

VOLUME 9  
NUMBER 12

# The Whole



# Dog Journal™

A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

December 2006

\$5.95

## FEATURES

### 3 Positively Australia

*Trainer Pat Miller travels Down Under to spread the message of positive training. . . and finds Aussie dog owners to be way ahead of us in many respects.*

### 6 Diet and the Older Dog

*New research is changing the way senior dogs are fed (and the way progressive pet food companies now formulate their senior diets).*

### 11 Leaping to Attention

*How to use basic agility skills and training to rehabilitate a reactive dog.*

### 14 Eeek! Don't Eat That!

*How to deal with a dog with pica or coprophagia . . . Is he really missing something in his diet?*

### 18 Practice Management

*Veterinary visits are far more productive when you intentionally nurture and manage the vet/owner relationship.*

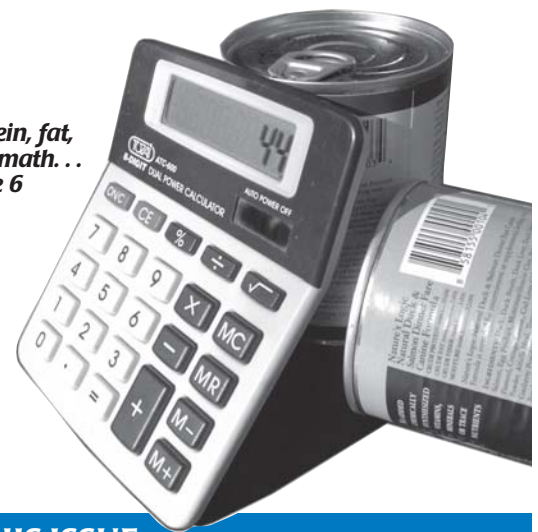


*Dingos, raw diets, and flat collars. . . page 3*



*Putting a stop to poop-eating . . . page 14*

*Protein, fat, and math. . . page 6*



## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Editor's Note
- 22 Letters
- 23 2006 Editorial Index
- 24 Product and Expert Resources

# Don't Whisper

*We favor behavioral science over showmanship.*

BY NANCY KERNS

Setting out on a long drive the other day, I turned on my radio just in time to hear the host of a show introduce his guest: Cesar Millan, the controversial dog trainer and star of the National Geographic Channel's television show, "Dog Whisperer." Grrr. I'm *not* a fan. But as much as I hated it, I had to listen to the interview – and then I *had* to call in, also!

I've avoided commenting on Millan's show in WDJ, because I honestly thought that giving it any attention would just reinforce it. I hoped that if I ignored it, the show might just go away! But the show is in its third season, and Millan's book, *Cesar's Way*, has been a best seller for many weeks.

I do think Millan is a skilled handler; he's able to quickly alter the behavior of many difficult dogs. He also handles people well; he's supportive of their efforts to improve their lives with their dogs. So what's my problem?

I don't like Millan's techniques. Many are antiquated and dangerous, for dogs *and* owners, in my view and that of many dog behavior experts I respect (such as Drs. Ian Dunbar, Patricia McConnell, and Nicholas Dodman, as well as our own training expert, Pat Miller). Also, the theory he uses to guide most of his precepts is an oversimplified reading of behavioral studies conducted on captive wolves decades ago. Modern behavioral scientists understand that there is *lots* more to canine interactions than constant displays of dominance and submission, and that humans are probably at their least effective as trainers when they try to "act like a dominant dog."

Another thing that bothers me about the show is the reductionist premise it suggests,

that solving a dog's behavior problems is fast and simple if only you have the right *energy*. This makes Millan look like a magician, and makes people think all they have to do to fix their dogs' behavior problems is to walk and act like him. I fear that in trying to emulate Millan's assertive brio, especially with scared or defensive dogs, without a foundation of experience and in-person guidance, many people are going to get hurt. And when people get hurt, dogs tend to wind up dead.

Millan's ideal is a dog who exhibits "calm submission" to its owner. In contrast, most pet dog owners I know, myself included, want an affectionate, trusting, respectful coexistence with our dogs, not wary subservience. We want them to *want* to do what we want them to do! The most effective way to accomplish this, with the least fallout or dangerous side effects, is with the dog-friendly behavior modification techniques we regularly detail in WDJ.

As I listened to caller after caller on the radio describe problems they were having with their dogs, I was reminded how people are hungry for expert advice. But as appealing as it might appear, there is no *magic* when it comes to dog training; quick fixes rarely provide a long-term solution. Real experts will

confirm that improving your dog's behavior takes time and practice, and that preserving your trust in and affection for each other will be paramount for your – and your dog's – success.

NK



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

## The Whole Dog Journal™

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

### EDITORIAL OFFICE

E-MAIL: WholeDogJ@aol.com  
 MAIL: PO Box 1349  
 Oroville, CA 95965  
 PACKAGES: 1655 Robinson Street  
 Oroville, CA 95965

### SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

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

### BACK ISSUES, WEBSITE INQUIRIES

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

### REPRINTS

For price quote, contact Mona Kornfeld at  
 (203) 857-3143  
 Minimum order 1,000

### SINGLE COPY SALES

Lisa Evans, (203) 857-3100

**WHOLE DOG JOURNAL  
 DOES NOT ACCEPT  
 COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING**



**THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL** (ISSN #1097-5322) is published monthly by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 800 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Executive Vice President, Editorial Director; Philip L. Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Executive Vice President, Marketing Director; Marvin Cweibel, Senior Vice President, Marketing Operations; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Vice President, Circulation; Michael N. Pollet, Senior Vice President, General Counsel. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, CT and at additional mailing offices. Copyright ©2006, Belvoir Media Group, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited. Printed in U.S.A. Revenue Canada GST Account #128044658. Canada Publishing Agreement Number #40016479.

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

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

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

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

# Positively Australia

*A trainer travels Down Under to proselytize about positive training . . . and is happy to find the natives already converted!*

BY PAT MILLER

Just a few days ago, my husband, Paul, and I were strolling Darling Harbour in Sydney, Australia, hand in hand. I had been offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be the main speaker at the annual conference of the Australia APDT (Association of Pet Dog Trainers), expenses paid! Of course, we couldn't pass up the chance to make it a family vacation and explore some of the exquisite country.

I'm a strong proponent of positive training; Paul is executive director for the Humane Society of Washington County, in Hagerstown, Maryland. As eager as we were to explore Australia, we were just as interested in finding out more about the state of the dog care and training professions in a country whose animal ethic includes a ban on shock collars. We weren't disappointed.

## Flat collars everywhere!

Our first glimpse of Australian canines came immediately upon our arrival at Sydney International Airport, as a detec-

tion dog – a Beagle – happily worked the baggage claim area at the end of his handler's leash, on a flat collar. Nice!

A short time later, as we were converting U.S. dollars to Australian (\$.76 U.S. = \$1.00 AU), an equally happy yellow Labrador Retriever detection dog wandered past. I was a bit concerned they'd be attracted to our luggage given the multitude of doggie smells our bags must carry, but, as they say in Oz, "No worries!" The dogs clearly knew what they were looking for, and it wasn't "Essence of Canine."

The 20-minute trip to our hotel precluded any dog-scouting, as Paul was busy learning how to drive on the left side of the road on motorways markedly narrower than ours, while I was having multiple coronaries at his near misses as he hugged the left side of the road. My gentle, "You're a little close on this side," quickly deteriorated to a shouted, "Watch that truck mirror!" as my adrenaline and cortisol levels rocketed up from the stress. We miraculously arrived unscathed at the Crest

Hotel in King's Crossing, only to face a new concern.

I had somewhat blindly selected the hotel over the Internet, trusting that 3.5 stars would be more than adequate, and seizing on a "hot deal" with reduced prices. Since the APDT was paying my conference-related expenses, but of course not any of Paul's nor our add-on vacation, we were looking for opportunities to economize.

When we drove up the street past our chosen accommodation, we realized that King's Crossing was located in a somewhat "Bohemian" part of town, as tour guides politely described it. The street walkers out on the sidewalk at 8 am were a giveaway, as were the numerous "girlie shows" with hawkers already inviting passers-by to come have a look. We checked into the hotel, and then quickly hopped back into our rental car to get our bearings.

Sydney is enormous, with an astounding *four million* inhabitants. We ran for the suburbs, tripped over our first national park (Georges River NP) where we gawked at



How Pat and Paul Miller spent their autumn vacation: Checking out the sights and signs – but mostly dogs, dog owners, dog-related businesses, and animal shelters in Australia. An observation at the gorgeous Royal National Park? "No dogs on the beach?!"



Kangaroos are considered something of a pest species in parts of Australia, and are a common ingredient in pet food.



**Pat falls for a Kelpie “parked” outside a bank. His sitters said he was a retired show champion.**



**Fresh, raw dog and cat foods are featured in many pet supply stores. Kangaroo and mutton varieties are most common.**

sulphur crested cockatoos and snapped numerous photos – only to later discover they’re as common as pigeons here and considered a nuisance, as they rip off roofing and pull rubber insulating strips out of car doors.

We also found our first Australian companion dogs. Lots of poodles, *tons* of Cavalier King Charles Spaniels (the breed we saw most frequently in the cities), a Golden Retriever, a couple of small Poodle-Terrier mixes, numerous Pits and Pit mixes (excuse me, American Staffordshire Terriers – Pits are restricted in New South Wales), Boxers (with beautiful long ears and tails, by the way, as cropping and docking are also now banned there) . . . and our first Australian Kelpie. We have a Kelpie ourselves, Katie, so were particularly interested in finding them in their “native habitat.”

I caught a glimpse of the dog out of the corner of my eye and my brain leapt to “German Shepherd mix.” It was a black-and-tan (we have a red) and longer-legged than ours – as were several of the Kelpies we saw there. But on second look I yelled “Kelpie!” We pulled over and asked the gentleman on the other end of the leash if it was, indeed, a Kelpie. He beamed and said, “Yup – best dog I’ve ever owned!”

Several days later we made our best Kelpie find – a handsome dark red fellow tethered outside a bank. Smitten, I schmoozed him up until the couple who had tied him there returned. They were just pet-sitting for him, a retired champion show dog, until his owners came home from vacation, but they enthusiastically went on

about what a superb dog he was and how much they enjoyed caring for him.

As it turned out, our hotel selection was a blessing in disguise. The classier hotels where APDT had arranged for us to stay for the last several days of our trip (three nights in Sydney’s Olympic Park and the last at Darling Harbour) were fantastic – and not a dog in sight. By contrast, at King’s Crossing we encountered a wide variety of dogs.

We saw dogs on and off leash. I’d estimate that 99 percent of them were with their owners and under excellent control; we saw very few strays. *All* of the dogs we saw wore flat collars or harnesses; there was not a choke chain (or check chain, as they call them), prong collar, or shock device in sight. I didn’t even see a yank on a flat collar or angry word to a dog our entire visit, although I’m sure that happens, especially more in the rougher, rural areas of the vast country.

### **Pet touring**

Australia *is* vast. Imagine a country the size of the U.S., with seven states instead of 50 (including the island of Tasmania) and a total population of only 20 million, compared to our 300 million. If Paul’s and my experience there is any gauge, Australians love their companion dogs and treat them well.

Culturally, as far as dogs go, Australians seem more on a par with parts of Europe. While we didn’t see any dogs inside of restaurants, we saw many who joined their owners for meals at the outdoor cafes in King’s Crossing, and several

who accompanied their owners into shops. No one seemed to give them a second look.

We found a wide selection of dog magazines in the news shops. Not one of the dog magazines contained a single advertisement for check chains, prong, or shock collars, nor was there a *single* photo of a dog wearing one, not even in the *National Dog*, which appears to be the show dog enthusiast magazine. Photos of dogs displayed with the light chain often used in the conformation ring showed the collar always conspicuously loose on the dog’s neck, often with the handler’s hand slipped through the loop to emphasize the looseness. Lots of dogs posed for their show photos wearing no collar at all.

The final article in the October issue of this magazine, written by Honey Gross-Richardson, is titled, “*Compulsion: For and Against*,” and contains this paragraph, with the first sentence in bold type:

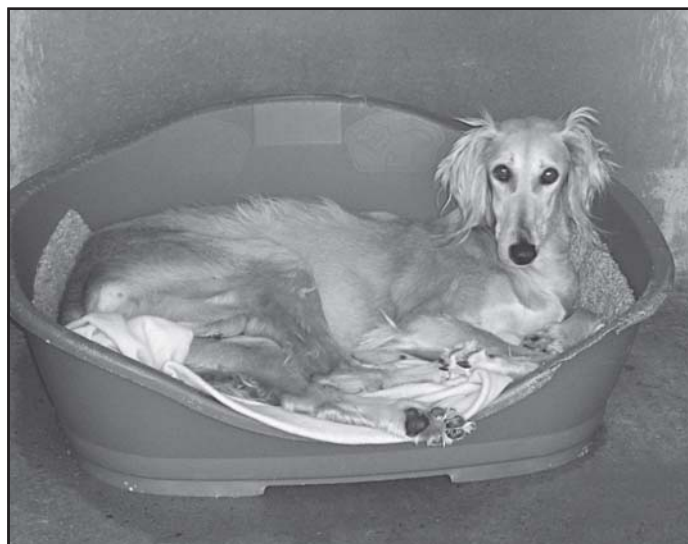
**“Positive punishment has no place in our training.** In modern training we teach our handlers, every step of the way, how to use POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT and NEGATIVE PUNISHMENT to shape their dogs’ behaviour.”

A writer/trainer after our own WDJ hearts!

Pet supply stores are very common, and most offer an array of fresh raw meat (including Kangaroo) and bones for dogs and cats; these foods are displayed in their own refrigerated meat cases, right at the front of the store.



One of the few stray dogs the Millers saw, this well-mannered Cattle Dog waited patiently for a handout at an outdoor cafe.



The shelters toured by the Millers were clean, comfortable for the dogs, and well-attended by staff and volunteers.

Again, there was a refreshing paucity of prong, choke, and shock collars, and a wide selection of dog toys and accessories.

We found only one store with live puppies for sale – sadly typical, overcrowded puppy mill puppies – a good day’s drive inland from Sydney, near Bathurst. This same store had scruffy-looking Galahs – beautiful pink, grey, and white parrots that are native to Australia – also in overcrowded, dirty cages. But that was the only sour note on our otherwise purely positive canine experience.

### Shelter visits

We visited the RSPCA shelter in Yagoona, just outside Sydney – one of many RSPCA facilities in the country – and were given a gracious behind-the-scenes tour. While the shelter recently gave up a government contract to house strays, it’s still a full-service shelter, accepting any animal brought in, and rarely euthanizing dogs for space.

With more than 300 kennels (and some new ones nearing completion), there were *lots* of dogs there. We saw, among others, a long-tailed Rottweiler, a Saluki lounging regally on her bed in the back of her kennel, an overweight yellow Labrador Retriever, a very perky Papillon, and a sweet Pomeranian who was sucking his blanket to relieve stress . . . would that I could have tucked him into my carry-on bag to take home with me!

The RSPCA has a behavior department, whose staff conducts behavior assessments on all dogs prior to adoption, and who follow through with training and behavior work with the dogs while they are there.

Many of the shelters also have positive trainers (lots of them APDT members) who conduct training classes at the facilities.

### Positive bear training

After 11 days of holiday, it was time to settle in for the conference. We said goodbye to the Crest Hotel, having survived the neighborhood in relative peace.

Our room at the Novotel in Olympic Park was like a different universe. We looked down from the King Suite on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor onto the acres and acres of park, and could see Sydney in the far distance. But no dogs!

We moved in on Wednesday, and the following day APDT member Peta Clarke took us on another behind-the-scenes tour, this time at Taronga Park Zoo, a short ferry ride from Circular Quay in downtown Sydney.

There we got to see positive training in action, as the bear keepers proudly demonstrated how they’d desensitized and shaped the Kodiak bears to offer their substantial claws for trimming. (They used bear treats, and the word “Good!” for a reward marker instead of a clicker, so they could keep their hands free!)

They also showed us how they’d taught one of the Sun bears to offer her teeth for brushing, also with shaping and reward-marking.

### Getting to work

The APDT conference started Friday, and was a delight. My hosts – all 250-plus of them – were unfailingly gracious, friendly, attentive, and hungry for information about

positive training in the U.S.

As we chatted on breaks, lunches, and at the conference dinner, I realized that APDT AU members seem far more philosophically aligned than APDT US members. Perhaps it is because shock collars are banned and “check” chains and prong collars not as widely used; perhaps because APDT AU has done more to promote the “dog-friendly” part of its mission. There seemed to be wide, if not universal acceptance among them that positive is, simply, the way to train.

But maybe part of it is cultural. As Paul and I made our way through the rigors of customs and security at the Sydney airport, we both commented on how nice the people of Australia were. Few horns blew, even in rush hour traffic. People seemed more laid-back, relaxed; we heard very few rude or angry comments during our stay. Airport officials were not only kind, they were efficient; there was *no* line at security, despite a process that was actually more thorough than U.S. airport security.

No wonder that a culture producing a less-aggressive population of humans appears to be more accepting of non-aggressive training methods. No worries, mate! 🐾

*Pat Miller, CPDT, is WDJ’s Training Editor. Miller lives in Hagerstown, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. She is also the author of The Power of Positive Dog Training and Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog. For book purchasing or contact information, see “Resources,” page 24.*

# Diet and the Older Dog

*New research is changing the way the senior dog should be fed.*

BY MARY STRAUS

**W**e all want our dogs to enjoy the highest quality of life for the longest possible time. Proper diet, adequate exercise, weight control, appropriate supplements, and good veterinary care can all help our dogs remain active and vibrant well into their senior years.

Nutrition can make a significant difference in how long our dogs live, and how healthy they remain as they age, but there are a lot of misconceptions about what type of diet is best for older dogs.

Fundamental principles widely accepted in the past have been discredited by research done in the past 15 years. This research has revolutionized what we know about canine nutrition and profoundly changed our ideas about what older dogs need, not just to survive, but also to thrive and be as healthy as possible. It takes time, though, for this new knowledge to filter down into the veterinary, pet food, and pet owner communities.

## Protein for senior dogs

Here's a quiz: which of the following are the most important reasons for feeding a lower protein diet to senior dogs?

A: Senior dogs need less protein than younger adult dogs.

B: Lower protein diets help to protect the kidneys, especially in older dogs.

C: Replacing protein with carbohydrates helps to prevent older dogs, who may be less active, from gaining weight.

D: Carbohydrates help dogs being fed a lower calorie diet feel full, so they won't be hungry and crave more food.

Answer: None of the above.

The truth is that there is *no* reason to feed a lower protein diet to senior dogs.

While lower protein diets have tradi-

## What you can do . . .

- Feed your senior dog a high protein diet, but reduce her daily quantity of food (and perhaps the amount of fat, if needed) to help her stay lean.
- Select foods that contain high-quality animal protein; a meat source should be first on the list of ingredients.
- If you notice changes in your senior dog's sleeping or eating habits, or if your dog is slowing down, schedule a vet exam. He may be ill, not "just old."



Shown here at 14 years old, wet from swimming in a creek, author Mary Straus' dog, Piglet, continues to thrive due to her high-protein diet and beneficial supplements.

tionally been recommended for senior dogs based on assumptions such as those above, we now know that a protein-rich diet is especially important for older dogs, due to the fact that their systems are less efficient at metabolizing protein. Recent studies show that healthy older dogs may need as much as 50 percent more protein than their younger adult counterparts.

Protein is valuable for many reasons: it supports the immune system and the central nervous system, contributes to wound healing, helps build lean muscle, and is required for skin and coat health.

When dogs are not fed enough protein, their bodies will break down their own muscle tissue to get what they need, leading to muscle wasting and other serious problems. Even mild protein deficiency can significantly impair immune function. Dogs who get too little protein are also more susceptible to stress, including stress from injury or infection.

But what about the kidneys? Doesn't a

low protein diet lessen the workload on the kidneys and help protect older dogs from kidney disease?

Again, the answer is no. Research done on dogs has now proved that protein does not damage kidneys, and feeding a lower protein diet does not protect them. In fact, senior dogs fed high protein diets live longer and are healthier than those that are fed low protein diets, even when one kidney has been removed. Studies conducted at the University of Georgia in the 1990s demonstrated that feeding protein levels of 34 percent (on a dry matter basis; see sidebar, below) to older dogs with chronic kidney failure and dogs with only one kidney caused no ill effects.

These same studies did raise the issue of whether low-protein diets may cause harm. The mortality rate was greater for the dogs fed 18 percent protein than for the ones fed 34 percent protein. Another study done on dogs with only one kidney showed that protein levels up to 45 percent of the diet had no harmful effect on the remaining kidney.

My own dog Nattie, who was diagnosed with early kidney disease at age 14, actually improved over the next two years on a diet that was more than 36 percent protein on a dry matter basis, before I lost her to problems unrelated to kidney failure.

### More myths busted

The same is true of liver disease. Although low protein diets were recommended in the past for dogs with liver disease, recent research has found that protein is required for a healthy liver and a low protein diet can be harmful to dogs with liver disease. The only time that protein needs to be restricted is when hepatic encephalopathy (neurological problems caused by excess ammonia) is present.

So, if a lower protein diet is not necessary or desirable for health reasons, what about weight loss? Won't lowering protein and increasing carbohydrates help prevent an older dog from becoming overweight? Doesn't a diet high in carbs, such as grains and vegetables, help a dog on a low calorie diet feel fuller?

Once again, the answer is no.

Protein and carbohydrates supply exactly the same number of calories: four calories per gram. Replacing protein with carbohydrates does nothing to reduce calories, but it does reduce nutrition.

Dogs have no nutritional need for carbohydrates, as even the veterinary text-

books admit. Diets high in carbohydrates contribute to inflammation, which increases arthritis pain, and can cause medical problems, including obesity and maldigestion.

It is far better to feed protein, which dogs efficiently convert into energy as well as muscle, than to feed carbohydrates, which are more likely to be converted to fat. In one study, 26 English Pointers ranging in age from 7 to 9 years were fed either 15 percent or 45 percent protein over several years. The dogs fed the high protein diet maintained a higher percentage of lean body mass and a lower percentage of body fat.

It is also likely that protein helps to satisfy the appetite more than carbohydrates do. Several studies done on people have shown that high protein diets reduce appetite, and a recent study found that meat, eggs, and cheese trigger a protein that

makes us eat less.

While the pet food companies have added indigestible fiber to "bulk up" their foods so the dogs would supposedly feel fuller on a lower calorie diet, this turned out not to be true. A study done on dogs by the Waltham® Centre for Pet Nutrition concluded that the addition of soluble or insoluble fiber had no beneficial effects on satiety (feeling full), nor did they increase weight loss.

In *Canine and Feline Nutrition*, authors Case, Carey, and Hirakawa state, "Diets that contain increased levels of indigestible fiber and reduced levels of protein are not recommended for weight loss or for long-term weight maintenance of sedentary dogs and cats. If a diet is simultaneously high in indigestible fiber and low in fat and/or other nutrients, it is possible that long-term feeding may result in nutrient deficiencies in some animals."

## Know the Difference: "As Fed" vs. "Dry Matter" Percentages

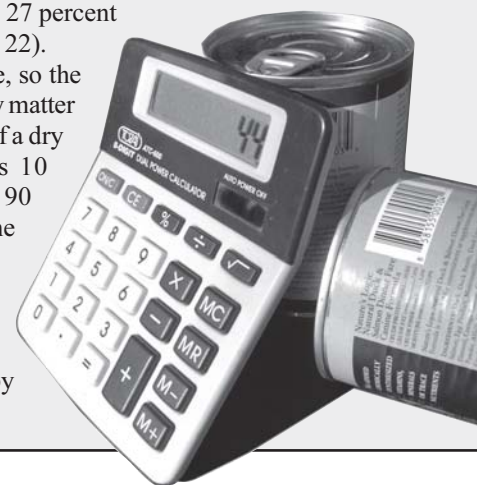
Every commercial pet food is required by federal and state laws to exhibit a "guaranteed analysis" (GA) on its label, listing the minimum amounts of protein and fat and maximum amounts of fiber and moisture in the food. These are listed as a percentage. These numbers are referred to as the "as fed" percentages, meaning the food as it is presented *in its current form* contains at least that percentage of protein and fat, and at most that percentage of fiber and moisture.

Sometimes, however, nutritionists or other pet food experts will refer to a product's protein or fat levels on a "dry matter" basis, that is, with the (nutrient-empty) water removed. Converting the amounts of nutrients in foods to a dry matter basis allows us to compare the levels of nutrients in dry foods to the amounts in canned or raw foods.

To compute dry matter percentages, start by subtracting the amount of moisture from the total, leaving the amount of "dry matter." Then divide the amount of protein or fat (for example) by the amount of dry matter.

For example, if a canned or raw diet is 78 percent moisture, subtracting that from 100 leaves 22 percent dry matter. You can then compute the protein or fat content by dividing it by 22. If the label says it contains 9 percent protein, it contains 41 percent protein on a dry matter basis (9 divided by 22). If the food label says it contains 6 percent fat, it is 27 percent fat on a dry matter basis (6 divided by 22).

Dry foods have much less moisture, so the "as fed" percentages are closer to the dry matter percentages. For example, if the label of a dry dog food says the product contains 10 percent moisture, it is comprised of 90 percent dry matter. If the label says the food is 18 percent protein, it contains 20 percent protein on a dry matter basis (18 divided by 90). And its stated 14 percent "as fed" fat is 15.6 percent fat on a dry matter basis (14 divided by 90).



## A family of Chows

Southern California resident Mindy Fenton, owner of the SeniorRawFeeding list on Yahoo, has raised several Chows, a breed that normally lives to between 10 and 12 years of age. Of Mindy's last three dogs (none of whom were related to each other), two passed away while still extremely healthy at age 14 (one due to pet sitter negligence and the other to a fat embolism following surgery for a broken leg). The third dog, Maggie, lived to age 16 before passing away naturally on her own.

These were not dogs who were simply "existing" in their very advanced years; they had clear eyes, perfect hearing, and far more energy than many dogs half their age.

Even in their last years, these dogs had tremendous vitality, still racing around the house, jumping on furniture, and pulling to go faster during their walks. At the beach, Mindy and her husband could hardly keep up with the dogs, who would still run with the wind. People who met Mindy's senior dogs could never guess their age. We should all be so lucky in our advanced years!

Mindy attributes her dogs' ongoing vitality to feeding a high-protein raw diet. While we sometimes see dramatic changes in younger dogs who are switched to a raw diet, she believes the real pay-off comes during a dog's senior years after having been fed a raw food diet for many years. Common sense tells us that when a dog has eaten a lifetime of species-appropriate food, inherently his body is going to function better during those latter years.

Even dogs who are switched to a raw diet at an older age will benefit. Maggie, the Chow who lived to 16 years old, was nine years old when Mindy originally began feeding a raw diet. My oldest dog was 13 when I made the switch in 1998. While he lived only one more year, he became completely allergy-free during that year, after suffering from environmental allergies most of his life.

Mindy fed her senior dogs exactly the same diet as her young adult dogs. Specifically, her dogs eat a wide variety of proteins including chicken, turkey, beef, lamb, venison, buffalo, tripe, ostrich, quail, and duck. She uses a mixture of ground raw food (meat, bones, and/or organ meat) and

whole bones, extras such as eggs and dairy, plus organic vegetables that consist of no more than about 10 percent of the overall diet. Needless to say, her dogs eat a very high protein diet, which is consistent throughout their lives.

## Weight control

All in all, there is nothing to be gained and much to lose by feeding a reduced protein diet to older dogs. Other dietary changes, however, may be beneficial. As dogs age, they usually become less active, and may put on weight if fed as many calories as they received when they were young.

It is important to keep older dogs lean



**Two of Mindy Fenton's extremely healthy senior Chows: Above, Bekki at age 11. Right, Maggie at age 13.**

and not let them get fat; overweight contributes to joint problems that may slow them down even more. This can create a vicious cycle, and make it difficult to return them to a normal weight.

To control weight, you can feed your dog less of his regular diet, or look for ways to reduce the fat if you are feeding a high-fat diet. Fat supplies 9 calories per gram, compared to 4 calories per gram supplied by protein and carbohydrates.

Limit the dietary fat to moderate levels for inactive dogs, but don't feed a low-fat diet, which will make your dog feel hungry and crave more food. Fats are needed to maintain healthy skin and coat, support the immune system, and transport fat-soluble vitamins, so it is important not to reduce fat to levels that are too low.

Senior dogs who are underweight may benefit from a higher-fat diet, particularly because fat makes food more palatable, which may encourage them to eat more.

My dog, Piglet, will be 15 years old this month. She has severe arthritis in both elbows, which has slowed her considerably from her younger years, though she still takes one- to two-hour walks every day. Piglet is fed a raw, home-prepared diet similar to what is described above. I continue to feed the same foods that I did when she was younger, but I have reduced the quantity that she gets, and I now remove visible fat from the meats and chicken backs and necks I feed her. I also remove some of the skin, which is where most of the fat in poultry is found.

I feed low-fat yogurt and cottage cheese rather than the whole milk varieties that I used to give her when she was younger. Her diet is not low fat, but it's considerably lower than it was when she was more active and burned off calories more easily.

In Piglet's case, I use a scale to help me control her portion sizes. Due to her arthritis, it is critical that I keep her lean so that her bad joints don't have to support any more weight than they must. I found that when I eyeballed her portions, she tended to gain weight. I purchased an inexpensive postal scale from an office supply store and now I weigh all of her food. The scale also makes it easy for me to adjust her diet if she begins to put on weight.

It is important when reducing the amount of food that you feed to do so gradually, in increments of about 10 percent or so every one to two weeks, until you begin to see slow, gradual weight loss. Once you reach that point, continue to feed the same amount as long as the weight loss continues, decreasing further only if your dog stops losing weight but still has some extra pounds to lose.

If you try to reduce the amount fed too quickly, the body will go into "starvation mode," which changes the metabolism and makes weight loss more difficult. Slow and gradual weight loss is healthier.

If you feed a dry or canned diet, look for varieties that are moderately lower in fat and calories for your overweight or less active senior, while maintaining protein levels of at least 25 percent on a dry matter basis (see sidebar, page 7).

Unfortunately, the majority of senior and weight loss diets on the market are high in carbohydrates, sometimes using indi-



gestible fiber such as peanut hulls to “bulk up” the food without adding calories. This does nothing to satisfy your dog’s appetite, despite the manufacturers’ claims to the contrary, and provides no nutrition; avoid those foods.

Exercise is also important for keeping your older dog fit and at the proper weight. Exercise should be increased gradually, as your dog becomes accustomed to it. Don’t push your dog past his comfort level, to the point where he is more tired or sore the next day. Two or three short walks may be easier than one long one. It’s a good idea to have your vet do a routine exam before beginning a diet or exercise regime.

Remember that weight gain can be related to physical problems such as hypothyroidism, Cushing’s disease (particularly if appetite has also increased), arthritis, and more. Your vet can help identify any conditions that may require treatment or restricted exercise.

## Commercial senior diets

Happily, there are some newer senior diets on the market that do not feature decreased protein levels. This seems to be particularly true of large breed senior foods, probably because these formulas were developed more recently.

For example, Innova has two new senior dry foods: Large Breed Senior, which is 26 percent protein (as fed), and Senior Plus with 24 percent protein (as fed). Innova’s older product, Innova Senior, is 18 percent protein (as fed), which is much lower than I would recommend.

I see no reason why the higher-protein large breed formulas cannot be used for all dogs, as the main difference between them appears to be the addition of glucosamine for joint problems, which can benefit small dogs as well.

As with all commercial foods, there is a big difference between the high quality senior diets and the lower quality brands, which may have higher protein levels but are using poor quality plant proteins to achieve them. Avoid foods that contain corn gluten meal, a waste product from the human food industry that provides incomplete proteins for dogs. Its appearance, especially high on the ingredients list, is a hallmark of lower quality food.

High-quality foods have high percentages of protein from animal sources. If overweight is a concern, look for products that contain moderately reduced levels of fat – around 10 to 14 percent (as fed) for

dry foods and 4 to 7 percent (as fed) for wet foods; less than that is excessively low in fat.

For more tips on selecting high quality foods, see “Moist and (Probably) Delicious,” January 2006 and “The Right Stuff,” February 2006.

In addition to Innova Large Breed Senior and Senior Plus mentioned above, other senior diets that have higher percentages of animal proteins include Eagle Pack’s Holistic Select Senior Care Formula, Chicken Soup for the Pet Lover’s Soul Senior Dog Formula (canned and dry), and Champion Petfoods’ ACANA Senior Light and Orijen Senior (made in Canada). Innova EVO now offers a high-protein, reduced fat version.

This is by no means a complete list of high-quality, commercial senior foods, and the number should increase as the knowledge that senior dogs benefit from high protein levels becomes more widespread. Remember that there is no *need* to feed a senior diet; it is fine to continue to feed foods approved for adult dogs or for all life stages.



**Most overweight older dogs would benefit from a diet with higher levels of protein and moderate levels of fat.**

Rather than trying to find a single, “best” food, choose at least two or three different brands, using different protein sources, and rotate between them every few weeks or every few months. Variety is always better than feeding any single food, as it helps to guarantee that all your dogs’ nutritional needs are met and is more interesting for your dogs.

It’s also a good idea to add some fresh foods to the diet, no matter what you feed, such as eggs and meat (raw or cooked), canned fish with bones (jack mackerel, pink salmon, sardines), dairy (yogurt, kefir, cottage cheese), and healthy leftovers.

These foods can also be used to increase protein levels in a diet that might otherwise be too low.

## Supplements for senior dogs

Some commercial senior diets, particularly those designed for large breeds, have added **glucosamine** for dogs with arthritis. This is fine, but if you have a dog with arthritis, it is best not to rely on *diet* to provide the glucosamine and related ingredients that can help to rebuild cartilage and restore synovial (joint) fluid.

Instead, give a glucosamine-type product separately. Start with high doses so that you will be able to tell whether or not your dog responds. If you see improvement, reduce the dosage to see if the improvement can be maintained on a lower dose.

If you don’t see any change within three to four weeks, try another supplement. Different dogs respond differently to the various supplements.

Some brands that have worked for dogs I know include Arthroplex from Thorne Research, Syn-Flex Glucosamine Complex, DVM Pharmaceuticals’ Synovi-G3, B-Naturals’ Flexile-Plus, and Liquid Health K-9 Glucosamine. You can also use products made for people that contain ingredients such as glucosamine, chondroitin sulfate, green-lipped mussel (*perna canaliculus*), and hyaluronic acid. The use of manganese in the supplement may help with absorption.

Commercial senior diets also often contain **antioxidants**, which help to fight damage caused by free radicals and may reduce cancer risk. Antioxidants are provided by some vitamins and minerals, including vitamins C, E, and A, carotenoids such as beta-carotene, and selenium, found mainly in fruits and vegetables. Other antioxidants include CoQ10, alpha-lipoic acid, lutein (which may help to prevent cataracts), and pycnogenol.

While adding antioxidants to commercial foods is a good idea, it is questionable how much value these additions to the foods offer. Dry foods in particular can have a very long shelf life, and lose some vitamins to degradation over time.

It may be more productive to add an antioxidant supplement, whether or not you feed a diet containing them. Suggested brands include Cell Advance 440 and 880 from Vetri-Science, and Small Animal Antioxidant from Thorne Research.

**Herbs** can also be helpful for senior dogs. Both of my seniors responded well

to Animals' Apawthecary's Senior Blend, for example. Tasha's Herbs also makes a Senior Support supplement. Invigor from The Honest Kitchen, Organic Green Alternative from Animal Essentials, and Genesis Resources Canine Antioxidant Formula are whole food herbal supplements that provide antioxidants and other benefits.

## When is a dog a senior?

There is a chart in my vet's office that compares dog ages to human ages. It shows the first year of a dog's life being equivalent to 15 years in human terms, the second year equivalent to 24 years, and then they add 4 dog years to each human year after that.

This timeline is fairly accurate for a medium-sized dog, though larger breeds age faster and smaller dogs more slowly, once adulthood has been reached. The part that makes me chuckle is their division of the chart, showing middle age starting at 4 years (equivalent to a 32 year old person), and senior classification beginning at age 7 (equivalent to a 44 year old person). Can you imagine how you would feel if you were told you were a senior at age 44? A giant breed dog, such as a Great Dane, may be a senior at age 7, but many smaller

breeds would still be in their prime of life.

So, when is a dog a senior? Is it when they start slowing down, becoming less active, sleeping more? While these things may come with age, they are often symptoms of conditions that can be treated and sometimes cured. Never assume that your dog is slowing down or sleeping more just because he's getting older.

Arthritis may be decreasing his activity, but arthritis can be treated, both by natural methods that include weight loss and supplements, and by anti-inflammatory drugs when needed, so that your dog can continue to be active and enjoy his life as long as possible.

Sleeping more is often a symptom of pain and should never be dismissed as simply a sign of aging. Have regular vet checks done on older dogs, and discuss any changes you've noticed with your vet. If you see any sudden changes in activity level, sleeping habits, weight or appetite, etc., see your vet right away.

I've been surprised at how many signs of "aging" actually improve with proper care. Piglet's arthritis has slowed her down, but I've continued to try different supplements and medications, and several have

made a significant difference. For example, her lameness increased at age 11, but she improved when I added dl-phenylalanine (DLPA), an amino acid used to treat chronic pain. I use Thorne Veterinary's Arthroplex, which includes DLPA, because it makes it easy to give the proper dosage for a medium-sized dog; you can use human DLPA supplements for larger dogs.

Piglet's activity level also increased and she began taking much longer walks after she had a broken tooth removed. Teeth become more brittle with age, so even if your dog has never had problems with broken teeth before, you may find yourself dealing with them when your dog gets older.

We can't stop our dogs from aging or make them live forever, but we can do a lot to ensure that they live the longest and healthiest lives possible. We can help our older dogs to enjoy their senior years with protein, exercise, weight control, supplements, and good veterinary care. 🐾

*Mary Straus does research on canine health and nutrition topics as an avocation. She is the owner of the DogAware.com website. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her 14-year-old dog, Piglet.*

## Resources Mentioned in This Article

### **Arthroplex and Small Animal Antioxidant**

Made by Thorne Research, Inc. Information available at [thorne.com](http://thorne.com). Thorne sells its products through veterinarians; ask your vet to order. Also available from [wellvet.com](http://wellvet.com), (303) 702-1986.

### **Berte's Naturals Flexile-Plus**

Made and sold by B-Naturals, [b-naturals.com](http://b-naturals.com), (866) 368-2728.

### **Syn-Flex Glucosamine Complex**

Made by Syn-Flex America, Inc. Information available at [activexamerica.com](http://activexamerica.com). Product available from many retailers; the best price we've found is from [k9rawdiet.com](http://k9rawdiet.com) (818-888-6983).

### **DVM Pharmaceuticals Synovi-G3 tablets, granules and chews**

Made by DVM Pharmaceuticals. Information available at [dvmpharmaceuticals.com](http://dvmpharmaceuticals.com). Available from KV Vet ([kvvet.com](http://kvvet.com)) or 800-423-8211 and other retailers.

### **Vetri-Science Cell Advance 440 and 880 Antioxidant Formulas**

Made by Vetri-Science Laboratories of Vermont. Information available at [vetriscience.com](http://vetriscience.com). Available from VetAmerica ([vetamerica.com](http://vetamerica.com)) or 888-838-2637 and other retailers.

### **Liquid Health K-9 Glucosamine and K-9 Glucosamine & HA**

Made and sold by Liquid Health, [liquidhealthinc.com](http://liquidhealthinc.com), (800) 995-6607.

### **Animals' Apawthecary Senior Blend**

### **Animal Essentials Organic Green Alternative Herbal Blend**

Made and sold by Animal Essentials, [animalessentials.com](http://animalessentials.com), (888) 463-7748. Also available in some pet supply stores.

### **Tasha's Herbs Senior Support Supplement**

Made by Coyote Springs Company, (800) 315-0142. Available from many retailers. We found the best prices from Equilite, Inc. ([equilite.com](http://equilite.com), 800-942-5483) and Botanical Dog, LLC ([botanicaldog.com](http://botanicaldog.com), 843-864-9368).

### **The Honest Kitchen Invigor**

Made and sold by The Honest Kitchen, [thehonestkitchen.com](http://thehonestkitchen.com), (858) 483-5995.

### **Genesis Resources Canine Antioxidant Formula**

Made by Genesis Ltd., [genesispets.com](http://genesispets.com). Available from Only Natural Pet Store ([onlynaturalpet.com](http://onlynaturalpet.com), 888-937-6677) and other retailers.

### **Eagle Pack Holistic Select Senior Care Formula**

[eaglepack.com](http://eaglepack.com), (800) 255-5959.

### **Chicken Soup for the Pet Lover's Soul Senior Dog Formulas**

[chickensoupforthepetloverssoul.com](http://chickensoupforthepetloverssoul.com), (800) 658-0624.

### **Champion Petfoods' ACANA Senior Light and Orijen Senior**

[championpetfoods.com](http://championpetfoods.com), (780) 939-6888.

### **Innova Large Breed Senior,**

### **Innova Senior Plus, and**

### **Innova EVO Reduced Fat Dry**

[naturapet.com](http://naturapet.com), (800) 532-7261.



# Leaping to Attention

*Agility training can be therapeutic for challenging dogs.*

BY ANGELICA STEINKER

Own an aggressive, fearful, or other type of “special needs” dog is stressful. When your dog overreacts to other dogs – or just the stimulus of being out in the world – by barking, lunging, and exhibiting overexcited, out-of-control behavior, it can become so unpleasant that you start leaving him at home more and more. Of course, this coping mechanism will only contribute to your dog’s behavior issues becoming worse.

Agility may just be the thing for you! Agility is a fun dog sport that involves the dog running over planks, through tunnels, and leaping over a variety of jumps, while the nearby handler walks quickly or runs along directing his activity. In competitions, the dog being judged is the only dog in the ring, so with some self-control training and good management you may even be able to compete with your difficult dog. If that sounds like a huge leap, consider the skills

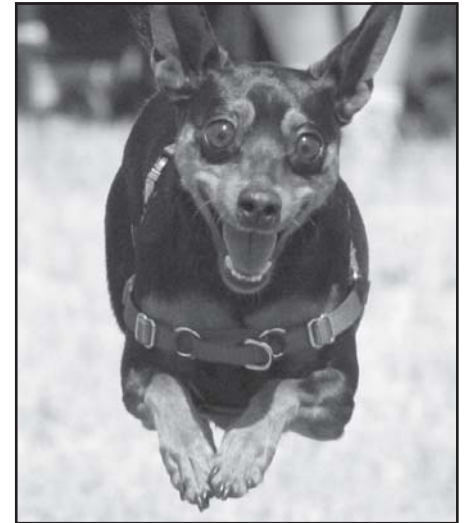
your dog will acquire and benefits he will reap along the way:

- **Increased attention** is one of the many benefits resulting from agility training. If a dog is looking at you, she can’t be looking at another dog or a person at the same time. This makes attention a behavior that is beautifully incompatible with most aggressive behaviors.

- The process of learning agility can be therapeutic for a difficult dog by **building his confidence** if he’s shy or fearful; many dogs who exhibit aggression are actually fearful and lacking in self-confidence.

- **Self-control** is taught and reinforced in every phase of agility training.

- Finally, because it’s fun for dogs and their people, it can help **repair damage done to their relationship**, and **deepen the bonds** between them.



The happy expression on the face of Turbo, a Miniature Pinscher, is common in agility dogs. (Note: Front-clip control harnesses can inhibit a dog from being able to jump freely.) PHOTO BY TONY RIDER

Every part of agility requires a certain amount of self-control – some parts require a *lot!* – which is always a benefit for an aggressive dog. Once a dog has learned that agility is a fun game, she will be eager to start performing the obstacles. Before she is allowed to play, however, she has to wait at the start line until her handler releases her. This is just the kind of self-control game that is beneficial to a dog with aggression issues.

Dogs also have to exhibit extraordinary self-control at an obstacle called the table. At this obstacle, the dog is asked to leap onto the table top and sit or down, holding that position for five seconds. Most dogs consider it more fun to be moving. Learning to hold still earns her the reward (positive reinforcement) of getting to continue with more running and jumping.

Agility can even help canines who don’t enjoy the company of other dogs learn to ignore them. They may even learn that dogs near agility equipment signal impending fun – a little classical conditioning.

## What you can do . . .

- Teach your dog basic skills, such as a very quick recall and a “go” cue. That’s a bare minimum for “agility” training, even if it’s only played in your living room.
- Keep all your practice sessions light and fun and always positive. Agility competitors have a saying, “Agility dogs don’t make mistakes; only their handlers do!”
- Reinforce your dog’s attention and self-control as frequently and generously as possible, especially when he’s first learning these important skills.



## How to get there from here

In many cases, people with difficult dogs spend most of their time trying to get their dogs *not* to do something – don’t jump, don’t bark, don’t pull, don’t lunge. Agility gives those dogs something easy and enjoyable to *do*, and do with enthusiasm!

Agility is a game that you play with your dog. Play is emotionally incompatible with the emotions linked to aggression. If your dog is playful she is less likely to bark or lunge at a person or other dog.

Just as “rope courses” build confidence in people, agility course training builds confidence in dogs. At first you are certain you can’t possibly scale the wall; once you have done it you feel empowered and more confident. As dogs learn to leap over hurdles, run through tunnels, and balance over planks, their confidence increases. Since most aggression is based on fear, this increase in confidence is helpful. A more confident dog is usually a less fearful dog.

## Stress and Agility

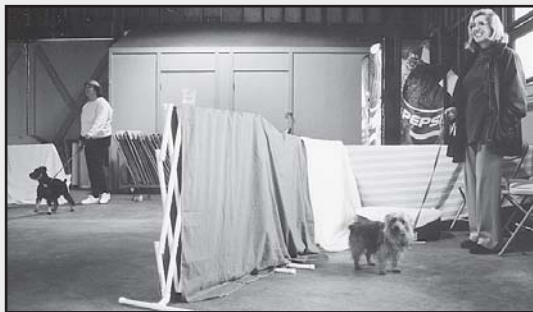
Stress is like gasoline to the fire of aggression. The movement and exercise provided in agility play are superb ways to help most dogs to de-stress.

That said, some dogs are so stressed that playing agility, especially around other dogs, is overly arousing for them. For these dogs a different game, individual (not group) classes, or maybe even a game that is played at home is more appropriate. But don't give up on them! Find a good agility instructor to help you; cleanrun.com features a wealth of information on agility training schools.

An excellent trainer will help you determine what works best for your dog, adjusting what she teaches as you all work together. Good agility trainers do not use choke chains, prong collars, squirt guns, shock collars, or excessive crating for any reason.

Aggressive dogs can be carefully managed in an agility class

(and should be, of course!). The instructor should make it very clear to the entire class that the reactive dog should not be approached by other dogs and/or people. All participants in a class that includes a reactive dog should be briefed on how to respond if there is an aggressive encounter between dogs. Also, the training area should be equipped with a "safe place" for the reactive dog and his handler to retreat to, where he can relax without having to see or deal with other dogs.



**Reactive dogs should have a "safe" place so they can retreat from the rest of the class periodically.**

At no time should a dog who exhibits aggression be "corrected" with leash "pops" or hitting; this only confirms his bad feelings about the activity and presence of others. Instead, care should be taken to move him to a greater distance from the rest of the class, and more time spent working on self-control games and behaviors that are incompatible with barking and lunging. This takes time but is well worth the effort.

## Therapeutic games that are useful in agility

Even without having agility equipment, you can play the following games to help your dog learn some therapeutic skills. Be sure to play these games with a happy attitude. Dogs are truth detectors; if you fake having fun, they will know. Play with your dog only when you truly are feeling playful and want to have fun!

While you are playing, observe your dog and use her behavior as a method of feedback. If she's playing the game slowly and methodically, bump up your own energy level to encourage her.

### ■ Eye contact game

This is a fun way to teach your dog to pay attention to you. With your dog on a leash, and with you standing on the end of the leash, take a piece of food in an obvious way, so she sees that you have something delicious, and hold it out at arm's length from your head at eye level.

If she looks at your face, mark the behavior (with a click! of a clicker or verbal marker, such as the word, "Yes!") and feed her the piece of food. Watch her carefully. Most dogs will look at the food for a few seconds, and then look at your face for clues as to why you are doing something so odd!

The second she looks at you, click! and treat. If she only stares at the food, hypnotized, hide it behind your back for a second, and then hold the food an arm's length away from you again. Most dogs will look at you at some point when they realize that staring at the food yields nothing.

Once the dog has the idea that looking at your

face earns her clicks and treats, raise the criteria slowly by requiring a slightly longer period of eye contact before she gets the click and treat.

As soon as it's clear that she gets the game, you can increase the difficulty of the exercise. Move the food closer to your head, and, as she consistently succeeds, wiggle the food around, making it progressively more challenging for her to ignore the food and make eye contact with you.

This is a very fun game that teaches self-control, eye contact, and how to ignore enticing distractions, all at the same time. These are especially valuable skills for a dog who has "issues" with people and/or dogs; you now have a behavior (eye contact with you) that is incompatible with barking and lunging. Instead of scanning the area looking for things or other beings to bark at, your dog can look at you and earn clicks and treats instead!

### ■ Restrained recall game

To play this game you need two people. One person holds the dog, gently restraining her from getting to the trainer. The trainer runs away from the dog calling her name. When the dog strains against the person holding her back, this person releases the dog to dash to the trainer. The trainer can then click as the dog is running to her and feed her a delicious treat or, if she is more motivated by play, play with a

## If Pain, No Gain

Physical issues can be a significant barrier to agility training being useful as a training or rehabilitation tool. Loose knee caps, dysplastic joints, back pain, or injuries can interfere with your dog's enjoyment. Most agility trainers recommend a detailed veterinary physical exam of every single joint of your dog's body prior to starting an agility training program.



toy when the dog reaches her.

This game can help train your dog to come when called at light speed – very helpful if you find yourself in an emergency situation with your dog off leash.

### ■ Running side by side game

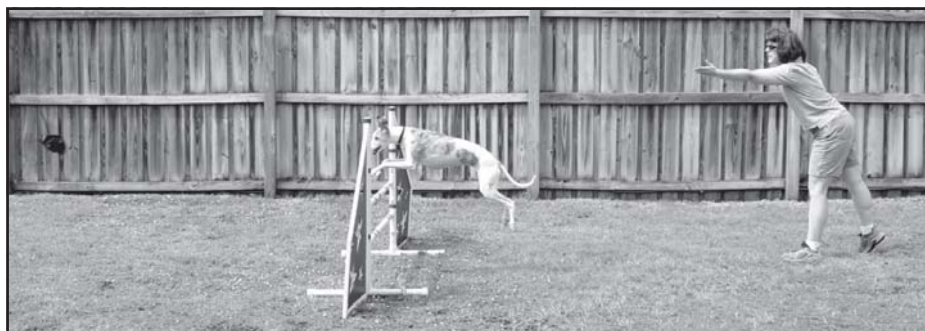
In this game, your dog learns to run alongside you, in a loose heeling position. The goal is for him to keep his eye on you for direction, so he doesn't run in front and trip you!

It's easiest to start by running in a small circle, with your dog on the outside. Carry one of your dog's favorite toys or some scrumptious treats, and click! and treat frequently at first, to engage and hold her attention. Practice in clockwise and counterclockwise circles.

### ■ Go game

The object of this game is to get your dog to run and jump a small obstacle on cue. This doesn't have to be fancy; you can use a broomstick and two piles of books to make a little jump! To start, position your dog by your side, with both of you facing a small jump. You should be equipped with a toy the dog really likes, or a "bait bag" full of treats.

The idea is to throw the bag over the jump, with the intention, initially, of get-



In the "go game," your dog learns to run and jump over an obstacle on cue. At first, he's actually chasing a toy or bag of treats that the handler throws over the jump.

ting your dog to chase after it, jumping the obstacle in the process. She gets to play with the toy or enjoy a few treats before you repeat the game.

After a number of successful repetitions, as she anticipates your throw and runs ahead to the jump, you can start adding a cue, such as "Go!" or "Go jump!"

As she continues to succeed and seems to enjoy this game, slowly and progressively add a little more distance until you can send your dog to the jump from 30 or more feet away. Be sure to teach your dog to play this game from both sides of your body.

Also, move the jump around and make it look different; drape a sheet over the broom, or put pillows underneath it. This

will help your dog generalize the behavior, making it more likely that your dog will play the game even if the jump looks different or is in different locations.

### ■ Endless games

It's not immediately apparent to the casual observer, but there are literally hundreds of games that you can play with your dog in the process of teaching him to run an entire agility course. That's a *good* thing for a dog who enjoys playing games! Each skill he learns can be applied in many agility activities.

### Find a positive trainer

Agility is about bonding and connecting with your dog. It is a fun learning process for both humans and dogs. If you are in an agility class and are concerned your dog isn't having fun, discuss this with your instructor immediately.

Any forceful training (the use of choke chains, prong collars, shock collars, water squirt guns, or excessive crating) is not part of playing the agility game. Screen instructors and schools carefully, finding a good match for yourself and your dog.

Agility is not a substitute for a behavior modification program, or medication if it is needed, but it can be a wonderful adjunct that will likely speed the progress of your dog's path to better mental health. If you have a dog with issues, consider finding an agility clicker trainer familiar with fear, aggression, and learning theory. It will make you *both* feel better! 🐾

*Angelica Steinker owns and operates Courteous Canine, Inc., a clicker training and agility school in Lutz, Florida. She is the author of Agility Success (2000) and Click and Play Agility (2006). See "Resources," page 24, for book purchase and contact information.*

## Learning to Relax (Both of You!)

The benefits of agility do not end with the training session. One extremely helpful technique for modifying aggressive behavior is teaching a dog to relax. Some of the more active dogs (herding, terrier, and sporting types) can benefit tremendously by the relaxing aftereffect of exercise. After a good agility workout most active dogs curl up for a nap.

Make it a habit to sit quietly for at least 10 to 15 minutes with your dog in a comfortable place after your agility practice session. Sit on a blanket or pad, or, if you are not at home (and if your dog is reacting to other dogs or activity nearby), sit in the back seat of the car together.

When she is sitting or lying quietly with you, reward her with treats and calm petting or massage strokes – that is, if she enjoys petting. (If she ducks your touch or becomes more energetic when you stroke her, don't pet her during this quiet time.) Ignore her if she is active or restless. Reinforce only the desired behavior: tuning into you and calming down.

Keep yourself calm and quiet, too! Don't "tune out" with the cell phone or socializing. Take some deep breaths (in *and* out!), relax all your muscles, and just "be" with your dog for a few minutes.



Prior to the strenuous physical activity of agility, Ferris, a Rat Terrier, was too "wired" to unwind like this.

# Eeek! Don't Eat That!

*Dealing with dogs with pica or coprophagia.*

BY CJ PUOTINEN

**A**norexia, bulimia, and weird pregnancy cravings are common in humans, but did you know dogs have eating disorders, too?

Dogs with pica (pronounced PIE-kuh) consume indigestible nonfood items like rocks, concrete, wrought iron, glass, ice, coins, screws, upholstery stuffing, batteries, soda cans, gravel, dirt, clay, and other objects. Young puppies often chew on inappropriate items in an effort to ease the discomfort of teething; this is different. Adolescent and adult dogs who exhibit pica compulsively chew and consume inappropriate items, sometimes resulting in their deaths.

Chewing hard or sharp objects can damage teeth, gums, or digestive organs. Objects that become stuck or cause blockage can require surgery. And items containing zinc or other toxic minerals can poison the dog.



**Nothing is quite as disgusting to dog owners as catching their dogs eating poop. However, pica – the consumption of nonfood items such as dirt or rocks – is actually more dangerous. These eating disorders may resolve with supplementation.**

## What you can do . . .

- Upgrade your dog's diet by replacing his grain-based kibble with a high-protein, low-carbohydrate food.
- Consider giving your dog a raw diet that includes whole or ground raw bone.
- Supplement your dog's food with enzymes, probiotics, minerals, and other products that improve digestion and assimilation.
- Pick up after your dog and other dogs in your area. Use a covered cat box or keep your cat's box where your dog can't reach it.



Dog owners more frequently complain about another disturbing habit of canine consumption: coprophagia (pronounced cop-ra-FAY-jee-a) or “dung eating.” Though dogs with coprophagia may eat only deer droppings, cat box contents, horse manure and the like, people are most horrified (and frustrated) with dogs who eat their own or other dogs' stools. Bleh!

What causes these eating disorders, and what can be done about them?

Most veterinarians consider pica and coprophagia behavioral problems having nothing to do with nutrition because their patients are fed a 100-percent nutritionally complete canned or packaged dog food.

But while it's true that you are what you eat, it's even more true that you are what you absorb, and not every dog has a perfect digestive tract. In many cases, improving a dog's diet and/or digestion has resulted in significant behavior changes. In addition to using positive reinforcement to

encourage dogs to consume appropriate food items and leave other things alone, a few simple adjustments to the dog's daily fare may solve the problem.

## A closer look at pica

When pica is caused by a nutritional deficiency or imbalance, other symptoms accompany the condition. In the May 1996 *Journal of the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association*, Martin Schulman, VMD, reported that mineral deficiencies often contribute to the development of seizures.

In a review of the medical histories of patients diagnosed with epilepsy in his clinic, Dr. Schulman discovered that an “astonishingly high percentage” showed significant manifestations of pica. In one case, a female German Shepherd Dog had a history of licking wrought iron and eating Christmas tree lights and glass. Treating the patient with an improved diet supple-

mented with plant-derived colloidal minerals, digestive enzymes, and probiotic foods cured the pica within 21 days, and the dog had no additional seizures.

Other conditions that can coincide with pica include hair loss, dry or flaky skin or coat, pigment problems, infertility, eclampsia or other problems with pregnancy or whelping, birth defects, bone and growth problems, anemia, fatigue, muscle spasms, irregular heartbeat, respiratory illnesses, allergies, digestive disorders, immune system problems, slow wound healing, glandular disorders, and chronic ill health.

Advocates of home-prepared diets often claim that a well-balanced raw diet eliminates or prevents pica, but occasionally the condition occurs even in well-fed dogs.

In Riverside, California, Jacki Panzik has been breeding Standard Poodles for 15 years, feeding a raw diet and using minimal vaccinations. She recently dealt with two litters born within a month of each other that were sired by the same stud dog, in which the puppies at age 12 to 16 weeks showed symptoms of pica, including the consumption of dirt.

"Pica is often demonstrated in autistic children," she says. "I am in the field of alternative medicine, and I see a lot of similarities between the physical condition of some dogs today and autistic children."

Panzik and her husband do energy balancing, so they worked with the pups and their sire energetically to correct the problem's underlying causes. In addition, they suggested adding bone meal to the diet fed to the pups. Within a week, the puppies from both litters stopped eating dirt.

Wendy Volhard, author of the bestselling *Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog*, has observed symptoms of pica in dogs who have a tendency to bloat. "When they are outside and a bloating episode is about to start," she says, "you sometimes find them eating grass, leaves, and dirt without stopping. If confined indoors, they may eat the fringes of carpets, curtains, and whatever else they can reach. This is true aberrant eating behavior, and in every case I have observed, the result has been bloat."

Years ago, Volhard's Briard, DJ, was with her at a training camp, and when she returned to her room after teaching a class, she was horrified to find DJ pulling curtains through the top of his wire crate. He had swallowed more than half of one before she could get him out and untangle the mess.

DJ was the portrait of a dog going into bloat as he stood panting with his head down and his left side brick-hard and slightly protruding. Volhard treated him homeopathically and did acupressure on his stomach meridian while someone drove them to the nearest veterinarian. The examination and x-rays showed that DJ had suffered no damage, but he went on to experience several more episodes, including one in which he ate large quantities of autumn leaves.

"We went back and forth to the vet many times," says Volhard, "and each time he was okay. Taking care of it is one thing, but I wanted to stop it entirely. I discovered that dogs with this condition seem to respond very well to the addition of hydrochloric acid and pepsin at every meal.

"This made me think that they don't have the capacity to make enough stomach acid to break down their food. In my experience, adding this simple supplement has been very successful in stopping pica.



**When two litters of puppies began eating dirt, Poodle breeder Jacki Panzik recommended giving the pups a bone meal supplement and used energy balancing – and the pica stopped.**

In DJ's case, a hydrochloric acid and pepsin capsule twice a day in his meals, plus a spleen glandular supplement during the change of seasons, did the trick. It took some trial and error but he never again had a problem with bloat or showed any symptoms of pica."

## Stool eating

In the wild, dung eating is common. As L. David Mech, Ph.D., explained in "What a Wolf Eats" (WDJ March 2005), wolves are opportunistic omnivores. "They will eat literally anything that is remotely edible," he says. The same is true of all canines.

In his popular book *Give Your Dog a Bone*, Australian veterinarian Ian Billinghurst reminds readers that all dogs are scavengers.

"They receive valuable nutrients from material we humans find totally repugnant," Billinghurst says, "things like vomit, feces, and decaying flesh . . . Feces are a highly valuable food consisting of the dead and living bodies of millions upon millions of bacteria. To replace feces requires a team of ingredients like yogurt, brewer's yeast, eggs, oils, an enzyme product, and crushed raw vegetables as a source of fiber."

Mother wolves, like mother dogs, ingest the fecal matter produced by their young puppies. Some researchers say this is an attempt to hide the litter from predators, while others say it provides the mother with nutrients.

Both theories are probably correct. The manure of herbivores such as deer, elk, cattle, sheep, geese, and other grass-eating animals contains B-complex vitamins, vitamin K, minerals, beneficial bacteria, essential fatty acids, enzymes, antioxidants, and fiber.

Although most dogs who indulge remain healthy, veterinarians warn that fecal matter may contain parasites such as giardia, coccidia, roundworms, or whipworms.

Some dogs become interested in their own stools only after they eat raw carrots or other foods that they cannot completely digest. Withholding hard-to-digest foods from your dog's diet is a simple solution.

Because grain-based foods are difficult for dogs to digest, a high-carbohydrate dog food can cause a dog to produce large amounts of feces containing only partially digested ingredients. Feeding a grain-free food or home-prepared food that is high in protein and low in carbohydrates can result in more complete digestion and smaller, less appetizing stools.

Those who feed raw bones report that the end result of a meal that includes raw bone is small, hard, dry, and less interesting than fecal matter that does not contain bone.

In her *Complete Herbal Handbook for the Dog and Cat*, Juliette de Bairacli Levy (see "Grandmother Nature," July 2006)



**If your dog exhibits pica eating, he must be either vigilantly supervised, or in a carefully managed environment with limited access to *anything* potentially harmful.**

writes, “Dogs should never have their natural instincts thwarted in the matter of diet. They should not be prevented from eating the droppings of grass-fed cattle and horses, from which they can get many vital elements derived from the herbage on which the animals have grazed and in a form easily assimilated by the dog . . . Only eating its own or other dogs’ feces is a depraved habit and should be checked at once.”

Commercial products with names like For-Bid, Deter, and SEP (Stop Eating Poop) are designed to make stools unappetizing. For-Bid contains wheat gluten and monosodium glutamate, which are said to work with the digestive tract to give stools a bad taste. Deter tablets contain a “natural vegetable extract.” SEP (Stop Eating Poop) powder contains dicalcium phosphate, rice flour, glutamic acid, peppermint, *Yucca schidigera* extract, beef liver, oil of parsley, and natural flavoring.

Do-it-yourself treatments include sprinkling monosodium glutamate (MSG, or Accent flavor enhancer) on the dog’s food, adding a drop of anise essential oil, or adding garlic, pumpkin, meat tenderizer, pineapple, zucchini, or Fig Newtons to the food. By all accounts, these methods work for some dogs but not for all.

“I’ve never had much success breaking a dog of this habit,” says canine health researcher Mary Straus, who lives in the San Francisco Bay area. “Interestingly, it’s a habit that can be learned as an adult, not just as a puppy. My Nattie was a stool-eater, but Piglet never was until she started ob-

serving Nattie. She’s now as bad as Nattie ever was.”

While debate continues as to whether coprophagia is a behavioral problem, there’s no doubt that dogs who are bored, receive little aerobic exercise or interesting play, and have unlimited access to their own or other animals’ droppings will be difficult to discourage. Increasing the dog’s active exercise, giving him a larger assortment of interesting toys to play with, keeping the dog’s exercise area clean and free from excrement, keeping cat litter boxes out of reach, and giving the dog several small meals per day rather than only one large meal can all help reduce his interest in coprophagia or at least reduce his opportunity to indulge.

### **Improve your dog’s digestion**

In addition to improving your dog’s diet, start using supplements that can improve her digestion.

For example, try an **enzyme product** like Prozyme. The heat of processing destroys enzymes in food, making the food more difficult to digest. Enzyme powders sprinkled on food supply these important catalysts, resulting in more efficient digestion. Many vets and dog owners have reported excellent results from adding Prozyme or similar enzyme powders to the food of dogs with pica or coprophagia.

**Digestive support products** that contain hydrochloric acid, pepsin, and other digestive enzymes may help prevent pica and bloat in dogs whose hydrochloric acid

production is low.

Human digestive supplements that contain hydrochloric acid (HCl) and pepsin or other digestive enzymes can be adapted for canine use. Assume that the human dose is appropriate for someone weighing 120 to 150 pounds and divide this amount by your dog’s weight to adjust the recommended dosage. Add one capsule or tablet (or an appropriate fraction of a capsule or tablet), buried in food, at the end of the meal. If feeding a dry dog food, wrap the tablet or capsule in a piece of cheese, a piece of meat, or something the dog will swallow whole.

**Digestive supplements that contain warming herbs or spices** such as ginger or cinnamon can also help improve digestion and assimilation. As above, adjust the dose for your dog’s size, or simply sprinkle  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon powdered cinnamon or ginger on your dog’s food. Give smaller amounts to small dogs and larger amounts to giant breeds.

**Seacure** is a fermented deep sea white fish product sold as pet supplement powder, chewable wafers, and capsules. Because it is predigested, its amino acids and peptides are immediately assimilated, facilitating tissue repair throughout the body. Dogs with digestive disorders that contribute to pica often improve quickly, and those with coprophagia may become less interested in their fecal output.

Dee Eckert, at Seacure’s manufacturer, Proper Nutrition, Inc., says they have heard from breeders, trainers, and pet guardians who say that Seacure helped eliminate symptoms in dogs with pica and coprophagia. “We have been told that dogs who exhibit these behaviors suffer from leaky gut syndrome and malabsorption. If this is true, it makes sense that Seacure would help because it is best known for treating digestive and malabsorption issues.” (For more information, see “Securing Seacure,” April 2003.)

**Beneficial bacteria** play an important role in not only the digestion process but the entire immune system. In fact, beneficial bacteria are the body’s first line of defense against harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites, and other pathogens. (See “Probing Probiotics,” August 2006, for more information.)

*Lactobacillus acidophilus* and other species of beneficial bacteria help prevent diarrhea, leaky gut syndrome, lactose intolerance, and other symptoms of indigestion. They assist in the production



of vitamins and enzymes, decrease toxins and mutagenic reactions, improve the assimilation and utilization of carbohydrates and protein, and strengthen the body's ability to fight infection.

But many American dogs have insufficient quantities of beneficial bacteria. One reason is their frequent treatment with antibiotics, which kill good as well as bad bacteria. Another is processed pet foods that disrupt the body's ecology and help harmful strains of bacteria take over.

Adding beneficial bacteria in the form of live-culture yogurt or probiotic supplements helps restore the body's army of friendly microbes. Probiotics are recommended for all dogs with pica, coprophagia, or digestive disorders.

**Mineral supplements** are another recommendation for dogs with eating disorders. Humans with iron-deficiency anemia often crave ice or paper, while those with other mineral deficiencies may crave items like laundry starch, chalk, clay, dirt, or charcoal from a wood stove. Mineral deficiencies may trigger similar cravings in dogs, and numerous holistic veterinarians report resolution of their patients' pica eating with mineral supplementation.

Several brands of colloidal minerals are sold in health food stores, most of which contain more than 60 minerals and trace elements. Mineral supplements like the Standard Process product Min-Tran, which

is available from veterinarians and some online retailers, have helped many dogs recover from pica.

Adding **vegetable oil** to the dog's food has helped in some cases of pica and coprophagia. Coconut oil may be the best vegetable oil for dogs because of its stability and its ability to destroy harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites, yeasts, and fungi. Coconut oil helps repair digestion and improves the assimilation of nutrients. Add coconut oil to any dog's food at the rate of 1 teaspoon per 10 pounds of body weight, starting with smaller amounts and building up gradually. (For more information, see "Crazy about Coconut Oil," October 2005.)

### Other methods

**Homeopathy** has helped some dogs with pica or coprophagia. In classical homeopathy, remedies are prescribed individually according to each patient's history and symptoms. For best results, consult a veterinary homeopath.

**Acupressure, acupuncture, and herbs** have also helped. In her book *Four Paws, Five Directions: A Guide to Chinese Medicine for Cats and Dogs*, Cheryl Schwartz, DVM, describes excessive appetite and the eating of strange things as symptoms of "excessive stomach fire" associated with the liver and gall bladder.

Dr. Schwartz explains how to treat the

problem by holding key acupuncture points. She also recommends 2 to 3 dropperfuls each of dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), burdock (*Arctium lappa*), and wood betony (*Betonica officinalis*) tinctures for medium and large dogs, twice daily, plus 2 to 3 teaspoons of strongly brewed chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*) tea twice daily with food. Small dogs receive 1 dropperful of each tincture and 1 teaspoon chamomile tea.

Some people have successfully trained their dogs to stop eating fecal matter, rocks, and other objects using various methods – at least, as long as they were present and vigilant. In general, though, most owners have learned that managing the dog's habit by simply keeping him away from the forbidden treats will be more fruitful, and less frustrating, than positive or negative training methods. And the various health-based strategies described above provide more reliable results.

There may be no *simple* cure for pica or coprophagia, but the potential for relief from these disturbing habits makes trying a few of these treatments definitely worth the effort. 🐾

*A long-time contributor to WDJ and author of The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care, Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats, and other books, CJ Puotinen lives in New York with her husband, a Lab, and a tabby cat.*

## Resources to Stop Pica and Coprophagia

### BOOKS

The following books are all available from DogWise (dogwise.com or 800-776-2665) and other booksellers.

*The Complete Herbal Handbook for the Dog and Cat*, by Juliette de Baracli Levy. Faber & Faber, 1992.

*Four Paws, Five Directions: A Guide to Chinese Medicine for Cats and Dogs*, by Cheryl Schwartz, DVM. Celestial Arts, 1996.

*Give Your Dog a Bone: The Practical Commonsense Way to Feed Dogs for a Long Healthy Life*, by Dr. Ian Billinghurst. Published by the author, 1993.

### INFORMATION RESOURCES

Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy, (866) 652-1590, theavh.org

American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association, ahvma.org, holisticvetlist.com

Jacki Panzik, Poodle Dog, poodledog.com

Wendy Volhard, Volhard Top Dog Training and Nutrition, volhard.com

### PRODUCTS

Canine Medicine Chest. Products for eating disorders include Pro-Bac probiotics, Systemajuv herbal remedy, Concentrated Trace Minerals, and Canine Vita Pak or Super Vita Puppy. Information at petmedicinechest.com. Free phone consultation (712) 644-3535 from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM CST.

Deter Coprophagia Treatment, Eight in One, eightinonepet.com. Sold by veterinarians and pet supply companies.

For-Bid, Alpar Labs. Sold by Biovets.com (800-447-1366, biovets.com) and other pet supply companies.

Prozyme. Free sample available from Prozyme Products, (800) 522-5537, prozymeproducts.com

Seacure. Proper Nutrition, Inc. (800) 555-8868, propernutrition.com.

SEP (Stop Eating Poop), Solid Gold Pet Products. Available from solidgoldhealth.com and pet supply stores.

Standard Process Min-Tran Minerals, Canine Whole Body Support powder, and Zypan hydrochloric acid-enzyme tablets. Information at standardprocess.com. Product available from licensed healthcare practitioners; ask your veterinarian.

# Practice Management

*Veterinary visits can be far more productive if you do your part.*

BY DENISE FLAIM

**R**andy Boucher of Philadelphia took his new Rhodesian Ridgeback puppy on her first veterinary visit armed with a binder full of diet and vaccine recommendations from his holistically oriented breeder.

But instead of a conversation about raw feeding and minimal vaccination, he got a rant.

“The vet told me my breeder was a crackpot, and that he totally disagreed with what she wanted me to do,” Boucher remembers. “And he said Mosa was underweight and that I should put kibble in her bowl and let her eat as much as she wanted for 15 minutes” – advice that for ever-ravenous Ridgies is a one-way ticket to obesity.

Angry and upset, Boucher picked up his brown-nosed girl and headed out the door. Later that day, he called his “crackpot” breeder – who, in the interest of full disclosure, happens to be me!

I promised that a remedy was only a

few keystrokes away, and it was: In response to my e-mailed plea, several fellow breeders on a Ridgeback Internet forum recommended a homeopathic vet in nearby Delaware whose attitudes about nutrition and vaccination exactly mirror the way Mosa was reared. Though the new vet isn’t as conveniently located as the first, the half-hour drive to Wilmington is a small price to pay for a kindred spirit.

Vet visits shouldn’t be traumatic, for the dog *or* the owner. And while Mosa’s story has a happy ending – and most vet visits aren’t as harrowing as her inaugural one – many owners who want to pursue a more holistic approach find themselves in a quandary over how to deal with the second-most important human relationship in their dog’s life: the one with their vet.

“That old paternalistic – and maternalistic – view of medicine is still there, particularly in older practitioners. There is this idea of ‘Do this because I say so, and don’t ask questions,’” says veteri-

narian Myrna M. Milani of Charlestown, New Hampshire, author of *The Art of Veterinary Practice: A Guide to Client Communication*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995). Thankfully, as with human medicine, veterinary care is evolving, and “there has been a shift to a new, patient-centered form, and in that realm the owner becomes the animal’s advocate.”

It’s getting there that can be difficult.

## It’s more emotional

Chances are your interactions with your auto mechanic or accountant are straightforward and uncomplicated – unless, of course, your car keeps stalling or the IRS comes calling, in which case you move on.

But your relationship with your vet is likely more complex, for a couple of reasons: The art of medicine is not as linear as adding up a column of numbers; negotiating your options is very subjective, and sometimes touchy, especially if your vet isn’t supportive of holistic modalities you



**For your dog’s sake, you *have* to be able to communicate well with your veterinarian. If you don’t understand and respect each other, it is your responsibility to do whatever you can to get things back on track, or find another veterinarian.**

## What you can do . . .

- Find your dream veterinarian – or build a team of vets who collectively offer what you need – before you are in urgent need. The odds of being able to find perfectly appropriate care for your dog under duress are low.
- Be honest and forthright with your chosen practitioner. Failing to disclose details about your dog’s diet, supplements, conventional medications, or vaccination history can cause him to make life-threatening mistakes in his diagnosis or treatment of your dog.



might be inclined to try. And while you may love your VW Bug beyond measure, triangulating yourself between a vet's professional opinion, the fate of your furry mop-top, and your own ideas about the right approach can bring with it a range of turbocharged emotions more appropriate for a therapist's couch than a stainless-steel exam table.

Randy DeLorto, a Rottweiler breeder from Hemet, California, says the handiest metaphor she can think of is marriage.

"Like any marriage, you have to work at it, and vets can be high maintenance," she says. "My vet knows I'm a breeder, and he knows I'm holistic, and we spar. I respect him for his thoughts, and I ask his opinion on other things. And I think he respects my knowledge and effort, and the fact that I don't think the same way he does. That's a good way to have any good working relationship – or marriage."

No relationship – conjugal, veterinary, or otherwise – is perfect. There will always be areas of tension and disagreement. In some cases, monogamy may not be the best option: Some owners might have to expand their circle of veterinary care to include specialty and holistic practitioners who have expertise where their primary vet doesn't. All of this takes time, thought, and – most important – the willingness to be honest and open about what you are doing and why.

If you're struggling with your relationship with your vet, or are considering finding a new one, here are some things to consider.

## Do a cost-benefit analysis

Every vet-client relationship will have its rough patches; that's just reality. The question to ask yourself, Milani suggests, is: "What am I getting from this person versus what I have to give up?" If your veterinarian is a brilliant diagnostician and surgeon, has top-notch equipment, keeps up on her continuing education, but is lukewarm about the fact that you feed a raw diet, consider whether that is enough to be a deal breaker.

What people value in a veterinarian can also vary wildly. "For some people, the most important thing is a vet they can communicate easily with," Milani says. "For others, it's state-of-the-art technology." If you're someone who places a premium on a relaxed, engaging bedside manner, no gee-whiz diagnostic machinery is going to make up for that. Figure out what matters



**It can be particularly difficult to monitor what is going on with your dog and communicate with his doctors when he is receiving care at a large hospital, such as those found at veterinary colleges. Be persistent! The busy vets generally appreciate your efforts and concern.**

to you, and see if you can forgive the rest.

Penny Mallen of Napa, California, is a case in point. Her equine vet is supportive of her decision to vaccinate her horses minimally, and to use homeopathic nosodes whenever possible. Her dogs' vet is a different story.

"We lock horns on a regular basis regarding vaccination," she says. "I send him all the articles that I see, and then he puts them in my file and we don't talk about it."

Despite the fact that her vet can get "feisty" and "argumentative," they've agreed to disagree – a process made easier, Mallen admits, by the influence of her vet's wife, who also happens to be the aforementioned equine vet.

"In all honesty, I haven't found anyone any better," she says. "He's a wonderful technician. I can call them at home. He's fairly open-minded, and he likes his clients to be knowledgeable; he respects that. He's willing to read and listen, and I think that's the most important thing, even in the end if he doesn't agree."

Bottom line: His pros outweigh his cons.

## Respect in, emotion out

Part of the reason for Mallen's success with her vet is that both are respectful: Mallen

of her vet's professional ability and training, and he of her position as final arbiter.

"I view all my relationships this way, whether it's with my attorney or my doctor or even my husband," she says. "If they are knowledgeable about the subject, I listen, but in the end I'm the one that has to make the decision that's right for me. And for the most part, if I can eliminate emotion, it works better."

Love, guilt, fear, sadness, resentment – all those feelings can cloud your dealings with your vet and affect the treatment process. "We increasingly live in a society in which our relationships with our companion animals are driven by emotion rather than knowledge," Milani says. And while that's understandable, it's not helpful, "because when you're driven by emotion, that's all you've got."

As simple as it is to do, it may be difficult for some owners to set aside the various emotions that dealing with an authority figure dredges up – whether fear or guilt or hostility – and just deal honestly and straightforwardly with their veterinarians.

"Do you know that your vet is going to be offended" if you respectfully but firmly disagree with her opinion? Milani asks. "Or are you just *afraid* the vet is going to be offended?" Don't make decisions based on "what ifs."

## Consider the culture

No matter what the species, medicine can be a rigid, hierarchical discipline where creative thinking and compassion – the very things that draw idealists to the field – are sometimes backburnered in the face of pragmatic considerations such as productivity and profitability.

Veterinarian John Robb of Fairfield, Connecticut, founder of Protect the Pets, a nationwide network of veterinary practitioners who have pledged to put the welfare of animals above the drive for profits, says veterinary culture is by its very nature resistant to change.

"There's a lot of concern with protecting our image rather than embracing change in a much-changing world," he says, noting that he felt pressured, even persecuted, when he decided to switch to a minimal vaccination protocol a decade before it was in vogue. This occurred again when he began to question the inordinate influence pharmaceutical and vaccine companies have on how veterinarians do business. "In that context, we do have a lot of vets who think they know more than they do, and

egos get inflated,” he says.

While no one advocates kowtowing to a Dr. Doolittle with a Napoleon complex, clients can get more with honey – or at least a little sweet talking. Veterinarians who are unaccustomed to having their authority challenged, or who interpret a client’s desire to follow a different protocol as criticism of their competency, can respond magically to a basic reaffirmation of their ability. Telling the veterinarian, “I know you’re a crackerjack allopathic vet and I’d like you to help me pursue holistic treatment for my dog,” tells her that you respect her knowledge base, and turns a potential conflict into a team effort.

“It’s like when you have kids,” Milani reminds. “There are times when for their sake you buck up and do something because it’s so important – even if you have to fake it.”

## Understand your vet’s unspoken concerns

The veterinary profession has already changed dramatically, Robb says, considering that until the 1950s veterinary medicine was mostly agriculture-oriented, and small-animal hospitals were unheard of. Today, awareness of the human-animal bond has taken root, but as an institution veterinary medicine is still often out of synch with it.

As an example, Milani points to the practice of not allowing an owner to hold an animal during an exam. “That’s an edict that comes down from the American Veterinary Medical Association,” she notes. Vets who choose to disregard this rule may be honoring their client’s relationship with their dog, but at a potential cost.

Like it or not, such liability concerns pay a large role in determining how a veterinarian will deal with requests that are outside his or her comfort level. You can help make that a moot issue by offering to sign a liability waiver. Or, reassure your vet by acknowledging his concerns, but reminding him that you take responsibility for the direction you are choosing, and re-

assuring him you won’t blame him if things don’t turn out as you envision.

“Ultimately, it’s the public that needs to spur on change by articulating what they want,” Robb reminds. By doing your part with your own veterinarian, you nudge the process a tiny bit further, one dog at a time.

## Be honest

This should be obvious, but for many it’s not. As with our own personal relationships, we are sometimes tempted play games in order to avoid confrontation or unpleasantness.

“Where people get into trouble is they don’t tell the veterinarian who’s working the case up that they’re going to leave with the antibiotics and then throw them out because that’s not what they wanted in the first place,” Milani says. Not only does this undermine your relationship with your vet, but it could put your dog’s health in jeopardy. The same applies if you are freelancing herbs on the side and are unaware of their contraindications.

Furtively obtaining holistic treatment without telling your veterinarian also undermines the validity of what you’re doing, she adds. “To me, what you’re saying is you believe those holistic treatments have no power, that they’re not going to have any effect.”

Besides, just how long can you keep up the ruse? “The benchmark of the whole natural holistic movement is that none of these modalities are a quick fix,” Milani explains. “They all require commitment and involvement” – something that’s impossible if you’re tiptoeing around.

## Don’t rationalize

Milani notes that previous surveys by the American Veterinary Medical Association have consistently found that location is a prime criterion for choosing a vet. “People go to the one that’s closest – until they have a bad experience. *Then* they’re willing to travel farther.”

Instead, be proactive. If your relationship with your vet is shaky, admit that to

yourself, and either try to fix it or move on. “Where I see people get into trouble is that they know when they go to their vet that it’s not working for them, but they go into denial,” Milani says. “Every time they go, there is no communication, which can’t be good for the dog. Then when crisis strikes, they just react.”

The more difficult the conversation, the more important it is to have it before things get to a breaking point. Milani says end-of-life concerns are a common area where communication snafus can be devastating.

“There is nothing worse for the owner of a terminally sick or injured animal than to discover that their vet will not euthanize that animal,” she says. “To have been with a practice for years, and now, when you really want this person there, to find out they have a personal moral view that they didn’t share” – that’s a surprise no one wants.

## Do your homework

Like it or not, the burden is on you to evolve your relationship with your vet, and give it the fuel to grow.

“What really needs to happen is the vet has to embrace the client,” says Robb. To encourage your veterinarian to make that leap, “clients need to do research on their own, and present the vet with reliable research from a reliable source.”

Owners who are newly embarked on a holistic path often don’t have the confidence to stand up for the approach they want. “The key isn’t so much credentials,” says Milani, it’s informing yourself about what you want. “If my client has obviously done her homework, I will feel more confident about letting her try different options than if she seems to know nothing.”

The more lead time you can get on decision-making, the better. For example, when you call to make the appointment for your puppy’s first series of inoculations, ask the receptionist or a technician to describe the practice’s standard vaccine protocol.

If, after more research, you decide you’d prefer a different approach, call back and inquire whether you have options on what vaccines to give. Doing more research – such as finding out if your breed or particular line of dogs has a history of vaccine reactions – will also bolster your case.

If you are very nervous about talking to your vet, jot down some talking points, practice them with a friend, or bring along another person for support.

### A Word to Our Readers: Whole Dog Journal's Mailing List Policy

Like many other publishers, we make portions of our customer list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services we believe you may enjoy. Indeed, in all likelihood, we were able to first reach you only because another company graciously permitted us access to its customer list.

If, when we make our list available, you do not wish to receive these offers and/or information, please let us know by contacting us at:

Whole Dog Journal Opt-Out Program, 800 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06856-1631  
Please include your current mailing label.



**Some owners keep their dogs' home-prepared diets or herbal supplements a secret from their vets, worried about the doctors' disapproval. Don't! The vet must have as much information as possible to diagnose and appropriately treat your dog.**

### Bring in outside expertise

DeLorto, who's fond of her marriage metaphor, went to her conventional vet six years ago "already having other suitors," she says with a wink. The consultant she selects depends on her needs.

For example, she sends all her bloodwork to veterinary immunologist Jean Dodds in Santa Monica, California. She has a holistic vet who she turns to for chiropractic and kinesiology. And there's another conventional vet who is open to holistic modalities, but whose policy of not taking appointments makes her less convenient.

Even if your vet labels herself "holistic," that won't necessarily save you from having to take a more buffet approach to your dog's care: "Holistic" covers a yawning spectrum, from the mostly conventional vet who is certified in chiropractic but only turns to it for textbook cases, to the naturopath who uses kinesiology to diagnose problems over the phone.

Referrals are another option, says veterinarian Anna Worth, owner and medical director of West Mountain Animal Hospital in Shaftsbury, Vermont, and vice president of the American Animal Hospital Association. "If we have someone who

doesn't want to give his dog Rimadyl [for arthritis pain], or wants to try something else instead of chemotherapy for cancer, we have a very good homeopathic vet near us," she says. "I think a vet has to be understanding of what that client wants."

If you don't have a holistic vet nearby, geography need not limit you: Many will do phone consults, as long as they can consult and work in conjunction with your local vet.

Robb notes that there is plenty of room for improvement, especially among general practitioners "who need to be more open-minded about holistic medicine." He suggests that owners remind conventional vets who are skeptical – or who have had a bad experience with what they term "quackery" – that there are varying degrees of competency in *every* area. And ultimately, "the proof will be in the pudding" if the holistic approach is successful.

Milani notes that the more confident and capable a vet is, the more tolerant she'll be of new ideas and approaches. "Vets who are comfortable with what they are doing are very open. They'll say, 'If I don't know, I'll find out' or 'If you feel strongly about this, I'll find someone to help you.' They're not threatened."

If all this sounds like a lot of work, it is. "You have the same problem with your own health care," Worth reminds. "You have to be proactive."

### Rely on word of mouth

As Boucher's story illustrates, turning to dog-savvy people you trust – including pooch-loving colleagues at work, acquaintances at the local dog run, or knowledgeable owners, breeders, and fanciers in an online community – can be a lifesaver.

Talk to people about who's "good" and *why*: Make sure you have the same priorities as the person who is doing the recommending.

In the case of Randy Boucher, the man who bought one of my puppies, I asked my circle of Ridgebackers, which includes licensed veterinary technicians – for a vet who was supportive of minimal vaccination and a raw diet. And that's exactly what I found!

### Read between the lines

"I can tell what's going on at a hospital by what the receptionist says on the phone," Robb says. "At a hospital where the vet techs and staff are living their passion, there's a peace and joy in a person's voice. When you go there, they meet your eyes and say hello because they're affirmed."

Then there's the opposite scenario, where the staff's "basically imprisoned and are unhappy. There's this sense of gloom and doom, because the vet is miserable and taking it out on the staff and pets. You walk in with a doctor like that and say, 'I want to have a raw diet ...'" Odds are the ensuing conversation won't be a particularly fruitful one.

### Take the ultimate responsibility

On this final point, Milani does not mince words. "If people put up with vets they don't like and they can't communicate with, or who make them feel inferior, or if they find they're doing things they don't want to do," there's only one person to blame, she concludes. Find a mirror. 🐾

*Denise Flaim is a freelance writer, mother of triplets, and has two raw-fed Rhodesian Ridgebacks. The New York-based writer is also the author of The Holistic Dog Book: Canine Care for the 21st Century (Howell, \$17). See "Resources," page 24, for purchasing information.*

# Butt Wait, There's More!

*Who knew the nether end of dogs was causing so much angst? You did!*

**T**he anatomically correct name for the organs discussed in the article, "Butt Scoot Boogie" (WDJ October 2006), is anal sacs. This term was used in one paragraph but the rest of the article referenced anal glands. This is a common mistake people make when discussing these vestigial organs, so I thought I would bring it to your attention. I enjoyed the article every much and thought it was helpful with the exception of the nomenclature of the anal sacs.

Forrest H. Davis, DVM  
Salmon Brook Veterinary Hospital  
Granby, CT

Our six-year-old Chihuahua has suffered with overfull anal sacs since she was a puppy. She frequently "scoots" on the floor and seems to be in considerable discomfort; her sacs have to be expressed almost weekly. We read "Butt Scoot Boogie" and its suggestion of giving small amounts of dried apricots or prunes. We chose to start with ¼ dried apricot with her breakfast (she eats it like candy).

We have not had to have her anal sacs expressed once since starting this program on a daily basis, and EmmaRose has not been scooting over the floor. I spoke to her vet about it and he concurred if it works, that was wonderful, but mentioned he had not heard of this particular solution. Sometimes something like this becomes a big deal in households that are dealing with it everyday. We and especially EmmaRose thank you very much.

The Prestwoods and EmmaRose  
Via e-mail

I read "Butt Scoot Boogie" in great anticipation of seeing my own solution to canine anal gland problems. But(t) nowhere did I read what has worked miracles for our Bearded Collie, Panda, who has been fed a completely raw diet for more than six years. I add two heaping tablespoons of raw flax seeds to her morning and evening meals. The flax seeds expand and produce

fat and healthy stools. Before adding flax seeds I was taking Panda to our vet every two to three months for expression of the glands. I hope this helps others who are also feeding raw but are still having anal gland problems.

Barbara  
Bodega Bay, CA

**T**his is concerning the photos in "Dog Gone Dung," WDJ September 2006. Why did you use *food* to illustrate dog poop consistency? Isn't there another way of portraying it? You had a photo of Twix bars to show what healthy feces looks like. I like Twix bars. Now I'll never think of them in the same way again. I like WDJ because it is informative and resourceful, but that was a case of too much information.

Angeline Roselani  
Honolulu, HI

*Sorry! I couldn't think of anything else, and I was not going to take or publish photos of actual poop. My husband likes Twix, too, and had a similar response. More for me!*

**R**iding in Cars With Dogs" (October) was good but I'd like to add a tip. I have a neon pink envelope taped to the outside of my glove box with IN CASE OF EMERGENCY on it. This has contact numbers (home, work, cell) for three of my friends, and emergency authorization for my dog's treatment if she is injured. If I am in an accident and am unconscious or can't speak, one of these people will come get my dog and care for her. I also have emergency information on myself, who to contact, my blood type, etc.

My Doberman always rides in a crate, since she is protective of me and "her" Suburban; also I don't want her to get lost in case of an accident, or to be hurt or shot so the paramedics can work on me.

Lisa Johnson  
Boring, OR

**I** just finished October's issue and am delighted to have found you! Four years ago I would have never dreamed of having a dog, let alone two. My story is typical. I'm over 40, and found out late in life the eggs I had been saving were not going to develop. A life-long cat person who used to wonder why dog people were so over the moon about their dogs. I mean, dogs are cute, but why did my friends all seem such slaves to them?

So I had this maternal thing I needed to work out. I had the good husband, we had a house, and some extra income. He had been a dog person . . . so I began to study. I read dog books for a year before deciding to go for it.

I researched breeds, I picked my dog: the cat-like Basenji. Never having had a dog before, I figured I wouldn't be disappointed by a "hard to train" dog. I met a breeder and we waited. In the meantime we helped her at dog shows, so we could pick her brain about our chosen breed.

Blah, blah, blah . . . I now have two dogs, we feed raw, I have six crates (car, home, and basement for tornados and to take into hotel rooms). Opus and Milo Bloom will be three years old this winter. Smitten hardly describes the joy these guys bring us.

I just got back from my first Association of Pet Dog Trainers conference and I am not even a trainer . . . yet! I hope to do some shelter work now that I have some dog experience under my belt. I found a mentor and am ready to dive in.

I'm so glad I found WDJ. It's helped reassure and inform me with every issue. I *knew* I wasn't the only one who studied poop! Thanks for a wonderful publication.

Mari Dawson  
(and her backseat buckaroos)  
Via e-mail

*Welcome! And kudos for doing everything right (reading, planning, taking your time getting the right dogs for you, etc.). Our guess? You'll be a great trainer! 🐾*

	Issue	Page #
<b>BEHAVIOR</b>		
Making Your New Dog's Adoption Work .....	January	14
How Your Dog Says, "You're the Top Dog!" .....	April	8
Living in Fear: Shy Dogs .....	April	16
Bully for You! Stopping a Bully Dog .....	May	8
Stress Signals .....	June	3
A Bark in the Park: Managing Dog Park Play .....	September	8
Lead Your Pack: Managing a Multi-Dog Household .....	November	12

**CONSUMER ALERT**

Shock or Awe? Electronic Training Collars .....	February	18
Safe Pain Relief .....	May	3
Chill Pills: Behavior-Altering Drugs .....	July	3
Shots Fired: Limiting Vaccines .....	November	6

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

Keep Talking .....	January	2
Putting Knowledge to Work .....	February	2
Praising Conventional Medicine .....	March	2
End of Life Issues .....	April	2
All Right, Already .....	May	2
Seek and You May Find (Signs of Stress) .....	June	2
On Moving .....	July	2
Newsbriefs .....	August	2
Problem Solving .....	September	2
Bottoms Up .....	October	2
Strange Excitement .....	November	2
Don't Whisper .....	December	2

**HEALTH**

Holistic Care and Home Support for Canine Cancer Patients .....	January	10
Nonconventional Care for Canine Cancer .....	February	12
Is Cancer Prevention Possible? .....	March	3
Heartworm: Don't Take It Lightly .....	March	12
Get the Worms Out: Heartworm Treatment .....	April	12
Hospice How-To .....	April	19
Safe Pain Relief .....	May	3
A Water-Lover's Worry: Giardia .....	May	11
Building Credibility: Interview With Dr. Susan Wynn .....	June	6
Arnica: Don't Leave Home Without It .....	June	9
Willard Water .....	June	13
Chill Pills: Behavior-Altering Drugs .....	July	3
Grandmother Nature: Juliette de Bairacli Levy .....	July	14
Gotta Detox: Herbal Detoxifiers .....	July	18
Probing Probiotics .....	August	3
Accelerated Wound Healing .....	August	13
Post-Op Acupressure .....	August	17
Drips Dried: Curing Urinary Incontinence .....	September	3
Healing Hot Spots and Lick Granulomas .....	September	12
Acupressure for Health Maintenance .....	September	16
Butt Scoot Boogie .....	October	6
Dog Gone Dung .....	October	14
Shots Fired: Limiting Vaccines .....	November	6
Don't Eat That! .....	December	14
Managing Your Relationship With Your Vet .....	December	18

**LETTERS**

Letters About Cropping and Docking .....	February	22
Regarding Arthritis Relievers .....	June	22

	Issue	Page #
More on Arthritis Reliever .....	August	23
Good Job, Good Year .....	August	22

**NUTRITION**

Moist and (Probably) Delicious: Wet Dog Food .....	January	3
The Right Stuff: Dry Dog Food Review .....	February	3
Completely Convenient: Frozen Raw Diets .....	April	3
Diet and the Older Dog .....	December	6

**TOUR OF THE DOG**

Aged to Perfection: Older Dogs .....	January	18
Brains of the Operation .....	March	20
Basic Immunology .....	May	18
Paean to the Pancreas .....	June	16
Yo Adrenals! .....	July	20
Too Much Love? Overweight Dogs .....	August	19
A World of Hurt: Pain and Pain Management .....	September	18
Up With Pups! .....	October	20
Pro Antioxidants .....	November	18

**TRAINING**

(Body) Language Barrier .....	January	9
Right On Target .....	February	9
Shock or Awe? Electronic Training Collars .....	February	18
Way to Stay .....	March	8
The Shape of Things to Come (Shaping) .....	March	16
Control Yourself! Teaching Your Dog Self-Control .....	May	15
A New Look: Teach Your Dog to Look at You .....	June	10
Biscuits, Not Rolls: No Alpha Rolls .....	July	10
Differences Between Men and Women Trainers .....	August	7
Riding in Cars With Dogs .....	October	3
Teach Your Dog to Read .....	October	10
Fix the Fetch .....	November	3
Positively Australia .....	December	3
Leaping to Attention .....	December	11

**Whole Dog Journal Back Issues Available**

Order now by calling (800) 424-7887

Or circle the back issues you want to order and send page plus check or money order to:

Whole Dog Journal Back Issues  
800 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk CT 06854-5656

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_ BACK ISSUES @ \$7.50 EA. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAGE & HANDLING \$ 2.00

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685). 1. Title of Publication: The Whole Dog Journal. 2. Publication No.:0016-8560. 3. Filing Date: 9/30/06. 4. Issue Frequency: Monthly. 5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 12. 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$39. 7. Known Office of Publication: 800 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. Contact person: Greg King, 203/857-3119. 8. Headquarters or General Business Office of the Publisher: Same as above. 9. Publisher: Same as above. Editor: Nancy Kerns. Managing Editor: N/A. Belvoir Publications, Inc. 800 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. 10. Owner: Belvoir Media Group, LLC 800 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. 11. Known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amounts of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None. 13. Title: The Whole Dog Journal. 14. Issue date for circulation data below: August 06. 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation (Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months/ No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date): a.

Total No. of Copies Printed (79250/75000) b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 1. Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (76690/73390). 2. Paid In-County Subscriptions (0/0). 3. Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution (889/776). 4. Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS (0/0). c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (77579/74166). d. Free Distribution by Mail: 1. Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541 (37/61). 2. In-County as Stated on Form 3541 (0/0). 3. Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS (0/0). e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (582/447). f. Total Free Distribution (619/508). g. Total Distribution (78197/74674). h. Copies Not Distributed (1124/326). i. Total (79322/75000). j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (99/99). 17. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. Gregory M. King, Sr. VP Circulation, 9/19/06.

## RESOURCES

### AGILITY

Angelica Steinker, M.Ed., owns and operates Courteous Canine, Inc., in Lutz, Florida. She is author of *Agility Success* (Clean Run Productions, 2000) and *Click and Play Agility* (Courteous Canine Inc., 2006). (813) 949-1465 or [courteouscanine.com](http://courteouscanine.com)

### BOOKS

WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of two books: *The Power of Positive Dog Training* and *Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog*. Both books are available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or [dogwise.com](http://dogwise.com)

*Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Dog Care* and *Dr. Kidd's Guide to Herbal Cat Care* are published by Storey Books, (800) 441-5700 or [storeybooks.com](http://storeybooks.com)

*The Holistic Dog Book: Canine Care for the 21st Century*, by Denise Flaim, is available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or [dogwise.com](http://dogwise.com).

### RABIES CHALLENGE FUND

Vaccine research scientist, W. Jean Dodds, DVM, and pet vaccine disclosure advocate, Kris L. Christine of Maine, have established The Rabies Challenge Fund to raise money to fund a rabies vaccine challenge study in the U.S. In addition to the challenge study, the fund will finance a study of the adjuvants used in veterinary rabies vaccines and establish a rabies vaccine adverse reaction reporting system.

Researchers believe the rabies vaccine causes the most and worst adverse reactions in animals. The Rabies Challenge Fund has been founded to improve the safety of rabies vaccines and to determine, by challenge, if they confer immunity for five, six, or seven years.

Donate to the Rabies Challenge Fund care of Hemopet, 11330 Markon Dr., Garden Grove, CA 92841. See [dogsadversereactions.com/rabieschallenge.html](http://dogsadversereactions.com/rabieschallenge.html) for more information.

### 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. Call her at (301) 582-9420 or see [peaceablepaws.com](http://peaceablepaws.com)

The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) has references to member trainers in your area. Call (800) 738-3647 or see [apdt.com](http://apdt.com).

Please note: APDT is dedicated to building better trainers through education, promoting dog-friendly methods, and encouraging their use. APDT's membership is composed of trainers from across the spectrum of training philosophies. Membership does not necessarily ensure 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, to achieve desired behavior.

### 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](http://ahvma.org)

### PLEASE NOTE: Unauthorized copying or distribution of WDJ is not permitted

This publication is supported by sales of subscriptions and back issues. The fact that we are NOT supported by advertising sales gives us the editorial independence necessary to present a subjective and critical view.

Making multiple copies of WDJ articles for distribution, in print or on a website, without the permission of the publisher, is **unethical and illegal**. If you would like to share material from WDJ with a group, please contact our Reprint Manager, Mona Kornfeld, at (203) 857-3143.

## WHAT'S AHEAD

### Preparing to Feed a Home-Prepared Diet

*How to develop a complete, balanced diet for your dog, and prepare it yourself.*

### Gear of the Year

*The best and most innovative dog training and dog care products we've seen.*

### New Uses for an Old Stick

*Use this technique to teach your dog to heel off leash, or to close the door on cue, or . . . ?*

### Arthritis

*Dogs with this common ailment are perfect candidates for holistic treatment. A reminder: "Holistic" means using everything that works.*

### You Know You Should . . .

*. . . brush your dog's teeth. Here's how, and some tools that make it easier.*

### Keeping it in Perspective

*Sometimes, when rehabilitating a difficult dog, you can lose track of how far he has already come.*

### A Real Treat

*How to identify and select healthy and irresistible treats.*