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Canine Kismet

We want WDJ to be useful to you now.

BY NANCY KERNS

One of the most gratifying things that readers say to me is, "Every time I need an article to appear on some topic, it does!" It's obviously a coincidence when it happens at just the right time for any given reader – but it's also an indication that we're on track in presenting enough articles on the issues that are relevant to you and your dogs, whether you are dealing with vexing puppy behavior, a senior dog health problem, a dietary dilemma, or any other dog-related issue.

It's weird, but it also happens to me. Sometimes I'll be privately wrestling with a dog-related problem, or starting to research a topic that is relevant to my dog, or one of my siblings' dogs. Right then, I'll get an e-mail message or a phone call from one of my regular writers, wondering whether I'd be interested in an article on that very topic.

As it happens, this issue contains a number of those kismet-kissed articles. My sister (the one with three small, naughty dogs) is hosting Thanksgiving this year; Stephanie Colman's article on the facing page could have been written specifically for her – but it wasn't, I swear.

Very recently, Training Editor Pat Miller and I were exchanging articles – which appeared in newspapers on our respective coasts – about car crashes in which dogs were lost after being thrown from an accident victim's car. Not "lost" as in "died," but "lost" as in they survived the crash, but ran in a panic from the crashed car, and couldn't be found. In both cases, the dogs' owners couldn't help with the search, either, as they were hospitalized with serious injuries themselves. My chest tightens and my eyes tear up as I imagine lying in a hospital room while Otto is out there somewhere, lost, injured, and afraid. Ack! Then, a day or two later, Susan Sarubin contacts me to ask whether I would like an article on canine car safety! Sarubin has contributed a number of articles



to WDJ in the past, but I hadn't heard from her for a while. I really appreciated the arrival of "Buckle Up Your Pup!" (page 4).

Two years ago, I tried feeding Otto a number of different commercial raw diets, and he rejected each and every one. I ended up giving them all to a friend for her dog.

Recently I tried again, in an effort to empty my freezer of the many samples that arrived while working on last month's review of commercial raw frozen diets (and this month's follow-up, on page 11). I guess his palate has matured, because he's been chowing right through the samples this time. I haven't noticed any of the dramatic changes that the proponents of home-prepared raw diets describe, such as a nicer coat, better energy, or fresher breath; he wasn't lacking in any of those departments. But his poop is a lot smaller and less smelly. And I know a raw diet comprised of fresh foods would be healthier for him.

Between Otto's newfound appetite for raw food and my newfound spare time (my baby boy moved out – into a college dorm! How can he be ready for college? He was only five when WDJ was launched!) I'm ready to start making Otto's food myself. And Mary Straus' review of books (appearing on page 6 and in the next issue) devoted to home-prepared diets will help me choose which guides I'll use to make sure the resulting diet will be complete and balanced.

As helpful as it is to me, it's more critical that WDJ is useful and relevant to you, too. What would you like to learn more about? What would you like to see less of? What

training or health experts would you like to hear from? My mailing address and e-mail address are at the top of the next column. Let me know what WDJ can do for you.

NK

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

EDITORIAL OFFICE

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

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

PHONE: (800) 829-9165
 INTERNET: whole-dog-journal.com/cs
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 CANADA: Box 7820 STN Main
 London, Ontario N5Y 5W1

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Happy Holidays

Five things to keep your dog safe during the holidays.

BY STEPHANIE M. COLMAN

The holiday season is upon us. As we settle into the hustle and bustle and begin planning for an onslaught of holiday visitors, it's important to remember that environmental changes can be challenging (and sometimes dangerous) for our pets.

When planning the perfect festive gathering, consider the following:

1 Train, don't complain. Dogs rely on us to teach them acceptable behaviors. Jumping up, stealing food, barking, and digging are normal dog behaviors. Unfortunately for dogs, they are also behaviors few people find enjoyable. The arrival of holiday houseguests often introduces ample opportunities for dogs to engage in unwanted activities. Even trained dogs can benefit from brushing up on basic skills. Help remind your dog what's expected of him by practicing and rewarding desired behaviors on a daily basis. Basic obedience can help keep your pet safe and happy.

2 Use the magic of management. In a perfect world our dogs would behave beautifully under any circumstances. When we live in the real world, management tools are a wonderful way to help create and maintain calm under challenging conditions. For example, if your dog is an avid counter-surfer, consider baby-gating him out of the kitchen when preparing the five-course feast. Baby gates, crates, tethers, and x-pens are all useful tools to help ensure correct behavior even when around high-level distractions.

Whenever possible, give your dog something *to* do rather than letting him become unemployed and seek out trouble. Complex food

delivery puzzles (Buster Cube, Kibble Nibble, Kong, etc.) are wonderful ways to keep dogs happily entertained. A secret stash of his favorite chew bones will also be helpful. Plan ahead and have several doggy "sit quietly and color" activities on hand for your pet to enjoy.

3 Respect each other. Avoid forcing your dog on non-dog people, and don't let guests force themselves on your dog. You may generally live by the motto of "Love me, love my dog," but a holiday party is not the best time to prove your point. You might find it endearing when your Great Dane thinks he's a lap dog, but your guests may feel otherwise. Don't expect others to enjoy the same type of interaction with your dog as you do.

Likewise, your second cousin might think it's adorable when Little Johnny tries to ride your dog like a rodeo cowboy. Don't be afraid to step in and toddler-wrangle. Set clear ground rules for how your dog is to be treated and if necessary, politely remove your dog from the situation if guests are unable or unwilling to follow them. Watch your dog closely for signs that he's uncomfortable, such as yawning, lip-licking, turning away, or actively trying to get away from the situation.

If you know your dog has fear or aggression issues, do everyone a favor and help guarantee success by completely avoiding interactions that can trigger unwanted or unsafe behavior. It's better to safely confine a dog away from the party than to risk a bite and undermine training progress.

4 Decorations or disasters? Be mindful of holiday decorations. Strings of lights, breakable ornaments, poisonous plants, and glowing candles can attract curious canines. Management and supervision is a must during the holidays.

5 Leave the leftovers. Rich, fatty foods can cause stomach problems ranging from simple upset to pancreatitis – inflammation of the pancreas resulting in pain, vomiting, and dehydration. Dogs with this serious condition often require hospitalization for treatment. Ask that guests refrain from feeding table scraps and be sure to dog-proof your garbage. Be especially mindful of cooked bones.

Alcohol, chocolate, xylitol (artificial sweetener), tobacco, and medications can be fatal when consumed in quantities proportionate to the size of the dog. Instruct guests to keep purses and suitcases closed and safely out of reach.

Keep your local emergency vet's phone number handy, along with driving directions if you're not familiar with its location.

Holiday festivities can become hectic. Don't forget to relax and spend quality time with your dog! 🐾

Stephanie Colman is a writer and dog trainer in Los Angeles. She shares her life with two dogs and competes in obedience and agility. See page 24 for contact info.



Pets need extra supervision during holidays, when routines are out of whack, and new things and guests are in the house.

Buckle Up Your Pup!

Simple safety practices may save your dog's life – and your own.

BY SUSAN SARUBIN, CPDT-KA

Those of us who are a bit older remember when seat belts, air bags, and infant car seats did not exist. Today, these safety devices are mandated by laws and most of us would not consider putting ourselves or our children at risk by not using them in our vehicles. So why do many people still risk the lives of another beloved family member – their dog – by allowing their pet to ride unrestrained in their car or truck?

A Lab riding shotgun or loose in the bed of a truck, a Shih Tzu on the driver's lap, a German Shepherd hanging his head out of the window, a Pomeranian lying up by the back windshield, a Heinz 57-mix pacing on the back seat – we've all seen, or even been guilty of, dangerous animal transport practices. "My dog loves to sit on my lap" or "...loves to feel the wind in her face" or "...will only sit in the front seat" or "...would never jump out of the truck," are all excuses used by owners who subsequently lost their pets tragically in vehicle accidents.

So why don't many dog lovers safely secure their canine companion in their vehicle? It's not for lack of loving the animal, but may be attributed to lack of awareness of the dangers of having an unsecured pet in a moving vehicle. It never occurs to many dog owners that their dog needs to

be protected in a car; it's not something that was done with the family dog growing up, and protecting our traveling pets has never been in the forefront of car safety issues. There are no laws for restraining pets in vehicles in most states, and they are woefully inadequate in those states that do have them; most address only the need to secure dogs in the backs of pickup trucks.

Dangerous driving details

The dangers of driving with your dog unrestrained are numerous and hardly hypothetical; in the United States alone, thousands of deaths of dogs, drivers, and passengers are attributed to unrestrained dogs each year, in addition to what must be an unimaginable number of injury accidents and fender benders.

■ Even a low-speed crash may turn an unrestrained dog into a missile, possibly ejecting the animal out through the windshield or side window, or perhaps injuring a passenger or driver, resulting in further loss of control of the vehicle. The Automobile Association of America (AAA) estimates that a 10-pound dog will exert approximately 500 pounds of pressure in a 50 mph crash, and an 80-pound dog will exert 2,400 pounds of pressure in a crash at only 30 mph.

What you can do . . .

- Buy a well-fitted harness/car safety belt product and use it, every time your dog is in the car.
- Or, put your dog in a well-secured crate in the car.
- No small dogs on your lap while you drive. No exceptions.
- Make sure your dog always has ID tags with your current contact information on them. It's best if there is more than one contact person/number on the tags.



■ If a dog survives the impact of a crash, he will likely be injured and frightened, and flee the scene, at risk of being struck by another vehicle or becoming lost.

■ An unrestrained dog can interfere with driving by crawling on the driver's lap, falling down by the gas and brake pedals, or creating some other distraction that causes an accident.

■ While there are age and weight requirements for children to ride in the front seat of a vehicle, there are no such laws to protect our canine companions. If you have an air bag for the passenger seat of your car, the force of impact upon inflation can severely injure or kill a dog.

■ A small dog on the lap of the driver in a crash is at risk of being crushed between the air bag and the driver.

■ Dogs riding in the back of pickup trucks can be severely injured or killed by jump-



This unsecured dog may enjoy his ride, but no one will be happy when he falls or gets thrown out of that truck – although his cell-phone-gabbing driver might not even notice it if the dog loses his grip on that slippery bed liner and falls out.

ing or falling out of the moving vehicle, injured by airborne road debris, and easily ejected upon accident impact.

- A dog who rides with his head outside of a partially opened car window is at risk of injury or loss of an eye from airborne road debris.

- An injured and unrestrained dog can be a danger to any human trying to help. Dogs who are frightened and in pain tend to bite, even their owners.

Statistically speaking

According to AAA, more than 30,000 accidents a year are caused by dogs riding in the front seat of the vehicle. As startling as this number is, it represents only dog owners insured by AAA. One can only imagine the additional high number of accidents due to unrestrained dogs by drivers with other insurers or uninsured.

According to the Travel Industry Association of America, in the U.S., 29 million dog owners drive with their dogs. But only 20 percent use dog safety restraints when traveling (according to the American Pet Manufacturers Association).

A recent online survey conducted by AAA asked dog owners how often they drive with their dogs; it also asked about their driving habits when their dogs were in the vehicle. The results:

- Eighty percent of respondents said they've driven with their dogs, but only 17 percent report using a pet restraint.

- One out of three admitted to being distracted by their dog while driving.

- More than half (59 percent) said they have participated in at least one distracting behavior while driving with their dog.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety reports that looking away from the road for only two seconds doubles your risk of being in a crash. Driving with an unrestrained dog can be as distracting as talking on a cell phone or texting. While laws addressing other distracting behaviors when driving have been passed in many states, laws proposed regarding pet restraint inside of vehicles have been routinely rejected.

Totally up to you

Whether through legislation or education, vehicle safety is ultimately up to the indi-

vidual dog owner. Our dogs can't protect themselves.

Using a crate is an excellent option for keeping your dog from distracting you, protecting him from injury in the event of a crash, and keeping him secure and contained in the aftermath. Plastic airline crates are best; they help shield the dog from flying shards of glass and unlike metal cages, they don't collapse easily on impact, causing injury to the dog. A crate should always be secured inside the vehicle to prevent it from flipping or flying forward, as well as in the bed of a truck so it won't be ejected upon impact.

Dog seat belts, used in the back seat, are another great option to secure your dog in your vehicle to minimize injury in the event of an accident. Available at many pet stores as well as on the Internet, seat belts designed for dogs are harnesses that are secured to the vehicle's seat belt. Most allow your dog to sit, lie down, or even stand, but otherwise keep the dog in place.

For small dogs, car dog seats or booster seats can elevate your pet so he can see out the window while keeping him restrained for safety. Find one that attaches to the car seat, strapping to the vehicle's headrest and seat, or secured by the seat belt, and is equipped with a leash tether to attach to your dog's harness.

Pet barriers made of steel are intended to keep your dog safely contained behind the front seats. While keeping the dog from physically distracting the driver or crashing through the front windshield from the impact of a crash, other possible dangers are not addressed. The dog may still be ejected from the vehicle, hit by another vehicle, and be a danger to you, or to emergency personnel attempting to help you or your dog. Seat belts are a better option.

And what of the dog who loves to hang her head out a partially opened window? Keep the windows closed; if you feel like you're depriving your dog of one of life's simple pleasures, indulge her in another of her favorite pastimes, like a tongue-dragging game of fetch when you reach your destination. She'll be a safer, healthier dog for it. 🐾

Susan Sarubin, CPDT-KA, lives in Easton, Maryland, with her husband and three Rhodesian Ridgebacks. Susan owns Paw-sitive Fit, LLC, Puppy and Dog Training, and she is the Maryland State Coordinator for Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc. See page 24 for contact information.

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Reliable Guides for Raw Diets

A review of books on feeding your dog a raw meaty bone diet.

BY MARY STRAUS

When someone becomes interested in feeding their dog a homemade diet, I always advise them to read at least one book on the subject before getting started. But which one should you choose? Guidelines run the gamut from diets that have been analyzed to ensure they are complete and balanced, to those that are dangerously inadequate. How do you tell the difference?

I decided to check out the homemade diet books that are currently available. Some of them I'd read before, but wanted to take a fresh look at; others were new to me. It's been an eye-opening experience.

I found some books that I'd liked a lot when I first read them didn't hold up well now that I know more about canine nutrition, and in comparison with others that have been published since. A few new books and improved new editions were pleasant surprises, but I found that other popular books lacked any credible guid-

ance on important topics such as dietary calcium, an omission that will lead to serious harm over time.

Whichever book you choose, it's important that you read the whole book, or at least all of the sections pertaining to diet, rather than just looking at recipes. All of the books I recommend contain critical information about the diet in the text that you need to know before using their recipes or guidelines. If you just follow the recipes, you may miss essential details such as allowable substitutions, optional ingredients, and recommended supplements.

You may ask why I recommend reading *books* in the Internet age. Books offer a more complete and organized view of the author's approach to diet, while even good websites often compress the information too much, leaving out important details, or scattering it onto different pages, making it easy to miss essential components. E-mail lists can be a good resource for beginners when they run into questions, but they're

What you can do . . .

- Read the whole book, don't just try to find recipes.
- Don't consider any part of the diet *optional* unless it is clearly marked as such.
- Limit RMBs to no more than 60 percent of the diet (preferably 50 percent or even less).



not organized in a way that lets you learn everything you need to know.

Also, some e-mail lists are dominated by people with a single point of view, who will attack, ridicule, and remove anyone who disagrees, ensuring that you see only one side. Others allow anyone to say anything, meaning the advice you receive may be very good *or* completely misguided.

Books allow you to see the big picture, refer back to relevant details, and (one would hope) gain a clear understanding of the whole diet before you start. You can read reviews, check references, and decide whether the information seems reliable. If you take the time to read a book thoroughly, you'll be better able to distinguish the good from the bad when it comes to advice found on websites and e-mail lists.

I'll start this month by looking at books that focus on diets based on raw meaty bones (RMBs). Next month, I'll review some excellent new books that offer guidelines for diets where RMBs are optional. Last, I'll discuss books that have only boneless recipes, either raw or cooked.

Most of the books reviewed are available from Amazon.com and bookstores. A few can be purchased only from pet book specialists (such as Dogwise.com), holistic



There are many books that explain how to prepare a diet for your dog that is based mainly on raw, meaty bones – but we recommend only a few.

pet supply stores, or from the author.

Some books contain additional chapters on such topics as herbs, health issues, the evolution of the dog, and more. I have ignored those parts and focused my reviews solely on dietary guidelines and recipes. My recommendation of a book's diet does not mean that I endorse anything else that the book may include.

The origins of RMB diets

When I first became interested in feeding my dogs a homemade diet based on raw meaty bones back in 1997, the choice of books was easy, as only one book on the subject existed. Australian veterinarian Ian Billinghurst published *Give Your Dog a Bone* in 1993. At least six more books that focus on RMB diets were published later, including two more from Dr. Billinghurst, as the popularity of the diets grew. Most offer variations on his original diet, though another Australian veterinarian, Tom Lonsdale, introduced a distinct style of feeding based on whole prey.

Proponents of raw meaty bones diets believe that this style of feeding most closely mimics the evolutionary diet of the dog. Raw meaty bones are those that can be fully consumed by dogs, as opposed to "recreational" bones, such as marrow and knuckle bones. Typical RMBs used by raw feeders include chicken necks, backs, wings, and leg quarters; turkey, lamb, pork, and beef necks; and lamb and pork breasts (riblets). RMBs provide a perfect balance of calcium and phosphorus, along with other nutrients.

It's vital to realize that these diets consist of much more than just RMBs, which is why reading a book on the topic is strongly advised. Again, it's important to choose the right book.

Give Your Dog a Bone: The Practical Commonsense Way to Feed Dogs For a Long Healthy Life, by Ian Billinghurst, BVSc

1993, Ian Billinghurst (self-published). 319 pages. The original guide to feeding a diet based on raw meaty bones. \$30 from Dogwise.com; (800) 776-2665.

Pros: A tremendous amount of detailed information about the value of various foods. Diet includes a large variety of different foods.

Cons: Difficult to follow. Information is scattered; there is no index. Specifics such as amount to feed are unclear. Book provides misinformation about the amount of protein, calcium, and phosphorus in commercial foods and their effects on health. A few recommendations are potentially dangerous. No nutritional analysis of the diet offered.

Rating: Recommended, with reservations

One of the biggest variations between books on RMB diets is the amount of bone included in the diet. Some books recommend feeding diets that are two-thirds or more RMBs. Too much bone provides excess calcium that can contribute to skeletal disease in large-breed puppies, such as hip dysplasia, hypertrophic osteodystrophy (HOD), and osteochondritis dissecans (OCD). Because calcium binds other nutrients, I believe that even adult dogs do better if the diet contains no more than 50 percent RMBs.

With that in mind, let's take a look at the available books on feeding your dog a RMB-based diet.

Dr. Billinghurst's books

Australian veterinarian Ian Billinghurst wrote the first popular book on diets that include RMBs, which he called BARF diets, for "bones and raw food" or "biologically appropriate raw food." His diet is based on the natural diet of wolves and wild dogs. He later wrote two more books, *Grow Your Pup with Bones*, on feeding puppies and dogs used for breeding; and *The BARF Diet*, an updated and condensed version of his first book.

I have a soft spot in my heart for Billinghurst's first book, as it's the one that I relied on when I started feeding a raw diet in 1998. The book has a tremendous amount of detail about the various ingredients that go into the diet, and helped me grasp the concepts of balance over time; feeding raw meaty bones; and that if we can feed our children without resorting to "complete and balanced" meals from a bag or can, we can do the same for our dogs.

Billinghurst's books can be frustrating, though. The information is disorganized. None of the books contains an index. If you want recipes or simple, clear instructions, you will not like Billinghurst's books. Even those who appreciate the details on the nutritional benefits of each type of food may find it difficult to extract the specific elements needed to formulate a diet and determine how much to feed.

The foods and ratios used in all three books are similar. Billinghurst recommends feeding a diet that is approximately 60 percent RMBs, 15 to 20 percent vegetables and fruits, 10 to 15 percent organs, and the rest a variety of "additives," including eggs, fish, muscle meat, oils, table scraps, grains, legumes, yogurt, and raw milk.

Billinghurst also adds whole food

Grow Your Pup with Bones: The BARF Programme for Breeding Healthy Dogs and Eliminating Skeletal Disease, by Ian Billinghurst, BVSc

1998, Ian Billinghurst (self-published). 405 pages. Guide to feeding a RMB diet to puppies and breeding dogs. \$40 from Dogwise.com; (800) 776-2665.

Pros: Covers RMB diets for all aspects of dogs in a breeding program.

Cons: No index or nutritional analysis provided for the diet. Suggested feeding amounts are excessive. Contains misinformation about high-protein diets causing orthopedic problems in puppies.

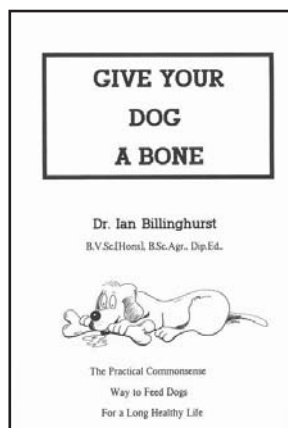
Rating: Recommended, with reservations

supplements: cod liver oil, apple cider vinegar, brewer's yeast, honey, kelp, alfalfa, and garlic. He suggests supplementing with vitamins A, B-complex, C, D, and E, and offering the dog larger (recreational) bones.

Billinghurst stresses the need for variety in all three books, but he's not consistent. In his first book, for example, he says that puppies can be fed up to 80 percent RMBs, stating, "We have found that we can get away with feeding puppies almost one hundred percent chicken wings, chicken necks, lamb 'off cuts,' and very little of anything else." This advice is irresponsible, as it could lead to serious nutritional inadequacies and excesses that may cause lasting harm.

Feeding methodology varies between the three books. In the first, Billinghurst suggests feeding different foods at different meals. Over three weeks, you would feed 10 meals of RMBs, 4 vegetable, 1 starch, 1 grain/legume, 1 meat, 2 milk, and 1 or 2 organ meat meals.

The second book introduces the "patty," a mix of all foods except RMBs (though



The book that started the "raw meaty bones" trend.

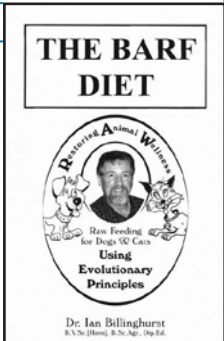
The BARF Diet: Raw Feeding For Dogs and Cats Using Evolutionary Principles, by Ian Billinghurst, BVSc

2001, Ian Billinghurst (self-published). 109 pages. Updated and more concise version of the first book. Provides a complete overview on feeding a RMB diet. \$20 from Dogwise.com; (800) 776-2665.

Pros: Shorter and easier to follow than previous books. More emphasis on variety rather than feeding primarily chicken.

Cons: No index or nutritional analysis for the diet provided. Amounts to feed are excessive. Suggests starving puppies with skeletal problems by feeding almost all vegetables, which I do not advise.

Rating: Recommended.



those can be included in small amounts). Billinghurst suggests alternating between RMB and patty meals.

The third book offers two feeding choices: alternating RMB meals with a combination of other foods, such as meat (some including bone), organs, vegetables, fruit, and additives; or feeding “multi-mix patties,” consisting of all foods, including RMBs, ground together. The latter ties in with the introduction of “Dr. Billinghurst’s Meat and Bone Minces” from a company, BARF World, that he helped found (he is no longer affiliated with the company). The third book also places more emphasis on variety rather than feeding primarily chicken necks, wings, and carcasses.

The first two books are both quite long. While they are filled with valuable details and concepts, they unfortunately also contain misinformation about such things as the amount of protein, calcium, and phosphorus in commercial diets, and problems caused by too much protein that have since been disproved. The third book is shorter, making it easier to follow, and leaves out most of the earlier incorrect claims.

None of the three books provides good guidelines for how much to feed. All contain at least a few recommendations outside the scope of the general diet that I consider dangerous, such as feeding too much bone to puppies, frequent or prolonged fasting, and starving dogs who are overweight and puppies with skeletal problems by feeding them almost entirely vegetables.

A large portion of the second book is devoted to topics (health issues, breeding, and history) that are beyond the scope of this review.

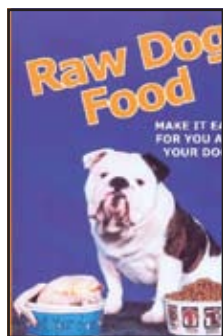
Good starter book

Carina Beth MacDonald uses a lighthearted approach to cover the basics of a RMB diet without making things too complicated. Recommended proportions are 50 percent RMBs, 20 percent boneless meat, 5 to 10 percent organs, and 20 to 25 percent veggies, eggs, and fruit. In my opinion, this is a better ratio than other books that recommend a higher proportion of RMBs. Optional ingredients include dairy products, grains, apple cider vinegar, blackstrap molasses, garlic, ginger, nuts, legumes, and leftovers.

MacDonald’s book covers all the basics that a beginning raw feeder needs to know:

what bony parts to feed, other foods to include in the diet, preparation, and how much to feed (as a percentage of ideal body weight). Note that the amounts given for puppies and small dogs (up to 10 percent of body weight daily) are too high. Recommended nutritional supplements include fish oil and vitamins C and E. Additional chapters go over customizing the diet based on age and size, problem solving, and answers to common questions.

I think this is one of the better “getting started” books for raw feeders, as it covers all the basics in a manner that is clear and easy to follow. The index is also helpful when you want to refer back to specific details as you put your diet together.



Raw Dog Food: Make It Easy for You and Your Dog, by Carina Beth MacDonald

2004, Dogwise Publishing. 86 pages, including index. Provides guidelines for feeding a Billinghurst-style RMB diet. \$13 (or \$9 as an e-book) from Dogwise.com; (800) 776-2665.

Pros: Easy for beginners to understand. Good ratio of RMBs to other foods.

Cons: No nutritional analysis of the diet provided. Lacking details on the nutritional value of different foods.

Rating: Recommended.

Billinghurst devotee

Switching to Raw is a very simple and easy-to-follow translation of the first Billinghurst book. Both recommend feeding at least 60 percent RMBs; Susan K. Johnson’s sample menu suggests feeding two RMB meals every other day, with one meal of RMBs and one meal of other foods on alternate days. This comes to 75 percent RMBs in the overall diet, which I believe is too much.

Instead, I would advise feeding just

Switching to Raw: A Fresh Food Diet for Dogs That Makes Sense, by Susan K. Johnson

2001, Birchrun Basics (self-published). 107 pages (printed on one side only, so half are blank). Gives guidelines for feeding a Billinghurst-style RMB diet. \$14, from the author: switchingtoraw.com.

Pros: Simple to follow. Wide variety of foods used.

Cons: Diet is too high in bone. No nutritional analysis of the diet provided. No index.

Rating: Recommended, with reservations.



one RMB meal and rotating between the other foods Johnson recommends for the second meal each day.

In addition to RMBs, Johnson’s diet includes fish, eggs, organ

meats (15 percent of the total diet), muscle (boneless) meat, and vegetables, with grains being optional. She gives guidelines for how much to feed dogs that weigh 20, 50, and 80 pounds, broken into meals of RMBs; vegetables with fish and egg; muscle meat with egg; and organ meat with egg.

Recommended supplements include fish oil and flaxseed or hemp oil; kelp and alfalfa; vitamins B-complex, C, and E; cod liver oil; digestive enzymes and probiotics; and molasses (although the recipes in the “Amounts to Feed” section leave out vitamin E).

Note that the recommendation to feed puppies up to 10 percent of their body weight daily is too high.

Other sections include information on treats and recreational bones; making the switch; what to expect; and shopping and preparation. The book does not address possible problems with RMBs for dogs who gulp their food.

Not recommended

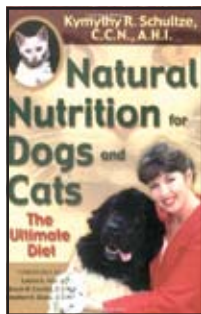
Schultze wrote one of the early books on RMB diets. Her diet consists of muscle and organ meat, RMBs, eggs, and a very small amount of vegetables. Recommended supplements include kelp, alfalfa, cod liver oil, “EFAs,” and vitamin C.

Schultze’s book is filled with absolutes. She tells you to feed just one meal a day, and fast your dog one day a week. You’re not allowed to use aluminum foil for storage. She avoids both grains and dairy products, inferring without evidence that dietary guidelines for dogs with cancer will also help to prevent cancer. She makes other unsupported claims, such as that most pets cannot tolerate yeast. Other statements are just odd, such as advising not to feed raw salmon “unless it has tested free of salmon poisoning.” Testing for the parasite that causes salmon poisoning is not a viable option for dog owners.

The kind of details that would enable a dog owner to feed this diet are lacking here. A few examples: Schultze recommends feeding fish, but offers no suggestions as to the type of fish. Instructions for adding oils are vague. Food ratios are never given and feeding guidelines are unclear. She provides sample amounts to feed dogs weighing 10, 50, and 100 pounds, but ratios cannot be calculated because amounts are in different units. To illustrate, this is what she says to feed a 50-pound dog: “3/4-1 cup muscle meat (plus organ meat or egg), 1 turkey neck or 6 chicken necks, and 3 Tbl veggies, pulped.” Supplement amounts are also given: “2 tsp kelp/alfalfa, 1 tsp cod liver oil, 2 tsp EFAs, and up to 3,000-6,000 mg vitamin C.”

This book is too limited to be of much use, and doesn’t allow for variation in a dog’s needs. It also fails to address potential problems caused by bones.

I am even more unimpressed with Schultze’s newer book, *The Natural Nutrition No-Cook Book* (Hay House,



2005). In this book, Schultze offers human-style recipes, divided into sections such as Beverages (10 recipes); Dressings, Dips, Sauces, and Salsas (10); Fruit (15); and Vegetables (17). No attempt has been made to make these recipes complete; the book has no value to those who want to feed a complete and balanced

homemade diet to their dogs.

Alternate paradigm: The “whole prey” diet

Tom Lonsdale, another Australian vet, advocates a raw diet based on whole prey. I am not a fan of this style of feeding, as I feel it is impractical. It’s also restrictive; just because foods such as vegetables were not part of the evolutionary diet of wolves does not mean they provide no nutritional benefits. This book is the best guide available, however, for people who choose this feeding method. I’ll describe the distinguishing features of the diet and let you decide whether it appeals to you.

Lonsdale’s recommended diet consists of 70 percent RMBs, plus offal and table scraps. Lonsdale asserts that RMBs should come preferably from whole carcasses, such as rats, mice, and quail for small dogs; calf, goat, pig, kangaroo, and lamb for larger dogs; and rabbit, fish, and chicken for all dogs. Other recommended RMBs include chicken and turkey backs and frames (meat removed); poultry heads, feet, necks, and wings (small dogs only); sheep, deer, pig, and fish heads; lamb and pork necks; ox and kangaroo tails; sides of lamb; slabs of beef; and ox brisket. Table scraps and fruit are also allowed.

Large meals of liver are fed once every two weeks. Other offal deemed suitable by Lonsdale include lung, trachea, heart, omasum (part of the stomach of ruminants), tripe, tongue, pancreas, and spleen. Lonsdale says that if you can’t get offal, it’s acceptable to feed 100 percent of the diet as RMBs; he states, “Many of my clients fed almost exclusively chicken backs and frames – whether to

adult dogs or litters of puppies – and their animals showed excellent health.” I do not recommend this!

Ground RMBs are *not* allowed by Lonsdale except for dogs with no teeth or health issues such as megaesophagus or pyloric stenosis; ground food can also be fed to sick dogs for short periods only. Problems with RMBs such as choking are blamed on feeding pieces that are too small. Foods to be avoided include excessive meat off the bone, excessive vegetables, small pieces of bone, garlic, and milk.

Lonsdale is opposed to adding supplements such as glucosamine, chondroitin, flaxseed oil, and kelp. He advises against using vitamin and mineral supplements for any dog, including pregnant bitches and puppies, saying they can be harmful.

Lonsdale suggests feeding dogs once a day, and fasting healthy, adult dogs one or two days a week; he also suggests fasting “fat dogs” for “lengthy periods . . . even several weeks” (which I consider abusive).

Work Wonders: Feed your Dog Raw Meaty Bones, by Tom Lonsdale

2005, Rivetco P/L (self-published), 118 pages, including index. Gives guidelines for feeding a raw diet based on whole prey. \$13 from DogWise.com; (800) 776-2665. Also available for \$10 as an e-book at rawmeatybones.com.

Pros: This is the only book on whole prey diets.

Cons: This type of diet is impractical for most people. Severe limitations on the type of foods fed. No nutritional analysis of the diet offered.

Rating: Recommended, with reservations.



One feeding method is to feed several days’ supply of food in one large piece, returning what is left to the refrigerator after the dog has eaten his share. Part-eaten bones can also be left outside “for further gnawing over ensuing days.”

Lonsdale and his followers are adamant that there is

only one right way to feed dogs; no deviation is permitted.

Lonsdale has another book, *Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health* (Rivetco P/L, 2001), which is not a how-to book; it’s mostly a history of Lonsdale’s war with the pet food industry. 🐾

Mary Straus investigates canine health and nutrition topics as an avocation. She is the owner of the DogAware.com website. She and her Norwich Terrier, Ella, live in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Natural Nutrition for Dogs and Cats: The Ultimate Diet, by Kymythy R. Schultze, CCN, AHI

1998, Hay House. 135 pages. Gives guidelines for feeding a RMB diet. \$9 from Dogwise.com; (800) 776-2665.

Pros: None.

Cons: Diet is limited, details are few, and instructions are inflexible. No nutritional analysis for the diet is provided. No index or references.

Rating: Not recommended.

A New Way to Spay

Fewer complications result from removal of only the dog's ovaries.

BY NANCY KAY, DVM

Taking a fresh look at the things we take for granted can be wonderfully enlightening. Sometimes, the little light bulb overhead begins to sizzle and sparkle, illuminating a new and better way of doing things. Consider this example: When some savvy veterinarians took a fresh look at performing spays, a surgery we've been doing the exact same way for decades, they came up with a revised technique that accomplishes all of the objectives of the spay surgery with fewer complications. How cool is that?

Spay is the term used for neutering a female dog. As I was taught in veterinary school, the medical jargon for spaying is ovariectomy (OVH). "Ovario" refers to ovaries, "hyster" refers to uterus, and "ectomy" means removal of. In other words, spaying the traditional way involves surgical removal of the uterus and both ovaries. The objectives of the spay surgery are to render the dog infertile, eliminate the mess and behavioral issues associated with a female dog in heat, and

prevent diseases that may afflict the uterus and ovaries later in life.

Thanks to some innovative veterinarians, we now know that ovariectomy (OVE) – removal of just the ovaries, leaving the uterus in place – accomplishes these objectives just as effectively as does the OVH. And, here's the icing on the cake: removal of the ovaries alone results in fewer complications when compared to removal of the ovaries and uterus combined.

Female canine anatomy

Here's a simple short course in canine female reproductive anatomy and physiology that will help explain why leaving the uterus behind makes sense. The shape of the uterus resembles the capital letter "Y." The body of the uterus is the stem and the two uterine horns represent the top bars of the "Y." An ovary is connected to the free end of each uterine horn by a delicate structure called a fallopian tube (transports the egg from the ovary into the uterus).

While the uterus has only one purpose

What you can do . . .

- Ask your veterinarian about the OVE surgery as an alternative to OVH for your puppy.
- If your veterinarian is opposed to changing her usual procedure, ask whether she can refer you to any colleagues who practice OVE. (Perhaps she will take the opportunity to learn more about the OVE if she learns her colleagues are using it.)



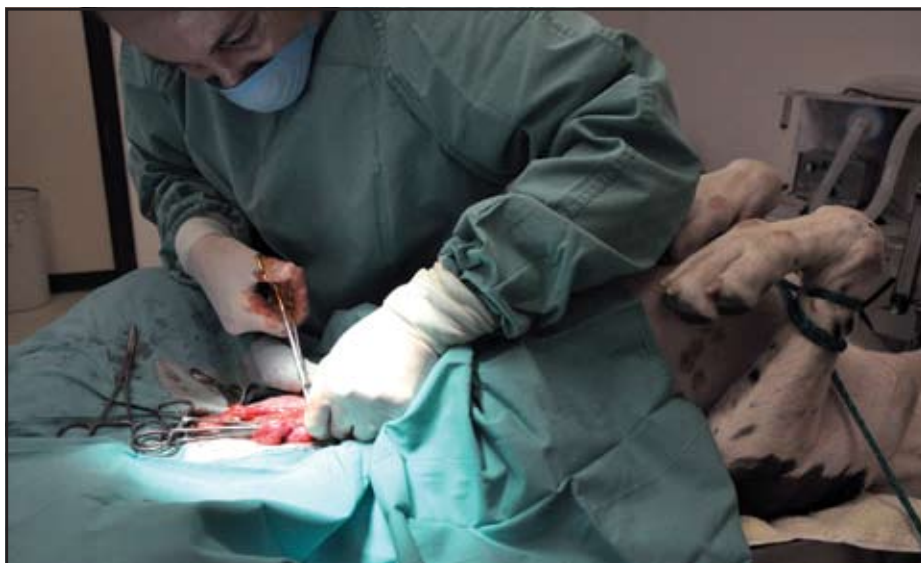
The Whole Dog Journal

(housing developing fetuses), the ovaries are multitaskers. They are the source of eggs of course and, in conjunction with hormones released by the pituitary gland, ovarian hormones dictate when the female comes into heat and becomes receptive to the male, when she goes out of heat, when she ovulates, and when her uterus is amenable to relaxing and stretching to house developing fetuses.

After the ovaries (and the hormones they produce) have been removed from the body, the uterus remains inert. The dog no longer shows symptoms of heat, nor can she conceive. Additionally, any chance of developing ovarian cystic disease or cancer is eliminated.

Better outcome

What happens when we leave the uterus behind? Isn't it subject to becoming diseased later in life? Actually, the incidence of uterine disease in dogs whose ovaries have been removed is exceptionally low. Pyometra (pus within the uterus), is the most common uterine disorder in unspayed dogs, and typically necessitates emergency surgery to remove the uterus.



No wonder female dogs are sore during recovery from conventional spay surgery – removal of the ovaries and the uterus requires the veterinarian to physically manipulate and cut away quite a bit of tissue. Removal of the ovaries alone is faster and less traumatic, and the patients recover more quickly.

Without the influence of progesterone, a hormone produced by the ovaries, pyometra does not naturally occur. The incidence of uterine cancer is extremely low in dogs (0.4 percent of all canine tumors) – hardly a worry, and studies have shown that the frequency of adult onset urinary incontinence (urine leakage) is the same whether or not the uterus is removed during the spay procedure.

If you are not already convinced that the “new spay is the better way,” consider the following complications that can be mitigated or avoided all together when the uterus remains unscathed:

- Compared to an OVH, an OVE requires less time in the operating room. This translates into decreased likelihood of anesthetic complications.

- Removal of the uterus requires that the surgeon perform more difficult ligations (tying off of large blood vessels and surrounding tissues with suture material before making cuts to release the organs from the body). A uterine body ligation that isn't tied quite tightly enough can result in excessive bleeding into the abdominal

cavity and may necessitate blood transfusions and/or a second surgery to stop the bleeding.

- The ureters (thin delicate tubes that transport urine from each kidney to the bladder) run adjacent to the body of the uterus. If a surgeon is not being extremely careful, it is possible to ligate and obstruct a ureter in the course of removing the uterus. This devastating complication requires a second corrective surgery; however, damage to the affected ureter and adjoining kidney may be irreversible.

- Removal of the uterus occasionally results in the development of a “stump granuloma” – a localized inflammatory process that develops within the small portion of uterus that is left behind. When this occurs a second “clean up surgery” is typically required.

- We know that the degree of post-operative patient discomfort correlates with the degree of surgical trauma. No question, of the two surgical options the OVH creates more trauma.

European veterinarians have been per-

forming OVEs rather than OVHs for years. In fact, the bulk of the research supporting the benefits of leaving the uterus behind has been conducted in Europe.

Slowly, veterinarians in the United States are catching on, and some veterinary schools are now preferentially teaching OVE rather than OVH techniques to their students.

What should you do if you are planning to have your dog spayed? Talk with your veterinarian about this article. Perhaps OVE surgery is already his or her first choice. If not, perhaps your vet will be willing to take a fresh look at performing this old-fashioned surgery. 🐾

Nancy Kay, DVM, is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM) and recipient of the American Animal Hospital Association 2009 Animal Welfare and Humane Ethics Award. She is also author of Speaking for Spot: Be the Advocate Your Dog Needs to Live a Happy, Healthy, Longer Life, and a staff internist at VCA Animal Care Center in Rohnert Park, California. See “Resources,” page 24 for contact information.



DOG DAYS— All Year Long!

For a dog lover, this is the perfect calendar! Not only will you meet a dozen of the most winsome, lively calendar canines we could find, but also, each month you'll get timely, pertinent guidance for keeping your own dog healthy and happy throughout the year. Each month is introduced with tips for everything from heartworm prevention to the importance of proper ID for your dog.

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Strong Foundations

How training Otto has reinforced the value of positive training for me.

BY NANCY KERNS

Teaching is the best way to learn. I know I'm not the first person to realize this, but it feels profound every time I remember it.

I've been working with volunteers at my local shelter, trying to teach everybody a little basic positive dog training, so that all the people who take dogs out of their indoor kennels for exercise, recreation, and socialization are on the same page.

We have several goals. Of course we want to make the dogs more comfortable, with a chance to eliminate outdoors, to breathe some fresh air, and have some room to run around or time to just lie in the sun and decompress from the stress of the loud indoor kennels.

We also want to help the dogs become more appealing to potential adopters. People are much more likely to consider a dog who knows even one or two basic good manners behaviors, such as "sit if

you want me to open the gate" and "when in doubt, sit."

I've noticed that as soon as you mention "training" to a motivated group of inexperienced dog lovers, however, almost immediately they start jerking dog leashes, kneeling jumping dogs in the chest, and saying "NO!" a lot. So my orientation speech to each potential volunteer starts out as a blatant sales pitch for positive training.

Otto is my model

I have my dog Otto constantly in mind as I'm working with the volunteers. I adopted Otto from these very kennels on June 13, 2008. He was absolutely no different from most of the dogs in the kennels today. He was an adolescent, about seven to nine months old. (There are more adolescent dogs than dogs of any other age in shelters everywhere. It's not hard to know why. They are neither cute puppies nor calmer

What you can do . . .

- A relationship can't be built overnight, but you can add to the foundation every day.
- Don't frighten or punish your dog if you can possibly help it.
- Try to catch your dog in the act of doing something right, at least a dozen times a day. Reward him with something unexpected, such as a spontaneous game of "Chase me!" or tug of war.



Otto was a scared, know-nothing adolescent when WDJ Editor Nancy Kerns adopted him. Today, he's the picture of confidence *and* calm, of curiosity and self-control. This is what consistently positive, "error-free" training can do for a dog.

adults.) He was frightened of humans and most things in the human world. He didn't know the most basic good manners behavior, not even "sit." His cage card indicated that he had a "rap sheet" for murder – chicken murder, that is. He had been in the shelter for almost two months.

Today, though, he's the best-behaved, most reliable, and *fun* dog I've ever owned. Not coincidentally, he's the first dog I've ever trained from day one with positive methods only – and I can't believe what a difference it has made.

Me and my last dog, a Border Collie named Rupert, were also very bonded, but this is different. Otto's actions and expressions convey a deeper trust in me than Rupert had. Otto is also far more motivated to try to figure out what I want, and unafraid to offer one behavior after another in an effort to puzzle out what might earn him my attention, praise, or a treat.

I owned Rupe for a number of years before I was asked to serve as the founding editor of Whole Dog Journal. I had never before been exposed to positive training



Typical shelter dog behavior: Jumping on the cage fronts and barking like mad. Without even entering their cages, volunteers can improve the “curb appeal” of these dogs, by reinforcing them with treats and attention, for keeping “four paws on the floor.”



That’s better already. It’s not *great*, but it’s better, and that’s a lot for a shelter dog who might have a limited amount of time to appeal to adopters. Simply reinforcing good (or marginally better) behavior and ignoring “bad” ones can have a marked effect in a short time. Positive training rocks!

for dogs – although I *had* been exposed to many different types of force-free *horse* training. Somehow, it never occurred to me to seek out similar methods for training my dog.

As a result, I used a certain amount of force-based training in Rupert’s early years. He was a classic sensitive, “soft” Border Collie, so all that was usually needed to “correct” his behavior was a stern verbal reprimand or an occasional leash correction. Not a big deal, right? Wrong! These seemingly minor transgressions on Rupe’s sensitive psyche meant that he developed into a dog who, when in doubt, would become very still. “I’m not sure what to do, but I don’t want to make a mistake and get yelled at . . . so I’ll just sit here and not look at her and hope she forgets about me.” And because I didn’t know any better, I took this for good training; because I had a dog who wasn’t being *bad*, I thought I had a well-behaved dog.

I suppose some people would say he was a “calm, submissive” dog.

I now know that what I really had was a cautious dog – one who knew *me* as someone who might scare or hurt him if he did the wrong thing.

Otto, by nature or nurture, is cautious, too. He can get frightened by new things, unfamiliar places, and loud sounds. However, he’s *not afraid of me*. He is not afraid or reluctant to come to me, ever. When I ask him to do something he’s not sure about, he’s like a kid whose hand shoots up every time the teacher asks a question, whether he knows the answer or not. He

tries something, anything, because the odds are really good that he’ll win a prize just for trying, and there is no chance whatsoever that there will be a scary consequence if he gets the answer wrong. He likes learning; he can’t wait for a chance to “play” the training “game.”

Do no harm

Neither I nor the other volunteers are there to form deep relationships with the shelter dogs. Nor is our goal to truly *train* the dogs. We’re there to help the dogs get adopted. The best way to accomplish this is to increase the dogs’ initial appeal; realistically, we don’t have the resources to accomplish much more than that.

But I’m adamant that we should also do no harm whatsoever. The animals in the shelter have already had enough misfortune for a lifetime; they really don’t need to learn any more about man’s potential for abuse. We’re not doing them any favors if they learn to trust humans even less, or to associate strangers with being smacked, reprimanded, yanked on the neck, or kneed in the chest – no matter their own behavior.

This is a tough concept for most people to grasp. I’m no anthropologist, but humans seem to be natural punishers. It’s not instinctive to turn the other cheek – butt cheek, that is! – when a large rowdy dog jumps on you; most people almost automatically swat at the dog. And it’s difficult to train inexperienced handlers to quickly respond to *any* more desirable behavior from the dog (such as standing,

sitting, lying down, or walking away) with something the dog finds rewarding (food, petting, verbal praise, eye contact). It’s hard enough to even get people to recognize behaviors like standing, sitting, lying down, and walking away as “a big improvement” or “very good!” And yet, compared to jumping up, they are!

Proud accomplishment

I know it’s instinctive for most people to attempt to “correct” obnoxious – and typical – shelter dog behavior such as barking, jumping up, and pulling on the leash. But instead of “correcting” *them* (the volunteers), I try to show them how well it works to simply ignore the undesired behaviors *and* quickly reinforce good (or better) ones. Fortunately, it works. It works in the short term – I can almost always demonstrate how well it works within minutes, with even the rowdiest, most frustrated, and most physically restless dogs in the shelter. And it works over the long term; Otto is exhibit A.

Best of all, these methods can be taught quickly enough for the volunteers to make obvious progress with the shelter dogs in just a single session. You can *see* them experiencing the joy of accomplishment when they see fast, positive results. It helps them enjoy working with the dogs so much more. So they come back more often. And the dogs get out more, and get more training. Win-win-win, to infinity.

I love this stuff. 🐾

Nancy Kerns is Editor of WDJ.

The Right Stuff

Basic gear every dog owner should have (and our favorite sources).

BY PAT MILLER, CPDT-KA, CDBC

There are some things every caring, responsible dog owner needs. Whether you are a longtime dog owner, have just acquired your first canine companion, or are still in the planning process to adopt a dog, it's important that you have the basic tools that make life with a canine family member run smoothly. Some seem obvious – a collar, leash, food dish – but even those aren't always as simple as they appear. Here's a comprehensive look at the right stuff to have on hand to help your dog-keeping go smoothly.

Training equipment

Pretty much every dog owner has a collar and a leash for her dog. But do you have the *right* ones?

COLLARS AND LEASHES

Call me simple, but my favorite leash-attachment appliance is still the plain old **flat collar**. Since many of us have stopped jerking dogs around, the dog training industry has devised a lot of tools to help with control in ways that are gentler than the old-fashioned choke chains and prong collars, or (heaven forbid!) shock collars. I do recommend and use front-clip control harnesses for training purposes – but since they can't be left on the dog all the time, there's still the need for a regular collar as a place to hang ID tags, if nothing else.

Attributes I look for in a collar: Strength; quality materials and stitching (pay special attention to the quality of any buckles); and ease of adjustment.

The same selection criteria apply to **leashes**. In my opinion, six feet is the perfect leash length for normal activities; it's long enough to give your dog a reasonable "loose leash zone," but short enough so that you can keep him out of trouble.

I remember when trainers insisted on *leather* leashes only for training, claiming that leather was softer on the hands – you know, with all that jerking on the choke chain. It's still true that leather is easier on the hands than a hard nylon leash; even though we're no longer yanking on the leash, some dogs do pull hard. But there are some wonderfully soft nylon and hemp leashes available now, too.



- ❖ **Soft, high-quality leather collars and leashes**
J and J Dog Supplies: jjdog.com; (800) 642-2050
- ❖ **Wonderfully soft nylon collars and leashes**
White Pine Outfitters: whitepineoutfitters.com; (715) 372-5627
- ❖ **Comfy and attractive hemp collars and leashes**
earthdog.com; (877) 654-5528



IDENTIFICATION

Speaking of **ID tags** – your dog should wear one, along with a license, on his collar at all times. If you're worried about him getting the tags caught in a heater vent or wedged in a crack in his crate, you can rivet the tags to his collar. Or, get one of these neoprene tag pouches, which both contain the tags and keep them quiet.

- ❖ **Quirt Spot Pet Tag Silencer**
Itzadog.com; (800) 961-2364



ADDITIONAL TRAINING GEAR

A few more items can make handling your dog exponentially easier. A **tab** – a short, 4-inch or 6-inch leash attached to your dog's collar – can be a useful item. Tabs are especially helpful for dogs who don't like their collars grabbed, but also for any time you might need an unobtrusive "handle" for your dog. You can make one by cutting an old leash to the appropriate length; they are also available from White Pine Outfitters (see contacts for leashes and collars, left).

You might also want to have a **light line** or **long line** in your supply closet, for those times when you want to give your dog more freedom but you're not ready to let him off-leash. A dog can get a lot of exercise on a light line or long line in an open field, and it's a perfect opportunity to work on recalls. A light line is a thin cord; a long line is normal or slightly narrower

nylon leash material, anywhere from 10 to as much as 60 feet long or more. My Scottie wears a light line on all hikes – in woods as well as open fields – but it takes some practice to be able to keep the line from getting tangled in brush and trees. Others use light lines when practicing in unfenced agility fields.



- ❖ **Light Lines and Long Lines**
genuinedoggear.com; (813) 920-5241

My favorite **front-clip harness** is the Freedom Harness, sold by Wiggles, Wags & Whiskers. This harness is made of superior quality materials in the USA, and fits better than many of the other no-pull harnesses I've tried on the market.

- ❖ **Freedom Harness**
wiggleswagswhiskers.com; (866) 944-9247

Head halters were once all the rage in the positive training field, and many trainers, including yours truly, have backed away from using them as we realized how aversive they were for a lot of dogs. Many dogs require a significant amount of conditioning to accept the halter, and even then never really seem to like it, as they take every opportunity to rub their haltered faces on grass, owners' legs, and furniture. For those dogs who *can* be conditioned to love them, halters can be a very useful tool, especially for controlling dogs who have aggressive behaviors. Every model on the market fits some dogs better than others, so it's best if you are able to try different models on your dog to decide which will fit best and bother your dog the least.



- ❖ **Comfort Trainer Head Halter**
ahimsadogtraining.com; (206) 364-4072
- ❖ **New Trix Head Halter**
newtrix.ca; (866) 384-2135
- ❖ **Snoot Loop Head Halter**
snootloop.com; (718) 891-4200

A **reward marker** is a word or a sound that lets your dog know the instant he's earned a reinforcer. It's an incredibly powerful addition to a positive training program, as it communicates much more clearly to your dog what he's getting the reward for, than does the simple (and often tardy) delivery of a treat. It makes him a real partner in the program, as he will begin to offer rewardable behaviors deliberately in order to try to make you click the clicker – always a prized moment in a clicker training program.

Some people don't like using a clicker "gadget." Or they may love the clicker but know they won't always have one in their hands when they need it. Never fear, there are many possible reward markers. While

a novel sound that is always consistent (the click of the clicker) has advantages, I *also* teach my dogs a verbal marker, for those times I don't have a clicker. You can use a mouth-click sound, snap your fingers, use the word "Yes!" in a consistent tone of voice that's different from the way you would say it in normal conversation, or say "Click!" You can still be a clicker trainer even if you don't use a clicker, as long as you use some kind of reward marker, and avoid training tools and methods that cause fear or pain. Just remember that your reward marker must *always* be followed by a high-value reinforcer if you want it to retain its power.

Any inexpensive clicker from any pet supply store will do the trick. Some people like the ones with a button on the *outside* of the clicker. I prefer the plain box models that are clicked by pressing a thumb *into* the box. For sound-sensitive dogs, look for models with especially soft, quiet clicks, such as the i-Click Clicker from Karen Pryor's Clickertraining Store.

- ❖ **i-Click Clicker** from Karen Pryor's Clickertraining Store
store.clickertraining.com; (800) 472-5425



Recall Those Retractable

I don't recommend retractable leashes. I know they are popular with many dog owners, but I've seen them used far too often in inappropriate places with owners paying no attention to where their dogs are. I've personally seen an incident where an owner dropped the plastic handle, the loud clatter frightened his dog, and the terrified animal went running right down the middle of a busy road. Fortunately, miraculously, we were able to chase down the dog, and corner and capture him without physical injury to anyone. Also, I've heard several stories of human digits being amputated by the thin cord when the dog suddenly pulls to the end of the locked-down leash.

Less dramatically, but no less tragic (from a dog trainer's perspective), is that these leashes actually reward and encourage dogs to pull on-leash. When a dog pulls against the pressure of the retracting spring mechanism to reach something he wanted to see or smell, he is rewarded for pulling by reaching the object of his desire. Show me a retractable leash and I'll show you a dog who pulls.

And don't get me started about people who use retractable leashes to walk more than one dog at the same time; it's almost always a tangled, out-of-control mess!



BASIC DOG CARE

Every dog has to eat and drink out of some sort of **bowl**, and when they do, there's a big advantage to using stainless steel.



These utilitarian dishes are not cute – but they are dishwasher-proof, and they won't rust, shatter, or leach harmful chemicals into everything your dog consumes out of them. Pretty much every pet supply store and catalog has them, so we won't list sources. Don't give into the temptation to use anything else.

Another article in this issue (“Buckle Up Your Pup!” on page 4) addresses why you should use a safely secured crate or a **harness and canine seat belt** every time your dog rides in the car. The Clix Car Safe Harness features a piece of hardware that snaps right into your car's seat belt mechanism. The Roadie Canine Travel Restraint is a bit more difficult to put on the dog, but it's designed and built to withstand serious, freeway-speed crashes. I'd feel safe with the Clix around town; I'd want the Roadie if my dog commuted regularly with me on the freeway.

- ❖ **Clix Car Safe Harness** from Karen Pryor's Clickertraining Store \$20-\$35. store.clickertraining.com; (800) 472-5425
- ❖ **Roadie Canine Travel Restraint** \$45-\$57. ruffrider.com; (866) 592-6837

EVER-IMPORTANT TOYS

Of course no dog's home would be complete without a supply of canine toys. It's critical to take the time to figure out your dog's toy preference, and to work with him to broaden his repertoire of playthings. I let my dogs tell me what their favorite toys are by offering them lots to choose from; I also take the time to teach them games that may not come naturally to them.

Toys don't have to be expensive or fancy. Tennis balls, sticks, and flying discs are favorites for many dogs (and yes, we know that tennis balls can wear down teeth, sticks can splinter, and dogs can blow their ACLs by leaping in the air, but used with good judgment they can be great toys all the same).

My Scorgidoodle, Bonnie, discovered that tangerines and oranges are wonderful toys (and I like that they don't wear



Most dogs love to play tug, which makes the game a great reinforcer when used as a reward for performing a behavior on cue, such as “Come! (even when I’ve dropped the leash by accident)”.

Support Your Local, Ethical, Independent Retailer!

We often list websites and phone numbers for products that we admire. In a few cases, the contacts we list do offer the products for sale. But in most cases, the contact information is for a manufacturer, and most are more than happy to help you find a local retail outlet that carries the product. It's invaluable to have the opportunity to see and handle a product in person, and to try it out on your dog.

If there are no retailers near you, the manufacturer may be able to provide you with a web-based or catalog retailer that can get the product to you. Or, if it's a product that you think your dog-loving friends may want to buy, too, perhaps you could convince your favorite local retailer to carry it.

Are we biased against the big-box chain pet supply stores? Well, they have their place. The prices are usually lower at the big box stores – but so is the quality of many products, especially training equipment, beds, toys, and treats. A decade ago, you couldn't find a top-quality dog food in the big box stores; today, a few premium foods are finally making their way onto those shelves.

Aside from food, about the only things I find myself buying at pet supply chain stores are stainless steel bowls, crates and exercise pens, ID tags, combs or brushes, and tick preventive treatments. It's a generalization, but I find the collars and leashes to be junky, the beds fall apart quickly, the toys are made of vinyl (and, being made in China, maybe lead and goodness knows what else), and the treats and chews are just plain awful.

One exception that is local to me (you may know of others): Petfood Express, a relatively small chain of about 35 stores in Northern California. The owners of the business “vet” all of their suppliers, and are unusually devoted to quality products of all kinds. They also inform their customers quickly and thoroughly about any recalls or problems they've heard about. I've learned more about certain food recalls from the signs they hang on their shelves than from the FDA's website.

Independent pet supply stores usually carry equipment that they really believe in and enjoy. My favorite stores look for products that are made in the USA, come with guarantees, and are made of nontoxic (and sometimes organic) materials. The prices might make you gasp – but when you realize that quality costs more, and that your dog will be happily playing with a top-quality product *years* after the cheap ones disintegrated, you should be happy to fork over a few more bucks.

Does this mean that all independent pet supply stores are good? Thanks for asking! NO! There are lots of awful “indies,” too. A huge tip-off is the quality of food on the shelves. If you don't see quality pet foods and treats, chances are, you won't find much else of quality, either.

And if a store has puppies for sale, please, please, *please* don't give them a nickel! You know that the “family farms” that supply puppies are *all* cruelty factories/puppy mills, don't you? Don't shop there, ask your friends not to shop there, and let the manager know you don't shop there because they support the unconscionable puppy mill industry. – *Nancy Kerns*

down teeth!); plus, after three to four days of play they double as a nice healthy snack. She even taught two other canine family members about the joy of fruit-as-toys.

On the commercial side, a good tug toy is a must for many dogs. I prefer tugs that are long enough to keep my dog's teeth far away from my skin. One of my favorite tug toy sources is Helping Udders, maker of Udder Tugs. They have great tug toys (made with parts from milking machines) *and* they donate a portion of their proceeds to rescue groups.

If your dog hasn't yet learned the joy of tugging, the online dog sports supply store Clean Run offers a unique tug toy that also dispenses food. The "Tug It!" is made of a nylon-polyester mesh and meant to be stuffed with a semi-solid food (like the Natural Balance rolls); the food strains through the toy as your dog tugs. The harder he tugs, the more food he gets.

Also on my list of favorites are interactive toys. A staple for every dog owner is the Kong – a hard rubber toy that is easily stuffed with a dog's dinner or treats. Filled with soft food, it can even be frozen for longer-lasting entertainment. Kong Company also sells a slew of other wonderful treat-dispensing and interactive toys that you can leave with your dog, unattended.

For toys you and your dog play with together, check out the Nina Ottosson Zooactive toys. We reviewed these toys a couple of years ago ("A Puzzling Activity," June 2008) and our dogs had a blast! Although they are manufactured in Sweden, you can find these toys for sale through a number of US distributors.



Then there's that staple, the soft squeaky toy. Countless owners have shelled out

big bucks for fancy plush toys, only to find the toys eviscerated, sometimes within minutes of handing them to the dog. A new genre of tougher toys has been developed, including the Tuffy Toys, which are numbered according to their toughness (a "10" is the toughest); and the disconcertingly named Road-Kill toys. The latter are not as durable as the Tuffys, but are double-stitched and contain no stuffing, so at least there's no mess to clean up, and not as much reinforcement for evisceration.

We've only scratched the surface here of dog toys now on the market. Browse the Internet, check out pet supply catalogs, and go play with your dog!

- ❖ **Udder Tugs** from Helping Udders. \$10-\$24. helpingudders.com; (620) 488-5488
- ❖ **Tug It!** from Clean Run. \$15. cleanrun.com; (800) 311-6503
- ❖ **Kong toys** from Kong Company. \$10-\$20. kongcompany.com; (303) 216-2626
- ❖ **Nina Ottosson toys** can be viewed at nina-ottosson.com. \$40 and up from Paw Lickers Bakery and Boutique (pawlickers.com; 888-868-PAWS) and Karen Pryor's Clickertraining Store (store.clickertraining.com; 800-472-5425)
- ❖ **Tuffy Toys**, \$17. tuffietoys.com; (866) 478-0848
- ❖ **Road Kill toys**, \$10-\$20. smartpakcanine.com; (888) 586-6808

MANAGEMENT

There are lots of management tools that make life easier for you and your dog. **Crates**, once available only in "basic kennel wire," now come in all kinds of designer styles suitable for any décor. Check out In the Company of Dogs for a wide variety of attractive crates, pens, and gates that will keep your canine pal out of trouble, and your home out of harm's way. Less attractive but more utilitarian offerings can be found in most pet supply stores and in catalog/website stores like Drs. Foster & Smith.

- ❖ **Designer crates** from In the Company of Dogs, \$149 and up inthecompanyofdogs.com; (877) 757-3477
- ❖ **Airline-style crates** from Drs. Foster & Smith, \$25 and up drsfostersmith.com; (800) 381-7179

Chaos would reign in my household without the judicious use of **portable gates**. We have one at the bottom of the stairs to our second floor, so our cats can have a domain of peace and quiet without having to keep one eye open for dogs. Our living room is gated, too, so we can limit our dogs' access to that area to those times when we are with them. A third gate blocks off one upstairs bathroom, where the cats' food bowls and litter boxes rest safely out of reach of dogs.



I prefer pressure-mounted gates with a latch that you can open and walk through (instead of climbing not-so-gracefully over) to those that actually screw into the door frame. If we need to change the position of the gates, it's easy to move a pressure-mounted barrier to another location, without leaving holes to be patched. These hold up well to all but the most determined gate crashers, and can be found in tall versions if you have a dog who delights in bounding over them. Pet Gates Direct has a large selection of gates, including wide ones, especially tall ones, and one with a cat door at the bottom so your feline family members can come and go with impunity.

- ❖ **Gates** from Pet Gates Direct, wide variety of styles and materials (and prices). pet-gates-direct.com; (407) 349-2525

Tethers are another useful tool for keeping your dog under wraps – indoors, within your presence. Attached to a secure object (think grand piano for those large, strong dogs!) a tether can, among other things, prevent counter-surfing, manage intrapack issues, and help teach polite greetings to visitors. A good source for tethers is BADDogs Inc. Family Dog Training.

- ❖ **Tethers** from BADDogs Inc. Family Dog Training, \$8-\$12. baddogsinc.com; (951) 283-2101

One of your best management tools is a solid, visible, **fence** (see "Fence Sense," May 2009). While I don't advocate ever leaving your dog in his yard when you're not home to supervise, a fenced yard offers your dog off-leash playtime without the added worry of him taking off to visit the neighbors (or having the neighbors' aggressive dogs enter your electronically "fenced" yard and attack your dog). Absent a fenced yard, you must always go out with your dog if you want to be sure he stays safe and close to home.

DOG CARE PROFESSIONALS

It turns out that it takes a village to raise a dog properly, too. Research and interview the following dog care professionals before you need them!

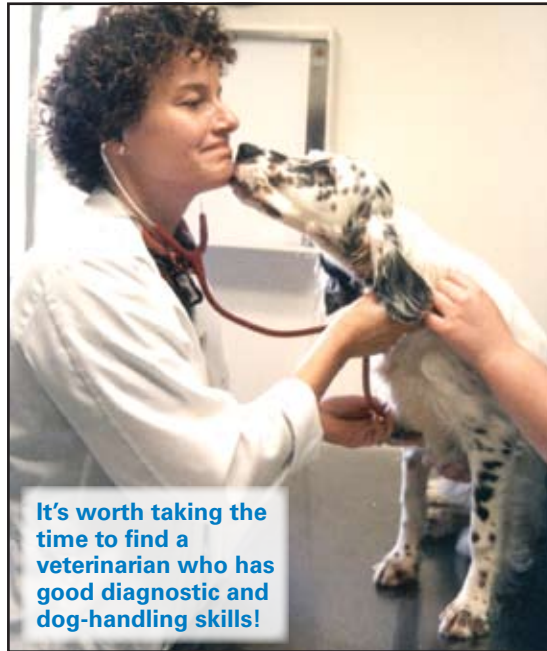
Your dog's **veterinarian** is a key part of keeping your dog healthy and happy for the 12 to 18 years he's going to be with you. Take the time to find a veterinarian you like – one who patiently answers your questions, explains thoroughly the nature of any treatments your dog needs, and is willing to work *with* you to make important decisions regarding your dog's health. Take extra care to be sure your veterinarian understands and supports your positive approach to training and handling, and is open to your requests to custom-tailor your dog's vaccinations and treatments to fit your desires. Tell her that you intend to be present for all procedures, and make sure she will accommodate that.

You can find veterinarians in your area online or in the yellow pages. Ask your dog-owning friends about the veterinarians they use. Make an appointment to meet and interview the vets you select (be prepared to pay for their time), and select the one you feel good about. If you are looking for a holistic veterinarian, contact the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association to find a practitioner near you: ahvma.org; (410) 569-0795.

Your **pet sitter** will interact with your dog in your absence, so it's even more critically important that you are comfortable with his methods and ethics. Make sure he understands and will comply with your wishes regarding equipment use (no shock or prong collars!) and handling techniques – positive only, no alpha rolls, finger pinches, or other punitive corrections. Be clear if you are comfortable (or not!) with your sitter walking multiple dogs at a time, or allowing your dog to interact with other dogs.

A professional sitter will provide a contract that clearly spells out expectations and responsibilities on both sides. In addition to searching the Internet and phone book, ask friends, your veterinarian, and your local shelter for pet sitter referrals. Your professional pet sitter will probably be a member of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (petsitters.org or 856-439-0324). You can search on its website for a certified pet sitter near you.

Select your dog's **training and behavior professionals** carefully. There are no legal requirements in the U.S. for someone to call themselves a dog trainer. Trainers who care about professional standards pursue ongoing education, membership in and certification offered through one or more of a number of organizations, such as:



❖ Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers.

CPDTs are required to have at least 300 hours of training experience, provide references, and pass a written test. The CCPDT is working on a second level of certification for

behavior consultants. You can search for CPDTs at ccpdt.org or call (212) 256-0682 for a reference to a trainer near you.

❖ International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants.

The IAABC offers certification for behavior work with a variety of species, including dogs, cats, horses, and birds. You can find Certified Dog Behavior Consultants (CDBC) at iaabc.org or write to IAABC, 565 Callery Road, Cranberry Township, PA 16066.

❖ Karen Pryor Certified Trainer.

Karen Pryor is a former marine mammal trainer and author of the landmark book, *Don't Shoot the Dog*, which launched the positive training movement. Pryor now offers certification via "Karen Pryor

Trainers" around the country (and soon in Australia). KPCTs do extensive online study, apply that training to their own dogs, and attend several hands-on training weekends with their designated instructors to demonstrate their own and their dogs' acquired skills.

❖ **Pat Miller Certified Trainer.** I now offer certification for trainers who have completed my Level 1 and both Level 2 Academies (Behavior Modification and Instructor's Course) and an additional level of certification for my Level 3 Behavior Study course. Students in the Level 1 and Instructor's Courses work with shelter dogs, and usually bring their own dogs for behavior modification. The second level of certification requires submission of CEUs for ongoing study.

Certification is also available for **groomers**. You can find a certified groomer through the National Dog Groomers Association of America (nationaldoggroomers.com or 724-962-2711). All of the prior cautions hold true here as well; if you leave your dog in someone else's hands, you must trust that they will be as gentle and caring with her as you are.

I discussed doggie **daycare providers** last month, in "Doggie Daycare: Yay! Or Nay?" If daycare is in your dog's future, be sure to check out the facility thoroughly, using the criteria described in the November article. Some daycare facilities are terrific; some, not so much. 🐾

Pat Miller, CPDT-KA, CDBC, is WDJ's Training Editor. Miller lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. Pat is also author of several books on positive training. See page 24 for more information.

Dog V. TV

Five things to do when your dog barks at the TV.

BY PAT MILLER, CPDT-KA, CDBC

Our Corgi, Lucy, barks at the television. Not only does she bark at dogs, she may also bark at horses, giraffes, cartoon hipopotami, and any other animal or ersatz animal, as well as menacing human figures. It's at least a little annoying, if not irritating. Given her herding-dog Type-A control-freak personality she may always be somewhat prone to respond to television stimuli, but we've made a lot of progress using several of these tactics:

1 Put your dog in a covered crate or in another room. If your dog's TV triggers are specific and visual-only, just blocking his view of the television can keep him calm and allow you to watch Victoria Stillwell's "It's Me or the Dog" training show without interruption from your canine pal.

Note: If you watch a lot of Animal Planet and National Geographic and your dog alerts to lions and tigers and bears (oh my!) as well as other canines, this might be too much separation during a prime bonding time of the day.

2 Lower the volume. Simply lowering the volume to a level where you – and no doubt your dog – can still hear it but it's not as overwhelming to him, can sometimes forestall a bark-fest. As long as you can keep the volume below your dog's reaction threshold and still hear the television yourself, you can watch in peace.

3 Plug in your ears. If it's mostly auditory stimuli that get your dog going, you can use headphones to listen to your favorite dog-arousing shows.

If you have a large family, you'll have to be more electronically adept than me to figure out how to get everyone plugged in. If your dog is also *visually aroused*, just tuning out the sound won't be enough.

4 Cover your dog's eyes and ears. I'm not joking! If we're watching a show and an animal comes on briefly that starts to set Lucy off, I can gently place my hand over her eyes until the offender is off-screen. She doesn't object, and it keeps the peace.

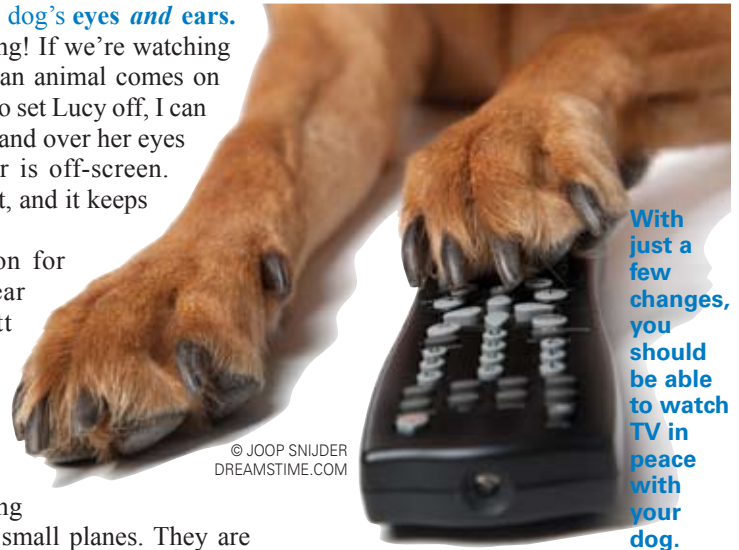
Another option for more thorough ear covering is Mutt Muffs. Yes, these are ear muffs for dogs! They were originally designed to protect the hearing of dogs flying in small planes. They are available from safeandsoundpets.com; (443) 536-6287.

Doggles (sunglasses for dogs) can be used to help reduce your dog's visual stimuli. Find a local retailer by checking doggles.com or calling (866) 364-4537.

5 Implement a behavior modification protocol. Television reactivity is a golden opportunity crying out for counter-conditioning and desensitization, to give your dog a new association with and response to the stimuli on your big screen. It's a simple training procedure that still allows you to be a couch potato yourself!

Just arm yourself with a Tupperware container of high-value treats cut into pea-sized pieces and turn on your favorite dog program or doggie DVD. Try this first with the television set at normal volume, but be prepared to turn it down if necessary.

Sit on the sofa with your dog on leash at your feet, or on the cushion next to you, if that's his normal hang-out spot. The instant he notices Dogzilla (or some other threatening on-screen entity) begin feeding him tidbits, one after the other, using the treat to draw his head toward you. Ideally, begin feeding before he has a chance to bark. If



With just a few changes, you should be able to watch TV in peace with your dog.

you miss that moment and he barks, feed him anyway. If he's too aroused to eat your high value treats, decrease the intensity of stimulus by reducing volume or moving farther away from the television, or by using one of the tools in tactic #4.

After feeding a few treats, pause, let your dog look back at the screen, then feed him again. Continue doing this until the bark-inducing figure has left the screen. Then sit back and wait for the next opportunity. (Don't forget to subtract calories from his dinner bowl roughly equivalent to the calories you feed during TV training.)

If you do this consistently, you'll see your dog begin to glance at *you* for treats when a dog comes on the screen rather than going into arousal mode. When your dog consistently associates the dogs on TV with "Yay, treats!" you can gradually wean him off the high-value, high-rate delivery and move to an occasional bit of cookie to keep the association strong. 🐾

Pat Miller, CPDT-KA, CDBC, lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. For contact information, see "Resources," page 24.

Bark Back

Thanks for your feedback!

SENSITIZED

First let me say that I devour every sentence of every issue. I love it! Now, let me say how disappointed I was to read in “A New Threshold,” October 2010, the statement concerning Pit Bulls and Rottweilers being able to inflict more damage when they bite than other breeds. *What?*

Why would you add to the stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding Pit Bulls? Any large or medium breed can inflict terrible damage. A Golden Retriever is a large powerful breed as well. Do I really need to tell you this? The level of damage inflicted has to do with arousal, fear, motivation, etc., *not* the breed of dog. If you haven’t already, please read *The Pit Bull Placebo*, by Karen Delise.

I never stop my quest for more information. I hope you are open to educating yourself as much as your readers!

Kelley MacConnel
Via e-mail

Thanks for writing, and for your kind words about WDJ. We, too, are fans of continuing education, especially when



PHOTO BY PENILOPE BROWN

Border Collies (such as this one) are among breeds with a lower tolerance for inappropriate human behavior and who are sensitive to violations of their personal space. Their self-protective behavior may contribute to society’s fear of dogs.

it comes to canine behavior. However, I beg you to read the paragraph again. The author, WDJ’s Training Editor Pat Miller, did not say that Pit Bulls and Rottweilers are able to inflict more damage when they bite than other breeds. Not even close.

What she did say was that our society has gotten more reactive (the word she actually used was “oversensitized”) about dog bites. She also she gave a number of theories as to why humans are more reactive and phobic about dog bites today than they were 30 or 40 years ago. One of the contributors, Miller speculated, is the increased population of breeds that many people find frightening. Here’s the paragraph again:

“There has been an increase in popularity of dog breeds that contribute to our cultural sensitization – large, powerful breeds who can do serious damage if they bite, such as Pit Bulls and Rottweilers – as well as breeds who are sensitive to violations of their personal space and have a lower tolerance for inappropriate human behavior, such as Border Collies and Australian Shepherds.”

Miller never said Pit Bulls and Rottweilers bite more, or bite worse, than any other breeds. She suggested that their increased populational presence – and a number of other factors – has helped sensitize and frighten society about dog bites. That’s all.

It is an odd phenomenon, because, as you mentioned, there are also an awful lot of large, powerful Golden Retrievers “who can do serious damage if they bite” in our society, too, and yet few people associate them with a dog bite epidemic.

UPLIFTING

I enjoyed Pat Miller’s article on dogs who can’t or won’t climb stairs (“Help for the Stair-Impaired,” November 2010). I thought your readers would enjoy seeing the lift I installed in my home for my dog.

Helena Doerr
Olney, MD



Thanks so much for sharing that with us! What a caring owner! Your dog looks very comfortable with the lift!

ANIMAL LOVER

Regarding your editorial about the Dyson DC 23 Animal vacuum you received for review (“Cashing In? No.” November 2010): I have a purple Dyson DC-14 Animal vacuum. I’ve had it for four or five years. They don’t lie when they say it sucks up hair better than anything else. I have four Mastiffs, a flat-coated retriever-mix, and a Chow-mix. I vacuum up about at least two canisters of hair a week.

I almost didn’t buy it. It was \$500 at the time and I thought that was a lot to pay for what looked like a pile of cheap plastic. I couldn’t have been more wrong. The vacuum is very well designed and easy to use. You really appreciate it after you use it for a while then switch to something else. Nothing else compares. Don’t send it back. Keep it. You won’t regret it.

Dave Hala, Jr.
Via e-mail

HAIRY OBJECTION

Before you wholeheartedly endorse the Dyson, please take it to the home of someone who owns a Newfoundland or Great Pyrenees – maybe a Collie. I have a Newfie/

Pyr-mix. A couple of years ago, I purchased an expensive Dyson DC 17 Animal. While this vacuum does have amazing suction, I found it to be *horrid* as far as long hair. Not only would the hair wrap around the beater bar (typical and to be expected) it tangled around the internal gears and caused the vacuum to make terrible noises. I would have to stop and de-hair the darn thing at least four times while vacuuming my 1,000 square feet.

A plea to Dyson resulted in them telling me to try vacuuming without the beater bar engaged, and then vacuum again with it engaged. This did not work; without the beater bar engaged, the hair remained stuck to the carpet. Vacuuming became something guaranteed to make me very angry. I finally found a slicker brush on a long handle and resorted to brushing up dog hair before I vacuumed. Even then, the Dyson would tangle once or twice and require the entire beater bar assembly be taken apart and dehaired. What should have taken 20 minutes in my small house ended up taking over an hour.

The Dyson now sits in the basement unused. I use a Bissell pet hair eraser. It is not perfect. The cord comes out of the machine at an awkward spot and when the dust bucket is removed for emptying it causes the dust up above it to spill all over the machine. But I do not have to stop and dehair it and it cost about a fourth what a Dyson costs.

I hope they have improved on the DC 17. It is my belief that the manufacturers of vacuums do not test their machines on homes with long-haired dogs. Note that I have chosen to blame vacuum manufacturers for this issue – *not* the fact that I choose to have a huge hairy dog (I can't imagine life without her).

Karen Stenson
Via e-mail

I appreciate the suggestion. I'll be sure to invite myself and my Dyson to the homes of friends with long-haired dogs. My research is ongoing!

SHOOT THIS DOWN

My husband and I have subscribed to Whole Dog Journal for many years. We were shocked when we read the article about the dog that was shot ("Dog Shootings by Law Enforcement Seem to Be on the Rise," November 2010). There is so

much unthinking cruelty in our civilization toward all animals! The facts about the shooting have haunted me since. I applaud your publication for bringing this shooting and others to your readers' attention. Keep fighting the good fight!

Lynda Lloyd
Via e-mail

Thanks for your concern. We've been somewhat heartened to learn about a few law enforcement departments across the country who have instituted remedial training for law enforcement officers who may have to deal with dogs when they go out on calls. Pat Miller has a further suggestion:

"We need a grassroots campaign that insists our law enforcement officers be trained and equipped to appropriately and non-lethally handle situations in which dogs are involved. Call your own police department tomorrow to inquire about their department policies for handling dogs, and to ask if their officers are equipped with and trained in the use of humane canine capture equipment. Then ask three of your friends to call, and have them ask three of their friends. Get it started."

A CLEAR VIEW

I just finished reading your article on dog daycare ("Dog Daycare: Yay! Or Nay?" November 2010). I thought it was a fabulous article with one exception: Your warning about facilities that do not allow unscheduled viewings of all areas of the daycare.

I have been in business for 15-plus years and operate a smaller facility, both in size of dogs and number of dogs. Typically, we have a 10 to 1 dog to handler ratio. I

do not allow viewing of the entire facility unless dogs have been moved out of the play yards.

My #1 concern is and always will be the safety of the dogs. Some dogs get over-excited when they see new people. Also, one of our specialties is hosting fearful dogs. We integrate dogs *slowly* for small amounts of time. The best part of my work is when I see a dog who wouldn't willingly enter the facility now running in and not even looking back.

Otherwise, it's a fabulous article. I'm glad that you made the point that owners should understand that just because their dog is not a good daycare fit, doesn't mean it is not a fabulous dog.

Another question worth asking prospective daycare providers: "How many of the dogs who are evaluated are good daycare candidates?" If they answer that they rarely have a dog who doesn't work out well, I would also run away!

Debbie Oliver, CPDT-KA
Miss Daisy's Dog Camp
Tomball, TX

Thanks for your letter. You make a good point – but it sounds like you manage your facility in a way that controls the real source of my concern about not being able to see the dogs at play; you have appropriate dog: handler ratios.

I've seen facilities that keep 60 or more dogs in the same play area. Before I'd put my own dog in such a potentially volatile environment, I'd want to see that the facility keeps enough well-trained staff members on the yard and has performed adequate screening of the canine clients to ensure my dog's safety. I'd also want to be certain that the staff members did not use aversive handling methods to maintain order in the pack. Unless I could put these concerns to rest, I wouldn't enroll my dog at a facility of this size. – NK



Otto enjoys a nice, small, supervised "playcare" group.

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Nancy Kay, DVM, Dipl.ACVM, Rohnert Park, CA. Dr. Kay is author of *Speaking for Spot: Be the Advocate Your Dog Needs to Live a Happy, Healthy, Longer Life*, which is available from Dr. Kay's website as well as your local bookseller. See SpeakingForSpot.com

BOOKS

WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of many books on positive training. All available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com



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More Canine Diet Options

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Why it's a great idea to teach your dog to accept short-term confinement (in a crate or pen) – and the right way to do it.

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Owners may be shocked to learn that canine blood is not always available when their dog needs a transfusion.

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This area of training is ripe for modernization – and fortunately, there are top trainers on the job.

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