If your dog is too close to threshold with the scary stimulus at any distance, start with a neutral target and click as soon as he looks at it. When your dog is offering a quick glance toward the target, name it “Look!”

Your dog will quickly start to look at his scary triggers when you give the “Look!” cue, and turn back to you for a reward. If your dog does not turn quickly, he’s probably too close to or over his threshold. Increase the distance between you and the bearded man and try again. Gradually decrease distance as your dog learns to do the “Look!” game with things that are worrisome to him.

Many of the above games and strategies are compatible with each other. CAT and BAT tend to be mutually exclusive because one moves the dog away from the scary thing, while the other moves the scary thing away from the dog. Other than that, the more of the above strategies you apply, the more tools you’ll have at your disposal to help your dog cope with fear-causing stimuli in his world, and the more confident he’ll become. 🐾

Pat Miller, CBCG-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC, is WDJ’s Training Editor. Author of numerous books on positive dog training, she lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center, where she offers dog training classes and courses for trainers. See “Resources,” page 24, for more information.



SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Keep in mind that our dogs can get very frustrated with us, too! Especially when we fail to give clear directions or when we put them in a stressful situation with no way out.

How can something as unpleasant as yelling at or jerking the dog's leash be rewarding? After all, very few of us feel good about losing our temper and resorting to violence (no matter how mild). But even a moment of lashing out (verbally or physically) serves to vent our frustration, and worse, it *can* alter the dog's behavior. Pain or fear may temporarily suppress the dog's unwanted behavior. In the moment, this can feel like a "win" for the handler . . . but this sort of emotional outburst on the part of the handler generally doesn't result in a lasting behavior change in the dog.

HOW TO GET PAST FRUSTRATION

It's infinitely easier to teach a dog what you *want* as opposed to what you don't. That's why positive reinforcement training can be so effective. It's built on a foundation of recognizing and rewarding correct behavior – not waiting for the dog to make a mistake. It's proactive, not reactive.

I freely admit to having moments of frustration while training. Despite the years of effort I have put into building strong, trusting, positive reinforcement-based relationships with my dogs, I still sometimes find myself gritting my teeth when things aren't going as I'd hoped and my dog can't seem to correctly perform a behavior we've spent generous amounts of time training.

The trick lies in learning to manage

The "F" Word

How to manage your frustration in dog training.

BY STEPHANIE COLMAN

Some people grit their teeth or hold their breath. Others clench their fists or rattle off a string of expletives that would make Pacino blush. When the frustration of daily life comes to a boil, people respond in myriad ways.

Dog training comes with many opportunities for human frustration. You wanted a dog. You didn't realize that "dog" was potentially code for "eats everything in sight, jumps on the kids, barks like a jackhammer, and if given the chance, leads you on a wild goose chase around the neighborhood as your recall word falls on deaf ears."

Training a dog, regardless of the method used, is bound to bring about moments of frustration. Addressing unwanted behavior can take time, and today's modern family often finds spare time to be in limited supply. In the midst of juggling busy personal and professional lives, it's easy to suddenly find yourself at the end of your rope when it comes to dog training.

The problem with frustration is that, when left unchecked, it can lead to an emotional outburst. Ever lash out with harsh words directed at your kids or spouse after a particularly challenging

day at work? We are only human. It happens. In dog training, these emotional outbursts often manifest in strong verbal reprimands, leash pops, and other physical corrections.

Interacting with your dog in an angry or physically forceful way carries the substantial risk of damaging the dog-owner relationship. It can also create an anxious dog, or one who "shuts down" when uncertain what to do. In extreme cases it can become abusive. Additionally, there's a dirty little secret about losing one's temper and responding to the dog in a vindictive manner: behaving this way can be rewarding.

Many dogs who have been trained with physical force or intimidation learn to "shut down" when they're unsure of what they're being asked to do.





A big benched show, an obedience class, and the Dalmatian just won't go with the program. He "downs" during the sit-stay...



... and returns to his owner during the down-stay. It has to be difficult at a time like this, but a handler must refrain from showing signs of anger or frustration in the show ring, lest her dog start to dread the experience.

the frustration in ways that don't involve taking it out on the dog. The following strategies can prove helpful:

■ **RELAX AND REMEMBER TO BREATHE.** Sounds easy enough, but frustration and stress can inhibit our breathing, which affects our body language – something our dogs are keenly aware of. By concentrating on slow, deep breathing, you take in more oxygen, and the shoulders, neck, and upper chest muscles are used less in the breathing process. This helps relax your body posture, which sends a different picture to your dog.

■ **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR DOG'S BEHAVIOR.** Dogs often respond to stress with one of many fine-tuned signals. Yawning, lip licking, sniffing the ground, and averting their gaze are behaviors dogs use with each other to reduce stress and defuse potential conflict. If you notice your dog engaging in these behaviors during training, take note. He may be aware of your rising stress level even before you are. These signals can be a sign your dog is attempting to self-soothe in the presence of a stressed handler.

■ **IT'S OKAY TO STOP.** When things aren't going well, sometimes the best thing to do is call it quits for the day. People often feel the need to end on success, and keep training as things start falling apart. According to legendary animal trainer Bob Bailey, whether or not you end a training session on success does not affect the animal's ability to successfully learn the task at hand.

"Ending a training session on a 'high

note' is of little significance in itself," says Bailey. "This assumes that the session more or less randomly ends with a success or a failure." However, he cautions against creating training scenarios where the dog consistently fails and then shuts down – a poor precedent for the dog.

■ **REMEMBER HOW PATIENT AND FORGIVING YOUR DOG IS OF YOU.** That's advice from professional trainer BK Grice of Muncie, Indiana. "Take some time to just hang out with your dog. Break off training and share an ice cream together. Remember that there may be other dogs in your life, but there will only be one Rex or Lassie. When you've calmed down, look at what you were doing and see if you can make some changes.

■ **TAKE NOTES.** In her book, *Tales of Two Species: Essays on Loving and Living with Dogs*, Patricia McConnell talks about the importance of being patient, and recognizing that training takes time. In an example of teaching impulse control to dogs, she writes, "It takes growing humans about 20 years to learn to control their emotions ... so be patient with your dogs, and think in terms of months and years when training, not days and weeks."

In an age when popular media aims to convince dog owners that behavior dramatically changes in the course of an hour, this reminder is a refreshing dose of eye-opening honesty that should be considered.

Feeling like your dog's behavior is not improving can be a major source of frustration for people. Often, he is

getting better, but owners who are deeply embroiled within a training program might have difficulty recognizing the incremental changes.

"I often get clients who call me to talk about how they aren't progressing in their training programs. Then I go out and find a dog who is so much improved, it's amazing," says Louise Kerr of Elite Pet Care & Education in New South Wales, Australia. "Clients often cannot see the small changes."

Learning to recognize and appreciate the "baby steps" along the way to complete problem solving can be a valuable tool in reducing human frustration. Organized trainers routinely keep training logs and journals that document results of each training session. Analyzing the

What you can do . . .

- **If you find yourself getting frustrated during training, stop. Don't risk taking it out on the dog.**
- **Take time to evaluate the situation. Use management to prevent unwanted behavior as you decide what to do next.**
- **Consider seeking outside help from a professional, positive trainer.**
- **Try to think of ways to vent frustration that don't involve your dog.**



data offers concrete information about a dog's rate of progress, and helps trainers fine-tune training programs when necessary.

Styles of record-keeping are as varied as the trainers using them. Sometimes I keep track of how many times we practiced something and how often my dog was correct. Other times I jot notes about what issues I discovered during the training session, which directs my focus for the next session.

Even something as simple as a happy or sad face drawn on the calendar – denoting an overall “good” or “bad” day in training – can prove helpful.

When working to modify problem behavior, it's easy to forget where you started. A quick glance at the ratio of happy to sad faces on the calendar can provide the confidence boost you need to keep pushing forward with what feels like a slow-moving or stalled training program.

THE MAGIC OF MANAGEMENT

Many of the routine problems clients ask trainers about can be prevented with management: not letting the dog practice the unwanted behavior in the first place. If your dog is reactive to people and dogs walking past his territory, he shouldn't have unsupervised access to the front room of the home, where he perches atop the sofa, ready to sound the alarm at the first sign of passersby. Nor should he be unsupervised in the backyard where he launches himself at the fence. Of course, you need to spend time teaching an alternative behavior, but if you aren't prepared to actively train, the next best thing is to prevent what you don't want.

“When possible, don't let the dog make the mistake in the first place,” says trainer Gail Rhyno of Prince Edward Island, Canada. “I didn't get this right away, and looking back, I likely could've prevented a few behaviors from becoming problems in the first place. Much of

It's easy to blame our dogs when they fail to perform “out in the world.” Do your posture and cues look and sound like they do at home? Ask someone who is familiar with you and your dog give you an honest assessment.



my frustration appears when I'm not training – when I'm tired and I don't have a plan. The unwanted behavior would happen and I wouldn't have a response ready and the frustration wells up; I'd feel like all the work I'd done the days before was wasted.”

As an example, Rhyno says, “With my little dog – who's on high alert all the time – I make sure I'm ready, or I don't put her in the situation to make mistakes. I don't have to take her out into the yard every time I go. I don't have to go to the places in town that I know are full of things that will set her off. I can put her on-leash in the house so that when guests enter, she doesn't have the chance to jump on them. Things like this have really helped me get around myself. I can't train all the time; I get tired of it, so in order to not get tired and frustrated, I have



The author says of her dog, “It's hard to believe I can get frustrated with a dog this cute, but it happens. His dedication to me and willingness to play whatever game I throw his way remind me of the importance of creating and maintaining a rewarding, respectful relationship.”

to find a way to not let my little pooch make the mistakes in the first place.”

IT'S NOT PERSONAL – BUT YOU DO NEED TO OWN IT

It's sometimes hard to not internalize your dog's misbehavior and take his non-compliance as a personal affront. Factor in any perfectionist tendencies, you may have and it can be a real test in emotional self-control to keep from feeling like your dog is purposely pawing his nose at you when things aren't going as planned – especially when training in a group. You're being watched. The heat is on. “Please, for the love of dog, will you stop jumping around and just sit?!”

Emotions are tricky. We know on a logical level that noncompliance isn't personal, but this can be tough to remember in heat of the moment. One of the greatest gifts I've gained in training dogs – especially my own, where the emotional involvement can intensify my perfectionist tendencies – is the ability to accept my training mistakes, recover, and move on. It's easy to blame the dog, “He knows this,” or “He knows better,” or even, “He did it right yesterday at the park.” It's harder to look at how our own actions likely contributed to the dog's inability to perform to your expectations or hopes.

It's easy to underestimate how a simple location change can affect a dog's ability to perform correctly. Clients who primarily practice behaviors with their dog at home and during dog class often report that their dog struggles when asked to work in new, unfamiliar surroundings. This is a normal part of the training process, and why I encourage my clients to not believe their dog “knows” something until

FEELING STUCK?

If you feel your training has stalled, consider the following:

✓ **Get help – If training on your own, consider enrolling in a class or booking a private lesson for one-on-one attention. You aren't expected to have all the answers** yourself. All dogs are different. Even if you've trained previous dogs on your own, a little professional guidance might be just what you need to jumpstart success.

✓ **Seek a second opinion – There are lots of ways to train different behaviors. If you feel you've hit a wall with one approach, don't be afraid to look for new ideas from** other trainers who follow similar underlying principles (for example, using reward-based training versus punishment). However, it's important to do your homework and give each

new idea adequate time to work before dismissing it and looking for something else. Even with diligent practice, you can expect it to take weeks and months for behavior to change.

✓ **Know your limits – Consider your dog training philosophy and know where you** stand on the use of various forms of compulsion and punishment. While more and more people are using positive reinforcement to initially train behaviors, many well-meaning people still suggest punishment-based techniques for problem solving. It can be easy to be tempted by the seemingly "quick fix," especially in the heat of the moment when your frustration is running high. A little honest soul-searching away from training can help you hold tight to your beliefs.

✓ **Table it – If a specific behavior really has you stumped, step away from it for a while. If needed, manage the dog's environment to prevent** rehearsal of unwanted behavior and concentrate on things that allow you to celebrate success.

Take a moment and take a breath. Your frustration may put your dog on the defensive; that's the last thing you want.



If your dog looks or acts as if he may be afraid of you, you need to take a break – and maybe think about finding a trainer (or a new trainer).

they've had training success in several different locations away from home. Be aware that certain environments will be more challenging than others, and gradually raise your expectations at a level that is fair and appropriate for your dog.

It's also important to look at how *your* behavior might affect your dog. If you primarily lure your dog into positions like sit and down by using treats, you might believe your dog "knows" down, only to be surprised by his inability to perform correctly in the absence of the treat. Sudden behavior changes on your part – such as switching from treat to hand signal, or even changing how you present a hand signal – can reduce the dog's ability to be correct, which can lead to frustration. Make changes like this to your training program gradually.

Finally, don't forget that dogs can get frustrated, too. My Golden Retriever reserves a specifically pitched bark for when I suspect he feels that I've failed to

provide clear direction while running agility. More often than not, he's right and my body cues were incorrect. "Dang it, woman!" he seems to say. "Where exactly do you want me to go?"

WE'RE ONLY HUMAN

Do I still get frustrated? Of course. I'm only human. I've been known to call my dog a creative "pet name" or two, or rattle off something to the effect of, "It's a good thing you're cute," as I re-set an obedience jump bar that he just knocked down – again. My secret? I deliver my monologue in a happy, upbeat voice, and often while delivering a stream of treats or tugging with a toy. I release the necessary steam and hope my dog is none the wiser. I'm far from perfect, but this trick often helps me keep my emotions in check so I'm not as apt to unfairly direct frustration toward my dog.

I often think about something an agility judge once said during a pre-run

briefing. I don't remember her name, but her words will stay with me for as long as I choose to share my life with dogs. "Run every run like it's your dog's last," she said. Powerful words. Our dogs are never with us long enough. I want to fill my memory bank with joyful interactions, not frustration-filled memories that potentially led me to treat my dog with less than the respect and compassion he deserved.

After all, as an anonymous author is widely quoted, "He is your friend, your partner, your defender, your dog. You are his life, his love, his leader. He will be yours, faithful and true, to the last beat of his heart. You owe it to him to be worthy of such devotion." 🐾

Stephanie Colman has been training dogs in Los Angeles for 10 years. She actively competes in obedience and agility with her Golden Retriever, Quiz and enjoys spoiling her retired Whippet, Zoie.

Hell's Nails

Symmetrical Lupoid Onychodystrophy (SLO) is a painful condition causing dogs' nails to slough.

BY STEPHANIE COLMAN

Dog nails aren't supposed to fall off, thought first-time dog owner Terrie Huberman some 18 months ago. That's when she first realized that finding one of her Pug-Poodle mix's nails on the floor of her Sherman Oaks, California, apartment wasn't an isolated incident.

It all started when, after coming in from a walk, Terrie picked up what would turn out to be the keratin shell from one of Bonzo's claws. At the time she thought it was something he'd tracked in from outside. Only later did she learn the shell was a telltale sign of Symmetrical Lupoid Onychodystrophy, SLO for short.

SLO is an inflammation of the nail matrix where the nail is formed. The pattern of inflammation is similar to

lupus, giving the condition its "lupoid" designation. The inflammatory reaction at the nail matrix results in abnormal nail development and growth, resulting in compromised claws that lift, separate, and often fall off. Flare-ups are painful and many owners first notice a problem when the dog begins favoring or nursing an affected foot.

While SLO can affect all breeds of dogs, some vets report seeing far

more cases among certain breeds. "When I think of SLO, I think of German Shepherds, Miniature Schnauzers, Rottweilers, and Corgis," says holistic veterinary practitioner Frank Bousaid, DVM, of Harmony Animal Wellness Center in Monroe, Washington. "In the German Shepherd, it seems to be worse, with more toes involved, in males than females." His experience supports further anecdotal evidence found online, which cites German Shepherd Dogs as being predisposed to the condition.

A dog's claw is made up of three distinct layers. The visible outer portion that must be routinely trimmed is hard, dead material. The innermost layer – the "quick" – is comprised of nerves and the blood supply; this is what bleeds when the nail is trimmed too short. Initial nail growth occurs at the root, located deep in the toe. In dogs with SLO, damage takes place at the root level about three to four months before the nail becomes visible. When affected nails emerge, they are misshapen and can also be hollow, soft or brittle, or discolored.

Onset is typically acute, with one or two claws initially being affected. "One of the hallmarks of SLO is multiple claw lesions," says Alexander Werner, VMD, Diplomate of the American College of Dermatology. "If I had a case that came in with a single digit where the claw was abnormal, Lupoid Onychodystrophy would not be high on my list. SLO by definition affects multiple nails."

Both vets agree the condition is relatively rare. As a veterinary dermatologist, Dr. Werner estimates he treats fewer than 10 patients per year.

DIAGNOSIS

Achieving a definitive diagnosis can be tricky because it requires a biopsy of the nail matrix, which must be accomplished by removing a piece of the third phalanx – the last part of the toe. This surgical procedure, much like a de-clawing of a cat, has a painful recovery and results in a malformation of any nail growth that follows (since the nail matrix has been

"My nails could do what?!" SLO is a painful condition that can cause your dog to limp, or to resist having to exercise at all, especially on hard surfaces.



surgically altered). For owners looking for an absolute diagnosis, dogs with affected dew claws are considered the best candidates for biopsy.

Due to the highly invasive nature of the biopsy, vets often make an initial diagnosis based on the characteristics of the disease, or, because treatment is well tolerated by most dogs, many vets will begin treatment on the suspicion of SLO, watching for signs of improvement.

TREATMENT

Both traditional and holistic practitioners agree on the core treatment protocol for SLO. High-dose essential fatty acids (EFAs), specifically omega-3 and omega-6, along with a generally well-tolerated antibiotic such as tetracycline or doxycycline is the most common approach. Antibiotics are used to try to save affected nails while preventing nail bed infections, which can get into the bone and lead to the loss of the toe. Nail bed infections also affect circulation to the feet. EFAs are used for their anti-inflammatory properties.

“In SLO, there is an unexplained inflammatory process that is happening at the cuticle level,” explains Dr. Bousaid. “There’s an infiltrate of inflammatory cells into the nail bed. That’s the immune-mediated part; this huge attack by the immune system on the nail bed. Omega-3s and omega-6s act as an anti-inflammatory to help calm down the overactivity.”

When it comes to EFAs, Dr. Bousaid strongly recommends salmon oil dispensed in free-fluid form rather than processed and encapsulated for convenience. “I like salmon oil specifically; I think it’s the gold standard of fish oils in dogs,” he says, noting that salmon oil has an ideal ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 for dogs. He recommends clients stay away from cod liver oil, which is frequently manufactured in China and can be months or years old by the time it’s purchased and consumed in the U.S. He does not recommend the use of flaxseed oil, which is often popular with vegetarian clients looking to avoid animal products. He cautions that Omega-3s and omega-6s from non-animal sources such as flaxseed oil are poorly utilized by dogs.

In addition to antibiotics and high-dose fatty acids, Dr. Bousaid also incorporates vitamin B (specifically niacinamide, not niacin or nicotinic acid), vitamin E, and plain gelatin.



SLO almost always affects more than one nail. German Shepherd Dogs are the most commonly affected, but a dog of any breed can develop the condition.

“Vitamin B serves as a natural free radical scavenger for anything that’s collagen based – skin, nails, etc.,” he says. “It has to do with the development of the dermal layer and aids in the foundational structure of the nail. I use vitamin B for its nail-strengthening properties. It aids in the development of the nail matrix that will harden and become part of the nail. Vitamin E also helps the nail matrix, playing a role in healthy nail formation.” It’s believed that the fatty acids and vitamins work in tandem. Fatty acids help reduce inflammation and vitamins B and E serve as tools to help rebuild the nail.

LONG-TERM CHALLENGE

One challenge with treatment is that much of the disease activity takes place before nail growth is even visible. Additionally, the disease is often cyclical, so many vets opt for lengthy treatment plans.

“I usually follow a treatment protocol of four to eight weeks,” says Dr. Werner. “The four weeks is just to make sure things are going well and to see that we’re

starting to get some good re-growth of lost nails and no additional nail loss. At eight weeks we’ll get a sense of how well the nails are doing. This disease can wax and wane and I want to make sure we’re not in a waning phase before I withdraw a drug that might be helpful. Because the therapy is so well tolerated, inexpensive, and benign for long-term use, I usually go six months before thinking of changing the therapy.”

Many vets, especially those who rarely encounter cases of SLO, will prescribe a steroid such as prednisone in an attempt to reduce inflammation. Both Dr. Werner and Dr. Bousaid consider this ill-advised, noting the host of secondary problems that can arise from steroid use.

“In situations where a vet has prescribed steroids to treat suspected or confirmed SLO, a referral to an animal dermatologist is very important,” says Dr. Werner. “One of the reasons people see dermatologists is to get dogs off steroids for skin conditions. I think steroids are overkill; you may produce a lot of systemic problems by using a potent medication that may or may not be necessary. I think it’s pulling out a big gun when you need a sharp shooter.” Steroid use can result in increased thirst, appetite, weight gain, and muscle loss, and can have negative effects on the liver.

“In extreme cases, short-term steroid use may be needed, but given a choice, it’s best to use something else,” cautions Dr. Werner.

PROGNOSIS

While not curable, most dogs tolerate treatment well and once it stimulates new nail growth, antibiotics can often be eliminated from a maintenance regimen of EFAs and vitamins. When flare-ups occur, booties or restricted activity are recommended to help protect the affected claws. Many patients report success

ANOTHER OPTION

Pentoxifylline, brand name Trental, has been used in Western medicine with some success to help treat dogs with SLO. According to Dr. Bousaid, the drug was originally being looked at to treat cases of Ear Margin Necrosis, due to its ability to increase tissue vascularity. It is not yet licensed for use in animals, but is licensed for human use to treat peripheral artery disease. The drug helps increase blood flow by decreasing its viscosity. Because both vitamin B and Trental increase blood flow, they should not be given together. Common side effects include nausea, and with no available generic, the drug can be costly when dosed for larger animals.



Bonzo's nails responded well to treatment, but it took a year of taking antibiotics in addition to an EFA supplement and vitamin E. His owner will continue the dietary supplements for life, in hopes of warding off future SLO attacks.

Bonzo EFAs and vitamin E daily. An energetic bundle of youthful energy, his quality of life remains unaffected, except for occasional flare-ups, which fortunately are nowhere near as involved as the initial presentation of the disease.

"His nails are looking much better," she says. "The SLO is totally manageable now. When he has a flare-up, mostly in the summer, we avoid going hiking. I feel like it has stabilized, and I'm not nearly as panicked about it." 🐾

Freelance writer and avid agility competitor Stephanie Colman has been training dogs in Los Angeles for 10 years.

with bathing the feet in a saline or diluted antiseptic solution after walks.

"I don't think it's curable, but it's controllable and most dogs do very well," says Dr. Werner.

Such is the case with Bonzo. One year into treatment, the veterinarian successfully dropped antibiotics from Bonzo's treatment plan; Terrie continues to give

What you can do . . .

- **Teach your dog to calmly accept foot and nail handling so you can routinely examine his nails.**
- **Talk to your groomer. Groomers are often the first ones to notice nail abnormalities.**
- **Watch for excessive foot-licking and chewing; make an appointment with your vet if you see this.**
- **If your dog has SLO, try to have him seen by (or have your vet consult with) a veterinary dermatologist.**



A CASE HISTORY OF SLO FROM A WDJ SUBSCRIBER

I adopted my greyhounds, Cleo and Ramses, from Personalized Greyhounds in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania on April 11, 2009.

In May of 2009 Ramses was running in the backyard and tore one of his toenails off in the grass. The quick was exposed and it was bleeding profusely. The vet sedated him and then trimmed and wrapped his foot and prescribed an antibiotic. After several months the nail cap began to grow back, but as soon as it did it was scaly and immediately sloughed off. The quick was no longer raw so it didn't bother him.

Everything was good until December 2010; Ramses had just turned 6. While getting his toenails clipped at the vet's he yelped and jumped off the table when the vet tech was beginning to clip a nail. He was bleeding and the vet was called in to take a look. The nail cap was standing up; it had split up the underside of the nail. She clipped it off and bandaged his foot. That started a downward spiral which for several months required a lot of vet visits. Right away Ramses started getting loose nail caps; they would split up the back and hang by a "thread" on the top of the foot. This made walking painful so he was bandaged most of the time. He lost all the nails on that foot.

I emailed Peggy Levin, the president of Personalized Greyhounds, to ask her if she had ever had this problem with other "greys." She told me about SLO; I immediately contacted my vet. Ramses by this time had started to lose nails on his other front foot. We began a treatment plan for him. Aller G-3 capsules: 2 caps 2x/day. Niacinamide 500mg: 1 tablet 3x/day. Vitamin E 400 I.U.: 1 cap 2x/day. Doxycycline 200mg: 2x/day.

We started this regimen in January 2011. Eventually Ramses lost all of his nail caps. During this period as the nails were becoming loose and falling off he experienced a lot of pain. He received Tramadol HCL 50 mg: 1.5 tabs 2x/day. His feet were bandaged when the quick was raw and bleeding. After a month Ramses could not tolerate the antibiotic. He had loose stool, vomiting, and loss of appetite. The vet took him off of doxycycline and administered a Covenia injection. Ramses immediately perked up and began eating again.

By the end of April all of the nail caps were gone but now he started to lick his feet and if they weren't bandaged he would lick them raw. The vet suggested laser therapy – 6 treatments every 2 days – and 1 percent silver sulfadiazine cream on the raw spots and bandages. After two laser treatments the feet began to show improvement. He still insisted on licking so I bought baby socks with grippers on the bottoms. I put these on his feet and hold them in place with adhesive tape. The laser treatments did wonders. All the hair grew back and the sore spots healed.

Ramses now has nail caps on all of his nails. They are thin, scaly, and deformed, but they are there. He can now walk a complete circuit around our neighborhood and is a happy boy. We discontinued the antibiotic injections in June and he remains on the Aller G-3, niacinamide, and vitamin E. He wears socks all the time; when it is wet outside I cover his socks with Glad Press n Seal.

This is a painful problem and the cure is long. I will probably keep socks on Ramses for the remainder of his life. He will take the meds forever, too.
– Pam Mowrey, Waynesboro, PA



Breed discrimination, guilty dogs, funky noses, and more

Thank you for Lisa Rodier's excellent article on breed discrimination in the insurance industry ("No Insurance," June 2011). I am fortunate to live in Pennsylvania, one of the states that forbid such discrimination, but it still exists here due to ignorance and some shady maneuvering on the part of the insurance industry.

For several years at my previous job I held a Pennsylvania Property & Casualty Insurance Agent's license. I wrote surety bonds, not homeowner's or renter's insurance, but the license and its associated educational requirements are the same. In order to obtain my license, I had to study a 5-inch thick manual, attend a multi-day instructional seminar, and take an exam which lasted about two and a half hours, as well as agree to fulfill several credits of continuing education per license term.



"My pit bulls are monsters only on Halloween!" says Lori Zimmer, president of badpress.org.

Not once during this journey was it mentioned that Pennsylvania is a non-discriminatory state – but the "risk" associated with certain dog breeds was. It was not until I became actively involved in dog breed advocacy that I learned that breed alone was not a legal basis for declining to insure in this state.

The problem is, the legal language forbidding denial of insurance coverage based solely on breed of dog is not contained in the insurance laws; it's buried

in the Dog Law portion – specifically the Dangerous Dogs section – of the agricultural statutes (Title 3 P.S. PA ST Ch. 8, § 459-507-A . . . right below another good-to-know subsection forbidding municipal breed bans!). As a result, this information is conveniently omitted in the education of insurance agents. Further, because it is buried in the "Construction of Article" section and somewhat hard for the casual researcher to find, insurance companies who are "in the know" about it bank on members of the general public not knowing their rights and standing up for them. Folks who don't know the law simply swallow the insurers' tale that they are uninsurable hook, line, and sinker.

When the mother of my best friend (and co-founder of our organization) decided to change insurers for her renter's coverage, the first agency she called asked her if she owned a dog; she answered in the affirmative. The next question was, "What breed?" Upon honestly replying, "a pit bull," she was told they would not insure her. The next day, when my friend called and angrily pointed out the unlawfulness of their decision, he was told that the agent his mother had spoken with was "inexperienced" and that they would gladly provide coverage . . . Fortunately, they had already obtained a policy from Allstate, whose agent wasn't concerned (in fact, hadn't even asked) about what breed their dog happened to be (the agent himself owned Dobermans!).

Breed discrimination – not only insurance discrimination but also breed-specific legislation – does nothing to punish the irresponsible owners who are to blame for most dog bite incidents;

instead, it hurts responsible, law-abiding dog owners who want to do the right thing. Further, I suspect it actually encourages insurance fraud and misrepresentation by forcing consumers to lie about their dogs' breeds in order to obtain policies.

Lori Zimmer, president and co-founder BAD PRESS Breed Anti-Defamation, Protection, and Rescue Society, Inc. badpress.org

The next letter is in response to "What Do You Think?" (July 2011), in which Pat Miller discussed a presentation on anthropomorphism by Alexandra Horowitz, PhD. Dr. Horowitz devised studies to determine whether a person's expectation of a dog's "guilt" resulted in the person's interpretation of a dog's behavior as "guilty."

I agree that dogs more often look "guilty" because of our body language and tone of voice – until this happened:

I have an extremely bright Border Collie-mix I adopted from our local Humane Society. I caught him once eating off the counter and used the "ah-ah" correction. He was so terrified of people that I have never used anything more harsh than "ah-ah," and even that correction is rare. He has had a lot of positive training/clicker training, work with a behaviorist, and a course in "control unleashed" in which he learned "doggy Zen" and other self-control techniques.

Long story short, I had made some cornbread and set in on the stove to cool. I stepped outside for a moment to say goodbye to a friend. When I came back into the house, only one of my dogs greeted me. Normally, both dogs act like I've been gone forever even if it's only been a minute or two. I was a little puzzled, but thought no more of it until I entered the kitchen and saw my smart little BC cross peeking in from the dining room, head held low, whites of his eyes showing. He slinked in to greet me. I had no idea why he was acting so strange until I saw that he had eaten the top off the corn bread.

I gotta say, I could hardly keep from laughing – but now I think some dogs *do* feel guilt. I have absolutely no other explanation for his behavior. This dog is the brightest dog I've ever owned, so maybe that has something to do with it. But there you have it.

Pat Emmerson
Via email

I have to say, I've heard more stories from friends about their dogs' guilt. My friend Maureen, for example, insists that family dog Carly (a former neighbor and frequent model, in her youth, for WDJ) is waiting to greet her just inside the front door when she gets home from work every day – except on the days that Carly has gotten into the garbage. Then Carly hides upstairs. Maureen says, "There is no way I'm cueing her to be anxious; I don't know whether she got into the garbage or not until I've entered the house." Pat Miller has explained this to me, saying something along the lines of, "Carly has formed a negative association between garbage strewn around the house and Maureen's unhappy behavior; that's all." I just don't know. It's sure interesting to observe, anyway.

Having just finished the article about more assistive products for dogs with mobility problems (“Even More Support,” August 2011), I love the idea of putting down cheap runners for elderly dogs for no-slip solutions. However I must point out that many yoga mats as well as cotton fabrics have toxic materials in them and can be hazardous to a dog’s health. I feel your readers should be aware of this when searching for this type of solution for their elderly pets.

Sharon
Via email

Regarding your editorial in the August issue: We all have been told that *Consumer Reports* tests everything they report on. They eat peanut butter, test cars, and paint rooms, for example. Since dogs can’t report true quality, the question is this: “Who at *Consumer Reports* gets to eat the Gravy Train?”

With tongue-in-cheek, Jackie Malcolm
via email

Yeah, take a look at “meat and bone meal” and tell me you’d eat it. Whereas, I would not be a bit frightened to eat some of my dog’s food!

Regarding “Noses and Toes Gone Wrong” (August 2011): I am thrilled and honored to have my Blissful Dog Nose Butter mentioned in this amazing article. Thank you so much. I have said one of my missions is to eradicate this heinous condition from dog noses and helpful articles such as this one really help spread the word to pet owners. There is relief for this condition.

Kathy Dannel Vitcak
theblissfuldog.com

I appreciate that Greyhounds’ corns were included in “Noses and Toes Gone Wrong” but felt the small side box and limited information regarding corns was less than helpful. The true cause of Greyhounds’ corns is still very debated as are various treatment methods including the duct tape method discussed in the article. The topic of Greyhounds and corns could easily be an entire article! Thanks for acknowledging us Greyhounds owners struggling with corns, but please dig deeper on the topic!

JoShannan Kimpel
Arlington Heights, IL

We’ll see what we can do; thanks for the suggestion. There are so many conditions that can plague our dogs, and so few pages in which to discuss them! PAW

HEARTWORM RESISTANCE UPDATE

There’s more than one resistant heartworm isolate

In “Time to Step It Up” (WDJ July 2011), we described one small study that showed only Advantage Multi was 100 percent effective against the MP3 strain of resistant heartworms after a single dose. The report was true as far as it went, but new points have emerged that make this a more complex story and one for which we do not have all the answers yet.

The MP3 heartworm strain was isolated from a dog in Georgia in 2006 and kept in the laboratory for study, but has apparently not been found outside the lab since. More recently, studies have identified additional heartworm isolates with “reduced susceptibility” (the term researchers prefer to “resistance”) in the lab to heartworm preventives. These strains were taken from dogs in the Mississippi Valley region who developed heartworm infections despite being on monthly preventives. Unpublished laboratory studies show that none of the existing heartworm preventive medications, including Advantage Multi, were 100 percent effective against these isolates.

It’s important to emphasize that all of the heartworm preventives are still effective against most heartworms, even those from potentially resistant strains. In fact, further unpublished results from the MP3 study showed that all four of the heartworm preventives tested (Heartgard, Interceptor, Revolution, and Advantage Multi) were 100 percent effective against this strain after three consecutive monthly doses were given.

Heartworm resistance is not a reason to discontinue monthly heartworm preventives; in fact, the opposite is true. It’s more important than ever to give heartworm preventives

year-round, and to have your dog tested for heartworm infection every year. Because it takes larvae about six months to mature into adult heartworms that can be detected by heartworm tests, the best time for testing is in the spring, six months after the start of cold weather (for those in warmer areas, testing can be done at any time).

Potential heartworm resistance is still believed to be geographically limited to the Mississippi Valley, from Missouri to Louisiana. As discussed in July’s article, those who live in this area may also want to consider giving heartworm preventives more often or at increased dosages, if their veterinarians agree that it is safe to do so.

— Mary Straus

FOR MORE INFORMATION

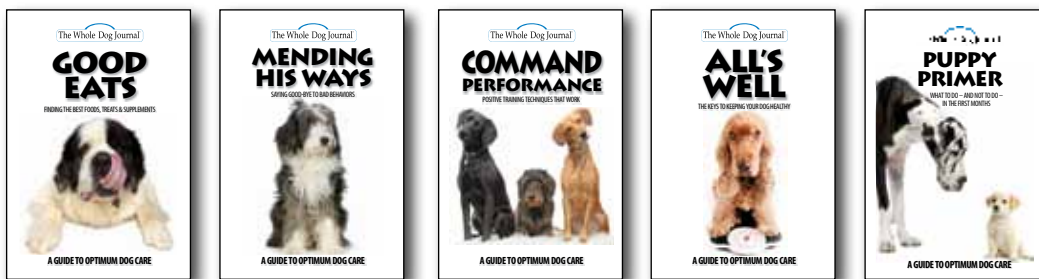
- ❖ Heartworms and Resistance: Truth or Fiction?
bayeranimalhealthsymposium.com/blagburn_heartworm.shtml



Don’t stop using those heartworm preventives in the face of resistant strains; that’s the time to step it up!

Shouldn't you have the answers before the questions arise?

Take the confusion and hesitation out of your dog's care! Be fully ready for anything—and everything! Accept this risk-free invitation and discover...



- 🐾 Positive solutions to your most stubborn training challenges.
- 🐾 Smart decisions for safe, natural, and nutritious feeding.
- 🐾 Meaningful measures to strengthen good health and reinforce resistance to illness.
- 🐾 Essential fundamentals to starting your puppy off right.
- 🐾 Proven techniques to end problem behaviors.

YOU WANT THE BEST FOR YOUR DOG!

Five brand-new books from Whole Dog Journal will show you how to provide the vigilant care you want to give—and your dog deserves!

Because foresight is far better than hindsight when it comes to your dog's health and training, nothing beats having a solid game plan. **Whole Dog Journal's Guides are playbooks for winning and effective dog care.** It is a series everyone who has a dog should own!

Good Eats: Finding the Best Foods, Treats and Supplements

- Basic Food Selection • Canned Foods • Dry Foods • Weight Control • Treats
- Food Disasters • Diet and the Older Dog • Special Needs Diets • Home-Prepared Diets
- Pica and Coprophagia

All's Well: The Keys to Keeping Your Dog Healthy

- Exercise and Injury Prevention • Selecting a Holistic Vet • Old dogs • Anesthesia
- Dental Health • Creating a Healthy Home • Vaccinations • NSAIDs • First Aid
- Preventing Heat Stroke

Command Performance: Positive Training Techniques that Work

- Positive Training Basics • Leash Manners • Getting a Sit • Encouraging Self-Control
- The "Come" Command • Greeting • Tricks and Games • Park Behavior
- Teaching Wait and Stay

Puppy Primer: What To Do—And Not To Do—In The First Months

- Pre-Puppy Prep • Housetraining • Crate Training • Vaccinations • Grooming
- Bite Inhibition • New Dog Do's and Don'ts • Socialization • Building Good Manners

Mending His Ways: Saying Good-Bye To Bad Behaviors

- Dealing with Anxious Dogs • Remedial Housetraining • Crating Problems
- Destructive Chewing • Escape Artists • Reactive Behaviors • Growling • Barking
- Multi-Dog Households

30-Day Risk-Free Examination Privileges for Whole Dog Journal Readers when you order now, your satisfaction is assured with our 100% money-back guarantee. If you are not completely satisfied, you may return your Guides within 30 days for a full and unquestioned refund.

A WEALTH OF INFORMATION— AT MONEY SAVING PRICES!

- 🐾 **Save \$5.00 on each Guide!**
- 🐾 **Buy 4 and get the fifth guide free!**

Three convenient ways to order...

1. Call 1-800-571-1555
2. Online at www.whole-dog-journal.com/dogcare
3. Mail this coupon

Whole Dog Journal's GUIDES TO OPTIMUM DOG CARE

YES send me the following Guides

- Good Eats
- All's Well
- Command Performance
- Puppy Primer
- Mending His Ways

___ Guides @ \$14.95 = \$ _____
Add Postage & Handling \$ 2.95
TOTAL AMOUNT \$ _____

Check enclosed (payable to WDJ)

Postage & Handling \$2.95

Charge to: Amex VISA MC

Account No. _____ Exp Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: **Whole Dog Journal Books**
PO Box 221004, Beachwood OH 44122-2449

All 5 Guides for \$62.75
including p&h!

**Just \$14.95 each—
\$5 off the cover price!
Buy 4 Guides
and get the 5th Guide FREE!**

BEST VALUE

RESOURCES

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

- ❖ **Pat Miller**, CBCCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDDBC, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Fairplay, MD. Train with modern, dog-friendly positive methods. Group and private training, rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. Trainers can become "Pat Miller Certified Trainers" (PMCT) by successfully completing Pat's Level 1 (Basic Dog Training and Behavior) and both Level 2 Academies (Behavior Modification and Instructors Course). (301) 582-9420; peaceablepaws.com
- ❖ **Sarah Richardson**, CPDT-KA, CDDBC, The Canine Connection, Chico, CA. Training, puppy classes, socialization sessions, "playcare," boarding. Force-free, fun, positive training. (530) 345-1912; thecanineconnection.com

HOLISTIC VETERINARIANS

- ❖ American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association (AHVMA). PO Box 630, Abingdon, MD 21009. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a list of holistic veterinarians in your area, or search ahvma.org

BOOKS AND DVDS

- ❖ 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, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com



You're leading us to drink!

Unauthorized copying or distribution of WDJ is not permitted

This publication is supported by sales of subscriptions and back issues.

If you would like to share material from WDJ with a group, please contact our Reprint Manager, Jocelyn Donnellon, at (203) 857-3100.

WHAT'S AHEAD ...

- ❖ **NO WIGS NEEDED**
What chemo is like for dogs; what to expect, how to prepare.
- ❖ **BRAKING THE BARK**
Help for those who live with a very barky dog. More than one? Have a medal.
- ❖ **IT'S IN THE CAN**
WDJ's 2011 wet food review.
- ❖ **DON'T DRINK THE WATER**
Giardia, Coccidia, and Cryptosporidium, oh my.
- ❖ **HATES CRATES**
What to do when your dog just can't stand confinement.
- ❖ **ADDISON'S AND CUSHING'S**
These conditions result when the adrenal glands are insufficient or overactive (respectively).
- ❖ **AMAZING APPLE CIDER VINEGAR**
It's used as a topical rinse for skin and coat and internally to help over-alkaline dogs.