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The Whole



Dog Journal™

A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

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Spending Time Together

Building bonds, day by day.

BY NANCY KERNS

When I was a kid growing up in a farming region in Northern California, there were very few kids my age to play with – just two within a few miles. My more reliable and ever-present playmates were my family's dogs – and what a lot of dogs we had! We had *five* females deliver at least one litter of puppies (and a couple of them had more than one litter) when I was between the ages of five and 14. It's embarrassing to admit now, but in those days it was highly uncommon to own a spayed or neutered canine. And my parents, bless them, knew practically nothing about responsible pet ownership other than keeping animals well fed.

For a dog-loving child, though, it was *heaven*. It was only occasionally sad – when we found homes for my favorites; we were *always* on the lookout for friends or relatives who wanted a puppy, and somehow always managed to find homes for all the "accidental" mixed-breed pups. But even with the puppies coming and going, I always had a built-in pack of friends, confidants, co-conspirators, and followers. The pack would greet me when I got off the school bus, and I spent just about every minute with the dogs until I went to bed each night.

As the youngest child, I loved bossing the dogs around (since I couldn't boss anyone

else), but, knowing next to nothing about training, and lacking leashes and collars, all my "dog training" was based on the dogs' utter complicity. If they didn't want to do what I wanted them to do, they left. If I wanted their company – and I did! – I had to hold their interest. I did that with play and exploring. I was forever making up games to play with the dogs, wandering with them through our neighbor's orchards or up and down the bed of the creek that flowed by our house, swimming with them in the creek, crawling under the blackberry bushes with them to try to collect eggs from our free-range (read, escaped) chickens, and so on.



Almost every childhood photo of Nancy Kerns has a dog or puppy in it.

My family regarded me as the designated animal trainer. But the fact is, I totally took it for granted that my pack of friends would always come when I called them, and mostly behaved as I told them to. Looking back, I see now that it's not that I had a special gift for training; it was the *bonding* that we did while hanging out for hours and hours each day that made our dogs enjoy my company and offer me their genial compliance.

We have three articles in this issue that discuss how spending more fun time with your dog can improve both his training and the bond between you. It's something I know to be true from the bottom of my heart.

NK

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

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Cold Standard

Commercial frozen diets have proliferated but range in quality.

BY NANCY KERNS

We have long maintained that an intelligently formulated diet, made in a dog owner's home out of fresh, wholesome ingredients, is the ideal diet for optimum canine health. The tens of thousands of dog owners who make their dogs' food at home agree. Their dogs enjoy their food; look, smell, and feel terrific; and enjoy vibrant good health.

However, some people who would really like to feed their dogs this way don't feel capable of routinely shopping for and preparing their dogs' food. Others worry that their dogs might suffer from a nutritional deficiency or imbalance if they don't formulate the diet just so. These folks are the target market for the products featured in this article: diets made of fresh ingredients (mostly meat) and frozen for convenience.



Commercial raw diets are fairly new. As in any emerging market, the products reflect divergent formulation philosophies and manufacturing methodologies. You may have to try several products to find what works best for your dog.

What you can do . . .

- Look for products that meet your dog's needs and that reflect your preferences: Organic? Complete and balanced or supplementary? Grains or grain-free?
- Ideally, look for manufacturers with local retail outlets, or whose shipping schedule, range, and prices work well for you.
- Discuss your dog's health status with the food company rep. He or she should be able to help guide your purchases based on your dog's needs.
- Use safe meat-handling and sanitation practices at all times.



There is a lot of variation within this product category, however. Some of the companies offering frozen, meat-based diets for dogs include raw ground bone as a natural, healthy source of dietary calcium; others incorporate eggshell or another calcium source. Some include grain in these diets; most do not. Most (but not all) contain at least a small amount of organ meat, fruit, and vegetable matter.

Some of these products contain a pre-mixed vitamin/mineral supplement, to ensure that the diet is nutritionally "complete and balanced" as per the nutrient levels recommended by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). Others meet these nutrient levels (and thus earn the right to make the complete and balanced claim) through their food ingredients alone – without the addition of a vitamin/mineral "premix."

Still other products are meant for "supplemental" feeding only, with the idea that the owner will continually vary the diet in order to provide nutritional "balance over

time." Companies that sell supplemental products generally offer a wide array of frozen, raw ingredients – as well as guidance on how to mix and match these to provide a complete diet.

Quality varies

Just as with every other type of pet foods, including kibble and canned, the ingredients used in these diets vary in quality. Some use only human-grade ingredients, meats that come from free-range, grass-fed animals, and local and/or organic fruits and veggies. Others use less-expensive ingredients. The difference here, though, is that almost *all* of the ingredients in these products are higher in quality (and price!) than those used in *most* kibbled or canned foods. Fresh, wholesome, and natural are the watchwords for this category; it's expected that resulting food will look and smell fresh and appealing when thawed.

Presentation and packaging varies within a small range in this category. Some companies grind their food ingredients

into a very fine “mush” that, when thawed, resembles canned dog food. Others use a coarse grind, enabling the pet owner to identify various ingredients by sight. Products may be formed into cube-like “nuggets” or hamburger-style patties, packed into plastic tubs (like cottage cheese), or pressure-packed into plastic tubes generally referred to as “chubs.”

As to availability and shipping: Most of the companies that sell frozen diets offer direct shipping, via overnight service, right to your home. This practice is incredibly convenient – but also increasingly expensive and quite unkind to the environment; it takes a lot of Styrofoam, and sometimes a lot of dry ice and cardboard, too, to ensure

these products are still frozen when they are delivered to your door.

Most of the companies sell the bulk of their products through pet supply stores that are equipped with freezers. This is most advantageous for owners who live in close proximity to one of these stores (or veterinary offices), since they don't have to pay for shipping and can take the products directly home and put them in their own freezers.

Commonalities

So what do all these diets have in common? They all contain fresh, raw meat: muscle meat, fat, and connective tissues. They are all based on the concept that

uncooked animal proteins offer the most complete array of amino acids required by canines, providing the most important building blocks of the natural, evolutionary canine diet.

This concept was championed in recent decades by Australian veterinarian Ian Billinghurst, who sought to bring back the vibrant health he remembered seeing in the dogs of his youth, before commercial foods were widely used in Australia. But Dr. Billinghurst sought to replicate the evolutionary diet of the dog, where any raw meat the dog ate would come wrapped around bones and organs of the dog's prey; he called this sort of diet “BARF,” which alternately stood for “bones and raw food”

Are Bacterial Threats Really Something to Worry About?

The most frequently cited objection that veterinarians have to raw diets is the threat of bacterial infection – for both the dog and his human family.

It's true that today's meat and poultry supply is commonly infected with *Salmonella*. The reported rate of infection varies by source. Tests conducted by the Consumers Union, publisher of *Consumer Reports*, indicated that an astounding 83 percent of the supermarket broiler chickens were infected with *Salmonella* or *Campylobacter*. Those numbers are not supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – yet the USDA's figures are alarming, too! The USDA estimates that nearly 40 percent of the American poultry supply, 12 percent of the pork, and 5 percent of the beef are contaminated with *Salmonella*. *E. coli* and *Listeria* have also been found to present chronic threats.

To counter fears of bacterial infection, let's discuss each potential victim separately. First, your dog:

Advocates of raw diets argue that dogs are exquisitely well-suited to safely consume masses of potentially harmful bacteria without ever becoming ill. Credit for this ability has been given to the dog's stomach acids (said to be much stronger than ours) and short digestive tract (which supposedly denies the bacteria enough time to multiply to dangerous levels). Wherever the credit lies, the fact remains that dogs have successfully survived eons of eating rotting carrion, feces from all species of animals, and all sorts of other bacteria-laden things. Few become ill from bacterial infections.

However, a case can be made that an immune-compromised dog might be unable to fight off the bacterial challenge presented by a raw diet. If you have an immune-compromised dog and are concerned about bacteria, feed your dog a diet that utilizes cooked meats.

The so-called “public health risk” of raw diets, in our opinion, is overblown. Millions of people bring home raw meat and poultry every day. Despite the presence of bacteria in a certain amount of that meat, most are able to cook it and eat it without infection. Why there should be a greater risk in dropping that raw meat into a dog's bowl than into a frying

pan or wok is beyond me; a smart person washes each utensil afterward.

If people employ scrupulous meat-handling and sanitation practices, and leave the consumption of raw meat to their healthy dogs, they should be able to keep their families safe.

Faithfully practice the following food safety guidelines:

- People with immune system disorders should avoid handling raw meat.
- Keep food frozen until you are ready to feed it. Then, thaw small amounts (only what your dog will eat within a day or two) in the refrigerator. *Never, ever* allow food to sit for long at room temperature.
If you need to thaw food in a hurry, seal it in a Ziploc bag and place it in warm water for not more than a few minutes.
- Wash your hands with hot water and soap immediately after handling the dog's food.
- Promptly wash everything that comes in contact with the food with hot, soapy water: bowls, knives, grinders, countertops, and cutting boards. Periodically, use a disinfectant, such as a mild bleach solution.
- Discard any food your dog leaves in his bowl after eating. Don't allow him to “leave it for later.” Don't even save it for later in the refrigerator!
- Immediately pick up your dog's bowl after he eats, and wash it in hot, soapy water (or disinfect in a dishwasher). Never allow small children to handle the dog's raw food or the bowl he ate from.
- Don't forget to wash the dog's *water* bowl in hot, soapy water daily, too. Many dogs drink right after eating, and could conceivably contaminate their water with bacteria in their mouths.

or “biologically appropriate raw food.”

Dr. Billinghurst saw the consumption of raw bone and organ meat as an integral part of this type of diet, but others who followed in his footsteps found that the raw meat was the key to the diet’s success. They use other calcium sources rather than raw bone in their formulas and feel that the diet is just as beneficial.

Be forewarned: The arguments between the people who feel that raw, meaty bones *must* form the basis of these diets and those who think the raw meat itself is the key absolutely resemble the arguments between believers of related but divergent religious sects. Each is certain that only *they* know the light and the way.

Our opinions are ecumenical. If a diet is mostly comprised of fresh, whole, raw meats; contains all the nutrients known to be required by dogs; and your dog thrives on it, it’s okay by us. We suggest that newcomers to this style of feeding start out by feeding a variety of complete and balanced products, keeping a record of the results in each dog they feed, and ultimately going with the diet style that works best for their dogs’ individual needs and tolerances.

A few good foods

On the following pages, we’ve listed a number of makers of commercial raw diets. To assist those who are new to this style of feeding, we’ve separated the “complete and balanced” diets into the chart on pages 6-7, and the “supplemental feeding” products offered for more experienced raw feeders into another chart on page 8 (some companies will appear on both charts).

As with any type of commercial diet, we suggest contacting the manufacturers for more information about their products. Ask them how their products can help you meet your dog’s needs; they have a wealth of experience and a vested interest in helping to

Raw Pet Food Association

The North American Raw Petfood Association (NARPA) was founded in 2005 by Melinda Miller, then co-owner of Bravo Raw Diet; Sandy Goodman, CEO of Nature’s Variety; Matt Koss, co-owner of Primal Pet Foods; and Steve Brown, author of *See Spot Live Longer*; and founder of Steve’s Real Food (Brown is no longer affiliated with Steve’s Real Food).

The group has sought input and participation from raw food manufacturers and suppliers, as well as people who produce ancillary products, such as supplements and mixtures that are added to raw meat to “complete and balance” canine diets. Growth of the association has been slow, however, as most of the members have been too busy growing their businesses to participate in community-building. NARPA now has a website, and as enrollment in the association grows, hopes to stock the site with industry news, informative articles, and a member directory. The ultimate goal is to fund research or surveys that will confirm what anecdotal evidence from thousands of raw feeders already suggests: that complete and balanced raw diets can produce and maintain super-healthy, well-adjusted dogs.

For more information, contact NARPA through its website: rawpetfood.org.

demonstrate the benefits, not the pitfalls, of this method of feeding healthy dogs.

The more questions you ask, the more opportunities you’ll have to ascertain what their level of commitment is to providing clear, credible guidance for feeding your dog in an optimal way. We also suggest that you ask about the following:

■ **Information about their formulation.** Is it complete and balanced? Does it require other supplementation? Who was involved in the product formulation? What are that person’s credentials in animal nutrition? If you have a very technical question about the product’s nutrients, can

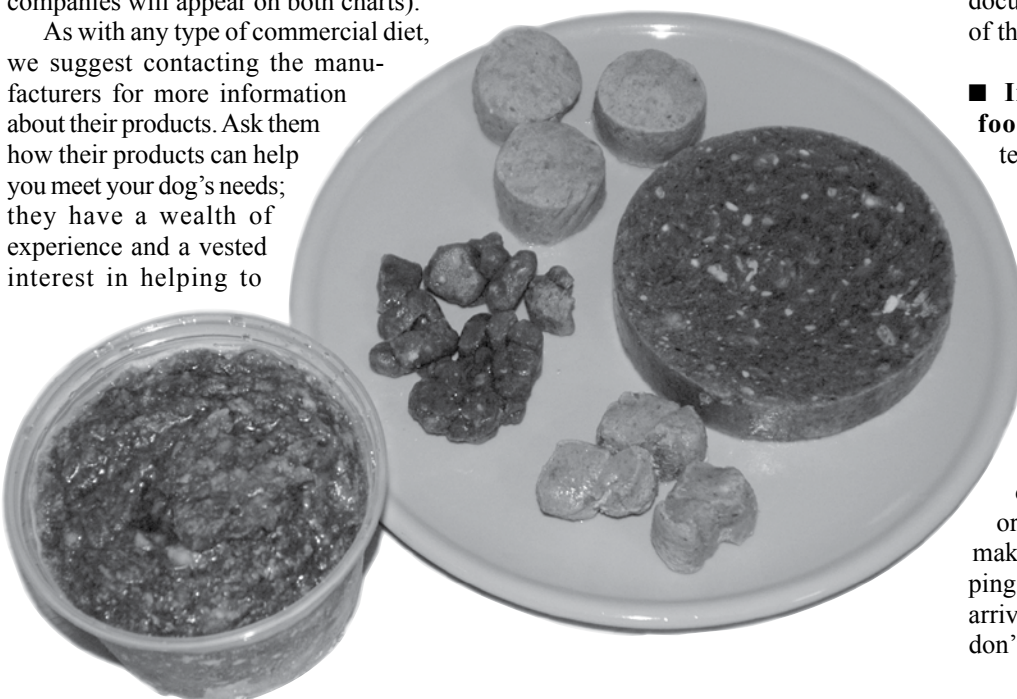
they refer you to a nutritionist or vet with advanced study in nutrition?

■ **Information about the nutrient content of the products** (more information is better than a minimal report). Does the company offer only the “guaranteed analysis” (which is required to detail only the protein, fat, moisture, and fiber content of the food) or a *complete* analysis that lists all of the values for the product’s vitamins, minerals, and fatty acids?


■ **Information about ingredient sources.** Where does the company get their meats and other ingredients? Can they provide documentation to confirm the provenance of the ingredients?

■ **Information about the company’s food safety program.** What sort of tests and/or food safety steps does the company take in order to ensure that the product is as free of potentially harmful bacteria as possible?




■ **Information about shipping.** Most of the companies that direct-ship products do so only early in the week so there is no risk of frozen product getting stranded on a weekend and thawing before delivery. Nevertheless, before you order *any* frozen product, question the maker as to the company policy on shipping mishaps. Who will pay for meat that arrives at room temperature? Because you don’t want *your* dog to eat it!





COMPLETE AND BALANCED RAW, FROZEN DIETS

COMPANY INFO	DESCRIPTION OF PRODUCTS	INGREDIENT CLAIMS	AVAILABILITY/SHIPPING	SUPPORT/ INFO
<p>Animal Food Services Green Bay, WI (800) 743-0322 animalfood.com</p>	<p>Several complete and balanced products, either chicken-based or beef-based. Some contain a higher percentage of organ meat. Some include some fruit and vegetables. All contain a vitamin/mineral supplement.</p>	<p>All beef-based diets use "human grade" meats.</p>	<p>First-time customers order through corporate office; then orders are made through and shipped from distributor closest to customer.</p>	<p>We found the info on the company's website about to be confusing and not as credible as on some other sites.</p>
<p>Aunt Jeni's Home Made 4 Life Temple Hills, MD (301) 702-0123 auntjeni.com</p>	<p>Six complete and balanced diets are available. Each contains ground meat, organs, and ground bone from a single species (chicken, lamb, beef, rabbit, goat, turkey) as well as fruit, vegetables, whole eggs, and supplemental foods such as garlic, honey, flaxseed, and more. No vits/mins added.</p>	<p>Poultry is from Bell and Evans; beef is free-range, grass-fed, and imported from New Zealand, Argentina, and Australia. Other meats are similarly sourced.</p>	<p>Products available in pet supply stores in 26 states; maker will direct-ship frozen product only if no local retailers are available.</p>	<p>Website offers a vast amount of information on home-prepared diets.</p>
<p>BARFWorld Danville, CA (866) 282-2273 barfworld.com</p>	<p>Four basic complete and balanced diets are offered: chicken, beef, lamb, and a combination diet that includes beef, lamb, chicken, and pork. Each of these also fresh ground bone, fruits, vegetables, and other food supplements. A few vits/mins added.</p>		<p>Products available in pet supply stores and other local distributors. Also available via direct shipping from company headquarters.</p>	<p>Lots of information available on website to support raw feeders.</p>
<p>Bravo Raw Diet Vernon, CT (866) 922-9222 bravorawdiet.com</p>	<p>A new complete and balanced diet, "Bravo Balance," is being offered by Bravo, to be available on June 1. (We have seen the formula for the product, but not the product itself.) Some vits/mins added.</p>	<p>USDA meats and grass-fed beef.</p>	<p>See supplemental feeding chart.</p>	<p>See supplemental feeding chart.</p>
<p>Companion Natural Pet Food Milwaukee, WI (866) 617-7735 Companion-naturalpetfood.com</p>	<p>Five single-protein, complete and balanced diets are available: beef, turkey, fish, duck, chicken. Diets include raw ground bone and organ meat.</p>	<p>"Human-grade" meats, fruits, and vegetables and some organic supplements are used.</p>	<p>Currently available in five states via local distributors (four states to be added soon). Also available via direct shipping from company HQ.</p>	<p>Complete nutrient analyses are available on website. Complete information packet sent with products; website offers lots of support, too.</p>
<p>FarMore Sanger, TX (866) 507-8255 farmoreddogfood.com</p>	<p>Complete and balanced diets are offered in three varieties: beef, chicken, and buffalo. Beef diet includes oatmeal and buffalo diet includes barley, but maker says these are present by no more than 3% by weight. All diets include fruits and veggies.</p>		<p>Currently in retail stores in 26 states. Also available through third-party online retailer.</p>	<p>Online information and support is skimpy.</p>
<p>Nature's Menu Lake Geneva, WI (866) 333-3729 naturesmenu.com</p>	<p>Complete and balanced diets come in four varieties: beef, lamb, turkey, and chicken. Each contains 80% muscle meat and 20% organ meat. Products do not include bone, but contain a custom-formulated vitamin/mineral supplement.</p>	<p>Company uses only grass-fed lamb and organic chicken.</p>	<p>Sold in retail outlets only in Wisconsin, Oregon and in New York City and Denver, Colorado. Also available via direct shipping from manufacturer.</p>	<p>Online information is not impressive.</p>



COMPANY INFO	DESCRIPTION OF PRODUCTS	INGREDIENT CLAIMS	AVAILABILITY/SHIPPING	SUPPORT/ INFO
Nature's Variety Lincoln, NE (888) 519-7387 naturesvariety.com	No vitamins/mineral supplements were needed to make these diets complete and balanced. Available in six varieties: organic chicken, chicken, beef, lamb, venison, and rabbit. Beef in beef variety is pasture-fed. Each type includes same-species ground raw bone and organ meats; the sole exception is the rabbit variety, which uses rabbit meat and bone, but also pork fat, liver and heart. Whole duck, pheasant, and quail eggs are also included. N	This is one of the few products in this category that meets the AAFCO "complete and balanced" standard via feeding trials.	Does not direct-ship; products available in pet supply stores and online retailers.	A complete nutrient profile is available for each variety. Information on the website is very complete about the product; not much information is present specifically for the support of raw feeders.
				
Northwest Naturals Portland, OR (866) 637-1872 nw-naturals.com	Five complete and balanced varieties are offered: beef, bison, chicken, chicken with salmon, and turkey. Each contains raw ground bone, fruit, vegetables, and other food supplements, and a vit/min mix.		Available in retail locations in 24 states and via two online retailers.	Online support regarding raw feeding is adequate.
Paw Naturaw Lake Mills, WI (866) 729-4738 pawnaturaw.com	 Four complete and balanced varieties are available (beef, bison, chicken, and turkey). Beef and bison varieties do not contain bone; poultry varieties do include raw ground bone. A few vitamins and minerals are included in formula.	USDA-certified organic frozen raw diets; only organic meats and veggies are used. Complete nutrient profiles for each product are on website.	Available in retail outlets in 20 states and via several online retailers.	Lots of support and information on raw feeding and the benefits of cruelty-free, organic, sustainable ingredient sources.
Pepperdogz Bellevue, WA (866) 866-3649 pepperdogz.com	Three complete and balanced varieties are available. Bison variety uses ground eggshell for calcium source; turkey and chicken varieties use ground raw bone. Each type is about 65% muscle and organ meat and 35% whole fruits, vegetables, and food supplements. No vit/min supplement was needed.	Bison is grass-fed; poultry is cage-free.	Available in retail outlets in Washington and Oregon and via direct ship from the maker.	Online support regarding raw feeding is adequate.
				
Primal Pet Foods San Mateo, CA (866) 566-4652 primalpetfoods.com	Six complete and balanced "raw frozen formulas" are offered. Each contains raw ground bone, organ meat, and organic fruits and vegetables. (Six "raw frozen grinds," which are not complete, are also offered).	All fruits and vegetables are organic; all meats are "human-grade."	Available in many retail locations and through many online retailers.	Lots of info about raw feeding and Primal's products (including complete nutrient values for each diet) are on website.
Raw Advantage Kettle Falls, WA (866) 331-5185 rawadvantage-petfood.com	"Dinner" products are complete and balanced, and contain about 40% meat and ground bone, 46% organic cooked grains, 9% organic vegetables; the balance is food supplements. Company also offers supplemental products.	Beef, turkey, and chicken are all organic.	Available in retail outlets in seven states, and through an online retailer.	Ample support for raw feeding is present on website.
Stella and Chewy's Muskego, WI (888) 477-8977 stellaandchewys.com	Three complete and balanced diets are available: beef, chicken, and lamb. Each contains 96% raw ground bone and organ meats, with the balance comprised of fruit, veggies, food supplements, and a vit/min premix.	USDA beef, organic produce. Documents food safety and testing program, including on-line test results for each batch of food – wow!	Available in many retail outlets and through several online retailers.	Complete nutrient analysis for each product is present on website. Tons of info about the products is offered; less about raw feeding in general.
Steve's Real Food for Pets Eugene, OR (888) 526-1900 stevesrealfood.com	Offers four complete and balanced diets: chicken, turkey, "turducken," and beef. Meats are ground with bone included; same-species organ meats are also included. Each contains vegetables, fruit, gluten-free rice bran, flaxseed, and sardine/anchovy oil.	All food ingredients are human grade.	Does not direct-ship; products available in pet supply stores and online retailer.	A complete nutrient profile is available for each variety. Website offers lots of information for raw feeders.

SUPPLEMENTAL PRODUCTS FOR RAW, FROZEN DIETS

COMPANY INFO	DESCRIPTION OF PRODUCTS	INGREDIENT CLAIMS	AVAILABILITY/SHIPPING	SUPPORT/ INFO
A Place for Paws Raw Columbiana, OH (800) 354-4216 aplaceforpaws.com	A vast variety of products for home-prepared raw diets: raw meaty bones, ground muscle meats (with or without ground bone), organs, vegetables, and supplements. Products include beef, lamb, pork, buffalo, emu, rabbit, chicken, turkey, and quail. Mostly packed in one- or two-pound plastic tubs.	Manufactured weekly in limited batches to ensure the freshest product possible. Frozen to -0° temperature immediately after processing.	Orders are shipped in within a two day UPS ground delivery area from Ohio.	Lots of information on website for people who are new to this style of feeding.
BARFWorld Danville, CA (866) 282-2273 barfworld.com	Main products are complete and balanced. Frozen tripe, minced fruit and vegetable cubes, and minced meats are also available for those who want to put together their own diets.		Products available in pet supply stores and other local distributors. Also available via direct shipping from company headquarters.	Lots of information available on website to support raw feeders.
Bravo Raw Diet Vernon, CT (866) 922-9222 bravorawdiet.com	Bravo has long provided a wide range of high-quality products that experienced raw feeders could use to “build” a complete diet for their dogs. Products include single protein ground meat; meat mixed with ground bone; and meat mixed with ground bone, organs, and vegetables. A new complete and balanced product is planned for release in June (see “complete and balanced” chart).	Beef, lamb, and venison used is grass-fed.	Does not direct-ship; available in select pet supply stores and via online retailers.	Lots of supportive information available on website.
				
Celestial Pets Westlake Village, CA (818) 707-6331 celestialpets.com	Offers a wide variety of frozen raw ground meats, organs, bones,		Available via direct ship through website or phone orders.	Little information is on website, but owner is available for consultations.
Grandad's Pet Foods Lodi, CA (209) 368-3025 grandadspetfoods.com	Six ground chicken or beef blends are available for formulating your own diets. Offered with ground bone and organ meat and with veggies.	Chicken is Rocky (free-range, USDA) chicken	Available through distributors in nine states and via direct shipping from maker.	Little information is on website.
Halshan Harbor City, CA (888) 766-9725 halshan.com	Dozens of ground meats, with or without bone, organ meat, and veggies, are available.	All USDA ingredients.	Available in retail outlets in California and Florida and by direct shipping from maker.	Little information is on website.
Oma's Pride Avon, CT (800) 678-6627 omaspride.com	Offers four different “Oma's Pride Mixes.” Turkey, chicken, and beef varieties contain 70% meat and ground bone, 10% organ meats, and 20% veggies; lamb variety is 80% meat and bone and 20% veggies.	A wide variety of other supplemental frozen foods are offered, including ground vegetables, individual organ meats, various poultry parts, and more.	Available in retail outlets in 39 states and via direct shipping from maker.	Information about products is complete; supportive information for raw feeders is not.
				
Primal Pet Foods San Mateo, CA (866) 566-4652 primalpetfoods.com	Offers six different supplemental “raw frozen grinds” containing only muscle meat, bones, and organs, to which you can add your preferred supplements.	All fruits and vegetables are organic; all meats are “human-grade.”	Available in many retail locations and through many online retailers.	Lots of info about raw feeding and Primal's products are on website.
Three Cheers Raw! Raw! Raw! North Lima, OH (330) 549-3077 threecheers-rawrawraw.com	A dozen or more ground mixes, with or without ground bone, organ meat, and veggies are available.	All “human-grade” meats and veggies.	Available from a limited number of outlets in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and via direct shipping from maker.	Lots of information and guides for raw feeding are present on website.

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Bouncing Off the Walls?

Acupressure to calm the high-spirited, high-energy dog.

BY AMY SNOW AND NANCY ZIDONIS

These are too-common refrains of guardians of dogs who are bouncing off the walls: “She has way too much energy!” “This dog is out of control!” “I’ve had enough of this crazy dog, he’s a maniac!”

You can love your dog to pieces, but if his behavior is unruly, it can be very hard to live with on a steady basis. One of the most common reasons dogs are released to shelters is because they are out of control. Hyperactive dogs are frequently difficult for their owners to enjoy. Surviving this situation may be stressful for you, your family, guests – and the dogs themselves.

The first step is to have the dog evaluated by your trusted holistic veterinarian, to determine if there is any underlying

medical condition. Hyperactivity, also called “hyperkinesia,” actually can be the result of a medical condition that is characterized by frantic behavior, incessant movement resulting in exhaustion, a consistent elevated heart rate, panting, loss of weight, vomiting, and increased appetite or loss of appetite. Canine compulsive disorders such as tail-chasing, self-mutilation, and other nonproductive, repetitive behaviors are usually considered forms of hyperactivity.

There are many reasons that may contribute to a dog’s overactivity. Some young dogs have a lot of energy by nature; others may lack proper training or may be frequently exposed to too much stimulation. Some holistic practitioners speculate that artificial preservatives and/or coloring in commercial foods can contribute to overactivity; others point fingers at grain-based diets, and still others at diets containing excessive amounts of protein.

Insufficient exercise, a lack of personalized attention, and chronic stress are frequently to blame. Any combination of these factors may worsen the hyperactivity. It may be difficult to figure out exactly why your dog is excessively active since it is often a combination of factors, but there are many resources available to help you deal with the problem. Once you have consulted your holistic veterinarian and are following a regime he or she has recommended, you can turn to other sources for support in managing your dog’s behavior.

Canine acupressure

Acupressure can be an ally and an adjunct to medical intervention and positive, professional

training assistance. It is a safe, noninvasive, deceptively gentle, and extremely powerful resource for the high spirited, overly excited dog whether the behavior is a physical disorder or a training issue. Acupressure offers the added value of enhancing the emotional bond between you and your dog.

Like acupuncture, acupressure is based on Traditional Chinese Medicine. Acupuncture uses fine needles to stimulate specific pools of energy called “acupoints,” which are located along pathways running throughout the dog’s body. To use acupressure, we use the soft tip of our thumb or index finger to administer light pressure on the acupoints, and to achieve a similar effect. The intent, when applying pressure on acupoints, is to allow the body to balance the flow of energy along the pathways (also called “channels” or “meridians”) so that the animal’s energy flows harmoniously. When energy is flowing harmoniously, the dog’s physical and mental state is in dynamic balance and he experiences good health and a sense of well-being.

Since acupressure is noninvasive, dog guardians are able to perform a session with their own dog. Complete novices can work with their animals with good results. Trained acupressure practitioners are able to select the most effective acupoints to resolve a specific issue.

Acupressure adjunct

A general canine acupressure session can help with getting the dog’s attention, enhance the focus needed for training, and provide calming and grounding. Dogs having a propensity for being high energy will benefit from working with the acupoints described below.

■ **Yin Tang Point** – This acupoint can be used to help a dog with focus, especially when his attention seems to be scattered. It is good to work this point just prior to a training session so that you can get his



If your dog seems to levitate more than she walks, try the acupressure techniques described here to gently bring her back to earth.

attention more easily. The Yin Tang point is located between and slightly above the eyes in the “third-eye” position.

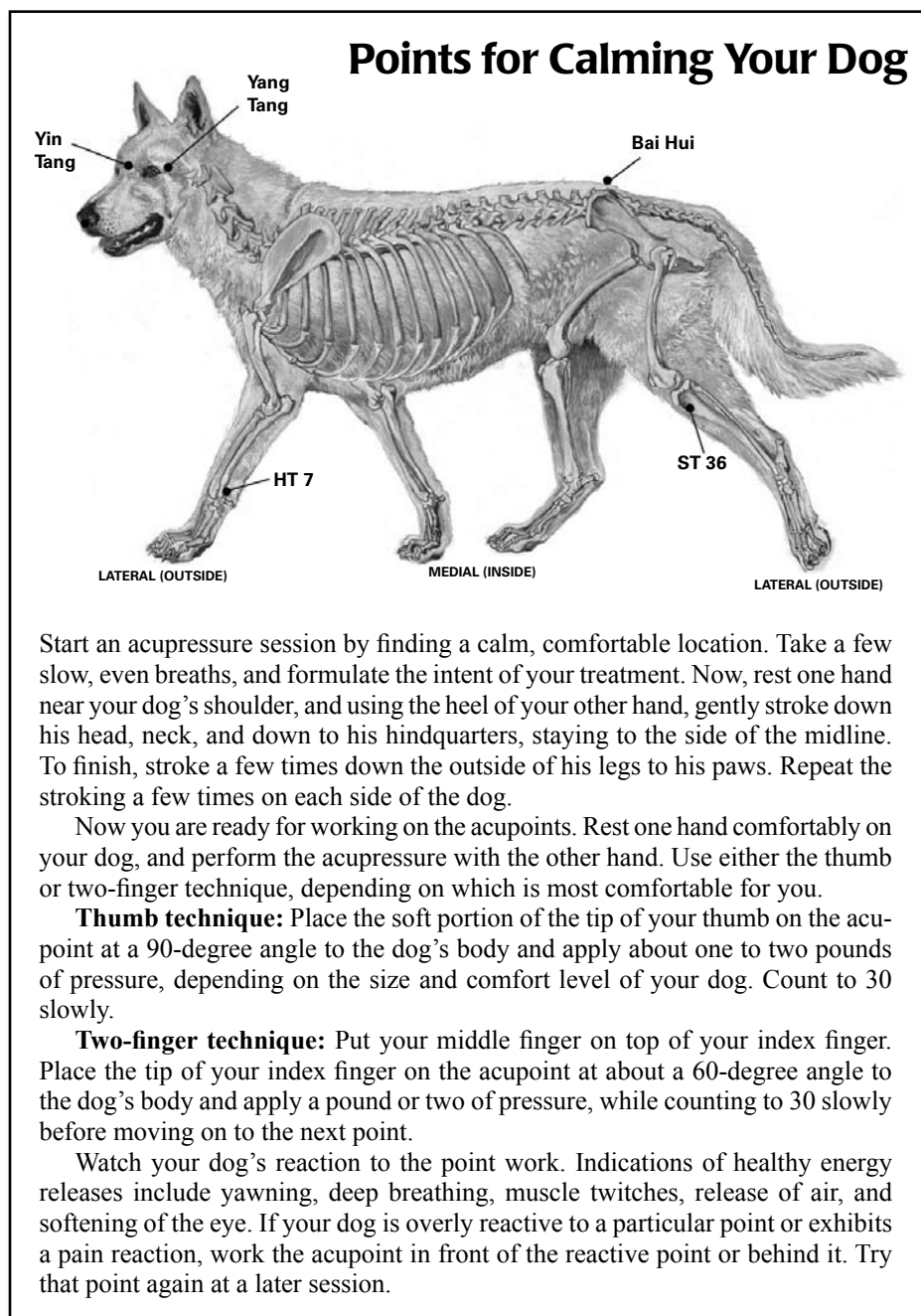
■ **Yang Tang Point** – This point is best utilized when the dog is too intensely focused on something other than you, and you are not able to get his attention. The Yang Tang point is known to disperse mental energy so that you can direct the dog’s attention to you during training. This point can be used when a dog has experienced (or you anticipate that he may experience) a strong fear reaction. (Note: Do not attempt an acupressure session in the midst of a stressful event! Remove the dog to a calm, quiet area, and proceed only when you feel it’s safe to do so.)

There are two indents on the side of the dog’s eyes just beyond the bony prominence of the outer canthus of the eye. Press these indents very lightly with your index fingers and make little counter-clockwise circles to dispel the dog’s intense focus. You can work both Yang Tang points on each side of the dog’s head simultaneously.

■ **Stomach 36 (St 36), Leg Three-Mile** – In Chinese medicine, Stomach 36 is considered the most powerful grounding acupoint. High spirited, high energy dogs need to be more securely earth-bound and stimulating this point can help the dog feel as if he belongs on this earth. Stomach 36 is known to bring the flow of energy down. This point is located on the outside of both the hind legs, just below the dog’s stifle (knee) toward the front of the leg.

■ **Bai Hui, Heaven’s Gate or Point of 100 Meetings** – The Bai Hui Point is a classic animal acupoint that has many benefits. It can be used to help clear the animal’s mind and provide an overall feeling of well-being. It is often used to enhance the dog’s ability to “tune in” to himself. Many dogs with excessive energy issues do not know where their body ends and the rest of the world begins; the Bai Hui point can draw the dog’s awareness back to his own body. This point is located on the sacrum right on his midline.

■ **Heart 7 (HT 7), Spirit’s Gate or Shen Men** – This point is known to calm the spirit, reduce heat, dispel anxiety, and clear the mind. Heart 7 is a key acupoint for calming overly active dogs and can be used in every acupressure session. It is



Start an acupressure session by finding a calm, comfortable location. Take a few slow, even breaths, and formulate the intent of your treatment. Now, rest one hand near your dog’s shoulder, and using the heel of your other hand, gently stroke down his head, neck, and down to his hindquarters, staying to the side of the midline. To finish, stroke a few times down the outside of his legs to his paws. Repeat the stroking a few times on each side of the dog.

Now you are ready for working on the acupoints. Rest one hand comfortably on your dog, and perform the acupressure with the other hand. Use either the thumb or two-finger technique, depending on which is most comfortable for you.

Thumb technique: Place the soft portion of the tip of your thumb on the acupoint at a 90-degree angle to the dog’s body and apply about one to two pounds of pressure, depending on the size and comfort level of your dog. Count to 30 slowly.

Two-finger technique: Put your middle finger on top of your index finger. Place the tip of your index finger on the acupoint at about a 60-degree angle to the dog’s body and apply a pound or two of pressure, while counting to 30 slowly before moving on to the next point.

Watch your dog’s reaction to the point work. Indications of healthy energy releases include yawning, deep breathing, muscle twitches, release of air, and softening of the eye. If your dog is overly reactive to a particular point or exhibits a pain reaction, work the acupoint in front of the reactive point or behind it. Try that point again at a later session.

located on the outside (lateral side) on both front legs, in the deep indent created by the tendon just above the dog’s wrist (carpals) toward the back of the leg.

Offer your dog an acupressure session every third or fourth day, using the acupoints above. Over time, you will most likely see a shift from being wild and crazy to being happy and possessing more self-control, especially when the acupressure is combined with good training practices and holistic veterinary support. Life will be better for all concerned. Remember to tell your dog what a good boy he is when he is a pleasant companion. 🐾

Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis are authors of The Well-Connected Dog: A Guide to Canine Acupressure; Acu-Cat: A Guide to Feline Acupressure; and Equine Acupressure: A Working Manual. They own Tallgrass Publishers, which offers instructional meridian charts and acupressure DVDs for dogs, cats, and horses. They are also founders of Tallgrass Animal Acupressure Institute, offering hands-on and online training courses worldwide, including a practitioner certification program. For more information or to find a certified canine acupressure practitioner in your area, see animalacupressure.com or call (888) 841-7211.

Dogs Just Wanna Have Fun

Engaging in activities you both enjoy will improve your bond.

BY PAT MILLER

Sometimes we can get so focused on behavior and training that we forget to have fun with our dogs. I realized some time ago that I had become a behavior addict. I took the premise to heart that “any time you are with your dog one of you is training the other,” and became so caught up in reinforcing desired behaviors and preventing reinforcement for undesirable ones that I forgot how to just *be* with my dogs. While positive trainers have become quite adept at incorporating fun into their training programs, there is value in letting go of the behavior stuff occasionally and just having fun for its own sake.

Fun comes naturally to dogs *and* humans. Just watch a litter of puppies at play – or class of children romping in a kindergarten schoolyard – and you’ll be quickly convinced that fun is a primary (innate) reinforcer for dogs (and kids). The wise dog owner/trainer takes advantage of this, using play (not just food!) to reward



On vacation? Take your dog with you! Just be sure to consider his needs for water, snacks, rest breaks – and consideration for coping with local conditions. Chicago’s fast walkers have no problem crossing six lanes in time, but tourist dogs crossing this wide intersection on Michigan Avenue at Millennium Park may need an assist!

What you can do . . .

- Play with your dog more!
- Buy some new toys and invite your dog to play new games with them; don’t just hand them to the dog and go back to work.
- Make sure that you take breaks from training and enjoy relaxed but engaged time with your dog.
- Look for dog-safe community activities you can enjoy with your dog, such as quiet street fairs, rather than loud parades or firework displays.



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desirable behaviors in training sessions and in real life, and giving canine-human interactions a positive classical association to help create a strong relationship between dog and owner.

The dog-human social contract is all about our relationship with our dogs. Play builds relationships – hence the importance of play. As children, the friends with whom we form lifelong relationships are likely to be the ones with whom we have the most fun sharing mutually rewarding and enjoyable activities. Play. Play for its own sake, just because it’s fun, and helps us remember what we love about our dogs.

As we mature, we tend to get serious about life – perhaps *too* serious. Hence the new-age sometimes-appropriate advice to find your “inner child.” Your dog is the perfect companion to accompany you on your journey to find more fun. Here are

some ideas to help you remember how to play with your dog.

Out-and-about fun

If your dog has sufficient social skills so that you can safely take him out into the world, make it a point to do so! If most of your time with your dog is spent at home, you may discover an entirely new and enjoyable side of him off his home turf. After all, there will be completely new sights, interesting sounds, and best of all from a dog’s point of view, novel *smells* for him to experience.

■ **Take a hike.** If you’re fortunate enough to live near a place where dogs are allowed off-leash, and your dog has a reliable recall, go for a long hike. I mean a *long* hike. When we lived in California I used to take Keli, my Kelpie, for an occasional

all-day adventure in the Mt. Burdell Open Space Preserve near the Marin Humane Society where I worked. With a daypack full of provisions, a tatami (lightweight woven mat that rolled up for easy carrying), and a couple of books, we'd hike a while, climb on or jump over fallen trees, relax a while, play in the pond, watch redtail hawks soar, stop for lunch, fetch tennis balls a while, pretend to herd a few cows, hike a while, and finally head back to the car, tired, relaxed, and happy.

For a variation on the theme, sometimes several friends and co-workers would join us for a dog-pack hike. Occasionally we loaded up the cars and headed out to Pt. Reyes National Seashore for a change of scenery. The dogs didn't care where we went, as long as we had fun.

If off-leash isn't allowed in your local parks, or you're still working on that recall, you can do the same thing with a long-line to keep Rover in sight. Maybe not quite as much fun, but almost.

■ **Have a dog pal party.** It's a special occasion – your dog's birthday, or the anniversary of her adoption, or the recent arrival of a *new* canine family member. Throw a dog pal party! Invite all your dogs friends from training class, offer the canine guests some FrostBite, Chilly Dawg, or Frosty Paws (ice cream treats created for dogs), and pupcakes (healthy homemade goodies in muffin papers), and organize games like Bobbing for Hotdogs. (Use sliced "pennies" of hotdog in just a few inches of water for small dogs, a bit more for larger dogs. And make sure dogs play just one at a time.)

Holidays offer theme-based party opportunities. Talk to your friends about a party rotation plan, where one person hosts a spring-themed party (how about an Easter egg hunt, substituting dog treats for the eggs?), another does Independence Day (no fireworks please!), and someone else takes Halloween. Costumes. Oh, costumes! If you're ethically opposed to making dogs wear costumes, have the humans wear costumes that complement their dogs. The Border Collie owner could dress as a shepherdess; the Lab owner could come as a duck . . .

While the dogs play dog games with each other, you can play human games, like Dog Trivia. Google "dog trivia" to find



A birthday party for your dog may seem silly, but it can be both fun and a great socialization opportunity for your dog and the guest dogs.

challenging canine questions, or make up your own. Unleash your creative side, and see how many great party ideas you and your friends can come up with.

■ **Go to the dog park.** If you're fortunate enough to have a good dog park in your community, take advantage of it. Check it out first, to be sure it's clean, well-run, and securely fenced, that canine bullies aren't allowed, and small dogs have a separate area where they can't get run over by bigger play pals. Make sure you're comfortable with the rules, which may include a requirement that dogs be spayed or neutered and currently vaccinated for rabies; a prohibition against food, to reduce the potential for resource-guarding fights; and a request to keep small children outside the fenced area.

Playtime at the dog park doesn't have to be limited to dog-play. At Remington Park in Sausalito, California, regular users used to hold an informal Friday evening wine-and-cheese party at the park for the humans while their dogs romped.

■ **Attend a pool party.** Every year at the end of August, when the community pool closes here in Hagerstown, Maryland, the city and the Washington County Humane

Society jointly host the Potterfield Pool Pooch Plunge.

For one afternoon, dog owners can bring their dogs to the pool and play with them in – or out of – the water. Hugely popular, this event is in its fifth year here, with nary a serious unpleasant incident despite more than 100 dogs in attendance. Event planners have a veterinarian present to monitor dogs so no one gets too tired or waterlogged. They also arrange a few lighthearted contests for the party-goers, awarding prizes for the best trick, the best tennis-ball catcher, the longest tail, the best bark, and more.

If your community doesn't already offer this delightful doggie diversion, put a flea in someone's ear at your humane society or parks and recreation department and see if you can get the ball rolling. Your dog-friends will lick your hand in gratitude if you're successful.

■ **Support a good cause.** Animal shelters across the country sponsor a variety of events as fundraisers for their animal care and protection causes. You might find – or organize! – any of these events or others in your community:

- Dog Walk-A-Thon
- Bark in the Park
- Polar Bear Plunge
- Flea Market
- Pooch Parade
- Canine Games

Many of the events welcome dogs, and often include games, vendors, and food for dogs and humans. You can meet other dog folks, play, eat, and buy dog stuff. What better way to have fun and support a good cause all at the same time?

■ **Explore your town.** Once a week (or more!) hop in your car with your dog, and drive to a different part of your community

for each outing. Park and walk around. Look for dog-friendly shops, outdoor cafes where you can dine with your dog, little-known parks, and serene hiking paths.



Dogs and owners love Hagerstown, Maryland's annual "Pooch Plunge," which raises funds for area shelters.

Stay-at-home fun

You don't have to go somewhere to play; there are plenty of activities you and your dog can enjoy in the comfort of your own home, indoors or out.

■ **Find it!** You can play this game inside, outside, or both, and create your own variations. Start with your dog in front of you. Say "Find it!" in an excited tone of voice and toss a treat to one side. As soon as he gobbles down that one, toss one the other direction and say "Find it!" again. After a half-dozen tosses, have him sit-and-wait while you place a treat 10 to 15 feet away in plain view. Return to his side and tell him to "Find it!" After a few of those, start "hiding" the treat while he watches you – behind a chair leg, under a pillow, around a corner. Then return and send him to find it. Make the hiding places harder and harder, so he actually has to start looking (with his nose) to find the treats. Most dogs (and their humans) adore this game; those canine noses are so talented, it doesn't take a Bloodhound to sniff out yummy treats.

You can also play "find it!" using a favorite toy. Variations of the game include:

• **Find and destroy:** Treats are hidden in an empty cardboard container taped closed; your dog must shred container to get treats (don't let him eat the cardboard!).

• **Find the human:** Your dog waits while you hide, or you can just duck behind a tree when he's not looking. Give him a "Find me!" cue to let him know the game is on. Or, your dog stays with you while someone else hides. You tell him, "Find (insert name here)." The person hiding can make noises if necessary to encourage your dog to find them. Give your dog treats and praise when he finds the missing person.

■ **Fun with toys.** Of course, there's the ever-popular "fetch the ball" and "catch the Frisbee" kind of fun with toys. While there's absolutely nothing wrong with those, today's generation of dog toy play possibilities goes way beyond a simple game of fetch. There's a wide range of various interactive toys now available, just waiting for you to get silly with your dog.

These are not toys you just hand to your dog and go back to work while your dog plays – these are toys that you and your dog do things with *together*. There are a host of different tug toys: Wubbas, Udder Tugs, bumpers, and fleece tugs – and tug toys with a zing, like the "Chase-N-Pull," that has a square of fleece attached to the end of a rope on a pole, that you swing around for the dog to chase, grab, and pull. There are interactive stuffed toys, such as the "Hide-A-Toys" and "Egg Babies," where smaller stuffed toys are hidden inside larger ones for your dog to pull out,

so you can stuff them back in again, so he can pull them out again.

And there's the new genre of wooden puzzles – the Nina Ottosson toys (reviewed on page 18), guaranteed to make you and your dog think. These puzzles are a great activity to include in your dog parties!

Finding my inner child

When I realized that the fun part of my relationship with my dogs was suffering as a result of my addiction to the principles of behavior and learning, I started making a concerted effort to turn off that part of my mind at least some of the time when I'm with my dogs.

Now, when we hike around the farm, I sometimes take a book along, and we hang out a while at the picnic table by the creek, in the shade of the trees. I worry less when one of them takes an excursion out of my sight into the woods. They never go far, and they always come back quickly, without getting into trouble; our 80-acre buffer is good insurance that they won't wander over to the neighbor's house. It's second nature to me by now to have treats in my pockets, so they still get some reinforcement for desirable behaviors, even when I try to have my training brain turned off. But I no longer let it take center stage all the time when we're just in "relax and hang out" mode. Sometimes it's good to just *be* with your dogs.

Note: Dog Play

Parts of this article are adapted from my new book, *Dog Play: How and Why to Play With Your Dog*, due for release from Dogwise Publishing in June. The book is packed with information about dog play, including more games and activities you and your dog can have fun with and tons of tips on how to play with your dog. There's also a chapter on the "play-deprived" dog – so if you have a dog who's forgotten how to have fun, you can re-introduce her to the joy of play.

You'll be able to order the book at dogwise.com starting in June, or get signed copies from me at peaceablepaws.com. 🐾

Pat Miller, CPDT, is WDJ's Training Editor. Miller lives in Hagerstown, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. Pat is also author of The Power of Positive Dog Training; Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog; and Positive Perspectives II: Know Your Dog, Train Your Dog. See "Resources," page 24.

Sources for Interactive Toys

There are lots of sources for good interactive toys. You can find them in your local pet supply store and on the Internet by googling "dog toy," "interactive dog toy," or "dog tug toy." Here are just a few of our Internet favorites:

HelpingUdders.com: Great, sturdy tug toys, made of cow milking machine parts (rubber).

SitStay.com: Wide variety of tug toys including bumpers, Wubbas, fleece tugs; puzzle toys, including I-Cube, Intellibone, Bag-O-Balls, Hide-a-Squirrel, Hide-a-Bird, Hide-a-Bee, and Egg Babies.

CleanRun.com: Huge selection of tug toys (and others), including the exciting Chase-N-Pull, fleece tugs, Egg Babies, and Pentapull.

AlphaDogToys.com: Pull-Apart Toys (Mailman, Vet, Clown, Convict); six-foot-long tennis ball tug toy; and I-Cage.

PawLickers.com: Nina Ottosson's interactive toys (wooden puzzle games); Funagle and Do You Mind (training games); tug toys and Wubbas.



Don't Worry, Be Happy

Keep your training style loose and positive for best results.

BY NANCY KERNS

Training the family dog can be difficult and trying at times, but it's important to stay positive, have fun, and keep practicing, says Tacoma, Washington-based trainer Kathy Sdao, an associate Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist (CAAB) who has worked as a full-time animal trainer for the past 23 years.

As a graduate student at the University of Hawaii in the 1980s, Sdao (pronounced suh-DAY-oh) was part of a team that trained dolphins to solve complex cognitive puzzles. After receiving a master's degree in experimental psychology, she worked for the U.S. Navy to train dolphins for defense-related open-ocean tasks. Next, Sdao worked as a marine mammal trainer at the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium in Tacoma, Washington. There she expanded her training skills by working with beluga

whales, walruses, porpoises, sea lions, polar bears, and otters. Years later, Sdao and another zookeeper left their jobs to create Tacoma's first dog daycare facility, Puget Hound Daycare. This is where Sdao began teaching group classes for pet owners.

Since leaving Puget Hound in 1999, Sdao has been lecturing throughout the U.S. and Europe on operant conditioning, sharing her passion for the science of training and the awesome power of clicker training. Sdao lives in Tacoma with two rescue dogs.

I first met Sdao a decade ago at one of the Association of Pet Dog Trainer's annual conferences, where she was presenting a talk about the use of positive training and enrichment for rehabilitating aggressive animals. She talked about dogs, but also gave a detailed case history of her work with an aggressive juvenile walrus named "E.T." at the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium. Her video footage of E.T.'s transformation from a ton of very reactive, dangerous muscle and teeth to a well-behaved, affectionate walrus was astounding. Positive techniques, Sdao says, are incredibly powerful.

I asked Sdao if she could contribute to our special section this month on training fun and games. Here is our conversation about making training more enjoyable for dogs and people.

What can people do to make training more fun for their dogs?

For one, they can stay positive, and avoid doing anything that is punishing for the dog – that is, painful or even just annoying enough to cause behavior suppression and anxiety. Even a small amount of aversive things mixed into an otherwise very positive training program can poison a dog's willingness and interest in training. Training can be negatively affected by even very infrequent leash pops or verbal reprimands. A simple unhappy sigh or scowl – which even positive trainers will



Is it possible to positively train dogs in "real world," distracting environments? Kathy Sdao, who has trained dolphins for the U.S. Navy in the open ocean, says it really can be done, and "positive" is the best way to do it! Photo by Jon Smith, jonsmithphotos.com.

do from time to time – can affect training, even if they are fairly mild.

These aversive things can also decrease the value of your reinforcers, which has more serious consequences to your training program. You can inadvertently turn your reinforcers into punishers if you're not careful. We generally think of food, toys, and praise as being immutably reinforcing for dogs – but you can actually wreck that by associating those things with punishment. Once you have a dog who no longer trusts food or praise, you'll find that your training really slows down . . . and it's easy to blame the dog for this, instead of the fact that your "reinforcers" are not so reinforcing any more.

How can this happen? A good example is when food is followed quickly by some-

What you can do . . .

- Keep your training positive! If you feel yourself starting to get frustrated or angry with your dog, stop the training session (as cheerfully as you can). Think over what you could do differently in the next session.
- Build a set of "secondary reinforcers" – things that your dog enjoys – to use as alternate rewards to food.
- Train your dog like no one is watching you. Have fun! Keep your body language loose and inviting, your voice cheerful, and your attention focused on your dog.



thing the dog finds scary: e.g., peanut butter is used to lure a dog into getting his nails trimmed; liver treats are thrown into a crate to lure a dog in (where he will spend the next eight hours); cookies are used to coax the dog onto a teeter in agility. These experiences of “reinforcer (food) followed almost immediately by a punisher” will cause the food to be suspect. It’s as if the food starts to have strings attached. (Then students will tell me they have a dog who isn’t motivated by food . . . Sigh.)

How can a person tell when they are presenting something that is aversive for the dog?

Aversives are easy to identify in the behavior laboratory: the rat runs out of the Skinner box (its real name is “operant conditioning chamber”) when shocked by an electrified floor grid; the chimp looks for ways to leave the cage if threatened. In training, when our dogs are on leash with us and they can’t physically leave, they often *mentally* check out.

I see lots of dogs who look confused, or show low-level signs of stress, by turning away from their handlers, licking their lips, sniffing the ground. Detaching from their trainers tells us that the training is really not that much fun for them – or it might even be quite icky for them. It *doesn’t* indicate that they are stupid or that they are just not “paying attention.” Frustrated handlers will often say “My dog is not paying attention!” The dog may not be paying attention because he would prefer to be somewhere else.

Sometimes, though, this is less about the handler being aversive and more about the rest of the dog’s environment being so much more appealing than the handler. When people say, “My dog is so easily distracted,” it’s really *not* about a distractible dog; it’s actually a symptom of something bigger. It’s about the handler not being very reinforcing.

Norwegian clicker trainers Morten Egtvedt and Cecile Koeste, owners of Canis Clickertraining Academy and very successful obedience competitors, recently put it this way: If you are not paying well enough, your dog just might take a job with another firm that is offering a better rate of pay. Dogs are going to do whatever is

most worthwhile for them, and if you are not more fun than chasing a squirrel or investigating something smelly, you just might lose that canine “employee.”

What are some things people can do to make themselves more enjoyable for their dogs?

One thing that marine mammal trainers do a lot, to great effect, is to intentionally build up the list of things that can serve as secondary reinforcers. Food is a primary reinforcer; animals don’t have to be taught to like food. But if you have only food as a reinforcer – if food is the only thing that motivates an animal – you have nothing to work with if the animal is not hungry or is sick.

Marine mammal trainers intentionally develop a number of other things that the animals enjoy: certain toys, certain types of touching or scratching, having a stream



Engagement with you should be highly reinforced. Dogs who are inattentive may be stressed – or simply find you to be not very reinforcing.
Photo by Jon Smith, jonsmithphotos.com.

of water sprayed on their tongues. These things may not start out as inherently enjoyable or reinforcing in and of themselves, but if you consistently, in a careful way, associate them with other reinforcers, you can transform them into reinforcers. Then you have even more things to use to motivate your dog to learn and to behave how you want him to.

What about a handler’s body language, posture and facial expressions? I see many people who frown or get stern when they work with their dogs . . .

I heard someone else say this, and I like to repeat it: “Train like no one is watching you.” I find that when people are alone, they are much more relaxed, they

are looser, their shoulders are down, they breathe evenly, the leash is loose . . . but as soon as they realize that another human is watching— whether it’s an instructor, co-trainer, family member, friend – they really tense up, which makes it difficult to stay “in the moment” with the dog and observe and respond to him.

Worrying about who is watching us is a natural primate thing, but it’s counterproductive in dog training. Allow yourself to relax and remember that it’s really about teaching the dog, not performing for whomever is watching you. I reinforce students in my classes for laughing when they are having fun. Most of my students have to be encouraged to be more animated and relaxed.

That said, you don’t *have* to dance around and cheer to be a good trainer. There are very good trainers who are quite still and quiet. And there are some trainers who are very animated and would seem to be very exciting for their dogs, but who have such bad timing or are so distracting to their dogs that they actually make it harder for the dog to learn. It’s a fine line. The most important thing is to really watch your dog and reinforce as quickly and appropriately as you can.

What are some other things people can do to keep their training sessions enjoyable for the dog?

I try to teach people to keep their expectations reasonable. You shouldn’t expect to be able to get your dog to make giant changes in his behavior in any one training session.

It’s sort of like going to the gym and doing a set of curls. How much do you expect your biceps to change in each session? Do you really expect them to look different when you come out from when you went in? Not much. But you do understand that after *lots* of short sessions of doing curls at the gym you’ll have nice biceps.

Understand, too, that your dog may improve only negligibly in any given training session. I’ll test my students on this by asking, “What’s your goal for this training session?” If they answer some big chunk of behavior change – “I’d like to teach him to come and sit straight in front of me!” I tell them that their expectations may be too high; it may not be real fun. Let’s do something more reasonable, or it’s going to be a real grind for the dog.

I use the gym analogy to illustrate the importance of short sessions, too. You

wouldn't do curls continuously until your biceps grew visibly! No, you do a set until your muscles are just beginning to be fatigued, then you take a break and drink some water. Then you do another set, and then do something else. You slowly build strength over time. Dog training should be just the same: frequent, short, fun sessions. Over time, you'll see great improvement.

Another thing: Many people suggest that you should try to always end a training session on a good note. I don't think this is always a good idea. Many of us start a training session, and things start out well. But then we hit a point where things start going awry. If we persist in an effort to "end on a good note," oftentimes we just make things worse.

If the dog starts showing signs of checking out and getting frustrated, sometimes it's better to just stop the session. I'd suggest stopping – not angrily, just stopping – putting the dog safely away somewhere, and trying to figure out what went wrong, rather than persisting in a session that, to any objective observer, is not going well.

I hear owners say things like this: "Positive training is all well and good in my backyard, but what about using it in the real world?" Can we ever really be more interesting and motivating than all of the distractions out there?

I would love to promote the Premack principle and its uses. Few trainers really understand the full power of its potential – and it's been *so* incredibly powerful for me as a trainer in real-world situations. The concept is that high-probability behavior will reinforce low-probability behavior. It's so dry, but it's also so practical. Let me explain:

Just about all the behaviors we want our dogs to do could be considered "low-probability behavior." That means that the things we want them to do – walk or sit quietly at our sides no matter what is going on around them, ignore other distractions in the world and pay attention mostly to

us – are things that they would be fairly unlikely to do on their own, if there were no leashes and no fences.

All those things that dogs would like to do most at any given moment – go sniff that pole, pee on those bushes, run and look for squirrels, greet that other dog – those are high-probability behaviors. If you took off the leash, the probability is very high that your dog would go do those things. We ordinarily call those things "distractions." But consider this: Those things are also by definition reinforcements. The dog *really* enjoys them and wants them; they could be amazing "jackpots" in our training, if we structure our training really well.

Approached the right way, you can transform "distractions" into reinforcers. All you have to do is show the dog that if he does a little bit of your low-probability behavior, you will let him go sniff that pole, go pee on those bushes, run and look for squirrels – whatever that dog is most apt to do right then.

We want dogs to pay attention to us and ignore everything else. I tell people to stop trying to get their dogs' attention and, instead, to brainwash the dog into realizing that the way to get access to all the things he wants is to pay attention to you. I don't even teach my dogs to pay attention and make eye contact with me anymore; I found it redundant after I realized that if I just gave frequent, consistent, meaningful reinforcement, my dogs will *naturally* pay more attention to me. They aren't going to ignore me, because I have convinced them I am the way to get to the things they want in the world.

Many people, even very experienced trainers, knock their heads against the wall when they are trying to figure out how to get dogs to walk away from chasing a squirrel. I tell them, let's figure out how to use squirrels in your training program. It takes some creativity; I know that. But if you can do it properly, it expands your ability to reinforce so much; it can take you so much farther than that cookie you have in your pocket. 🐾

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A Puzzling Activity

These interactive toys are a blast, and a mental workout for your dog.

BY PAT MILLER

Only rarely does a totally new genre of dog toy appear on the market, and it almost never happens that a new genre of toys is introduced with more than just one or two representative products.

This rare event was recently engineered by Sweden's Nina Ottosson, with the introduction of her Zoo Active Games, a line of 10 novel interactive dog toys (and a few cat toys!). As a huge fan of interactive toys for dogs, I was eager to get my paws on as many of the toys as I could, and see if they were as fun for dogs as they looked!

The Zoo Active toys are available in the United States from only a select few distributors, including Paw Lickers Bakery and Boutique, owned and operated by Marianne Gage and her son David in Greenfield Center, New York. Fortunately for me, when WDJ editor Nancy Kerns



The human participants in our Paw Lickers Puzzle test and party had a blast watching (and helping) the dogs solve the puzzles and comparing how the different dogs approached each task. The dogs wanted more chances to play!

What you can do . . .

- Order one or more of the Zoo Active toys from Paw Lickers Bakery and Boutique: (888) 868-7297 or pawlickers.com.
- Try different treats in the puzzles. Use treats that your dog especially covets in the toys that are more difficult for him.
- If your dog gets “stuck” and can't seem to progress with a toy, help him out a time or two!
- Never leave these or any other toys that can be chewed with your unattended dog. Vigilant supervision is required at all times for your dog's safety.



contacted David to inquire whether we could test the toys, he generously offered to send me seven of the products to try out. I've been introducing the toys to my own dogs for a few months, so I knew they had great “fun potential,” and looked forward to an opportunity to try them out on a bunch of other dogs, too.

So it was with great anticipation that I planned a Paw Lickers Puzzle Party, inviting friends to bring their dogs to test and review the intriguing interactive puzzle toys.

The night of the party finally arrived. We had seven toys to test, and seven canine players came, so we set the dogs up around the room. We also set up dividers between them to reduce distractions and the potential for resource-guarding. Each of the dogs was accompanied by an owner/handler, and we had four trainer/observers

taking notes on the dogs' interactions with the toys. We allowed each team 10 minutes per puzzle, then passed each toy to the next dog in line. If a dog emptied the toy quickly, it was reloaded so the dog could continue to play.

Pieces of the puzzle

With one exception, the Zoo Active puzzles are made of wood and particle board and didn't look like they'd stand up to heavy abuse. It is clear they are intended to be interactive – not to be left for dogs to play with them unattended. I was curious to see how they'd hold up to normal, supervised abuse.

By the end of our puzzle party, there was unanimous agreement that a good time was had by all. Five of the seven puzzles won several canine and human fans; one (the “Dog Trigger”) had some logistical

problems but was workable, and only one (the “Dog Box”) was judged by all present to be a “dud.”

I had invited friends with a variety of breeds, of different ages and sizes, to give the toys a thorough test. All the owner/handlers and observers were Peaceable Paws Academy graduates and/or trainers that I knew well. They were instructed to help their dogs as much as they felt the dogs needed to be successful with the toys. The partygoers were:

■ Gretel, a young adult spayed female German Shepherd-mix, and her owner/handler James Latonick of Martinsburg, West Virginia.

■ Merlin, a senior neutered male Jack Russell Terrier, and his owner/handler Karin Fellers of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

■ Molly, a senior spayed female Cocker Spaniel, and her owner/handler Katie Ervin of Hagerstown, Maryland.

■ Willow, an adult spayed female Collie/Shepherd-mix, and her owner/handler Penelope Brown of Washington, D.C.

■ Truman, an adolescent neutered male Golden Retriever, and his owner/handler Beth Adamec of Windsor Mill, Maryland.

■ Allie, a senior spayed female Golden Retriever, and her owner/handler Susan McCullough of Vienna, Virginia.

■ Jamie, a senior spayed female Border Collie-mix, and her owner/handler Roz Ferber of Alexandria, Virginia.

Our observers were: Shirley Greenlief of Martinsburg, West Virginia; Jeanne Klink of Meyersdale, Pennsylvania; Hedda Garland of Washington, D.C.; and Tim Sandusky of Silver Spring, Maryland.

Our results

Here are the toys themselves, and the results of our testing party, in order of highest (four paws) rated to lowest (zero paws):

DOG TORNADO

The Dog Tornado (\$46) consists of four layered discs, three of which have round slots for treat placement (the fourth is the “lid”). The human places treats in all the slots, rotates the layers to hide the treats and lets the dog begin; you can show the dog a treat in the slot to get him started if necessary. The dog moves the layers with his or her paws and nose to reveal – and eat – the treats.



All the dogs figured this one out and emptied the Dog Tornado of treats within five to six minutes. Jamie required a little help at first; this was her first toy, so she wasn't sure what was going on, plus, in general, she seemed to offer less behavior with the toys (thus needing more help) than the other dogs.

The other dogs varied in technique. Truman used lots of enthusiastic foot action. Allie loved it, and moved it across the



Willow used as much of her anatomy as was needed to empty treats from the Dog Tornado. She also figured out the “pattern” to the puzzle.

room with her energetic efforts. Merlin bit it and flipped it upside down.

An owner comment from Penelope Brown: “The Dog Tornado was fantastic. Willow used everything – paws, nose, and chin. She even figured out that when one hole on a layer was open, the opposite one was also.”

DOG SMART

The Dog Smart (\$42) is a disc with eight round slots around the perimeter and one in the center, looking somewhat like the face of a clock. A hollow round peg sets in each slot, with a treat hidden underneath. The dog must pick up the pegs with his mouth or dislodge them with nose or paws to gain access to the treats.

This one was also a favorite of most of



Merlin used his paws on the Dog Smart, but most dogs had more success removing the pegs with their mouths.

the dogs and humans. It was a little harder than the Tornado, and some of the dogs eventually lost interest. After five minutes of effort yielded only two treats, Allie began offering other behaviors to Susan in hopes of earning rewards. In contrast, Gretel found all nine treats in two minutes, and when James placed the pegs back without treats, Gretel continued to remove them. Willow also enjoyed the toy even after the treats were gone; she continued to play with the pegs, and even replaced some of them in the slots herself!

James Latonick's comment: “Gretel's favorite toy of the evening was the Dog Smart. She loved taking the pegs in her mouth, and caught on to this game fast.”

DOG PYRAMID

The Dog Pyramid (\$22) is the only one of the seven toys we tested that wasn't made of wood, but rather of sturdy, bright red plastic. Shaped like a beehive with a weighted bottom and one hole on the side near the top, the toy is intended to be loaded with treats and pushed around by the dog



to make the treats fall out. It's similar to other treat-stuffed toys such as the Buster Cube and Molecuball, but the weighted bottom makes it unique; every time the dog pushes it over, it rights itself again.

This one was very popular with our party crowd as well. It was Allie's favorite, and Truman had so much fun with it he batted it across the room. Gretel, on the other hand, only got one treat out in three minutes and lost interest due to the low payoff, and Jamie got bored with the toy after getting a few treats out and deciding they were too low-value to be worth her attention. (As a treat dispensing toy, the Pyramid was loaded with dry kibble, as moist treats would stick to the inside.) Willow, creative as always, not only pushed it around vigorously, but also picked it up in her mouth and shook it to make the goodies fall out.

Susan McCullough's comment: "Allie stayed with the Dog Pyramid for the full ten minutes. The rolling motion of the toy seemed to fascinate her as much as the treats she was able to ferret out. This toy definitely seemed to be her favorite."

DOG SPINNY

The Dog Spinny (\$37) is a simpler version of the Tornado – a flat disc with only one layer for treat placement (plus the lid). The dog must spin the lid to find the eight treats underneath. All the dogs emptied the Spinny easily – but none of the humans enjoyed it much. The Tornado was just as much fun but more of a challenge for the dogs with its additional two layers.

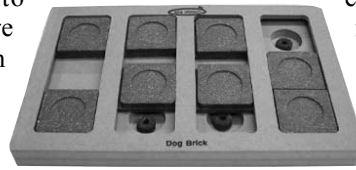
Jamie found three of the treats within 10 seconds, and didn't want to stop even when the Spinny was empty. Truman got very excited and worked extremely hard to get the treats – scratching, pushing, digging, and spinning the lid at a high rate of speed. Almost all the dogs emptied the toy within five minutes, and got a reload.

Penelope Brown's comment: "The Spinny was fun for Willow. She figured it all out; she spun the disc with her chin and paw, even experimented with picking it up and dropping it (on my broken finger – ouch!)."



DOG BRICK

The Dog Brick (\$47) is a flat rectangle with four oblong cutouts, each of which has two round slots into which treats are placed (one on each end) and two square sliding pieces that cover the treats. The dog must move the squares to find the treats. This toy works best with paw or nose action; dogs whose behavior choice is biting were at a disadvantage.



Again, Merlin did well with this toy by using his paws. Dogs who mostly use their mouths grew quickly frustrated.

The Brick had fewer devotees. It was the favorite puzzle of only one dog: Merlin, probably because the behavior options were more limited. Merlin was the most adept at manipulating the squares; he retrieved all eight treats within four minutes.

Gretel also did well, finding all the treats in six minutes with a little help from James. Molly lost interest and walked away after four minutes, but Katie encouraged her to come back and try again, and she eventually found seven of the treats. Willow got five treats in three minutes – and became much more motivated to look for the remaining ones when Penelope switched to a higher-value treat.

Karin Fellers' comment: "Merlin is a food hound and is relentless with the trash can at home, so this was really fun for him. He especially liked the Brick, where he could paw the sliding square to get the treats out."

DOG TRIGGER

The Dog Trigger (\$46) is a flat, arrow-shaped puzzle with semi-circles cut from each side and the bottom. There are nine holes for treats, with a round peg in each hole that protrudes from the front of the Trigger. The dog must push each peg with his nose or paw to make the treats fall out of the back of the trigger, and collect them from the floor through the

bottom semi-circle. The side cut-outs are for the human to hold the trigger between her legs.

This toy has some design flaws. While the concept is interesting – and significantly different from most of the other puzzles – the execution is somewhat lacking. None of the dogs really figured this one out in the allotted 10 minutes; most of them failed to make the connection between pushing in the peg and finding the treat on the floor. Owners found it awkward to hold the Trigger between their legs, and dogs kept trying to go behind the toy and just eat the treats from the holes instead of pushing them out with the pegs.

The Trigger has some potential, but would require more training for the dogs to understand the concept of "push the peg, find the treat on the floor."

Roz Ferber's comment: "The Trigger was somewhat awkward; it must be held, and Jamie didn't notice the fallen treats."



Willow fixates on her handler, looking for a clue about this hard-to-understand puzzle. She doesn't even notice a treat has dropped.

DOG BOX



The Dog Box (\$44) is a cube with a removable top, no bottom, and a square insert that slides in and rests at an angle, with two narrow strips of foam attached to the

surface. One wall of the cube has a five-sided opening cut from the bottom.

There are three options for the top piece – one with a large hole, one with a smaller hole, and one with an oblong-shaped hole just slightly larger than the accompanying round peg. To get a treat, the dog is supposed to push the peg, and eventually pick it up and drop it through the top opening. Treats balanced on the foam strip them fall out the bottom cut-out for the dog to eat.

Neither the dogs nor their handlers liked this toy. It fell apart easily, and didn't set the dogs up for success. Our testers tried to poke their noses through the top opening or the bottom cut-out for direct access to the treats; none of them were able to figure out the concept of pushing the peg into the hole to make treats fall out the bottom. Merlin had the most fun with it, as he enjoyed knocking the box around and sticking his head through the openings, but he didn't have any more of a clue than any of the other dogs as to the intended goal for the toy.

Susan McCullough's comment: "The Dog Box was a dud. Allie only wanted to stick her head in the hole to get the treat. When she couldn't do that, she lost interest."

General comments

- Beth Adamec: "I noticed that as we went from toy to toy Truman became increasingly excited to try the next thing."
- Katie Ervin: "Molly and I had a lot of fun playing with the toys at the party. She especially liked the Dog Smart and the Tornado."
- Roz Ferber: "Overall I like the toys, and think they will provide great stimulation for smart, bored dogs."
- Karin Fellers: "Merlin got to the point

where he was waiting for the next toy with anticipation. I think he liked them all."

- James Latonick: "This was a fun exercise for us; we got to play with some cool toys! I think the particle board construction isn't ideal for all the toys where exposure to moisture (dog spit) is certain to have a destructive effect over time."

Puzzling conclusions

The Nina Ottosson puzzles are truly a new generation of interactive dog toy – unlike any I have seen before, and well-designed for today's new generation of positively trained "thinking dog." Most of the toys provided challenging and fun entertainment for our test dogs and their owners, some of whom left after the party with full intention of acquiring one or two of their favorites for their dogs to play with.

We did not explore any of the variations described in the instructions that are intended to make the toys even more challenging, such as placing the round pegs in various slots, thus requiring the dog to remove the peg before sliding other parts and exposing the treats. This would add another dimension of interest when the dog became so adept at the original puzzle that the challenge faded.

The toys are costly, to be sure, partly as a result of shipping from the European source. The particle board construction is somewhat of a concern, although after 90 minutes of concentrated dog-attention, none showed significant wear. Some of the pegs bore minor tooth marks from enthusiastic players, but nothing that would interfere with their function for the next round of play.

It's important to remember that, with the exception of the Pyramid, the puzzles are only intended for use with the owner present and supervision; they are not "leave with your dog to play with while you're away at work" toys. We also suggest making sure they are thoroughly air-dried after each use to minimize deterioration of the particle board from moisture.

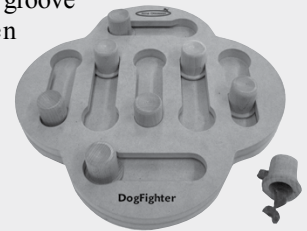
That said, we enjoyed the toys immensely, and look forward to more hours of fun playing with them with our own dogs, perhaps to scheduling future Pawlicker Puzzle Parties. We'd like to pass along a last comment from Gretel's human, James Latonick, and direct it to Nina Ottosson and the people at Paw Lickers Boutique and Bakery, "Thank you for a great time!" 🐾

More Zoo Active Toys Available

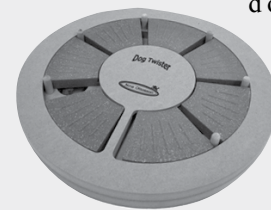
The following puzzles were not available when we obtained the seven toys we reviewed, but are now also featured on the Paw Lickers website (and available through phone orders at 888-868-7297).

Dog Fighter (\$48) – A clover-shaped flat puzzle with seven grooves; dog must slide the peg along the groove

and then lift it to reveal treats underneath.



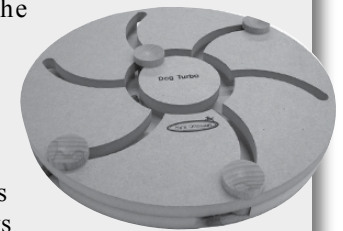
Dog Twister (\$48) – A circular flat puzzle with seven segments that cover treats hidden in round slots;



dog must slide the segments around the circle to expose the treats.

Dog Turbo (\$48) – A circular flat puzzle with curved grooves; dog must slide pegs

along the grooves to push treats out the end. This one looks challenging – and fun!



Pat Miller, CPDT, is WDJ's Training Editor. Miller lives in Hagerstown, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. Pat is also author of The Power of Positive Dog Training; Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog; and Positive Perspectives II: Know Your Dog, Train Your Dog. See "Resources," page 24.

Evade These Dangers

Feedback regarding vinyl and vestibular disease.

Having recently read “Why Vinyl Stinks” (WDJ April 2008), I wonder whether polyethylene rubber toys (i.e., Jolly Balls) are safe products for dogs. The manufacturers say they are completely safe, but I would expect that to be their position regardless. I hope you can clarify this for me. My puppy Rufous thanks you in advance.

Jeanette Robertson
Via e-mail

Author Susan Weinstein responds:

Environmentally concerned scientists believe that both polyethylene (recycling codes HDPE #2 or LDPE #4) and polypropylene (PP #5) are among the least toxic plastics available at this time. (Both are plastics, not rubber.) They offer toughness, durability, and flexibility, and don't need additives the way vinyl does to attain these qualities. My Bouviers, who are great chewers with powerful jaws, love to play with their Jolly Ball and I feel it's one of their best and safest plastic toys.

Thank you for the excellent article “Why Vinyl Stinks,” which alerts consumers to the hazards of vinyl toys and products for dogs.

As a professor of interior design, I am very aware of the problems associated with PVC and many of the products that are made from this plastic. PVC is a prevalent material in our world and it is used for a multitude of things that we use every day, many of these things we may have direct contact with. As the author points out, most PVC is fairly stable and may or may not present a hazard to the user. Primary hazards for end-users are the softening agents that are added to it or if it is burned.

A main concern that I have is for the factory users who work with PVC directly.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (atsdr.cdc.gov) states “The US Department of Health and Human Services has determined that vinyl chloride is a known carcinogen. Studies in workers who have breathed vinyl chloride

over many years showed an increased risk of liver cancer, brain cancer, and lung cancer. Some cancers of the blood have also been observed in workers.” There have been well-documented cases of bone reabsorption in workers who continually touch this chemical and cases of chemically induced

scleroderma.

I highly recommend two documentaries that cover this topic and associated problems. “Blue Vinyl” covers the PVC industry in this county and Italy, and the PBS Bill Moyer’s documentary “Trade Secrets” focuses on a chemical industry cover up of the hazards of PVC.

Your article also mentions “outgassing” (or offgassing) of PVC. This can occur with many types of products and different chemicals when those chemicals evaporate from the product. Indoor air quality has become a major concern for both people and pets today. For anyone interested I would recommend aeris.org as an excellent resource about indoor air quality and the hazards of chemicals in our world.

Nancy Chwiecko
Associate Professor, Interior Design
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, NY

The article on vestibular disease (“Tales of the Lost Balance,” WDJ May 2008) could not have been more timely. My 14-year-old very healthy Miniature Schnauzer recently woke me at 1 am vomiting and staggering. Both eyes were rapidly moving back and forth! It was a horrible, frightening first-time experience for me.

Of course, I immediately took her to the emergency vet who at first glance said “She has old dog disease” – vestibular disease! She has had one more, but fortunately milder, attack since the first attack a month ago. My vet prescribed antibiotics for inner ear infection the second time, which seemed to help tremendously. She is also on an herb prescribed by my holistic vet.

Thanks for the excellent article, which helped clear up all my confusion about this mysterious, very frightening disease. I shall not panic should my little gal have another attack.

Betty Whiteaker
Fredericksburg, VA

I am a licensed physical therapist who is also certified in canine rehabilitation.

It was with interest that I read the article in this most recent issue on vestibular disease. I know that in the veterinary training there is the belief that peripheral vestibular disease is idiopathic. In human medicine there is an identical condition that is termed benign paroxysmal positional vertigo. The signs and symptoms are the same as what we see in the canine patient.

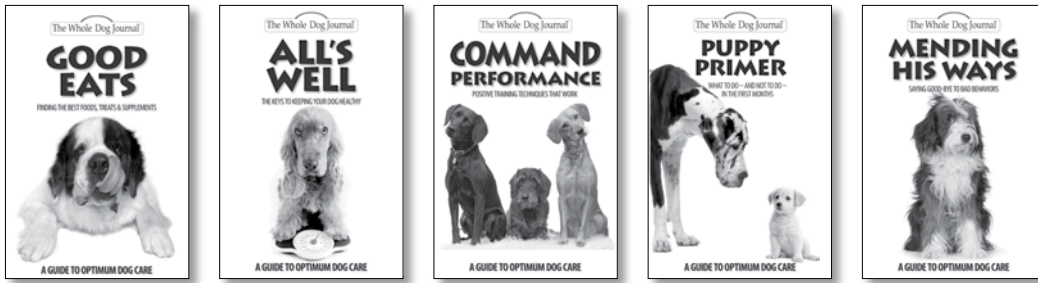
It is recognized that this condition is precipitated by the movement of the crystals in the semicircular canals in the ears. There is a treatment protocol that is used very successfully in humans. Several physical therapists and veterinarians that are certified in canine rehab are now using a similar technique to alleviate the symptoms in our canine patients. In addition to the positioning techniques to address the movement of the crystals, we also employ specific manual therapy techniques to address the residual head tilt. I wrote an article about this topic, with several references, that was recently published in a Canadian physiotherapy journal.

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