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The Whole



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A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

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Ready for Baby?

My dog wasn't; I hope yours will be!

BY NANCY KERNS

By the time this issue arrives in your mailbox, my newest little niece should have made her debut into the outside world. The fact that my brother and sister-in-law are expecting to deliver a baby girl at the end of July will be a surprise to only one party in our immediate and extended family: their dog, Hannah.

I've written about Hannah before, and her photo has graced these pages on a number of occasions; she's a big, pretty, expressive mixed-breed, and my brother is an excellent photographer. Hannah also has some issues with strange people from time to time, and while she's always been rock-solid with kids, Keith and Leslie have wisely gone out of their way to prepare Hannah as much as they can for the baby's arrival.

To make sure they were on track, I asked our editor of training topics, renowned positive trainer Pat Miller, to prepare an article about "what you should do before baby arrives" (see page 10). Yes, I was indulging my own interest; I wanted to satisfy myself that I had communicated to the happy couple everything that a responsible, dog-knowledgeable aunt should convey to expectant parents about dog- and baby-safety. (And then I was able to use them as photo models for the article, too!) But I am confident that many of you, too, can use this information, if not for your own family, for some other family you know.

Many families suffer when they discover, too late, that their dog just can't abide babies or children. Years before WDJ was conceived, I went through that very experience with my own son and dog, a sensitive Border Collie. Rupert had rarely been around kids, but he was so well-behaved with adults that I never *dreamed* he'd be deeply uncomfortable around my precious baby.

I now know that I failed Rupert on many levels. I never socialized him with kids and babies; when he was frightened of strange people or loud noises, I'd allow him to avoid them (never knowing that he

could be desensitized and counter-conditioned to the things that scared him). I was dismayed when he would slink out of the room every time the baby cried or made exuberant noises or motions, but I failed to realize that this would be a *bigger* problem when baby Eli started toddling.

I didn't have much time to ponder the impending danger; Eli started walking at 10 months! And it wasn't long after, that Eli once stumbled suddenly toward Rupert, grabbing double handfuls of fur as he fell. Rupe swung around and binged Eli on the face with his muzzle; it was a miracle that Eli didn't end up with a nasty bite and scar on his face (especially because Rupert had very poor bite inhibition; I didn't even know what that was at that time). I was right there, and there wasn't a thing I could have done to prevent it. All I *could* do, once Eli was calmed down, was place a call to my mom and dad; could Rupert go live with them for a while?

Yes, I once rehomed my dog. But it was the best thing I could have done at the time; Rupe loved my parents and staying at their house in the country, and they lavished all sorts of attention on him during his not-quite two-year stay with them. Rupert came back to live with me once Eli was old enough to throw tennis balls; that's what won Rupert's heart, as it pertained to Eli and all other oddly sized or -shaped humans.

Knowing what I know now, I would have super-socialized Rupe to babies and kids when he was a pup, and kept those experiences fresh as he matured. I would have been more assiduous about preventing accidental contact

between my adventurous but not-yet-coordinated toddler and my sensitive dog. And I would have read Pat Miller's article, and taken every precaution presented there! I hope Keith and Leslie and every other expectant couple will, too.

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Potty Break

Five things to do when your dog . . . has an “accident” in the house.

BY PAT MILLER

There’s probably not a canine companion on earth who hasn’t had at least one accident in the house; it’s inevitable no matter how careful your management. Ideally the accidents are few, but what do you do when they *do* happen? It may depend on the circumstances, but here are five things that are appropriate in most cases when a previously well-housetrained dog goes potty in the house.

1 If you discover your dog *in flagrante*, cheerfully interrupt him with an “Oops! Outside!” and hustle him out to his legal potty spot. *Do not punish him.* If you do, you’ll just teach him to pick a more secluded spot next time where you’re less likely to catch him in the act.

2 Thoroughly clean any soiled spots with an enzymatic product designed to clean up animal waste. Use a black light to find untreated spots. *Do not* use ammonia-based products to clean! Urine contains ammonia and the ammonia in the cleaning products may actually inspire your dog to urinate on the spot where the ammonia-based product was used.

3 Take your dog out more frequently so he has more opportunity to do it right; every hour on the hour (during the day), at first, for young pups or older dogs who need remedial housetraining, then *gradually* lengthen the time between bathroom breaks.

Go out with him; don’t just send him out to the yard on his own. When he goes potty where he is supposed to, calmly praise him as he’s going (you don’t want to interrupt him!), then mark the desired behavior with a “Yes!” or other verbal marker when he’s finished, and give him a tasty treat.

Keep a potty journal, so you know when his last accident was and to keep track of his housetraining progress. When he’s gone a week with no accidents, increase the time between bathroom breaks by 30 minutes.

4 Give him periods of house freedom when you *know* he’s empty, but confine him to a crate or other small area (exercise pen) when you can’t supervise, or when you have to leave him alone for an extended period (or overnight). Be sure he doesn’t tank up on water just before bed.

Don’t crate him longer than he can hold it; if you have to be gone for a long time, have a friend, family member, or pet-sitter take him out for a potty break.

5 Make sure there are no medical issues that might be interfering with his ability to “hold it.” If he has several lapses in housetraining, make an appointment for a thorough health examination with your vet. Diarrhea almost guarantees accidents, and things like urinary tract infections, and kidney and bladder stones will also cause housesoiling.

By the way, I don’t consider a dog reliably housetrained until he’s at least a year old. My own Bonnie was more than two years old before she could be trusted for long periods in the house.

One last thing: That old rolled up newspaper? You can use it to smack *yourself* in the head every time your dog has an accident, for allowing your management program to slip. If it’s not caused by a medical problem, an indoor potty incident is *always* a management lapse. Urine “marking” – a different behavior from housesoiling – is another story, and one for a future column. 🐾



Use an enzyme-based cleaner on every “spot” your dog has made, whether it’s on carpet or floors. The enzymes break down the smelly agents in urine and feces, so your dog won’t get a whiff of his past mistake and be inspired to go again.



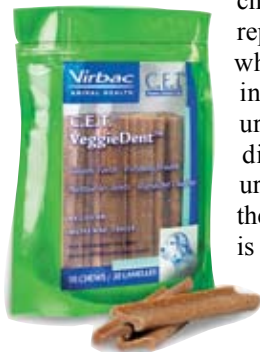
Don’t just put your dog outside to go potty; you won’t know whether or not he went! Accompany him outside, praise him while he does his business, and when he’s done, “mark” the behavior with a click or “Yes!” and give him a treat.

VeggieDent Chews Recalled in Australia

Irradiation suspected of causing problem

In June, Virbac recalled VeggieDent Chews for Dogs in Australia as a precautionary measure after veterinary researchers noticed a possible link between dogs developing kidney disease and consumption of these chews. No reason has been found and there is as yet no proof that the chews are causing the Fanconi-like syndrome. The chews were introduced to Australia in March of this year. They are manufactured in Vietnam, and are made of corn, starch, glycerin, soy, rice, yeast, sorbitol, corn derivatives, and water.

The Fanconi-like syndrome linked to VeggieDent Chews is similar to that associated with consumption of chicken jerky strips made in China. In fact, it was researchers look-



ing into that problem who first noticed the correlation with VeggieDent chews, when a few dogs who had not consumed chicken jerky treats developed the same form of kidney disease. Possible problems with chicken jerky treats have been reported in the U.S. and elsewhere since 2007. Symptoms include excess drinking and urination, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, and glucose in the urine. Despite investigation by the FDA and others, the cause is still unknown.

VeggieDent chews have been marketed in the U.S. since September 2008, and in Europe and Japan for two years, but Virbac claims it has not received reports of problems anywhere

except Australia – the only country that required some imported pet foods to be irradiated. Virbac blames the irradiation for the problem.

Neurological problems were found in cats consuming irradiated food in Australia last year, and after this problem, that country dropped the requirement for irradiation for those foods. While researchers are not yet certain what exactly has been responsible for the health problems caused by these irradiated foods, it is suspected that irradiation-induced changes in the food can cause toxicity. An upcoming article in WDJ will discuss irradiation of pet foods in more detail. – *Mary Straus*

For more information:
Virbac Animal Health
(800) 338-3659; virbacvet.com

New Treatment for Mast Cell Cancer Tumors

Not without risks, but a good option for inoperable tumors in particular

In June, the FDA approved the first drug used specifically to treat cancer in dogs. The new drug, called Palladia (toceranib phosphate) and made by Pfizer Animal Health, targets mast cell tumors. It does not replace surgical removal, but is used for higher-grade tumors that recur after surgery, with or without lymph node involvement. It is not recommended for dogs with systemic mast cell tumor, due to the increased risk of adverse side effects.

Mast cell tumors primarily affect the skin. They can vary widely in appearance and must be identified by fine needle aspirate or biopsy; there's no way to tell if a lump or bump is a tumor by looking at it or feeling it. Mast cell tumors are graded on a scale of I to III, with III being the worst. They are the second most common tumor found in dogs. If left untreated, they can spread to other parts of the body.

Surgical removal with wide margins is always the preferred treatment for this type of tumor, but that's not always possible, particularly when the tumor is in an area without a lot of extra skin, such as the face or lower limbs. Chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy are used in these cases,

as well as for high-grade tumors and those that have spread.

Palladia is a tyrosine kinase inhibitor that works by killing tumor cells and cutting off the tumor's blood supply. The result is that it shrinks the tumors and prolongs survival time. The initial study of 86 dogs found the tumor disappeared in 8.1 percent of treated dogs, shrank in 29.1 percent of dogs, and stopped growing in another 20.9 percent of dogs. In addition, Pfizer reported that quality of life improved in dogs whose tumors responded to treatment.

In its testing phase, Palladia was found to cause side effects in the majority of dogs who received it; these included diarrhea, decrease or loss of appetite, lameness, weight loss, and blood in the stool. Additional side effects were reported in a minority of the dogs. Most side effects are mild and resolve when the drug is stopped temporarily and then dosage is reduced, but

in rare cases they can be life-threatening.

Palladia is given continuously every other day, with weekly vet checks and blood work recommended for the first six weeks, then every six weeks thereafter. The cost is as yet unknown, but it's likely to be expensive, especially when the cost of follow-up care is included. For these reasons, if there is no lymph node involvement and it's possible to try again to surgically remove the tumor after it recurs, that could be the better choice. You'll need to discuss all treatment options with your vet before making a decision.

Palladia will be available in 2010. Initially, it will be available only to oncologists and veterinary internal medicine specialists.

– *Mary Straus*

For more information:
Pfizer Animal Health Inc.
(800) 366-5288; palladia-pi.com



Canine Influenza Vaccine

May not be needed by most pet dogs, but will be useful in shelters and kennels

A new vaccine for canine influenza virus (CIV) developed by Intervet/Schering Plough was conditionally approved in May. Conditional licenses are granted before much is known about a vaccine's effectiveness. This is a killed virus vaccine, so it cannot cause disease itself. The makers suggest that two vaccinations are given two to four weeks apart; then it can then be given annually. (Whether it *needs* to be given annually is unclear, since most viral vaccines confer long-term immunity.)

Canine influenza was first identified in 2004 in racing Greyhounds in Florida. It has now been found in 30 states, though the number of cases is still small. The areas most affected are Florida, New York City's northern suburbs, Philadelphia, Denver, and a recent outbreak in New Jersey. There is no evidence that it has spread to other countries. Most cases occur where dogs are housed closely together.

CIV is a highly infectious respiratory disease that is considered one of many types of kennel cough. Each type of kennel cough is different, so vaccinations for other types will not protect against CIV. The virus can persist for up to a week in the environment, but is deactivated by common disinfectants, such as alcohol and bleach. It is most commonly found in high-traffic facilities, or kennels where many dogs are housed together.

The vaccine may only reduce the duration and severity of the disease rather than giving complete protection, similar to influenza vaccines in other species. It may also reduce shedding of the virus and so make it less contagious. Canine influenza is not contagious to other species.

Virtually all dogs exposed to CIV will be infected, though the severity will vary considerably. Symptoms can last up to a month, and may include a low-

grade fever, nasal discharge, and a mild, productive cough. In 10 to 20 percent of cases, the virus can lead to high fever and pneumonia, usually caused by secondary bacterial infection. The fatality rate is currently between one and five percent of affected dogs. The virus is not responsive to antibiotics, though they can be helpful for secondary infections.

Should you vaccinate your dog? It depends on your dog's likelihood of exposure and overall health. Because the risk of CIV to most dogs is minimal at this time, few household dogs are likely to benefit from the vaccine. It *may* be helpful for kennels where large numbers of dogs are housed together, especially in areas where the disease is prevalent. — *Mary Straus*

For more information:
Intervet USA
(908) 298-4000; intervetusa.com

Update on Doxycycline and Heartworm Disease

A safer and more effective alternative to the slow-kill method of heartworm treatment

In August 2006, we reported on the finding that heartworms harbor a symbiotic organism called *Wolbachia*, and that treatment with doxycycline to destroy the *Wolbachia* could reduce the chance of adverse reactions during heartworm treatment.

According to studies published in late 2008, treatment with a combination of weekly ivermectin (Heartgard) and intermittent doxycycline helps rid the body of adult worms, reduces the effects of the worms, and stops the heartworms from being infectious to other dogs. The effects of the combined treatment are more pronounced than with either drug alone, making the treatment a more effective and safer alternative or adjunct to Immiticide.

"Preliminary observations suggest that administration of doxycycline and ivermectin for several months prior to (or without) melarsomine (Immiticide) will eliminate adult heartworms with less potential for severe thromboembolism than melarsomine alone," one study concluded.

This study followed dogs treated with weekly ivermectin at standard monthly

heartworm preventative doses (6 mcg/kg), and with doxycycline at 10 mg/kg daily for weeks 1-6, 10-11, 16-17, 22-25, and 28-33 (the study lasted 36 weeks). Antigen test scores gradually decreased, reflecting a reduction in the number of adult worms (antigen test scores did not change for dogs treated with either ivermectin or doxycycline alone).

After 36 weeks, adult worms had been reduced by 78.3 percent in dogs treated with both medications. In addition, all microfilariae were gone by week 9, meaning that the adult worms had ceased reproducing. Mosquitoes that fed on the dogs treated with doxycycline produced heartworm larvae that were not infectious to other dogs.

An Italian study found that dogs treated with the same combination of doxycycline and ivermectin had less perivascular inflammation. Dogs who also received Immiticide showed no thrombi in their lungs (pulmonary thromboembolism, or blood clots in the lungs, are the major life-threatening adverse effect of worm

death). A third study with the same protocols concluded, "Results indicate that the combination of these two drugs causes adult worm death."

These studies clearly indicate that treatment with a combination of weekly ivermectin and daily doxycycline given intermittently will sterilize the heartworms, prevent the dog from being infectious to other dogs, speed up the death of the worms prior to (or in place of) Immiticide treatment, limit inflammation and damage caused by the worms' presence, and reduce the chance of serious adverse reaction from Immiticide treatment.

Weekly doses of Heartgard should be safe for all but those dogs with the mutant MDR1 gene that affects collies and related breeds, making them more sensitive to ivermectin and a number of other drugs. — *Mary Straus*

For more information:
Heartworm and Wolbachia:
Therapeutic implications
ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18930598 🐾

Safe and Not Sorry

Why (and how) to condition your dog to comfortably wear a muzzle.

BY LISA RODIER

Long thought to be a sign of a “bad dog,” muzzles are more commonly seen today on ordinary pet dogs who are being proactively managed by a smart owner! But our guess is that many of our readers haven’t given a second thought to introducing a muzzle to their precious pooches. In reality, it would behoove all of us to consider purchasing a muzzle and familiarizing our dogs to it *before* we’re put into a situation of having to use one.

Why get a muzzle?

Can’t imagine why your dog might need a muzzle? Consider the following:

■ **Routine veterinary visit.** Face it, some of our dogs just do not like to be handled. Bing, a Belgian Sheepdog belonging to Ali Brown, trainer and author of *Scaredy Dog!* and *Focus Not Fear*, doesn’t like people touching him. So she free-shaped him to accept (read: *love*) a nylon muzzle, and now he wears one for veterinary visits,

chiropractic adjustments, and grooming appointments.

■ **Medical emergency and/or emergency veterinary visit.** No matter how sweet, a dog in pain can bite. A muzzle can be a lifesaver if your dog has a critical injury and needs medical help. Chances are good that the emergency vet staff might want to muzzle your dog. Two years ago when we thought that Axel, my large Bouvier, was bloating, the ER vet told us that he’d be muzzling Axel as a precaution during the exam. Although I wasn’t thrilled – Axel was a highly regarded therapy dog – I relented, putting myself in the shoes of the vet who was dealing with a “scary” large breed dog whom he didn’t know, and one who was possibly in a great amount of pain. (Note: no bloat!)

■ **Grooming.** Angela Duckett, who’s been grooming professionally for 15 years, with another 15 years under her belt as an assistant to a professional handler and

What you can do . . .

- Select the best muzzle for the task. Short sessions might call for a nylon muzzle, while more intensive work might require a basket muzzle.
- Create a positive association to the muzzle before you need it.
- If working with a behavior professional, veterinarian, etc. consider asking him/her ahead of time if she has a preference for the type of muzzle you use.
- Don’t use a muzzle as a substitute for working on problem behaviors.



PHOTO BY PETE SMOYER

Ali Brown’s Belgian Sheepdog, Bing, wears his muzzle for grooming, veterinary, and chiropractic visits, ensuring everyone’s relaxation and safety.

breeder (as well as her mom!), has no objections to grooming a dog who requires a muzzle. “A few of my clients need one during the entire groom, while others need it just for things that don’t feel good (i.e., nails, ears),” she says. Muzzling a dog allows her to pay more attention to the dog and getting the groom right, rather than having to watch the dog’s face the whole time to see if he’s getting ready to nip.

Duckett differentiates between dogs who “argue” about being muzzled and those who panic. If the dog takes the muzzle and lets her touch him, she’ll proceed. But should a dog physically fight or become frantic when muzzled, she stops the session, calls the dog’s owner and recommends another avenue for grooming such as a mobile groomer, or the veterinarian.

■ **Discouraging picking up, chewing, and eating of foreign objects.** While better management and training (i.e., “Give,”

“Drop it,” “Leave it”) are the preferred methods of dealing with a dog who picks up inappropriate foreign objects, a muzzle can come in handy if you’re trying to rule out ingestion of “stuff” as the cause of a medical problem.

For some time, my dog Axel was having blood in his stool. He also routinely picked up and chewed small wood chips and sticks while in the backyard, even under a close watch. Before making him submit to an invasive medical procedure (endoscopy), I wanted to rule out that his grazing wasn’t at the root of the problem. For a week or two, he wore a basket muzzle any time he was off-leash outside. This allowed him the freedom to move about without me breathing down his neck, while giving me peace of mind that he was not ingesting forbidden fruit. Pica was ruled out as a reason for his problem.

■ **Traveling on public transportation.**

In some enlightened U.S. cities such as Boston, leashed dogs are allowed to travel on public transportation with their people. Depending on the locale, certain rules and regulations apply. In Europe, it is the rule, rather than the exception, to allow dogs on public transport. Some cities permit leashed dogs on public transportation without being muzzled, although some systems, such as the water taxis in Venice, Italy, require dogs to be muzzled during travel, or, at the least, that the dog’s owner carry a muzzle should it be required.

■ **Certain introductions.** A muzzle can provide an insurance policy in some unknown situations. For example, in the case of a dog who has killed cats, and is being considered by a potential adopter who already owns a small dog, a muzzle could be used to ensure the safety of the small dog during a carefully orchestrated “meet and greet.”

WDJ training editor Pat Miller would consider the use of a muzzle on a dog-aggressive dog for meeting other dogs, but only after significant training and behavior modification work has progressed to the point that interaction might be appropriate. At that time, a well-desensitized muzzle might be called for as an extra precaution.

■ **Aggression cases.** If your dog is aggressive toward people and

you are seeking the assistance of a behavior professional, s/he might require your dog to be muzzled during the consult.

For consults with the University of Georgia Veterinary Behavior Service, for example, Sharon Crowell-Davis, DVM, PhD, Diplomate American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, explains that, “Aggressive dogs that come to the behavior service and present a risk of injuring hospital personnel, other clients or other patients are required to wear a basket muzzle. Clients are given instructions on how to get a correctly fitted basket muzzle, which allows the dog to pant, bark, drink, and take treats offered through the basket muzzle. They are also educated in how to train their dog to readily accept the muzzle.”

While some trainers offer “growl” or reactive dog classes that require the participants (the dogs, that is!) to be muzzled, Pat Miller and Ali Brown both independently offer reactive dog classes and workshops, and are not fans of muzzling the dogs in class. Their sessions focus on working the dogs sub-threshold, getting them to be relaxed and calm and able to control their own behavior in the “reasonable” presence of other dogs; the intent is not to ask the dogs to interact with each other or to work super-threshold.

When not to muzzle?

Pat Miller warns that, with aggressive dogs, the purpose of a muzzle is not to give free rein to the dog and therefore repeatedly push the dog past his threshold, exposing the dog to stimuli that could and

should be avoided. Likewise, Faye Owen of Animal Harmony, LLC, reminds us that “Any type of muzzle can be dislodged with a really intently aggressive dog or during an attack, so a muzzle should not be worn as a ‘cure all’ for aggression.”

We have also seen advertisements advocating the use of muzzles to prevent or control barking and believe this to be an irresponsible use of a muzzle.

Types of muzzles

We found muzzles ranging in price from a few dollars to more than a hundred, and from tiny, flimsy nylon muzzles to custom-made leather super-muzzles used for sport and police work. The type of muzzle you introduce to your dog will largely depend on how you plan to use it; our focus is on types suitable for pet dogs in the situations mentioned above. When purchasing a muzzle, fit, durability and comfort are the key determinants to making the right choice.

■ **Cloth muzzles**

Cloth muzzles are typically very simple and usually made from nylon. They feature a band of fabric that envelopes the dog’s muzzle and two straps with a quick release that buckles up behind the dog’s ears. Offering a fairly snug fit, this is the type of muzzle most commonly used for handling issues, and is typically used by groomers and veterinarians for ease of use, comfort, light weight, and affordability.

Dogs have limited ability to pant and cannot readily drink water while wearing this style of muzzle. They might be able to take treats, but not easily, so Samantha Fogg of Work + Play Positive Dog Training recommends using baby food in a syringe to administer food. Because the dog cannot pant very well in this style of muzzle, it is imperative not to leave it on the dog for prolonged periods of time.

We checked out the Kwik Klip Nylon Muzzle (\$10), and the tongue-in-cheek Happy Muzzle (\$20) made in the U.S. and sold by Dog in the City of San Francisco. The Kwik Klip, in basic black, is a standard nylon muzzle; it offered a rim of padding around the edge of the muzzle where it contacts the dog’s face. The Happy Muzzle is available in a variety of bright patterns, which make the muzzled dog



The Happy Muzzle helps with the muzzled dog’s public relations, but may not allow the dog to pant well enough to be worn for more than short periods.



The Italian Basket Muzzle is made out of polyethylene, a flexible plastic. It allows a dog to open his mouth wider (for air and water), but impedes his ability to take treats.



The Heavy Duty Wire Basket Muzzle is the Hannibal Lecter look. But it provides substantial security when the goal is to prevent any bite. Not all models have a forehead strap.

look less threatening, reducing the Hannibal Lecter effect. It is manufactured from heavy duty Cordura, and is water resistant and machine washable. It offered a little more substantial padding around the nose and just felt like a more robust muzzle.

I did a “pant test” with my Bouviers, putting each muzzle on them after a walk while they were panting. Both muzzles pretty much closed their mouths, limiting them to breathing through their noses. I didn’t like that there was little to no air flow around the muzzle.

Happy Muzzle literature explains that, “Panting is a necessary way of self cooling, so while dogs can easily breathe and drink water with the muzzle on, the Happy Muzzle is meant to be worn for periods of time not to exceed 90 minutes, particularly in hot weather.” Happy Muzzle or not, I would be hesitant to leave this style of muzzle on a dog for an hour and a half. I could not easily slip treats into their mouths. Also, some dogs can still nip while wearing this style of muzzle.

For a nylon muzzle, details you’ll want to pay attention to include weight and strength of the material, stitching, how well the straps are attached, and the quality of the buckle. And, of course, the muzzle is only as good as the fit. Sizing for each is fairly straightforward; simply measure the widest part of the muzzle and find the closest size. Both models are available in eight sizes. My vote in a nylon muzzle, for a few extra dollars, is to go with a product such as the Happy Muzzle which appears to be more durable and well-made than a basic nylon model.

Two additional cloth muzzles to mention are the **ProGuard Softie** and **Tuffie**

muzzles. These are made from a “patented DuPont fabric” (read: fancy nylon) and offer more coverage than a traditional nylon muzzle, almost mimicking a basket style muzzle.

On the Softie, mesh material covers the dog’s nose and mouth, while the front of the Tuffie is solid fabric, with mesh on the sides. It appears that this design attempts to combine the comfort of a soft muzzle with the coverage of a basket, and I suppose for some folks it works. My primary concern is lack of air flow, and I’d personally opt for a wire basket style in lieu of this one.

■ Basket muzzles

Basket muzzles are just that: a wire or plastic catcher’s mask-like cage that fits over the dog’s muzzle, and has at least one strap that clasps behind the dog’s ears; some models also feature a forehead strap which extends from the muzzle, reaching over the dog’s forehead, attaching to the neck strap for a super-secure fit.

All of the trainers we queried favored the basket muzzle, though they admitted they tend to use nylon muzzles often in practice simply because of ease of use. It also appears that desensitization to a basket muzzle might take a little more time simply because of its size. Although veterinarians with whom I spoke typically use nylon muzzles in their practices, they are not averse to clients using basket muzzles.

Basket muzzles better allows dogs to pant, more easily take treats (small ones work best), and drink water, and provide better ventilation than a nylon muzzle. For those reasons, the basket muzzle is favored for dog-dog interactions, although Samantha Fogg is quick to point out that a big dog

in a basket muzzle can still damage a little dog just from the force of a muzzle punch, so precautions need to be taken.

The **Italian Basket Muzzle** retails for just under \$20, depending on the size, and is favored for its lightweight and flexibility. The basket part is made from flexible polyethylene (plastic) while the adjustable buckle strap is leather. When I tried it out on my dogs, they could more easily pant, though still not a full on open mouth pant. Getting treats into their mouths was a little tricky, which is where the “small treat” part comes in to play, I suppose. The front of the muzzle features an extra removable grill; without it in place, treat delivery is a little less tedious.

Although the muzzle comes fairly high up on the bridge of the dog’s nose, just under the eyes, I can see how a really determined dog might be able to dislodge the muzzle, though it would take lots of work. There is a thin layer of leather that lies between where the muzzle hits the dog’s face and the muzzle. I imagine extra padding with something like moleskin might make for a more comfortable fit.

Some basket muzzles allow the user to thread the dog’s collar through the attachments for the neck strap for a more secure fit, but that is not possible on this model. There are a number of sizes available and a few measurements to take to get the right size. This model is not recommended for flat or pug nose breeds. I would use this for some applications, but probably not for a serious aggression case.

The **Heavy Duty Wire Basket Muzzle** is just that: heavy duty. The basket part of the muzzle is made from chrome wire, and the straps a little more substantial leather

than those on the Italian basket model. The part of the muzzle that contacts the top of the dog's muzzle is lined with a thick piece of leather, with additional padding under it. The #5 size that we tested weighed about 8 ounces, or about twice as much as the Italian Basket muzzle size 8.

The model we looked at came with a forehead strap. It would be much more difficult – though maybe not impossible – for an intent dog to dislodge the muzzle with a forehead strap attached. Apparently not all sizes come with this strap; it appears that it's used primarily on models for short-nosed breeds. Perhaps because my dogs are used to having hair on their faces, they easily accepted wearing this style of muzzle. A shorter haired breed might prove more sensitive to the extra weight, so proper desensitization is necessary.

I liked that this model seemed to have extra room in the basket for panting and air flow, and of course, room to take treats.

This model retailed for \$33 and is available in 17 sizes, based on length and circumference of the dog's muzzle. This would be my choice for a more serious aggression case or for those instances when you really want peace of mind.

In terms of weight and sturdiness, mid-way between the Italian Basket and the Heavy Duty Wire Basket is the **Plastic Coated Wire Basket Dog Muzzle**. It is a little heftier than the Italian Basket, but less robust than the Heavy Duty Wire Basket, so not quite as heavy, and retails for about \$22. I used this model when I was trying to keep Axel from ingesting foreign objects, and it worked well. The basket is a lightweight wire covered in plastic.

Before you buy

With the exception of the Happy Muzzle, we bought the muzzles we tested at Morroco.com, but most pet supply stores and online retailers carry muzzles. To buy the

basket muzzles we tested, see morroco.com or call the business at (800) 575-1451. To buy the the Happy Muzzle, call (415) 861-4724 or see doginthecity.net.

Remember that flat or pug nose dogs require special sizing, and will even most likely do better with certain styles than others. If in doubt, consult with your trainer or veterinarian. If purchasing a muzzle to use at vet visits, ask your dog's veterinarian first if s/he has a style preference.

And above all, use common sense when desensitizing and using a muzzle. Don't keep it on your dog for extended periods of time, never leave one on an unsupervised dog, and don't use it as an excuse to expose your dog to situations that you shouldn't be placing him in. 🐾

Lisa Rodier lives in Alpharetta, Georgia, with her husband and two Bouviers. She is also a volunteer with the American Bouvier Rescue League.

Conditioning a Positive Emotional Response to a Muzzle

BY PAT MILLER

Trainers often use the term “desensitization” when talking about introducing your dog to a new piece of equipment, such as a muzzle. In reality, when it's something new, you're conditioning your dog's *initial* response to the new object. The desensitization procedure applies when your dog *already* has an association with the object – usually a negative one – and you're working to change the association to positive.

It's a lot easier (and wiser) to start by creating a positive association with a muzzle for your dog (or any other stimulus!) than it is to have to backtrack and create a new one. You'll have the most success if you and your dog can make a game of it rather than getting all worried and serious. Be upbeat and cheerful rather than serious or worried, and encourage your dog to be playful as you do this.

Your goal is to convince your dog that “muzzle = good stuff!” You know how your dog's eyes light up when you pick up her leash, her ball, or her favorite tug toy? That's what you want to see when you pick up her muzzle. Feel free to incorporate the clicker to mark your dog's behavior as soon as she starts offering deliberate muzzle-related behaviors.

Start by purchasing an-appropriately-sized basket muzzle. Work with your dog, in several short sessions (5-15 minutes) throughout each day – the more *short* sessions, the better! Here are the steps of a sample conditioning protocol:

1. Hold up the muzzle, feed your dog a high value treat. Repeat this step until your dog brightens and looks for the treat when you hold up the muzzle.
2. Let your dog sniff the outside of the muzzle (or invite her to target to it) and feed a treat. Repeat until she's happily offering to sniff/target and then looking for her treat.

3. Invite her to sniff/target the edge of the muzzle opening. Feed a treat. Repeat until she's happily offering to sniff/target, then looking for her treat.

4. Encourage her to put her nose into the muzzle opening by sticking a treat to the inside, near the opening. Repeat until she's eagerly putting her nose into the opening, then gradually move the treat deeper into the muzzle, with numerous repetitions at each new increment, until she's happy to put her nose all the way in.

5. Increase duration by feeding several treats each time while her nose is all the way in, gradually increasing delay between treats, until she'll voluntarily hold her nose in the muzzle for 5-10 seconds waiting for the next click and treat.

6. While she's holding her nose in the muzzle, clip the strap behind her head, click, treat, and release the strap. Gradually increase the length of time you leave the muzzle clipped on, with random reinforcement, and you're done!

If at any time during the protocol your dog resists the muzzle, back up to a point where she's happy again, and proceed more slowly. When you have completed the process and your dog is happy to wear her muzzle, be sure to play muzzle games with her from time to time to maintain the positive emotional response. If you put it on her only when she's going to see the vet, you can poison the association you worked so hard to attain.

For a fantastic video depiction of noted trainer and author Jean Donaldson conditioning a positive emotional response to a head halter with her Chow, Buffy, see abrionline.org/videos.php and click on “Conditioning a Positive Emotional Response.”

Family Planning

Protect everyone in your family (the dog, too) by selecting a good family dog and getting him ready for kids.

BY PAT MILLER

Childless by choice, I confess that when there's conflict between a family dog and a human puppy my sympathies usually lie with the canine. Maybe that's because the dog usually loses in the end – no matter how dedicated to the dog the owners had seemed before they became parents.

Some people seem to get overwhelmed when they become parents, and, lacking the resources of time, energy, or money to care for their newly expanded families, they relinquish their dogs to shelters. In many cases, it has nothing to do with the dog being “bad” with the baby; it's just that the parents felt overburdened by their responsibilities.

More commonly, however, dogs get sent to shelters after a dog/baby interaction that frightens the parents. Incidents range from a dog's apparent overinterest in the baby, to a display resembling aggression (such as growling or snapping) around the baby. Most of these scary (and

potentially dangerous) behaviors could be prevented – and the dog's lifelong tenure in the family preserved – if the dog was properly prepared for the baby's arrival, and parents take appropriate management measures after baby's arrival. Tragically, though, few dogs receive the training and exposure to babies and children that they need to succeed in households that suddenly include a baby.

It's frustrating that so many otherwise thoughtful, well-meaning, and intelligent parents make incredibly unwise decisions when it comes to helping the canine family member cope with the household changes brought on by the arrival of a baby. The following are my suggestions for ensuring the safety and happiness of an expanding human/canine family.

■ **Plan for a healthy dog-baby relationship before you're pregnant . . . or even before you have the dog!**

Ideally, a couple starts laying the

What you can do . . .

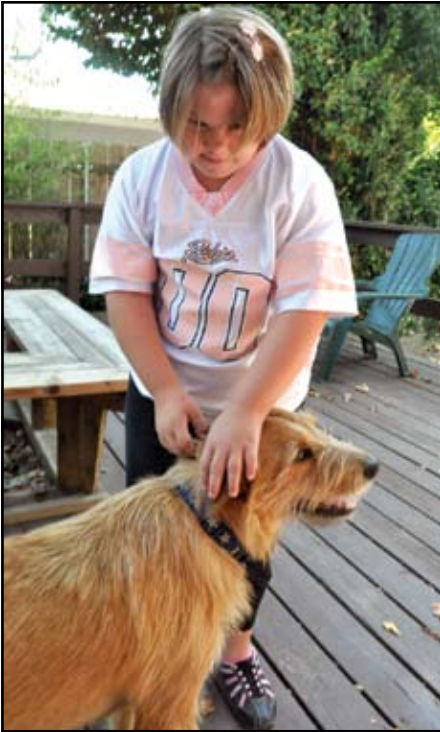
- If you plan to have children, and don't have a dog yet, select a candidate who is well-suited for a life with kids.
- If you already have a dog and are planning to have kids, prepare her *now* for a future life with children. Give her many positive associations with children from puppyhood on, even if your own baby is far in the future. Sooner is better than later, and later is better than not at all.
- Make anticipated changes to your dog's routine as early as possible (at least several months before the baby arrives) so you have plenty of time to practice the new behaviors, and so she doesn't associate the changes with the baby.



Smart parents: If you plan to walk the dog and baby together, start practicing walks with the stroller (or baby carrier) before the baby arrives, so all is smooth when you actually have the baby on board.

groundwork for a canine/human blended family when Junior is just a gleam in the future parents' eyes. They're not pregnant yet – in fact, they aren't planning to add to their family any time soon – but they know they want kids someday. They don't even have the *dog* yet! But as they research their canine adoption options, forefront in their minds is the fact that they want a dog who will be good with kids when they do eventually add that human puppy to the family.

Couples who want to have children within the next 16 to 18 years might be



In a candidate for a family dog, look for “affiliative behavior” – in which the dog seeks out the company of kids.

wise to avoid adopting dogs of any of the tiny toy breed dogs such as Chihuahuas, Yorkshire Terriers, and Pomeranians. I’m sure there are toy breed dogs who do just fine with young children in their homes. But keep in mind that most of these dogs are tiny, fragile, and sensitive – not ideal companions for humans who will be uncoordinated for a number of years!

Wise prospective parents might *also* want to pass on adopting one of the larger, high-energy breeds such as Weimaraners, Boxers, and Dalmations, unless they’re prepared to make a serious commitment to teaching the dog scrupulous good manners and impulse control long before Junior is born. They must also continue with the dog’s mental and physical exercise programs as the baby arrives and matures.

While the individual dog’s personality is more important than the general breed standard, there are certain breed characteristics that make some dogs more likely to be good candidates for the job of providing companionship to kids. These include a high tolerance for pain and discomfort; a resistance to becoming easily aroused; a resis-



PHOTO BY RONALD LEMISE

A prospective family dog should light up when she sees babies or children, not just tolerate them. And if she shows signs of discomfort (such as looking away or moving away from children), move on to another prospect.

tance to being highly reinforced by chasing children who are running (or moving on bikes or skates, as just a few examples); and a predisposition to being quiet (as opposed to excessively vocal).

Some of the large-to-giant breeds (such as Bernese Mountain Dogs, Great Pyrenees, and Irish Wolfhounds) tend to be relatively low-energy and, *when properly socialized to children*, can be excellent

choices, as can some of the scent hounds – such as Beagles and Bassets, who are often quite tolerant of typical kid behavior. Higher energy dogs who can also do well with children *when properly socialized and exercised* include Golden and Labrador Retrievers, Australian and English Shepherds, and Rough Collies.

Having said that, it *is* more important to evaluate the individual dog than relying on breed standards and anecdotes. And don’t forget the legions of mixed-breed dogs who might be great kid-dog candidates!

If you’re considering adopting an adult dog, bring a friend with a baby and some small children to the interview. The dog’s face should light up with delight when he sees the little humans, and make it clear with every bit of dog body language he can offer that he thinks playing with kids is the best thing in the world – better than a raw meaty bone or the world’s best toy.

If a dog displays anything less than full enthusiasm for kids, you’re asking for trouble. You need your dog to think kids walk on water in order for him to forgive the inevitable kid stuff that will happen even with the best children and the most careful management and supervision. It’s difficult to convert an adult dog with a lukewarm re-



Think you can create a child-friendly dog by getting a puppy – any puppy – and “raising them together”? Some pups don’t like kids! Interview any pup (or dog) with kids present. This pair does not look like a good match; they are both trying to avoid each other.

sponse to kids into a dog who completely adores children.

If you plan to adopt a puppy, make sure he is already very well-socialized – confident and with good bite inhibition. Don't bring home a Scaredy Sam or Sharkey Shamus bleeding-heart rescue case! If you can meet the pup's parents, all the better; some degree of personality is heritable, and pups will model behavior responses from their mothers even at an early age. The odds of a pup growing up to love kids increase exponentially if she sees her mom being happy and relaxed with kids, and she herself has good experiences with kids at an early age. The odds are as good as they can be if you continue with that all-important socialization program.

■ **Get to work now if you have a dog and plan to have children.**

If a dog didn't grow up with kids, and his humans haven't gone out of their way to socialize him well with children, he's likely to be (at best) mildly uncomfortable with kids, and at worst find them highly aversive. If your dog shows signs of discomfort around small humans, you'll need to help him learn to be safe with children – and commit to super-good management and supervision when you bring your baby home.

An impeccably socialized puppy would be exposed to positive experiences with babies and children when he's just 4 to 14 weeks old. This time period is considered a pup's prime socialization time, and the *most* critical period for a pup to have happy encounters with kids. But for *maximum* baby-dog insurance, it's important to continue to strengthen and maintain the positive association that is created during that time throughout the dog's life.

There are numerous ways to give your kid-friendly dog ongoing positive exposure to kids even before you have children of your own. One good way is to take him to dog-friendly parks and malls and carefully supervise his interactions with kids to be sure he continues to offer relaxed body language signals as he meets and greets (and receives treats from) all the kids who want to pet him. If he looks askance at a stroller or toddler going by, feed him high-value treats to convince him that baby strollers and toddlers make good stuff happen.



If you already have a dog, and plan to have kids (or grandkids!) at some point, take every opportunity you can to positively socialize the dog with kids. Parks are great for this.

Take advantage of visits by baby-toting friends; seize every real-life opportunity to give your dog good associations with babies and baby-related activities.

You could also get involved with a pet-assisted therapy group and volunteer to visit children who are hospitalized or institutionalized. Volunteer for one of the new library reading programs, where kids read books to dogs to improve their reading skills and confidence with a non-judgmental canine audience. Contact schools in your area to see if you can do programs to teach kids how to greet dogs safely.

■ **Put your action plan into overdrive once you are pregnant.**

If your baby is years away, you've got lots of time to play casual "baby-equals-good-stuff" games with your dog. If your baby is due sooner rather than later, you'd best get on it, triple-time!

All is not lost if you're already seven months pregnant and it just struck you that you haven't given much thought to the dog-kid issue. At least you haven't waited

until *after* the baby is born! You *will* need to scramble to get as much positive baby-and-kid-experience in your dog's world as possible before the blessed event.

You can give your dog good-baby associations in your own home before your wee one arrives by playing recordings of baby sounds (baby crying equals treats!), and role-playing with a lifelike doll for activities like diaper changing, feeding, and bathing (baby activities make stuffed Kongs happen!).

Think about what sort of baby-related activities will involve or affect your dog, and prepare him to succeed in his role during that activity. For example, if you plan to walk your dog while pushing a stroller with the baby in it, practice walking your dog on-leash with a baby-doll in a stroller, so you can perfect the technique before there's a live body in it. If you want your dog to leave the room while you change the baby's diaper, teach your dog a cue such as "Out, please!" and richly reward him for a prompt exit and staying outside the room. The goal is to have these be well-installed, well-reinforced behaviors long before the baby comes.

Make certain, too, that you initiate any post-baby lifestyle changes that you anticipate for your dog before the baby arrives. For example, if your dog is accustomed to sharing the sofa with you pre-baby and you'd like him to stay on the floor post-baby, teach him *now*. Get him a cushy bed, practice "go to your place," and convince him that lying on the bed makes wonderful stuff happen, while you also teach him that "on the sofa" is no longer an appropriate behavior.

If you do this well before the baby comes, he won't associate the baby's arrival with his loss of privileges. The same holds true for other perks that might change. If he's going to lose access to the room that will be the baby's nursery, put up a baby gate in the doorway, and give the dog good stuff on a special mat in the hallway. If he is accustomed to sleeping on your bed at night, find another wonderful alternative, but keep him reasonably close, such as a well-padded, large crate by your side of the bed, or a dog bed just outside the bedroom door.

Practice other baby-safe behaviors as well. Teach your dog to wait at the top of



Teach your dog “Go to your bed.” Make sure that this behavior is enjoyable (setting him up for success), with a cushy bed and a food-stuffed Kong. Prevent him from “failing” to stay put with a tether or crate.



Anticipate challenges of moving about your home with a baby, and prepare your dog to help you. For example, teach him to go up or down the stairs before you, or wait politely until you are done and you give him the cue to follow.

the stairs until you reach the bottom and invite him down, so he doesn't bowl you over as you carry the baby downstairs in your arms. Or, alternatively, teach him to go down first and wait for you at the bottom. Know that many dogs are attracted to the scent of soiled diapers: teach your dog a rock-solid positive “leave it,” use it anytime you see him interested in your baby's bottom, and don't let soiled diapers sit around where he can get to them – on or off the baby!

■ Plan and orchestrate the baby's homecoming with the dog in mind.

I understand that the day you bring a baby home is a big deal, and that the family dog might not be foremost on your mind. Consider this, however: The baby's “homecoming” can be a make-or-break moment for your dog's future relationship with Junior. There is liable to be lots of disruption in the schedule the dog has come to expect, he hasn't seen Mom for several days, there may be in-laws or other guests in the house, and excitement is running high. This is a recipe for stress – and stress-related “problem behavior,” the worst of which could be aggression.

Set your dog up for success by taking precautionary steps to maximize a positive first interaction. This is a job for Dad (and/or another family member):

- ◆ While Mom and the newborn are still at the hospital, bring home a blanket with the baby's scent on it and let your dog sniff it. Don't allow or encourage him to mouth or paw at it! After he's had his fill of baby

scent, cheerfully cue him to go to his place, and feed him treats there. Sometimes tether him with a stuffed Kong to reinforce staying at his place for longer periods of time. Then seal the blanket in a plastic bag so it holds the baby scent, and practice this exercise several times throughout the day. Each time you visit the hospital, bring home a newly scented blanket and repeat the game.

- ◆ The morning of homecoming, exercise your dog well – preferably for a long, off-leash hike (perhaps with your dog's regular dog-walker, if you use one). If that's not possible, tire him out with a tongue-dragging session of fetch, or even a heavy-duty, brain-draining shaping session. (See “The Shape of Things to Come,” WDJ March 2006.) The more canine energy you can get him to expend, the less energy he'll have to be excited about Mom and the new baby walking in the door.

- ◆ When the baby arrives home, Dad holds Junior on the front porch while Mom goes in to greet the dog who hasn't seen her in several days. With that happy reunion over, Mom goes back out and collects the baby. Dad re-enters the house followed by Mom and Junior. Dad invites the dog to gently sniff the well-blanketed baby for several seconds, then gives the cheerful “Go to your place!” followed by treats and a stuffed Kong. Tether your dog if it's necessary to keep him at his place while Mom catches her breath. Happy homecoming!

Whatever you do, do **NOT** exile the

dog to the backyard when baby arrives. Sometimes pressure from dog-phobic relatives induces new parents to banish the family dog to a fenced backyard, or worse, a chain. *Don't do it.* Imagine how stressful it will be for him to be on the outside looking into the home where, until the baby arrived, he once shared his life with you. Bored, lonely, anxious, left out, and seemingly being punished – that's no life for a dog who knows what it's like to be a member of a family.

If you truly think your dog isn't safe with your new baby, explore other options for him where he can continue to be a well-loved, full-fledged family member. If you think he has manageable and modifiable behavior challenges, make a firm commitment to manage and modify them. Don't evict your best friend from his house, home, and family, and condemn your dog to a life of loneliness.

Also, do **NOT** punish the dog for being interested in the baby. You want your dog to *love* your baby. If he associates baby with punishment, he's likely to have a less-than-positive association with the strange creature who has invaded his home.

Your dog's gentle interest is fine; intense, aroused interest is not. But rather than punishing the dog if you see arousal, ask for (and richly reinforce) calm, incompatible behaviors (sit-stay; down-stay; go to your place) and reward him for those.

■ Do not give the dog unsupervised access to the baby. Ever.

This seems so obvious that I'm embarrassed to even mention it – but the fact is,

Toddlers and Grade-School Children Are at Greater Risk Than Infants

Mother, Certified Professional Dog Trainer (CPDT), and author of the excellent book *Living with Dogs and Kids Without Losing Your Mind*, Colleen Pelar reminds us that while a lot of attention is paid to helping the family dog accept the newborn baby, the greater risk and management challenges arise when the baby starts to crawl, toddle, walk, and run.

As an example, in 2007, there were 18 dog-related fatalities in which the victims were under the age of 12. Of these 18 victims, 13 (72 percent) were 2 to 11 years old.

In her upcoming book, *Kids and Dogs: A Professional's Guide to Helping Families*, Pelar offers invaluable guidance for “dog aficionados” – people, professional or otherwise, who work with dogs other than their own, and who “play a vitally important role in making sure that kid and dog interactions are not only safe, but a positive part of a child’s development.”

Pelar notes that “Dog training books say, ‘Control your kids,’ and they expect you to control them to a level that seems pretty unrealistic to anyone who has ever been around a two-year-old for more than 20 minutes.” On the other hand, she says, “Parenting books imply that dogs are dangerous, unpredictable, and scary. They contain more fear-mongering than actual guidance.”

With years of experience parenting her own children while raising and training dogs, Pelar bridges the gap between the two in a book that will guide parents and dog owners equally as they strive to help dogs and children live in harmony.

By the way, if you’re thinking of taking your dog to schools and libraries to do kid programs, be sure to check out the fantastic script she offers for this at the back of the book.

Pelar’s new book is scheduled for release in October 2009. For information on ordering, call Dream Dog Productions at (703) 980-0908 or see dreamdog-productions.com.



Do you have a very kid-friendly, tolerant dog? Congratulations! But don't relax your vigilance, because part of your job is to keep your dog safe from your child! Small children are prone to doing unexpected things, such as poking, grabbing, hitting, screaming at, and falling on a dog.

a dog can badly injure or even kill a baby within just a few unsupervised minutes. Parents talk about how difficult it is to manage and supervise dogs and babies, but after a tragic event they have to realize that they could have done *something* differently. The guilt must be intolerable.

Use closed doors (use a baby monitor!), appropriately sized and securely installed baby gates, chew-proof tethers, and comfortable crates to limit your dog’s access to your baby. And use one *every time* you need to step in the other room for a moment to grab a bottle or a moment’s peace in the bathroom. Can you skip this step if the baby and dog are both sound asleep, and you need to step into another room for just a minute? After reading a few accounts of infant fatalities caused by family dogs, I wouldn’t.

■ Do not give the baby free access to the dog!

A video clip that aired on the Bonnie Hunt Show made the cyber-rounds recently, featuring an infant crawling up to a Boxer, who was lying on her side. The baby reaches out one tiny hand and touches the Boxer’s hind foot. The dog slowly raises her head to watch the baby, reaches out one paw to touch the baby’s hand, and while the baby laughs at this, the dog yawns, and licks her lips.

The camera cuts back to Bonnie Hunt, who is ooh-ing and ah-ing along with her audience over the sweetness of that image. Meanwhile I was holding my breath and praying that someone clues the parents into the fact that the dog’s behavior toward the baby is not sweet and affiliative, but rather an attempt to stop the baby’s advance, and a disturbing display of stress signals. If a future bite happens, someone will be bound to say, “Gee, she was always good with kids!” Her owners (and the Bonnie Hunt Show’s producers) failed to recognize the subtle (if you don’t know dog body language) signs that the baby was making her uncomfortable.

It’s your job to keep *both* dog and baby safe. It’s unfair to both of them to allow your baby to make your dog uncomfortable. If you see your baby approach your dog and the dog’s not soft, relaxed, and inviting, stop the baby before the dog has to. In addition, teach your dog how to escape from the baby, and be sure he always has at least two escape routes, in case the baby, a laundry basket, or a big baby toy is blocking one. Even if your dog adores

babies, he shouldn't have to tolerate baby grabbing hunks of dog fur, or baby fingers poking into canine eyes.

Difficult decision

Management is important, but don't rely on it *alone* to keep your family safe; sooner or later someone forgets to close a door, latch a baby gate, or attach a leash – and something bad happens. As you weigh the risks of keeping a not-so-child-friendly dog in your home while you raise your kids, remember that management gets more difficult as they start toddling, then walking, and are able to open doors and latches. Even if your dog is reasonably good with your children, when they start inviting their friends over to play there's greater risk, and greater chance for management failure.

Sadly, some dogs never will be safe with children despite their owners' best efforts (and wishing that the owner had not

adopted that dog, or would delay having children until the dog passed away won't solve the problem!). If, despite lots of training and counter-conditioning, the dog still shows signs of deep discomfort around babies and children, it's not unreasonable to rehome the dog rather than subject the entire family to the stress of knowing a potential tragedy may lie around the corner.

I understand that when you have human children they are, and should be, your first priority. I'm profoundly glad I'll never have to be in the position where it's necessary to choose between my child and my dog. If you aren't able or willing to help your dog love your child, or at least reasonably tolerate – combined with lots of management – then you really have no choice but to choose to protect your child.

If you decide you must rehome your dog because the risks in your home with children are too great, know that you are

protecting your dog as well as your child. Dogs who bite children tend to have short lives. If you wait to try to rehome your dog *after* a bite has occurred, your options for rehoming diminish greatly; most rescue groups and shelters won't accept dogs who have a history of biting – or they may accept and euthanize such dogs. Rehoming *before* a bite happens is a wise, albeit painful, decision.

If you make wise decisions from the start, however, chances are excellent that your dog can spend the rest of his life with you, and Junior, and all of Junior's brothers, sisters, and friends to come. 🐾

Pat Miller, CPDT, is WDJ's Training Editor and author of many books on positive dog training. Miller lives in Hagerstown, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. See page 24 for book purchase and contact information.

The Stakes Are High; Dogs Can Kill. Always Supervise.

I can't help my morbid interest in news reports about dog-related fatalities. For the past few years I've kept files of the tragic stories, noting the sad details and looking for trends that might help me help my clients and readers understand and avoid similar horrific events. This year so far there have been 20 dog-related deaths in the U.S.

This is a drop in the bucket, really, compared to death by smoking (about 414,000 per year), death by auto (42,000 per year), even death in swimming pools (1,000 per year). You're more likely to be killed by lightning (66 per year) than by a dog (average over past nine years, 24 per year). But because dogs are a man's (and woman's and child's) best friend, it seems especially shocking – and a betrayal of trust – when a dog-related death occurs, especially when the victim is a child.

For dog behavior professionals, though, many of the fatalities appear predictable and avoidable. Look at these, and see if you don't spot the dangers I've warned you about. [Editor's caution: *These reports are graphic.*]

- January 19, 2009 – Bourbonnais, Illinois: Alerted by her three-week-old daughter's screams, a mother stepped out of the kitchen into a hallway, where she saw her infant in the jaws of the family's Siberian Husky. She had left the infant sleeping on a bed in the master bedroom; the dog had apparently entered the bedroom and pulled the baby off the bed, dragging her into the hallway. (*Securely close the door between your baby and the dog, or use a tether or crate to prevent your dog from being able to reach an unsupervised baby.*)

- March 4, 2009 – Mesa, Arizona: Responding officers found a two-week-old infant in the living room with bite wounds from the family's Chow on her head; the baby girl was pronounced dead at the scene. Police say the mother had placed her daughter

in a low-lying bassinet and left the room to use the bathroom, discovering the attack when she returned a few moments later. (*Don't leave a baby unsupervised in any place that your dog can reach her, even for a minute.*)

- March 22, 2009 – Wayne County, Georgia: A three-year-old boy was mauled to death by a neighbor's Husky, who had played with the little boy on other occasions. The dog had been chained, and broke free from her chain to attack the boy, who was playing with a five-year-old girl. The dog was shot by its owner, who attempted to rescue the child. (*Small children should not be unsupervised anywhere near a dog. Chained dogs are especially dangerous to children. Not only do chains fail to prevent children from getting close to the dog, they also create and increase frustration and aggression in the dogs they confine. And a highly aroused dog can break a chain.*)

- March 31, 2009 – San Antonio, Texas: A seven-month-old boy died after being attacked by two pit bull-mix dogs belonging to his grandmother. Police say the boy was on his grandmother's bed in her room, while she prepared his bottle in the kitchen. She found the dogs attacking the baby when she returned to the bedroom with the bottle. A baby gate was present in the bedroom door, but had been knocked down by the two dogs. Stabbing the dogs with a knife, the grandmother managed to grab her grandson and put him in his crib, but then the dogs turned on her. Police had to shoot the dogs before paramedics could reach the victims. (*Make sure that the measures you use to confine your dog/s are up to the task. Baby gates are useful for light-duty applications, but are no match for tall, strong, or highly motivated dogs, and should not be used as a primary barrier between an unsupervised baby and an athletic dog.*)

Your Dog Nose No Bounds

“Fun Nose Work” is a new sport that any dog can enjoy!

BY TERRY LONG

Fun nose work, or K9 nose work, is a new sport that tests a dog’s ability to use his powerful sense of smell to locate a specific odor against the backdrop of many others. Although handlers take their dogs to group training classes to learn the game, only one dog is worked at a time. As a result, this is an ideal sport for dogs who are shy or reactive around people or dogs. It is also ideal for people looking for a sport that is less physically demanding on their dogs and isn’t populated by over-the-top, high-arousal dogs (and handlers).

At the beginning levels of training, dogs are encouraged to “find” their toy in a box. Lavish praise, the toy, and treats reward the dog for his efforts. Later, the toy is hidden in a box among other empty boxes, and the dog is rewarded for finding the box that conceals his toy.

Once the dog gets hooked on the game of “find it,” an essential oil such as birch, anise, or clove is used. A minuscule amount of one of these essential oils is placed on a very small cotton swab. The dog is rewarded for sniffing the container to indicate his find. This essential oil is then placed in more and more difficult locations for the dog to find.

As the dogs learn to play the game, handlers learn how to closely observe their dogs so they know when their dog has found the scent. This “indication” behavior is an important part of the training process since handlers will use their individual dog’s behavior to start rewarding their dog for “indicating” their find. Amy Herot explains why this is important.

“We want the dogs to first learn to enjoy hunting without much handler intervention. Many handlers want to teach their dogs a particular way of ‘indicating’ a successful search – such as barking or a sit – very early in the game. We prefer to take ‘control’ out of the game in the early stages. This frees the dog to just play the game. Later, the handler, from keen



Few pet dogs have opportunities to use their noses for a tenth of what dog noses were designed to do. Having a regular opportunity for using their sense of smell is highly reinforcing – and seems to tire and satisfy many dogs.

observation, can shape the dog to offer a particular behavior that demonstrates he has found the scent. As a trainer, this is one of the most satisfying things about teaching nose work: People learn to pay very close attention to their dogs; they become masters of observation.”

The difficulty of the game increases as the scents are hidden out in the real world in bushes and stairwells and, in vehicle searches, the wheel wells of parked cars and trucks.

There are several levels of competition that are described on the National Association of Canine Scent Work’s website (see “Snapshot of the Sport,” next page).

History of nose work

The sport of canine scent work is the brainchild of three trainers with experience in training detection dogs for narcotics and explosives. Ron Gaunt was a police dog trainer for 12 years and now runs a private security firm. Amy Herot is a professional

trainer and certified detection dog handler and trainer, and Jill-Marie O’Brien is the director of training and behavior for the SPCALA and is also a certified detection dog handler.

Their collective experience training their own dogs, as well as professional detection dogs, convinced them that companion dogs would benefit from the mental and physical stimulation provided by using their natural sense of smell in a very directed way. (See “The Birth of a Smelly Sport,” page 18.)

The initial classes quickly filled. Soon, there were long waiting lists, even though additional instructors became certified and other locations added. Co-founder Amy Herot admits that keeping up with demand has been difficult. “One of the biggest challenges for expansion is ensuring the quality of instruction and preventing the dilution of the basic concepts. It’s most important to us that the sport is always fun for the dog (and the human). That said,

we are indeed expanding. We have several certified instructors in Southern California, three new instructors in the San Francisco area, one soon to be in New England, one in Denver, and another in Albuquerque. We also look forward to the opportunity of doing workshops to help bring the sport to more locations. Our hope is that more and more dog enthusiasts will become involved and realize the value to their dogs and the relationships they have with their canine companions.”

For more information about how to host a seminar or how to become a certified instructor, send an inquiry to info@k9nosework.com.

Attributes of a nose work dog

The most attractive thing about this sport is the broad array of dogs that can do it. In essence, if your dog has a nose, he can play this game! Although certified search and rescue and detection dogs have a very demanding job, fun nose work does not place the same physical demands on the dog or handler. Amy Herot describes the difference between fun nose work for companion dogs and police detection work:

“Fun nose work incorporates elements borrowed from skills that we work on with detection dogs without it being detection



In this exercise, a mixed-breed dog smells his way past a number of cardboard boxes, one of which contains a tiny swab of the scent he is seeking.

dog training. Although nose work shares similarities with detection, there is much more that goes into a detection dog.

“Smelling is the easiest thing. The mental and physical ability, stamina, and stability for dogs to endure long and difficult searches are a big part of detection work. The dogs must be highly driven, uninhibited, and focused on their work all the

time. The training is technical, requiring dedication, documentation, and certifications. It also presents the handler and/or owner with great liability and pressure.

“Many companion dogs and even sport dogs share the basic sniffing skills of a working dog, but aren’t really suited to live that life. Nose work allows an owner to tap into those skills without pressure and to provide a great outlet for the dog’s natural abilities.

“In our classes, we have Pugs, Whippets, Shepherds, Labs, Shih Tzus, Huskies, Dobermans, Chihuahuas, Beagles, and Jack Russell Terriers, some of which are top nose work competitors. Certainly, the traditional dogs come to mind: German Shepherd Dogs, Bloodhounds, and Labradors. The skills do come naturally to most of them. Other breeds, however, just need the opportunity.”

Handler attributes

This sport requires a human team member who enjoys the simple pleasures of seeing her dog have a good time, without all the equipment and more complex training that is required in many of the other dog sports. The most strenuous part of the sport is running behind or along with your dog as he is working a scent.

Snapshot of the Sport: Nose Work

- **What is this sport?** In nose work, dogs indicate the location of a “target” scent by using their natural sense of smell.
- **Prior training required?** None.
- **Physical demands?** On the dog: Mild to moderate. On the handler: Mild to moderate.
- **Best-suited structure?** No specific structural demands in this sport.
- **Best-suited temperament?** Confident, high-energy, but the sport is also well suited to timid dogs.
- **Cost?** Low.
- **Training complexity?** Low.
- **Mental stimulation?** High.
- **Physical stimulation value?** Moderate.
- **Recreational opportunities?** High; this sport can be played in your backyard.

- **Competition opportunities and venues?** This is a brand-new sport, primarily available in California, but reaching into other states as instructors become certified.

■ For further information, see the following:

Fun Nose Work. Information about training. k9nosework.com

National Association of Canine Scent Work. Information about competition. nacswnet

Amy Herot, All Good Dogs, Los Angeles, CA
(323) 445-5007; allgooddogs.biz

Ron Gaunt, Travel’n Mandogs, Covina, CA
(323) 974-8910; travelmandogs.com

Ramona Audette, California Academy of Dog Behavior, Pico Rivera, CA
(562) 659-1803; cadogbehavior.com

Jill-Marie O’Brien, Van Nuys, CA
(818) 235-4727; jillmarie@k9noseworks.com

The Birth of a Smelly Sport

K9 nose work is arguably the newest dog sport to be added to the seemingly endless list of sports created by people who thought, “Hey, my dog loves doing this; I bet other dogs would, too.”

This is exactly what inspired Amy Herot, CPDT, to team up with two of her training partners, Ron Gaunt and Jill-Marie O’Brien, to create fun nose work classes and, later, the sport of canine scent work. The three trainers were convinced that nose work was one of the best ways to mentally and physically stimulate dogs, many of whom have behavior problems because of lack of stimulation.

It started several years ago when Amy became interested in training her own dogs in professional detection work. After a lot of long hours and hard work, Amy’s first dog became certified nationally as a narcotics detection dog. She was hooked. She went on to train and certify several other dogs in both narcotics and explosives detection. She learned a lot from professional detection trainers Ron Gaunt of Travel’n Mandogs (Covina, California), Rodney Spicer of Gold Coast K9 (Oxnard, California), and Andy Jimenez of Falco K9 (Brea, California).

Amy, Ron, and Jill-Marie O’Brien (the director of training



It’s riveting to watch a talented dog conduct a search of a truck or car. Experienced handlers often find themselves breaking into applause when the dog finds the scent.

and behavior at the SPCALA) started teaching classes in Long Beach, California, trying out the concept of teaching nose work to companion dogs. It took off with a bang. Developing exacting standards for competition came as a natural evolution of teaching those classes.

Amy remembers the early days in 2007:

“The sport idea came later. In the early classes, dogs had been searching for objects (toys, Kongs, food, etc.). We had been playing with the idea of teaching dogs a particular scent in order to advance those classes by making the ‘hides’ smaller and, therefore, more challenging. (It gets difficult to find places to hide a large, stuffed mallard duck without dog and handler seeing it.) We considered some sort of oil, like anise, as that has been used for evaluating detection dogs’ ability to work a novel scent, but we hadn’t settled on anything yet.

“About that same time, I had the opportunity to experiment



Certified Nose Work Instructor Ramona Audette says that even though her Labrador, Anton, is usually apprehensive around people, during nose work he’s so focused that he doesn’t notice the judges and other observers.

with the concept while in Seattle during a John Rogerson Instructor’s course. He had invited me to teach the scent discrimination portion of the course and wanted to introduce the concepts of training a dog on odor. All of the dogs in the course were just out of the local shelter and during their three-week stay were exposed to a crash course in tracking, agility, obedience, and nose work. Handlers not only had to get the dogs interested in searching, but also had to train them on an odor and pass an odor-recognition test. John likes to challenge people to be creative in their training and to accomplish a lot in a short time.

“What I witnessed in that course – because of the speed and intensity of training – was a spirited, competitive edge to the nose work that confirmed our thoughts about where we could go with the training in our classes. It proved a good testing ground for using odors with companion dogs and for leveling the playing field in terms of what the dogs were searching for. You can’t really have a competition if one person is hiding a treat bag of hot dogs and the other is hiding a stuffed pink bunny rabbit, but a cotton swab with a dab of oil eliminates that problem.

“When I returned to Los Angeles, Ron, Jill-Marie, and I talked about constructing a class to introduce the dogs to odor, which opened up the possibilities for competition and much more advanced handling and skill-building for the teams. Those next set of classes helped build the elements we now use in competition for the nose work titles. As handlers got more involved and interested in nose work, we had to keep adding challenges, like exterior area searches and vehicle searches.

“The original purpose of the class, whether dogs are hunting for food or odor, was to have fun. Watching dogs hunt – and watching the light bulb go on for them that they are allowed to hunt – is a beautiful and inspiring experience. I know this to be true every time I witness a dog searching in class. You can hear a pin drop because the observers are watching and listening so intently . . . often followed by rousing applause when the dog finds it.”

Equipment and supplies

Very little is needed to teach your dog to participate in nose work.

■ **Rewards** – Both toys and treats can be used. In the initial stages of training, dogs are encouraged to find a favorite toy or treat bag.

■ **Target odors** – Small bottles of the target odors (essential oils), small cotton swabs, and containers into which the scented swabs are placed are all that is required. These materials can be purchased online from a variety of sources. There is a link at the fun nose work website. Individual supplies are available, as well as a full kit with everything to get started.

Expenses

This is a very inexpensive sport. The costs mentioned below are for participation in a nose work class.

■ **Essential oils** – All materials are provided in the introductory classes. A student who chooses to continue training might want to purchase his/her own materials. A full kit with three essential oils and cotton swabs is \$35.

■ **Classes** – A package of six classes runs \$95 to \$150 depending on the location.

■ **Entry fees** – If you choose to compete, trial fees are only about \$30 plus a nominal one-time NACSW membership registration starting in 2010.



PHOTO BY SCOTT PETERSON

Dogs of any breed can enjoy and succeed at this sport; they needn't be a hunting breed, purebred, or a certain size. If the dog has a nose, he'll like nose work.

Training

Introductory classes focus on building enthusiasm in dogs for finding their toy or treat bag, hidden in an obvious place such as a cardboard box. A lot of praise and generous rewards are used to encourage the dog to continue to use his nose to find the treasure. Continuing classes leverage the dog's understanding of using his nose to find "target" scents such as anise, birch, and clove. At the beginning, the target scents are in easy-to-find locations;

as skills develop, they are hidden in more difficult locations.

People whose dogs are fearful or reactive around other dogs find that fun nose work classes are a rare opportunity to take their dogs to a class. That's because one dog is worked at a time, which allows each dog to concentrate on the task at hand instead of other often overwhelming environmental factors. Ramona Audette, a professional trainer in Southern California, was so thrilled with her own dog's expe-

Overcoming Anxieties

Janice Delaney brought home Mattie, a female Australian Shepherd/Cattle Dog-mix, when Mattie was about six months old. Mattie loves people – perhaps too much! She couldn't seem to bear being without her owner, and began tearing up Janice's home any time she was left alone. In an attempt to stop Mattie's destructiveness, identified by her trainer as separation anxiety, Janice enrolled her in obedience and agility classes. It wasn't until Janice enrolled then 13-month-old Mattie in fun nose work classes that her behavior at home improved.

"Nose work was a great overall experience," Janice recalled. "Mattie loved it and just came into herself. The training was very well done, from beginning basic box drills to being able to compete in trials. Amy Herot and her colleagues were wonderful at understanding Mattie's [separation anxiety] issues and allowed her to be in the building where she could watch me

but not distract the other dogs from searching. The best part of it all is that Mattie no longer suffers from separation anxiety and has a whole new level of confidence."

Janice went on to advanced levels of training and entered Mattie in trials starting in 2008. Mattie won her NW1 title on June 7, 2009, and will compete for NW2 in August.

Of special pride to Janice is that Mattie is a recipient of the Harry Award, which was established in 2008 in honor of Harry and his relationship with handler Penny Scott-Fox. Harry was entered in the inaugural nose work trial, but died from a rattlesnake bite just days before the trial. The Harry Award is awarded to "the most outstanding rescue dog that demonstrates extraordinary ability and spirit in nose work," emphasizing the relationship with the handler and the teamwork.



rience in fun nose work classes that she went on to become a certified nose work instructor (CNWI).

“I did not realize the impact fun nose work would have on my dog. I was hesitant to enroll him in the class because of his fear issues. Because there would be no other dogs around him and he didn’t have to engage with anyone but me, I thought, ‘This might work!’ There is such a difference in him today after his involvement with the fun nose work class. His confidence has soared. He loves doing it.

“I have since become a Certified Nose Work Instructor and have been able to see the same results with other dogs. I have seen a Corgi and an English Bulldog go from not wanting to leave their owner’s side and be afraid of a box used in the introductory class, to leaving their owners to go put their head in a box to make ‘their find.’”

Levels of competition

Currently, dogs as young as six months can compete, and there are three levels of competition.

■ **NW1** – Dogs earn points for each search for the target scent of birch in each of four locations with maximum time limits assigned to each location:

1. Several cardboard boxes in a row (on-leash).
2. A room in the interior of a building (on- or off-leash).
3. A 1,000-sq. ft. exterior area (on-leash).
4. In up to three vehicles (on-leash).

There are a total of 100 points possible; 90 points are required for an NW1 title.

■ **NW2** – At this level, dogs must show proficiency with searching for either birch or anise, distractions are added, and the locations become larger and more complex. There are a total of 100 points possible; 95 points are required for an NW2 title.

■ **NW3** – At this level, dogs must show proficiency with searching for birch, anise, and/or clove.

There are multiple distractions at this level, and one of the rooms in the building can be without scent (a decoy so to speak), and the locations become larger and more

Sniffing Out Confidence

Jesse, a Rhodesian Ridgeback-mix, was four years old when Lezle Stein enrolled him in a nose work class in 2007. Stein is a professional dog trainer and also spends countless hours volunteering with rescue organizations, working with dogs to help them overcome fearfulness. Jesse was afraid of men, children, and new places. He also suffered from separation anxiety, scaling six-foot fences and breaking through windows when suffering from a bout of the anxiety disorder. Stein hoped to build his confidence by enrolling him in the nose work class.

“I spend a lot of time in the rescue world working with emotionally damaged dogs. Amy Herot explained that nose work can be an excellent ‘rehab’ for nervous or fearful dogs. They develop confidence, overriding their fears by going back to what comes naturally for them – using their noses! And we make sure they always succeed.”

When Stein first enrolled him, Jesse was too terrified to do anything except cling to her side. Especially terrified of men, Jesse would panic if Ron Gaunt, one of the trainers, came within 10 feet.

“I really would never have guessed how much nose work could improve Jesse’s life. When he first started, he had zero confidence outside of my house. His strategy was a panicked avoidance and running away so nobody could approach him. He would never bite; he would just shake and pull to get away.”

Stein says the training and positive experiences have completely changed Jesse into a more comfortable dog. “He is a different dog today. He visits with all the class members and is willing and wanting to leave my side to find the scent.

“Amy was so careful and caring to help Jesse and me succeed. The process is slow and methodical in building confidence, but always fun and always with a win at the end. He understands the game and enjoys it now. His separation anxiety has also gone away. And he can say ‘hello’ to men now as well.

“It is a joy beyond words to see any dog, of any breed, awaken their nose and use it to the degree they can. It’s mind-blowing how incredible their ability to smell is, and I still think we have a lot more to learn about that. As a rescue person, I will continue to rehab dogs using their noses.”

And the icing on the cake? Jesse went on to compete as part of a team on two separate occasions. One team took home a first-place blue ribbon and another team took third place.



Jesse and owner Lezle Stein.

complex. The vehicle search includes five vehicles. There are a total of 100 points possible; 100 points are required for an NW3 title.

For detailed information, download the rule book from the NACSW website.

How to get started

This sport is so new it is only in limited states thus far. These include California, Colorado, Massachusetts, New Mexico, and Washington. If you are interested in this sport, e-mail info@k9nosework.com or call (323) 656-1200 and inquire about sponsoring a seminar.

Is this sport for you?

This is a sport for just about everyone. It is easy on the handler, easy on the dog, inexpensive, and doesn’t require a lot of equipment. You’re hooked as soon as you see your dog’s face when he realizes that he will be rewarded for using his nose.

As usual, have fun, train positively, and revel in the relationship with your dog, not the ribbons on the wall. 🐾

Terry Long, CPDT, is a writer, agility instructor, and behavior counselor in Long Beach, California. See “Resources,” page 24, for contact information.

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Progress Report

After a year of positive training, Otto is a delight to live with.

BY NANCY KERNS

I can't believe it's been a more than a year already since I brought Otto home from a shelter. The date was June 13, 2008. There were actually two dogs I was considering at the shelter, and I thought I might bring the other one home for a night, too; I wanted to make sure I had absolutely the right dog for me and my family. But Otto was "the one." He's developing into everything I could want in a dog – no small part, I think, due to all the positive training work we've put into him over this past year. I can confidently testify, "Folks, this stuff really works!"

A year of progress

I haven't managed to do half of all the things I planned to do with Otto in his first year with us – and yet, he's doing incredibly well. Our major accomplishments?

■ **He hasn't chewed anything he wasn't supposed to chew for months and months.** Okay, he's about 20 months

old now; he's not teething like he was. But he's also had a steady supply of appropriate chew toys – and ones that he showed he liked. There is no use in buying a bunch of toys for your dog if you don't pay close attention to what the dog does and does not like! With the exception of one rubber "stick," Otto doesn't like chewing on rubber toys or Kongs (except for the Kong with a squeaker in it; he loves anything with a squeaker). Same with plastic chews. He likes stuffed animals with squeakers, actual wooden sticks (and pieces of scrap lumber), rawhide chews, and fresh raw meaty bones. That's about it.

I've found that it's important to rotate his chew toys, picking all of them off the lawn and deck at least once a week, and doling out a fresh one or two a day. If they are all laying around all the time, he loses interest in them. But he's newly enthusiastic when I dole out a chew he hasn't seen for a few days.

■ **His barking is mostly limited to a few, appropriate barks,** such as those that alert us to the arrival of the mail or

UPS, or to a passing "suspicious person" (such as someone lurking near our cars, or a late-night stumbling drunk).

This has taken quite a bit of work. We rarely leave Otto out in the yard when we're not home, so he almost never gets an opportunity to "practice" nuisance or boredom-barking. My husband and I both work at home, and when we hear Otto bark, one or the other of us always investigates, acknowledges Otto, and calls him to us for a pet or a treat. He's learned that coming straight to us is consistently rewarding, and so he "calls off" of anything he's barking at very easily.

■ **He's far more confident with strangers than he used to be.** This, too, has taken a lot of work. I enrolled Otto in two six-week classes with a *wonderful* local positive trainer, Sarah Richardson, CPDT. (I've been meaning to sign up for a tricks class, or beginning agility, but just haven't found the time!) I've taken Otto to dog parks, people parks, friends' homes, and businesses where dogs are welcome.

My friends can attest that I've had a

What you can do . . .

- Train your dog daily, if only for a minute or two.
- Try to think of new things to teach him; don't just drill, drill, drill. That borders on punishment for many dogs!
- Keep high-value treats handy when in environments where distractions abound.
- Pay attention to what your dog likes and dislikes. Keep a supply of his favorite chews and toys on hand.



Otto hates baths and swimming, but loves wading and playing in the sprinklers. Go figure! He's a quirky dog, who sometimes gets scared and overwhelmed.

“bait bag” full of training treats fastened around my waist just about every day this year, so I could classically condition him to the sight (and then the presence) of strangers. I ask practically *everyone* we meet to give him a few treats. Now his tail starts waving and his expression brightens when we see someone coming toward us on a sidewalk or trail!

■ **He readily turns away from “forbidden pleasures”** such as stray cats crossing the sidewalk in front of us or the carcass of a dead animal on the side of the trail. I make sure I *always* have high-value treats for reinforcing Otto when it really counts, and it’s paid off in spades.

Just the other day, as I was biking with him on a trail – and he was off-leash – we spotted a raccoon eating from a pile of cat food that someone left for feral cats. Unlike them, the raccoon did *not* run away from the pile as we approached; growling and snarling, it backed into the bushes a *little* bit. The moment Otto spotted it, though, from a distance of about 100 feet, he turned his head and fixed his eyes on me. I sped up, while verbally confirming that he was doing exactly what I wanted him to do: “Good dog, Otto! Yes! Good boy!” and Otto kept his eyes on me, even as we raced past the raccoon and the cat food. When we were about 100 feet or so past the raccoon, I stopped my bike and fed him a jackpot of about, oh, I don’t know, maybe 50 pieces of hot dog! I was bursting with pride!

■ **He’s rock-solid with other dogs.** I can’t take all the credit for this; Otto was already very friendly and playful with other dogs when we got him. But I’ve taken pains to maintain this trait, by giving him lots of opportunities to play with other nice dogs and puppies, at my and friends’ homes, at the dog park, and in occasional doggie daycare sessions. He’s also gotten to play with some not-so-nice dogs, and he’s been unflappable with them, too, even after getting rolled over or pushed around. I limit his exposure to playmates who have “issues,” though, to preserve his good attitude toward and interest in other dogs.

Work still to be done

This is not to say that Otto is perfect! We still have some work to do. This is what I’m working (or planning) to improve in the immediate future:

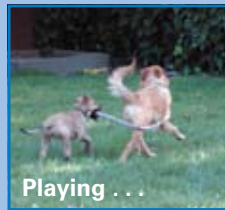
■ **He’s still “iffy” with kids;** he some-

Time With Tonka

When I first brought a foster puppy home, Otto was not amused. He spent much of their first half-hour together growling at and rolling the pup (Tonka) over onto his back, and herding him away from me.

As much as I was wanted to make Otto stop being so defensive (offensive?) toward the pup, I knew that if I scolded him, it wouldn’t help him feel any better about the pup’s presence. So I counter-conditioned: Every time Tonka came close to me, I gave Otto a treat. Every time Tonka went by Otto, I said “Good boy!” and gave Otto a treat. If I gave Tonka a treat, I gave Otto two. And if Otto offered Tonka some playful behavior, like a play-bow or rolling over onto his own back (inviting a pile-on), I said, “Yes! Good boy!” and delivered treats all around.

By the end of the first hour, Tonka had lost the doleful, sad puppy look Otto had initially put onto his face, and was respectfully but enthusiastically engaging Otto in play. And Otto was playing fairly gently, offering his favorite wooly snake toy for games of tug (and drag-the-puppy) and doing his best to get the puppy to “Chase me! Chase me!” By the end of the first day, they were inseparable.



times growls quietly and turns away from small children. Now that my son (and all of his friends) are older teens, I don’t have a steady supply of small kids to expose Otto to. And with a baby niece about to be born, I have to get on the job! We live across the street from a YMCA, though. I’m thinking that this summer, I’m going to make it a habit to sit with Otto on the sidewalk outside when swimming lessons are getting out, and ask kids if they’d toss Otto a few treats.

■ **He is afraid of slick floors,** like the polished concrete floors in pet supply stores. This one is weird. Sometimes he’ll go right across a slippery floor; on other occasions, he’ll suddenly freeze and, panicky, try to flee the floor as quickly as he can. I need to work on desensitizing him to slick floors.

■ **If he gets very afraid of something, he “checks out” and won’t come to us.** Recently, my husband took Otto fishing on a stream in the mountains near here. The trip entailed wading across rushing whitewater several times. Otto likes wading, but not swimming, and once he ascertained that this water was deeper and faster than he felt confident about, he dug in his heels.

The first time this happened, Brian just pulled him into the water by his leash; once he was half-way across, he leaped for the

other side. The next time Brian prepared to cross, Otto was ready. He ducked his head, pulled back, and neatly slipped his martin-gale (“no-slip”!) collar over his ears.

Afraid the collar was coming off, Brian dropped the leash, and Otto took off upstream, looking for his own way across the water. Worried that he had lost the dog, Brian waded back across, calling Otto – who reappeared without collar or leash (and tags). The rest of the day sounded like a trial for both of them.

Worse, the avoidant behavior recurred. A few days later, I called Otto to me as I watered some plants in the garden. He took one look at the hose, (wrongly) guessed at a possible bath in the works, and took off to hide on the far side of the house.

I plan to work hard to extinguish this behavior; I don’t want him to even consider the option of running away from us in a stressful moment. We need to go back to square one with our recalls.

Once they are solid again, we’ll work on recalls in the face of distractions and even scary things, using a long-line if we need to make certain he can’t run away. The goal will be to rebuild his confidence in the concept that coming to us is always a better option than pulling or running away. 🐾

Nancy Kerns is Editor of WDJ.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of *The Power of Positive Dog Training*; *Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog*; *Positive Perspectives II: Know Your Dog, Train Your Dog*; and *Play with Your Dog*. All of these books are available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com

The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and *Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats*, by WDJ contributor CJ Puotinen, are available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com. Puotinen is also author of several books about human health, including *Natural Relief from Aches and Pains*, available from your favorite bookseller.

HOLISTIC VETERINARIANS

American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association (AHVMA), 2214 Old Emmorton Road, Bel Air, MD 21015. (410) 569-0795. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a list of holistic veterinarians in your area, or search ahvma.org

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

Pat Miller, CPDT, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Hagerstown, MD. Train with modern, dog-friendly positive methods. Group and private training, Rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. (301) 582-9420; peaceablepaws.com

Terry Long, CPDT, DogPact, Long Beach, CA, is a writer, agility instructor, and behavior counselor. She provides pre-adoption counseling, behavior modification, and group classes in pet manners and agility. (562) 423-0793 or dogpact.com

Sarah Richardson, CPDT, CDBC, The Canine Connection, Chico, CA. Group and private training, puppy kindergarten, daycare. Force-free, fun, positive training. (530) 345-1912; thecanineconnection.com

The **Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)** has references to member trainers in your area. Please note that not all members employ similar training methods, nor does APDT set standards of skill or competence. APDT encourages (but does not require) its members to use training methods that use reinforcement and rewards, not punishment. See "How to Choose a Dog Trainer" on the APDT website: apdt.com. (800) 738-3647

Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers

Sorry, no phone number available; ccpdt.org

Truly Dog Friendly Trainers

Sorry, no phone number available; trulydogfriendly.com

WHAT'S AHEAD

Action Plan

Five things to do to stop your dog's "urine marking."

Herbal Safety

How to identify a "top quality herbal supplement."

Run With It

What sort of dogs can participate in lure coursing, and what they'll get out of it.

Canine Intervertebral Disc Disease

The most effective treatments for this potentially crippling disease.

Go Fetch!

Mundane as it may seem, teaching your dog to play fetch (by the rules) has many uses. Here's how.



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