

VOLUME 10  
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# The Whole



# Dog Journal™

A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

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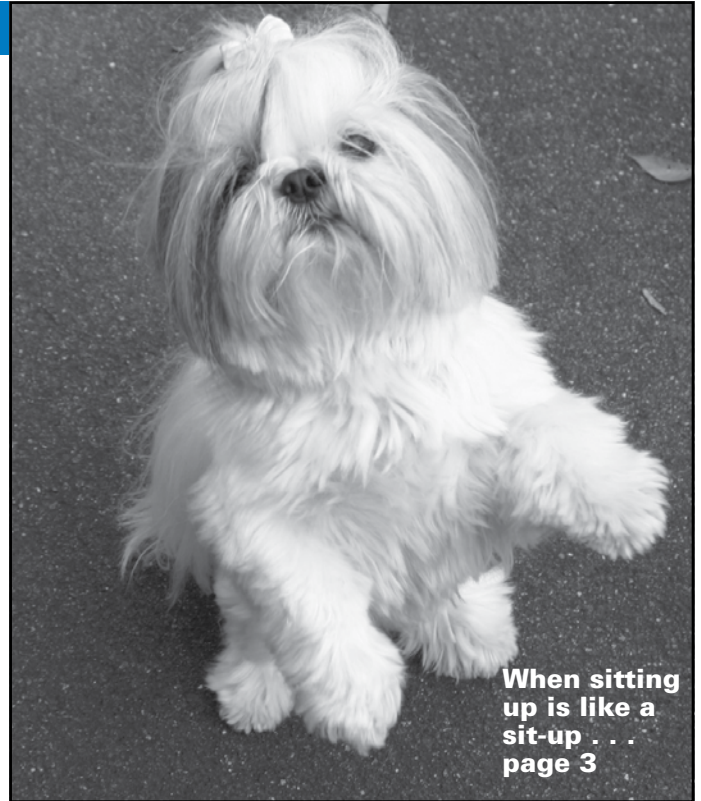
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# Keep an Open Mind

*Skepticism is fine . . . but might get shattered!*

BY NANCY KERNS

Last month, I introduced a series of articles we'll be running about forms of "energy medicine" available to dog owners. In this issue, author CJ Puotinen returns with the second installment of the series, describing flower essences, animal communication, and kinesiology.

Forgive me for addressing these topics again in this space, but in my experience, they need a personal introduction, as they can be difficult to accept. This is partially because they are not well-supported by the "gold standards" of evidence-based medicine, such as randomized, double-blind trials or even by meta-analysis of medical literature. They are not even well-explained by current scientific tools and techniques.

Personal experience opened my eyes to them anyway. Some 17 years ago, I approached my first encounter with an animal communicator *very* skeptically; frankly, as a fresh journalism grad, I relished the chance to expose her as a fraud. Within minutes, my skepticism was in shambles. She not only accurately described the quirky behavior problems my young Border Collie displayed – which I had not yet described to her – but gave me the most helpful advice for dealing with those behaviors that I ever received. I couldn't explain this in a million years, but I believed in it, whatever it was.

I used to be skeptical about kinesiology, too. One year, when I was attending the annual conference of the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association, Carolyn Blakey, a wonderful veterinarian who used complementary and alternative medicine, invited me to dinner. Our dining companions

were two other holistic vets; the three of them probably had a century of medical practice among them. Dr. Blakey introduced me to the other vets, giving WDJ a warm review. One veterinarian, Dr. Howard Rand, asked me if WDJ had ever done an article on kinesiology. I cheerfully admitted that "muscle testing" was one of those things I just couldn't buy; it was too "woo-woo" to put in the magazine.

After exchanging a smile with Dr. Blakey, Dr. Rand asked, "Would you be willing to try an experiment?" He had me press the tips of my forefinger and thumb together, making a circle; he made a similar circle, looped through mine. He told me he would ask me some questions, and invited me to answer with some truths and some lies. Dr. Rand didn't ask which answers were which; this became plain and perfectly apparent. He would tug at the circle my fingers made as I answered – and danged if my circle didn't come apart every time I gave what only I knew to be an untruthful answer. Dr. Rand wasn't diagnosing disease or prescribing a treatment, yet the principle behind muscle testing clearly worked. The vets laughed at the astonished look on my face. "Um . . . We'll have to write about that someday!" was all I could say.

Not all practitioners of these techniques are as skilled as the ones described above – but neither are all conventional medical practitioners. Alternative techniques are often worth a try.



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# Pilates for Dogs?

*Canine core conditioning prevents injury and improves performance.*

BY CJ PUOTINEN

**A**gility. Flyball. Freestyle. Disc. Dock diving. Sledding. Lure coursing. Water rescue. Herding. Skijoring. Retrieving. Tracking. Weight pulling. Schutzhund. And more!

Today's explosion of canine sports has made sports medicine a veterinary specialty. But, says Carol Helfer, DVM, at Canine Peak Performance Sports Medicine & Physical Rehabilitation Center in Portland, Oregon, competing dogs are prone to injury not because their sports are inherently dangerous but because canine athletes seldom receive the conditioning training that keeps them strong, balanced, and coordinated.

"The whole notion of injury prevention through proper conditioning is one that's just beginning to gather attention," explains Dr. Helfer. "And that's true for the veterinary community as well as dog handlers and trainers. What I love about this work is that a few simple exercises can dramatically change a dog's quality of life. In

athletic dogs, the proof is in their continued good health, enhanced performance, and absence of injuries. Elderly and sedentary dogs benefit, too, and they quickly show increased range of motion and a renewed enthusiasm for activities."

## How dogs work

When Dr. Helfer began to explore conditioning exercise, her attention was focused on canine athletes.

"I work a lot with agility dogs," she says, "and I compete a little in agility myself. Just looking at how dogs use their bodies on the agility equipment and thinking about the kinds of injuries I see in the clinic got me interested in figuring out how to change things so that injuries would be less common. Once you get past some obvious problems, like poor course design or poor handling skills, most of it has to do with the dogs' ability to quickly and accurately shift their weight."

Because not everyone is a world-class handler, she says, people moving with their dogs often end up where they didn't intend to be, or their commands are late, leaving dogs to twist, run, catch up, or move in a new direction. "In those situations," she says, "the possibility of injury expands exponentially."

Dr. Helfer realized that dogs who have good balance and core body strength quickly recover from not-so-great landings and rapid direction changes. Her findings agree with theories developed 80 years ago by fitness guru Joseph Pilates (pronounced Pih-LAH-tees), who focused on what he called "core" muscles: abdominal muscles and muscles around the lower back, pelvis, hips, and buttocks, all of which support the trunk of the body.

In humans, Pilates exercises flatten the stomach, improve posture, alleviate back pain, enhance athletic performance, improve balance and coordination, increase flexibility, improve range of motion, deepen breathing, alleviate stress and

## What you can do . . .

- Consult your veterinarian before starting your dog on a new exercise program.
- Start slowly and cautiously, especially if your dog is not used to exercise, is elderly or overweight, or is recovering from illness or accident.
- Use positive reinforcement to motivate your dog to learn and perform simple fun tricks that strengthen core muscles.
- Use these tricks as warm-up and cool-down exercises during practice or competition.



physical tension, reduce injuries, and increase body awareness. As Dr. Helfer suggests, there's no reason why dogs can't enjoy similar benefits from similar conditioning.

## Suggested exercises

To help keep her clients' dogs active and agile, Dr. Helfer designed a series of exercises that she calls "trick training." Most of the movements are familiar tricks, like rolling over, bowing, or chasing the tail. "What makes them work as core conditioning exercises," she says, "is their daily application. And when a movement can be done in one direction, such as rolling over or chasing the tail, it's important to do it in the opposite direction, too."

According to Dr. Helfer, most dogs have a preferred side – they are right-handed or left-handed, just like people – so it's easy to default to the side the dog



**"Sit up and beg" may be the best exercise for building core body strength.**

Photo of the author's Labrador Retriever, Chloe, by Lori Sash-Gail, [blueirisphotography.com](http://blueirisphotography.com)

## Watch Your Dog's Weight

Dr. Helfer estimates that 80 percent of her canine patients are overweight. "I really believe that most people don't know what a fit dog looks like," she says. "If you can't feel her ribs and if she doesn't have a well-defined waist, she's like most American dogs: overweight and under-exercised."

To remedy that situation, cut back on calories and start taking your dog for longer walks, especially up and down hills and on different surfaces, such as grass, bare earth, rocks, sand, etc. If you can combine long walks with short uphill runs and occasional swims, you'll provide the cross-training that gives your dog a head start on core conditioning.



prefers. "But if you're serious about core body strengthening, you have to work both sides and in many cases do more on the less-used side to bring things into balance."

No matter what your dog's sport, says Dr. Helfer, his exercise plan should consist of three basic parts: endurance, strength, and skills.

"Endurance is the bedrock of the well-conditioned dog. To me this means 20 minutes or more of moderate-intensity exercise like trotting or swimming.

"Strength training is high-intensity, short-duration sprinting exercise, like turning on the afterburners for half a minute or so to fetch a ball or bumper, or just running really fast, chasing a Frisbee, or racing to a flyball. If you have a safe place to ride a bike with your dog running along, that works well, too. You can alternate between riding slowly and fast while your dog walks and runs beside you. Many dogs do well with daily sprint work, but you may want to put a day of rest between workouts."

The skills portion of training is obvious. It involves familiarity with the sport and its equipment as well as regular practice.

All three components have to be in place for dogs to excel as athletes. "Too many people, when they're competing in dog sports, think that going to class once a week and practicing in the backyard three or four times a week for 10 minutes at a time is sufficient conditioning for competition," says Dr. Helfer. "When you look at what we ask our dogs to do with their bodies, you can see that that's totally inadequate."

When practicing or competing in agility or any other sport, take the time to

warm your dog up and, after exertion, cool your dog down. "Give your dog a chance to move," says Dr. Helfer. "All too often in agility, obedience, and other classes, you'll see dogs and handlers standing around until it's their turn, then the dog runs or jumps or whatever, and then the dog and handler stop and wait some more. This is a serious mistake when it comes to athletic training. Use that down time to get your dog warmed up, and when your turn is over, don't just stop, keep moving and gradually slow your dog down. Warm-ups and cool-downs are two of the most neglected parts of training."

### The right warm-up

To determine the right warm-up exercises for canine athletes, think about the work they'll be doing. "To warm up the body for competition or practice," says Dr. Helfer, "use the muscles you'll use in the event. It doesn't do much good to do hand stands if you're going to run a hundred-yard dash. It's difficult with dogs to isolate muscles that specifically, but when the event is weight pulling or sledding, the muscles you want to warm up are very different from the muscles used in agility or freestyle."

For every patient, Dr. Helfer prepares a written home exercise program with suggestions for appropriate warm-ups prior to practice or competition. Walking, she says, is an excellent all-purpose warm-up that gets the muscles moving. Then consider the sport and whether it requires endurance, strength, or flexibility.

For example, skijoring, sled pulling, and tracking are primarily endurance sports, so dogs need more endurance work than sprint or strength work as part of their foundation conditioning. Weight-pulling

is a strength sport and therefore requires more high-intensity/short-duration conditioning. Agility and disc catching require speed and flexibility.

"As far as specific warm-ups for all of the different sports are concerned," she says, "I think it's best not to make things too complicated. Get your dog out of her crate in plenty of time to do a decent warm-up before your event. I usually start with a walk, moving into a trot for 5 to 10 minutes. If the event involves jumping, there is often a practice jump set up outside the competition area. Once you've done your initial warm-up, taking your dog over the practice jump a few times can begin to warm up those jumping muscles."

Once the warm-up is out of the way, there is usually a delay before you get into the ring and begin competing. "While I'm standing in line," she says, "I try to keep my dog moving with spins, begs, high-fives, etc. Doing this also helps you and your dog focus on each other prior to going into the ring.

"There is a fine line between a good warm-up and too much. The goal is to get your dog primed to go in and give her best possible performance. This will likely involve some experimentation and observation before you figure out what works best for *your* dog."

### A daily dozen

Dr. Helfer recommends that young, athletic dogs who are in good health do each of the following exercises once or twice per day. Older dogs and dogs who are not used to exercise should begin more gradually, such as two or three exercises every other day, allowing ample time for recovery, then gradually increase the regimen as the dog's fitness level improves.

"If there is one single thing I wish I could teach all handlers," she says, "it's that just because the dog *will* do an exercise doesn't mean that he or she *should* do it. People often get into trouble because they don't realize that their dogs are overdoing it. One reason they don't notice is because they get caught up in the sport, paying more attention to the time clock or insisting on one more practice run without focusing on the dog, who may be tired, confused, or stressed. Another is because many dogs keep saying, 'Let's do some more!' The Border Collie is the poster child of this problem, but Labrador Retrievers are just as bad, and really, any high-drive dogs who love what they're doing cannot be counted

on to tell you when they've had enough.

"We're the ones with the big brains and the opposable thumbs; it's up to us to figure out when it's time to slow down, cool down, and rest – and to do that long before our dogs hurt themselves. When in doubt, err on the side of caution."

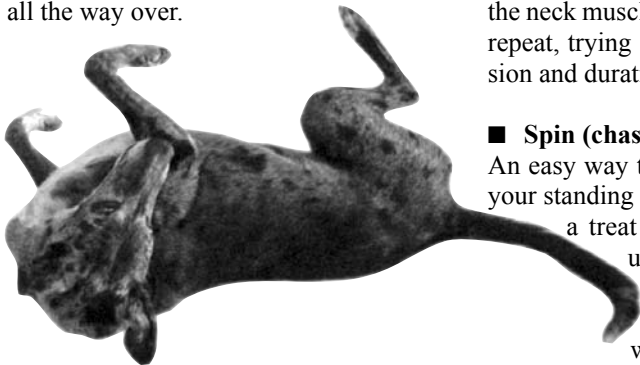
The following exercises can be done in any order and whenever it's convenient throughout the day.

"A picture is worth a thousands words," says Dr. Helfer, "so in addition to studying these instructions and checking the illustrations, I recommend the excellent new DVD by veterinarians Christine Zink and Laurie McCauley, *Building the Canine Athlete: Strength, Stretch, Endurance, and Body Awareness Exercises*. It demonstrates most of the exercises I use, and for someone who is serious about pursuing a conditioning program for dogs involved in any sport, I think this is an essential DVD."

### ■ Roll over

Here's the perennial favorite. If your dog knows how to roll over on both sides, simply have him do one or two roll-overs in each direction. If, like most dogs, he rolls more in one direction than the other, start strengthening the opposite side by having him roll twice or three times from the less-used side for every time he rolls from his habitual side.

If your dog doesn't know how to roll over, start with the dog in a down-stay and, holding a treat or toy near his nose, move it to the side of one shoulder, luring the head. After repeating and rewarding that motion, pull the lure up to the spine. When the dog begins to lose his balance, reward and praise him. Eventually, with time and practice, he will roll onto his back and then all the way over.



### ■ Scratch your back

Some dogs love to lie on their backs, and if you rub their bellies, they'll wriggle from side to side. Many dogs do this as they roll in grass or in snow. "This is a terrific core strengthening exercise," says Dr. Helfer.

"Do this for several seconds a few times, trying for a longer scratch each time."

### ■ Down dog and up dog (bow and stretch)

All dogs bow. The easiest way to teach this trick is to wait for your dog to come out of her crate or stand after sleeping. When she stretches all the way from fully extended front feet to up-in-the-air tail, give a click or praise and reward. In yoga, this is the "down dog" posture.

Most dogs follow or precede the bow with a second stretch by pulling their bodies forward and dragging the hind feet. In yoga, this is the "up dog" posture.

"I love these positions for their flexibility," says Dr. Helfer. "There just aren't many things you can convince a dog to do that will extend the spine like this. Bowing and stretching are easy ways to get that much-needed spine extension."

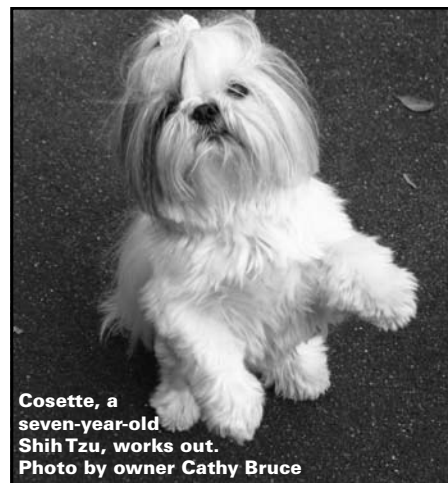


### ■ Neck stretch

With your dog standing, use a treat to lure the head up and back as far as it will go, then to the left and to the right, and down to the floor between the legs, pulling the treat back toward the hind legs. Move slowly so the neck muscles really stretch. Pause and repeat, trying for a slightly longer extension and duration.

### ■ Spin (chase your tail)

An easy way to teach this trick is to lure your standing dog to the left or right with a treat or toy. Canine freestylers use this maneuver in dance routines, and it's a fun addition to loose-lead walking. Have your dog spin three or four times in each direction. Alternate between having your dog on your left and on your right while he's doing the spins. Or simply teach the command and encourage your dog to make as many turns as possible.



Cosette, a seven-year-old Shih Tzu, works out. Photo by owner Cathy Bruce

### ■ Sit up and beg

"This is a great core-conditioning exercise," says Dr. Helfer, "although I approach it with caution if a dog has any history of back problems, and this is *not* an exercise for Dachshunds. Dogs who are significantly overweight shouldn't try it, either, until they slim down and get in shape. Most core-conditioning exercises are very safe and simple, but I suggest that anyone whose dog might have back health issues check with their veterinarian before trying it.

"Other than that," she says, "this is my favorite exercise for building core body strength. It's usually very easy for small dogs, but I've taught it to large dogs and older dogs, and it's done wonders for their coordination.

"Start slowly and gradually build up your dog's duration. Your starting point depends on the dog's condition; for many dogs, it starts as a simple stretching exercise in which all four feet stay on the floor. Using a cookie or other treat, lure the dog's head up as far as it will go and hold that position for a few seconds. Just the act of holding the body up, stretching the neck, and reaching up with the head involves tightening and conditioning key muscles.

"There are many variations you can do once the dog is comfortable holding the position for 10 to 20 seconds. One variation is to hold a treat as a lure so that the dog looks up, down, to the left, and to the right while maintaining her balance in the beg position.

"If you want to make it even more challenging, put the dog on a slight incline, such as the end of a dog walk or see-saw or outdoors on a hill, first facing down the incline, then facing up, and then to each side on the incline."



**Spam, a six-year-old Staffordshire Bull Terrier, high-fives on both sides. Photos by Dr. Helfer.**



■ **High five**

Reaching up with one paw exercises shoulders, front legs, and elbows. Do two or three on each side, aiming for a slightly higher extension and slightly longer duration each time. If your dog favors one side, have her raise the opposite paw an extra time or two.

Working in a narrow area, like a hallway or between two rows of chairs, helps keep the dog moving in a straight line. As your dog becomes proficient, have him walk longer distances backward, then faster, and, where possible, uphill.

■ **Walk backward**

This isn't a body strengthening exercise, says Dr. Helfer, but it helps prevent injury by making the dog more aware of where his rear legs are. Simply walk into your dog until he starts moving backward. Working in a narrow area, like a hallway or between two rows of chairs, helps keep the dog moving in a straight line. As your dog becomes proficient, have him walk longer distances backward, then faster, and, where possible, uphill.

■ **Tug of war**

"When I play tug with my dogs," says Dr. Helfer, "I let them control the movement. I think that letting the dog pull a tug toy straight back is preferable to swinging the

dog from side to side, which I see a lot of people do. I don't know for a fact that a swinging motion is harmful, but for core conditioning, I think a straight-back pulling motion works best.

"You can make the game interesting by standing still and resisting while the dog pulls back, then release the pressure slightly and pull the toy back toward you. If the dog wants to go from side to side, he has complete control of the motion, and that's fine. The other potential problem I see with tug toys is when a dog comes tearing toward you at top speed and grabs the rope toy. If you hold on tight, which many people do, your dog's neck gets whipped around severely. That always makes me wince."

Depending on how you hold the tug, your dog's pulling motions will strengthen his front or back muscles. "Hold the tug close to the floor and he'll use his front end," she says, "whereas if you hold it slightly above his head, he'll use his rear end more. Some dogs haven't read that rule book, though, and they do the opposite. Just play with your dog and aim for a whole-body workout."

■ **Crawl**

Some people teach their dogs to crawl by combining the signals for "down" and "come." Others call their dogs under dining room tables, coffee tables, and other furniture or home-made obstacles, lowering their height until the dog moves forward while flat on the floor.

■ **Side sit-ups**

With your dog lying on her side, place one

hand on the dog's hip and with the other hold a treat near her nose. "You want to lure the dog to lift her head a few inches without pushing up on an elbow," says Dr. Helfer, "so that the muscles in the neck and trunk do the lifting." Start with two or three repetitions of gentle movement on each side, and gradually increase the lift as the dog's muscles grow stronger.

■ **Keep your balance**

If you have a rocking chair and if your dog is small enough to sit in it, simply rock the chair back and forth. Your dog will automatically shift her weight to correct her balance with every change of motion.

"With a small dog," says Dr. Helfer, "you can do something similar with an office chair that swivels. Gently turn the chair one way and then another."

Dogs can also use products sold for human conditioning, such as BOSU "Balance Trainer" balls. A BOSU Balance Trainer looks like a therapy ball that's been cut in half so that the person (or dog) can balance on the round side, which is usually easy, or the flat side, which is more challenging. "If you gently push your dog from side to side, with your hands on his hips or shoulders," says Dr. Helfer, "he'll have to adjust his balance in response. If the dog is too large to stand on the ball with all four feet, try it with the front feet on, then the back feet.

"I do the same kind of thing with couch cushions. Take cushions off your couch, set them on the floor, and have your dog stand on them while you give a gentle push from one side and then the other. Or do this on an air mattress or any surface that's slightly unpredictable."



**When playing tug with your dog, stay aware of the forces applied to his neck and back. Don't swing him from side to side or jerk the toy roughly.**



**Dogs who are playing tug with other dogs, at a low angle, use different muscles than they use when playing with a much taller person. Vary the angle you use to pull on your end of the rope.**



**Spirit, a five-year-old Border Collie, displays poise on a BOSU Balance Trainer ball. He balances first with his front feet on the ball, then rear feet. An advanced exercise has his front feet on one ball and rear feet on an inverted ball, which tips easily. Photos by Dr. Carol Helfer.**

There are also rubber balance discs, wobble boards, and other balancing equipment made for humans that can be adapted to canine use.

“Not only do you strengthen the dog’s core by challenging his balance,” says Dr. Helfer, “but you improve his responses and quicken his reflexes.”

### Never too old

Core training benefits all dogs, not just those involved in competition. “My favorite success story is Jill, a Husky-Labrador mix who was a typical, creaky 14-year-old big dog. I’d been doing hydrotherapy with her for quite a while to keep her mobile, and then her owner started bringing her to

my Old Dog Exercise Class. Jill’s breakthrough came when she learned to sit up and beg. That was pretty impressive!

“I hear people say their dogs are too old to do much, but they’re mistaken. Old age is not a disease. The longer you can keep dogs active, the healthier they’ll be and the longer you’ll enjoy their company. Sometimes you have to step down the intensity of the activity or its duration, but you’ve got to keep them moving.”

### Watch your dog

Some of your best core conditioning training tips, says Dr. Helfer, can come directly from your dog. Just watch to see what he does naturally and what he most enjoys.

“Sports like canine freestyle have all kinds of excellent core-conditioning moves built into them, but so do the everyday activities of all dogs,” she says. “Whenever you see your dog doing something that will strengthen his core, reward him and encourage him to do it more often.

And put together a simple warm-up routine that you can use before your agility run or other event.”

The results, says Dr. Helfer, are well worth the effort. “Not only will daily core conditioning strengthen your dog’s muscles and reduce the risk of injury, it will also strengthen the bond that connects you and you’ll both have fun.”

See “Resources,” page 24, for more information on recommended exercise DVDs.

CJ Puotinen, a frequent contributor to WDJ, is the author of The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care and Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats. See “Resources,” page 24, for information.



**FULL COLOR PHOTOS!**

# DOG DAYS— All Year Long!

For a dog lover, this is the perfect calendar! Not only will you meet a dozen of the most winsome, lively calendar canines we could find, but each month, you’ll also get timely, pertinent guidance for keeping your own dog healthy and happy through the year. Each month is introduced with tips for everything from fighting fleas to keeping your dog safe on family car rides.

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# A Real Treat

*Don't undermine a terrific diet with chemical-laden, junky treats; there are too many healthy products from which to choose.*

BY NANCY KERNS

Treats are, by definition, more delicious, more special, and less plentiful than ordinary food. Treats for humans are usually sweet, but dogs are less particular about dessert; treats that are sweet, meaty, fatty, or any combination of those three will delight and fascinate most canines.

Dogs are individuals, though, and if you have a discriminating dog, you may have to work to find treats that will reliably attract his interest – give him a reason to be a good dog, so to speak. Treats that echo the food he eats every day will not do!

But while a treat should be something special for the dog, it shouldn't undermine his health, or counter the positive effects of a healthy diet. Artificial preservatives and colors can cause cancer. Too many sweets can contribute to the development



**The good news: Healthy, delicious treats are widely available. The bad news: Chemical-laden, unhealthy treats that are irresistible to dogs are even more widely available. Nothing new there! Just be a choosy consumer, read the product labels, and feed only healthy treats to your dog in moderation.**

## What you can do . . .

- Don't buy commercially made dog treats at the grocery store, unless you *also* do each of the following:
- Read the ingredients panel of any treat you consider buying. Pass it by if it contains artificial preservatives and/or colors.
- Check the ingredients list for foods your dog may be allergic to or intolerant of.
- Look for treats that contain whole grains and/or fresh meats, fruits, and vegetables.
- Buy organic products whenever possible.



The Whole Dog Journal

of diabetes; fatty treats can trigger an attack of pancreatitis. And an excess of treats can pose serious problems. It can spoil the dog's appetite for healthier, nutritionally complete and balanced foods. If the treats contain ingredients to which the dog is allergic or intolerant, an excessive allotment can trigger a dramatic reaction. And, of course, a chronic excess of treats can cause obesity, which contributes to many other disease processes.

Regarding treats, then, the goals of the responsible dog owner are threefold:

- Make sure the treats you buy do not contain ingredients that are less than healthful.
- Look for a variety of treats that the dog enjoys.
- Feed treats to the dog in moderation, as a complement to his regular healthy diet.

## WDJ's treat selection criteria

Faced with an endless array of treats with cute, appealing packages and clever names, how do we choose which products to bring home to our dogs? First, we seek out products with healthy, beneficial ingredients. We look for:

■ **Whole-food ingredients.** This means whole, named meats, organs, or meat meals – for example (and in order of our preference), chicken, chicken liver, or chicken meal. If the treat contains grain, we'd rather see whole grains than grain "fractions" (whole wheat, rather than wheat flour, wheat bran, or wheat starch). The same goes for fruits or vegetables; apples, blueberries, carrots, sweet potatoes, and the like are delicious, healthy additions to treats.

■ **Organic ingredients.** A product that contains only organic ingredients flies to



the top of our list, but one organic ingredient is better than none. The more organic ingredients, the better.

■ **Natural preservatives – or fresh products without preservatives.** Vitamins C and E (the latter is often listed as “mixed tocopherols”) are effective and safe preservatives. Many treats contain no preservatives at all; that’s fine, but the date of manufacture and/or expiration date should be easy to find and interpret.

■ **Natural, food-based sweeteners.** We disapprove of the use of sweeteners in dog *food*, but we’re talking about *treats* – something the dog may not get every day, and something he’ll get only a few of. Applesauce, molasses, and honey are better than artificial sweeteners.

Next, read the ingredients list with an eye toward what you **DON’T** want to see in your dog’s diet, such as:

■ **Low-quality proteins and fats; poor-quality animal-based ingredients.** Meat by-products are even less excusable in a treat than they are in a food. Generic or unnamed sources (such as “animal fat” or “animal protein”) are even worse. Yuck!

■ **Artificial colors.** Dogs don’t care whether their food is blue or brown.

Artificial colors fall into the “absolutely unnecessary chemicals” category.

■ **Artificial or low-quality palatability enhancers.** Treats are sort of like candy; they should taste better than the dog’s regular food, but they shouldn’t contain anything *bad* for the dog. We suggest avoiding treats that use salt as a flavor enhancer, as well as treats that contain sweeteners such as corn syrup, sucrose, and ammoniated glycyrrhizin (in favor of molasses, say, or honey), and artificial flavoring (such as barbecue flavor or artificial smoke flavor). Dogs like the taste of so many healthy and natural foods; there really is no good reason to use artificial flavor enhancers.

■ **Artificial preservatives,** such as BHA, BHT, and ethoxyquin.

Chewy treats invite the most chemicals, especially because most contain some sort of meat, which needs to be preserved. Some chemicals preserve the meat *and* help it maintain its nice red or pink color (keep it from turning grey), such as sodium nitrite, commonly found in preserved meats (and implicated in pancreatic cancer in humans).

### Final notes

We hinted earlier that you have to read the label of any item that crosses your dog’s

lips. Don’t be scared; it’s not that difficult! Compare the labels of the treats below; it’s really obvious which products are healthy and which aren’t.

Keep track of the ingredients that are in your dog’s food and treats. If your dog has symptoms of food allergy – such as severe itching (leading to frequent hotspots), goopy eyes, frequently infected ears – or certain ingredients give him painful gas or diarrhea, you’ll naturally want to avoid treats that contain these ingredients, even in small amounts.

Do check the packaging of any treat for any indication of its country of origin. It’s worth a call to a treat’s manufacturer to ask about the country of origin of all of the ingredients in their products.

To fully understand what it means (or may not mean, as the case may be) when a food or treat label indicates that “human grade” ingredients are used, see page 12.

Finally, be aware that we do *not* rate or rank-order the treats we have highlighted as examples of good products on the following pages. A treat either meets our selection criteria (outlined above) or it does not; there is no “top pick” or “best on the list.” Don’t fret if *your* top pick is not on our list; if it meets our selection criteria, it’s as good as anything we’ve highlighted on the following pages. Happily, there are many more good products than we could ever list.

Hallmarks of Quality	Avoid Products with These Attributes
<p>The label of this treat says it is the “lamb &amp; salmon” variety, and what do you know? The ingredients list starts with lamb and salmon. Yay!</p> <p>Source of glycerin (used to maintain moistness) is disclosed</p> <p>Grains are whole, not flours</p> <p>Natural sweetener</p> <p>Natural flavor enhancers</p> <p>Whole, healthy fruits and vegetables</p> <p>Natural acidifier</p> <p>Natural preservative</p> <p>Naturally derived preservative</p> <p><b>Lamb, Salmon, Ground Brown Rice, Oatmeal, Vegetable Glycerin, Guar Gum, Cane Molasses, Carrots, Sea Salt, Natural Smoke Flavor, Garlic, Blueberries, Flaxseed, Sweet Potatoes, Apples, Phosphoric Acid, Sorbic Acid, Mixed Tocopherols.</b></p> <p><b>This treat? It’s Wellness Lamb &amp; Salmon Wellbites.</b></p>	<p>A grain, not bacon nor cheese, is first on the ingredients list.</p> <p>Corn gluten meal and corn are low-cost sources of protein.</p> <p>Refined sweetener.</p> <p>More lower-cost grains.</p> <p>“Meat?” No species? Eek!</p> <p>Sodium nitrite and BHA are among the worst artificial preservatives.</p> <p>Artificial colors are bad; Red 40 is the worst.</p> <p><b>Ground Wheat, Corn Gluten Meal, Wheat Flour, Ground Yellow Corn, Water, Sugar, Glycerin, Soybean Meal, Hydrogenated Starch Hydrolysate, Bacon (preserved with sodium nitrite), Salt, Bacon Fat (preserved with BHA), Meat, Phosphoric Acid, Sorbic Acid, Dried Cheese Powder, Calcium Propionate, Natural and Artificial Smoke Flavors, Added Color Red 40, Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Blue 1.</b></p> <p><b>This treat? It’s Purina’s Bacon &amp; Cheese Beggin’ Strips.</b></p>

## Samples of Top-Quality Cookie-Type Treats

### BELLYRUBS DOG TREATS

Meyer Country Farms, Scottsdale, AZ  
(480) 614-1869; meycountryfarms.com

Organic, vegetarian treats are available in two flavors. No preservatives.

### BREW BREW BRAND ORGANIC WHOLE FOOD DOG SNACKS

Brew Brew Brand, Driggs, ID  
(208) 709-2739; brewbrewbrand.com

Artisan bakery makes treats made with local, organic ingredients.

### BUDDY BISCUITS

Cloud Star Corporation, San Luis Obispo, CA  
(800) 361-9079; cloudstar.com

Available in a wide variety of flavors and sizes, from tiny "Tricky Trainers" to Itty Bitty Buddy Biscuits, to the generously sized Buddy Biscuits. Cloud Star offers several meat-based cookies as well as vegetarian varieties, some organic cookies, and a new line of chewy biscuits.

### CHARLEE BEAR DOG TREATS

Charlee Bear Farms, Inc., Madison, WI  
(800) 880-2327; charleebear.com

We love these tiny treats for training; they are only three calories each! Each of the two flavors (liver and cheese/egg) has a very short, simple ingredients list.



### DOGGIE DIVINES

Brunzi's Best Inc., Garrison, NY  
(845) 734-4490; highlands.com/Brunzi/

Most ingredients in the four different varieties are organic. Cute packaging, great for gifts.

### DUDLEY'S DO RIGHT TRAINING TREATS

Bark Stix, Pt. Richmond, CA  
(510) 235-2430; barkstix.com

Seven different lines of treats baked into a variety of shapes and sizes, including our favorite small sizes. Only organic flours are used. No preservatives.

### GRANDMA LUCY'S DOG TREATS

Grandma Lucy's, Irvine, CA  
(800) 906-5829; grandmalucys.com

Dozens of different freeze-dried healthy treats with simple but compelling ingredients. None of the products contain preservatives. And absolutely the coolest dog product website we've seen!

### HEALTHY DOG TREATS

The Hand That Feeds You Healthy Dog Bakery, St. Michaels, MD  
(443) 799-9721; healthydogbakery.com

Six varieties with simple ingredients lists, and no preservatives.

### HEIDI'S HOMEMADE DOG TREATS

Heidi's Homemade Dog Treats, Columbus, OH  
(877) 738-7622; heidiskitchen.com

A wide variety of certified organic muffins, biscotti, cookies, and bagels for dogs, all meat-free. Local ingredients used when available. No preservatives.

### HENRY & SONS VEGETARIAN COOKIES

Henry & Sons, San Jose, CA  
(877) 473-7637; henryandsons.com

This company describes itself as the "pioneer in wheat-free, vegetable-based dog treats." We like all four varieties of these cookies for their light texture: not too hard to break into small pieces but satisfyingly crunchy for our dogs.

### HOWLIN' GOURMET

Dancing Paws Bakery, Tustin, CA  
(888) 644-7297; dancingpaws.com

Only healthy ingredients (some organic) and no preservatives in any of the three varieties.

### LATKA'S TREATS

Latka's Treats LLC, New York, NY  
(917) 570-4796; delicioustreats.com

Small treats available in three varieties; none contain preservatives. "Lap Dog Biscuits" are larger.

### LICK'N CRUNCH

Three Dog Bakery, Kansas City, MO  
(800) 487-3287; threedog.com

These irresistible cookies look just like Oreos, but are made with dog-healthy carob. All the ingredients are truly human-grade; cookies are made in a USDA bakery. One criticism: Like many cookies for humans, these are made with a partially hydrogenated vegetable oil.

### LIVER BISCOTTI

Premier Pet Products, Midlothian, VA  
(800) 795-5930; liverbiscotti.com

This company was recently purchased by Premier Pet Products. We've appreciated these treats for a long time, for their simple ingredients lists and small size (great for training.)

### MOTHER NATURE NATURAL DOG BISCUITS

Natura Pet Products, Santa Clara, CA  
(800) 532-7261; naturapet.com

Biscuits are made with whole grains, meat or meat meals, fruits, and vegetables, and without preservatives. Offerings include eight flavors, four sizes (mini, small, regular, and jumbo), and treats for puppies.

### NATURE NOSH

Nature Nosh, LLC, Los Angeles, CA  
(310) 980-2220; nature-nosh.com

Two varieties (beef liver, chicken liver) of these nice, small treats are available; all ingredients are organic.

### NEWMAN'S OWN PREMIUM DOG TREATS

Newman's Own Organics, Aptos, CA  
(800) 865-2866; newmansownorganics.com

Four varieties are available; many ingredients are organic.

### OLD MOTHER HUBBARD DOG BISCUITS

Old Mother Hubbard, Chelmsford, MA  
(800) 225-0904; oldmotherhubbard.com

A staggering 25 varieties of treats, available in 6 lines (our favorite line is the "gourmet pouch training treats," which are small. All of the treats are made with quality ingredients.

### SIMON & HUEY'S DOGGONED TASTY TREATS

Simon & Huey's Tasty Treats, LLC, Seattle, WA  
(888) 757-9663; simonandhuey.com

Available in many flavors and sizes (we lost count at forty-something) including "Soft and Tiny" training treats. Simple ingredients lists in a wide and creative variety of uncommon flavors.

### SMOOCHES FOR POOCHES

The Honest Kitchen, San Diego, CA  
(858) 483-8559; thehonestkitchen.com

Available in just one variety so far, but what a nice ingredient list! Only human-grade – truly "edible" quality (see page 12) – ingredients are used. No preservatives.



### SOJOS GOOD DOG TREATS

Sojourner Farms, Minneapolis, MN  
(888) 867-6567; sojos.com

These darling small treats are available in four varieties, with simple ingredients and no preservatives.

### TOY TEMPTATIONS

Dogchewz NYC, New York, NY  
(212) 752-5855; dogchewz.com

Intended for small dogs, but small treats are perfect for training. Most of the ingredients in each of the six flavors are organic. No preservatives.

### WAGATHA'S BISCUITS FOR DOGS

Wagatha's, Manchester Center, VT  
(802) 367-1010; wagathas.com

Available in four varieties; all are made with human-grade ingredients, many of them organic. No preservatives.



### WAGGERS DOG TREATS

Pet Central, Sylvania, OH  
(888) 892-7393; waggers.com

Available in beef liver/carrot (wheatless), peanut butter/oats (meatless), and chicken/cheese (sweetless) varieties; something for everyone!

### WELLNESS WELLBARS

Old Mother Hubbard, Inc., Chelmsford, MA  
(800) 225-0904; wellnesspetfood.com

Available in three varieties, all wheat-free.

### WET NOSES HERBAL DOG TREATS

Wet Noses Dog Food Co., Snohomish, WA  
(866) WET-NOSE; wet-noses.com

No wheat, corn, or soy in any of the five varieties.

## Samples of Top-Quality Meat-Based or Jerky-Style Treats

**CANINE CAVIAR WILD ALASKAN SALMON**  
Canine Caviar Pet Foods, Inc., Costa Mesa, CA

(800) 392-7898; caninecaviar.com

Sole ingredient: Dried Alaskan wild salmon.

### DOGSWELL PREMIUM DOG TREATS

Dogswell, LLC, Los Angeles, CA  
(888) 559-8833; dogswell.com

A wide variety of jerky-style dried meats. Meant to be functional foods; added ingredients such as herbs, spices, or vitamins are meant to address arthritis symptoms, cardiac problems, bad breath, hyperactivity, or skin.

### DR. BECKER'S BITES

Dr. Becker's Bites, Cedar Falls, IA  
drbeckersbites.com

Beef variety contains only USDA beef liver and kidney; bison variety contains free-range, grass-fed bison liver and heart.



### DR-CHEW SWEET POTATO TREATS

Landy Corporation, Federal Way, WA  
(253) 838-1427; dr-chew.com

Not a meat-based treat (but not a cookie, either!). A single-ingredient treat: Healthy, chewy, sun-dried sweet potato. Cool!

### ETTA SAYS! MEATY TREATS

Etta Says!, Seattle, WA  
(866) 439-3882; ettasays.com

Freeze-dried beef liver, chicken liver, or lamb liver.



### LIV-A-LITTLES

Halo Purely for Pets, Tampa, FL  
(800) 426-4256; halopets.com

Single ingredient freeze-dried chicken, salmon, beef, and lamb.

### NOTHING BUT . . . TREATS

A Place for Paws, Columbiana, OH  
(800) 354-4216; aplaceforpaws.com

Eight varieties of all-meat, single-ingredient dehydrated treats.

### REAL FOOD TOPPERS

Complete Natural Nutrition, Marshalltown, IA  
(800) 807-7335; realfoodtoppers.com

Eight varieties of freeze-dried treats; most contain only a single ingredient. As the name suggests, these are intended to be used as a top-dressing on your dog's food, but they work as treats even better.

### ROSIE'S REWARDS

Rosebud, Inc., Pray, MT  
(877) ROSEBUD; rosiesrewards.com

Single ingredient: Dried beef.

### WAGGERS CHAMPION CHIPS

Pet Central, Sylvania, OH  
(888) 892-7393; waggers.com

A jerky-style treat made of beef lung.

### WELLNESS PURE REWARDS AND WELLNESS WELLBITES

Old Mother Hubbard, Inc., Chelmsford, MA. (800) 225-0904; wellnesspetfood.com

"Pure Rewards" are chewy, moist meaty treats (20 percent moisture) available in four varieties; two contain a sole meat source and the other two contain two meat sources each (none contain meat meal). "Wellbites" are similar but more moist (30 percent moisture) and each of the four varieties contains two types of meat (and no meat meal) and whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.



### WHOLE LIFE PET TREATS

Whole Life Pet Products, Pittsfield, MA  
(877) 210-3142; wholelifepet.com

Six varieties of single-ingredient, freeze-dried meats.

### ZIWIPEAK GOOD DOG TREATS

ZiwiPeak Ltd., North Island, New Zealand

064-7-575-2426; ziwipeak.com

Natural, chewy (15 percent moisture) meat rewards, available in six types, including some uncommon venison-based varieties.



### ZUKE'S TREATS FOR DOGS

Zuke's, Durango, CO  
(866) 985-3364; zukes.com

Zuke's offers a wide array of moist treats that contain whole meats, grains, vegetables, fruits, and beneficial supplements.

# The Confusing Tale of “Human-Grade” Ingredients

While individuals and companies often use the phrase “human grade” to describe ingredients of the same quality that they might find in grocery stores or restaurants, the term means absolutely nothing, from a regulatory standpoint. The actual legal phrase, familiar to pet food and human food industry insiders but rarely understood by the average consumer, is “edible.” By law, an “edible” ingredient is one that has never departed from the custody of USDA-inspected and -approved food growers and processors. A tad more confusing are the appellations “food grade” (with an equivalent legal status to “edible”) and “feed grade,” which means “meant for animals; not legal for humans.”

The way the laws are written, an “edible” ingredient automatically loses the legal right to be fed to humans when the back of the truck carrying it is opened up at a pet food manufacturing facility (which are overseen and regulated by state feed control inspectors). So even though a pet food maker might claim, “Only human-grade ingredients are used in our products,” unless the product was made at a USDA-inspected facility with 100 percent USDA-approved ingredients, this is not a legal statement, because the ingredients would no longer be “edible” the moment they arrived at a pet food plant.

This is incredibly frustrating to pet food companies who really do buy edible ingredients, but can’t call them that; that’s why they often resort to using phrases without legal standing, such as human grade; they are trying to convey their quality without running afoul of the law. Unfortunately, this wiggle room also creates opportunity for unscrupulous pet food makers who do *not* purchase edible ingredients, but hint at their use anyway, knowing full well that this can’t truly be confirmed, since, from a regulatory standpoint, there are *no* edible ingredients in a pet food plant. Consumers have to judge for themselves whether they trust a company’s word (or documentation of some kind) that only edible ingredients were used in the company’s products.

However, a tiny few pet foods (and treats) *are* made in USDA-inspected and approved plants. No ingredients that lack USDA approval are allowed in a USDA-inspected and -approved plant, so it’s safe to conclude that any ingredients that are used in a product made in a USDA-inspected and approved plant are, in fact, legally and provably “edible.” Companies with products such as these are perfectly within their rights to say, “Made in a USDA plant,” and those in the know understand perfectly what this means. So far, so good.

The wheels come off, however, when a product that is indisputably made of edible ingredients in a USDA plant is labeled with phrases that infer “human grade” ingredients

and the words “dog food” or “for dogs.” Yoicks! You can just see the regulators start to spark and warning lights flash as a robotic voice yelps, “This does not compute!”

Dated cultural references aside, the concern here is that consumers will become confused. Is it for my dog? Or should I eat it? Honestly, the regulators worry about this! Ohio’s Department of Agriculture recently refused to issue a commercial feed registration to The Honest Kitchen (a San Diego-based company we admire, which makes its products in a USDA facility), stating that The Honest Kitchen’s food labels are contradictory and misleading, because they state the following:

This product is made with 100 percent human food grade ingredients. It contains no animal feed grade ingredients whatsoever and is made in a USDA-inspected facility, but is intended for your dog to eat, not you!

Since neither the FDA, USDA, nor the Departments of Agriculture in 19 other states had a problem with its label claims, the founders of The Honest Kitchen filed a lawsuit against the Ohio Department of Agriculture, to fight for the right to use the above statement on its product labels in Ohio. In a legal brief, The Honest Kitchen stated that it clearly intended for its products to be consumed by dogs and cats, as its products are labeled, in a large font, “Dehydrated Dog/Cat Food.” The products also picture dogs or cats prominently on their labels, contain a chart indicating the amount per day that should be fed to dogs or cats. By simply reading the labels in their entirety, says the brief, “it is clearly understood that The Honest Kitchen’s products are intended for animals.”

## Meant for sharing

Three Dog Bakery, of Kansas City, Missouri, took a completely different tack with its premium cookies. Company executives

conceived a plan to make and sell cookies that could be eaten by humans *and* dogs. It sounds simple, doesn’t it? They would formulate a treat that dogs and people would both enjoy, containing only edible ingredients, and make it in a USDA plant. And they would market it as a product that humans could eat, and share with their dogs.

But they, too, ran into trouble with various state feed control officials, which probably explains the constantly evolving product label. In the past, there was a prominent statement on the front of the

box that said, “Made with 100 percent human-quality ingredients for dogs.” Today, this statement is relatively small, and some type that reads “Just for Dogs!” is large. And the box doesn’t say anything about human consumption. 🐾



**Three Dog Bakery used to promote these cookies as human edible, since they contained all human grade ingredients. Sales reps ate them and encouraged passersby to try them, too. And the cookies tasted were good! But now the boxes say, “Just for Dogs.”**

# You don't have to dig for that lost issue!

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# Rely On Me

*How to positively increase the reliability of your dog's performance.*

BY PAT MILLER

The German Shepherd's owner wailed, "But he does it at home!" in my training class last night as her dog sat in front of her, apparently ignoring her cue to lie down. Dog trainers across the country frequently hear this complaint from their human clients during the first few weeks of a new training class. "Of course he does," we reassure them consolingly, and launch a discussion about how to achieve reliability – getting your dog to do what you ask of him anywhere, anytime, under any conditions.

Behavior professionals often define "reliable" as responding appropriately to the cue at least 80 percent of the time. That means your dog sits at least 8 out of 10 times when you ask him to. It's unreasonable to expect 100 percent reliability from your dog. After all, we humans are the ones with the bigger brains, and we aren't perfectly reliable 100 percent of the time – so why should our dogs be? It's



**When Mike first took Deveron to the post office, the Greyhound was too distracted by the sound echoes and the foot traffic to focus and follow through on Mike's cues. Mike had to revert to using a lure before Dev caught on: "Oh! Training time!"**

## What you can do . . .

- If you want reliability in your dog's performance, make the commitment to do the training necessary to achieve reliability.
- When your dog doesn't respond, examine the circumstances to determine why, rather than blaming the dog.
- Enjoy the fruits of your efforts by showing off your dog's talents in whatever venues appeal to you both – during gatherings of family and friends, pet assisted therapy, talent contests, canine sports, and more.



quite possible that your dog sits reliably at home, in the environment where you spend the most time training. Sitting on cue at the training center, at the farmer's market, at your daughter's soccer game, when the grass is wet, or in an infinite number of other possible environments, may be an entirely different matter.

It takes commitment to your training program to achieve reliability under a wide variety of conditions. Let's explore some of the elements that make for true reliability.

## Generalization

This is the concept that trips up so many beginning dog owners/trainers. You work hard at home all week training your dog to perfection, but when you return to class you're dismayed and disappointed when you try to show off your dog's accomplishments and he won't perform. It's enough to make you give up on training. DON'T!

Maybe you missed the part where your trainer told you that as soon as your dog can do a behavior in the privacy of your own home you need to take the show on the road and practice in lots of other places. If you only practice "sit" in the kitchen in front of the refrigerator, then your dog thinks "Sit!" means "Sit in the kitchen in front of the refrigerator." When you ask him to sit at the training center and he doesn't respond you're thinking, "Stupid dog, he *knows* what 'sit' means," and he's thinking, "But I can't sit here, there's no refrigerator!"

As soon as your dog will sit for you in one room of your house, practice in all the other rooms. Take him out in the backyard and practice there. Then in the front yard, on your walks around the block and at the dog park. Practice at the vet hospital, at the groomer's, at your favorite pet supply store, and when you take him to visit friends and family. Practice everywhere!



**Trainer Sarah Richardson asks Dev to perform some basic behaviors. No lures or prompts needed in the kitchen!**



**Dev understands that the cue for sit does not depend on Sarah's position or their locations; his sit is "generalized."**

You also need to practice when *you* are in different positions. If you usually train standing up, try asking him to sit while you're sitting on the sofa (television commercials are a perfect training opportunity). Try it when you're lying on the floor. Turn away from him and ask him to sit. You could even try it while you're practicing various yoga positions!

It may seem like a lot of work at first, but the good news is that generalization, well, generalizes! The more new behaviors you make the effort to generalize, the easier it becomes for each new behavior along your training journey. Once you've generalized "sit" it will be a little easier for "down," "wait," "leave it," "come," and all the other good manners behaviors you're trying to teach your dog.

### **"Proofing" for distractions**

Proofing is really just solid training. It simply means teaching your dog to respond to your cues when there are other interesting, exciting, fun, sometimes scary, things happening around him – things we call "distractions." The secret to proofing is convincing your dog that you are consistently more interesting, more fun, more exciting, and more reinforcing than the distractions. When I used to teach in Santa Cruz, California, I told my students they had to be more interesting than a dead seal. Here in Maryland it's dead squirrels rather than dead seals, but the concept is the same: If you are wonderful and the

training game is wonderful, your dog has no reason to ignore you in favor of dead smelly things – he's already having as much fun as he could possibly imagine.

Patty Ruzzo, longtime renowned positive trainer who, sadly, passed away last summer, encouraged people to be "variable and unpredictable" as a way to be irresistibly interesting to their dogs. If your dog never knows what fun stuff you're going to offer at any moment, he stays glued to you in eager anticipation. The tug toy or plush squeaky you could pull out of your pocket without notice is just as compelling as the squirrel who might run across his path.

To accomplish proofing, you'll need to start in any new environment with a high rate of reinforcement (lots of rewards), and a wide variety of high value reinforcers (lots of different kinds of "good stuff"). Start your training routine with behaviors that are easy for your dog so he can succeed. When a distraction presents itself, reinforce promptly before he has a chance to lose his focus on you. When no distractions loom, randomly surprise your dog with an exciting reinforcer, as he's come to anticipate. After a short heeling pattern, turn and run the other way (chase = reinforcer), or whip out a hidden rope toy for a quick game of tug. When you release him from a stay, scatter a handful of treats on the ground for a "find it" orgy, or toss a ball in the air for him to catch – have fun with your dog!

At first, keep training sessions short

so you can end with success. Having fun can be very tiring; you want to end the session *before* your energy wanes or your dog's enthusiasm wavers. As you both build stamina you can increase the length of your sessions and the duration of your dog's focus.

When your dog has learned to stay very focused on you, you can add even more intense distractions. Owners who show their dogs in obedience and rally competitions want their dogs to be as close to 100 percent reliable as canines can accomplish. They often proof their dogs with distractions such as metal chairs falling over, cats running past, loose dogs, balloons popping, car keys jingling, hot dogs dropping, children running and yelling – anything that might happen at a show to disrupt their dogs' performances.

### **Desensitization**

Sights and sounds that your dog finds worrisome, disturbing, or downright scary are guaranteed to diminish his reliability. Lucy, our three-year-old Cardigan Corgi, is very sensitive to sounds. When she was a year old I took her through a clicker class at "A Click Above" in Leesburg, Virginia. The class was held in a large warehouse building. While her class was in session there was also an agility class happening at the other end of the training center, with loud crashes, bangs, and cheers and applause as dogs negotiated the equipment and their owners urged them on.

Lucy's reliability, quite high at home, deteriorated significantly the first two or three weeks of class until she became desensitized to the sounds. At first, I had to just let her take a break whenever sound erupted from the other end of the room – she would shut down from stress and stop performing completely. Then she began to accept sounds of a fairly low intensity – a muffled bang of the teeter at the opposite end of the building, a person encouraging her dog at low to moderate volume.

I helped the process along with counter-conditioning – not just waiting for Lucy to habituate to the commotion, but actively encouraging a positive association with the sounds by feeding her high-value treats whenever a loud noise occurred. By week five she consistently performed her behaviors with 80 percent or better reliability.

## Fading lures and prompts

A *cue* is the initial signal you give your dog to ask for a behavior. A *lure* is a food treat that you use to show your dog how to perform the behavior (such as putting a treat at the tip of his nose and moving it toward the floor to get him to lie down). A *prompt* is a signal, such as a movement of your hand, that you use *after* your cue to help your dog perform the requested behavior. (A lure is one form of prompt; not all prompts are lures.) To be really reliable, your dog needs to respond to your cue at least 80 percent of the time *without additional lures or prompts*.

If you ask your dog to lie down using the verbal cue “down,” your training goal is to have him respond without you having to point to the floor, bend over, or move a treat toward the floor. If you are still do-

ing those things to get him to “down” then he’s not yet reliable, and you have more training to do.

It’s best to fade lures and prompts early with each new behavior. The longer you use them, the more you and your dog become dependent on them. This means you’ll always have to have a treat in your hand. Most dog owners don’t want that. As soon as you can easily lure your dog into position, start fading the lure as follows:

- Give the cue “Down.”
- Pause 2 to 4 seconds to let him hear and think about the cue.
- Lure him down.
- Repeat.

## “Blowing You Off”

There are a few phrases commonly used in dog training that put my hackles up. “Blowing you off” is one of them. You’ll hear it often in training classes, “Your dog is blowing you off; make him pay attention to you!”

I hate this phrase because it implies that your dog has some malicious intent in not doing what you’ve asked. The assumption is that he’s deliberately ignoring you. It blames the dog rather than holding the human responsible for figuring out why the dog didn’t respond as requested, and gives tacit permission for the owner to get angry, perhaps even punish her dog for failing to respond.

Actually, there are many legitimate reasons why your dog may not be able to perform the behavior you’ve requested, including:

■ You haven’t generalized the behavior. He doesn’t understand that “sit” in his own living room is the same as “sit” in training class outside when there are 8 strange dogs and 12 strange people and the wind is blowing and the grass is wet and there are kites flying in the distance.

■ He is distracted. He may understand that “sit” means sit anywhere, but he didn’t *hear* you say “sit” because a car door slammed in the parking lot as you spoke and a butterfly fluttered past his nose at the same time. His brain didn’t receive your cue.

■ You haven’t faded your prompts. You thought your dog was responding to your verbal cue to sit, but in fact he was relying a lot on your hand moving toward your chest. You were chatting with another dog owner and casually asked for the sit just using the verbal cue, no hand motion. He didn’t understand.

■ The behavior is extinguishing. You just asked him for three sits in a row without clicking, and he’s not ready for a reinforcement schedule that thin. He’s starting to think “sit” doesn’t pay off anymore, so this time when you asked, he didn’t bother to respond.

■ He’s in pain. An early sign of hip dysplasia is sometimes an unwillingness to sit – because it hurts. A number of other physical causes could interfere with his ability to sit comfortably.



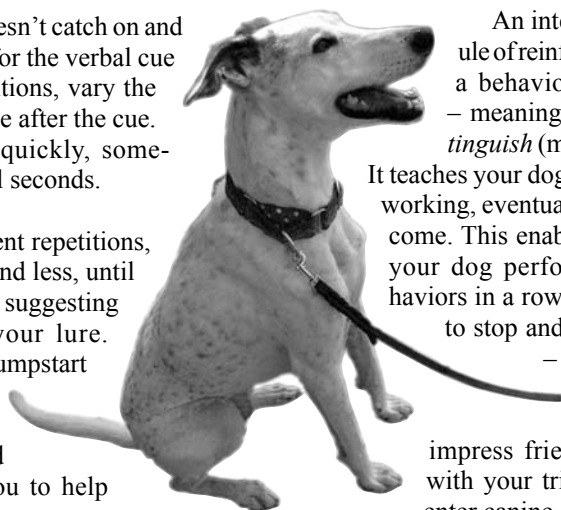
**When training your dog in the face of distractions, set him up for success, but expect that it will take him some time learn to focus on you alone.**

There could well be other reasons your dog doesn’t sit when you ask, but it’s unlikely that he’s doing it out of sheer cussedness. You’ll get a lot farther a lot faster in your training if you accept the challenge that it’s *your* job as the human member of the training team to get him to *want* to do what you ask, rather than blaming him for not doing it. Make sure he understands. Make sure he’s physically capable of doing it. Make sure he hears you. Help him succeed.



- If your dog doesn't catch on and start lying down for the verbal cue after 3 to 4 repetitions, vary the length of the pause after the cue. Sometimes lure quickly, sometimes wait several seconds.

- With subsequent repetitions, use the lure less and less, until you're just barely suggesting a motion with your lure. You're trying to jumpstart his brain – getting him to think for himself instead of waiting for you to help him out.



An intermittent schedule of reinforcement makes a behavior very *durable* – meaning it's hard to *extinguish* (make it go away). It teaches your dog that if he keeps working, eventually a payoff will come. This enables you to have your dog perform several behaviors in a row without having to stop and treat each time – an important skill if you really want to impress friends and family with your trick routine – or enter canine competitions.

Some trainers fade the lure by replacing the treat with a “down” signal with an empty hand (a prompt), then treating from the other hand. You can do this – and then you still have to go through the same process to fade the prompt. Of course, if you shape behaviors instead of luring them, you can skip fading altogether – there's nothing to fade! (See “The Shape of Things to Come,” March 2006.)

### Decreasing the rate of reinforcement

When you first teach your dog a new behavior, you use a *continuous schedule of reinforcement*. Every time your dog sits at your request, he gets a click and treat. When he sits reliably (8 out of 10 times) you are ready to start using a variable, intermittent reinforcement schedule. You will still treat every time you click, but occasionally you'll just say “good dog!” and skip the click and treat.

Be sure that you truly vary your reinforcement; dogs quickly discern a pattern – “Oh, she clicks only every fourth time!” – and won't perform as well for the three times in between clicks. Emulate a slot machine; he never knows when to expect the next payoff, so he'll keep playing, hoping the next “sit” will win the jackpot.

Remember that if you click, you must give your dog a treat. Recent research conducted by Dr. Jesus Rosales-Ruiz at the University of North Texas conclusively demonstrates that the quality of performance deteriorates rapidly if you click without treating. You can, however, gradually stretch your rate of reinforcement thinner and thinner. At first you skip a click only occasionally, but over time you can skip more.

### Stimulus control

Discussed at length in the October issue, stimulus control is the icing on the reliability cake. Incorporating the concepts above will help you attain this worthy goal. When your dog is truly under stimulus control he will:

- Always perform the behavior when you ask him to (sit when you say sit).
- Never perform the behavior in a training session if you haven't asked him (never sit if you haven't asked him to sit).
- Never perform the behavior when you ask him to perform a different behavior (never sit when you ask him to down).
- Never perform a different behavior when you ask him for the behavior (never down when you ask him to sit).

If you're not quite there yet, start working on generalization, proofing, desensitization, fading lures and prompts, and decreasing your rate of reinforcement. You and your dog have work to do! 🐾

*Pat Miller, CPDT, is WDJ's Training Editor. Miller lives in Hagerstown, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center, with her husband Paul. Pat is also the author of The Power of Positive Dog Training and Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog. For more information, see “Resources,” page 24.*

*Thanks to trainer Sarah Richardson, of Chico, California, for demonstrating the techniques in this article. For contact information, see “Resources,” page 24.*

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# More Good Energy

*Far out techniques just may help . . . and don't cost much to try!*

BY CJ PUOTINEN

**E**nergy medicine, once so exotic that it was dismissed out of hand by America's physicians and veterinarians, is now going mainstream. In addition to the therapies described last month (see "Good Energy," WDJ October 2007), energy healing techniques such as flower essences, animal communication, and kinesiology are used by holistic veterinarians in the U.S. and around the world.

Understanding what these therapies are and how they work will help you decide which energy therapies might be appropriate for your canine companion.

## Flower essences

There's nothing unusual about a dog responding to an herbal tea or capsule. Plants have been used for thousands of years to treat all kinds of conditions.

But flower essences, which are also called flower remedies, are very different from herbal products. Like homeopathic remedies, they contain little or none of the material used to produce them. Instead,



**"Yes, we think she has enough toys!" Kaniq used to suffer from severe separation anxiety. Despite a plethora of toys, crating, and training tactics, her behavior failed to improve – until her owners tried a flower essence called "Loneliness Blend."**

## What you can do . . .

- Keep Rescue Remedy or a similar flower remedy with you for use in emergencies; try other flower essences to help your dog switch emotional gears, reduce anxiety, and enjoy life.
- Read a book about animal communication and practice sending and receiving messages with your dog.
- Try muscle testing and practice with friends and dogs until your results are consistent and effortless.



they store a plant's "vibration" or "imprint," which in turn affects the animal's energy. These vibrations or imprints are said to act directly on the animal's emotions.

Conventional veterinary medicine finds no credible explanation for either homeopathy or flower essences, but physicists and other energy researchers say that on the atomic level, tiny amounts of matter contain subtle but powerful forces. For those interested in energy research, medical journalist Lynne McTaggart's book, *The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe*, reviews hundreds of scientific and medical reports that explore this subject.

Flower essences were developed by Edward Bach, an English physician and homeopath, in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Dr. Bach filled small glass bowls with pure spring water, placed freshly picked blossoms on the water's surface,

and left the bowls in direct sunlight for three hours. During this time, he theorized, the water became impregnated with the plants' healing powers.

He then discarded the blossoms and preserved the activated water in brandy. As in homeopathy, this basic formula was called the "mother tincture." When diluted with additional brandy, the result was called the "stock" remedy.

By far the most famous flower remedy blend is Dr. Bach's formula for emergency and stress, which is sold under the brand names (depending on the manufacturer) Rescue Remedy, Calming Essence, Five Flower Formula, and Trauma Remedy in health food stores, pharmacies, pet supply stores, and online. It contains star of Bethlehem for shock, rock rose for fear and panic, impatiens for tension and mental agitation, cherry plum for lack of emotional control, and clematis for the sensation one experiences just before fainting.

According to Helen Graham and Gregory Vlamis in their book *Bach Flower Remedies for Animals*, Rescue Remedy and similar emergency remedies can be used:

- As an adjunct to any treatment for illness, surgery, injury, trauma, or shock
- As a safe alternative to tranquilizers and sedatives
- To help revive weak newborn puppies
- To combat the aftereffects of anesthesia and to revive puppies delivered by caesarean section
- To help resuscitate dogs whose breathing has stopped or help dogs who are having trouble breathing
- After any seizure or convulsion
- To speed recovery from heatstroke or exhaustion
- To speed the healing of wounds
- To help dogs relax at the groomer's salon, veterinary clinic, obedience school, dog park, or any stressful surroundings
- To support dogs living in shelters
- To improve mental focus and learning

Like all flower essences, Rescue Remedy can be applied directly from the stock bottle, a drop or two at a time. The remedy can be dropped into the dog's mouth, massaged into the gums, applied to the nose or paw pads, or applied to bare skin on the abdomen or ears.

Canine massage therapists often incorporate flower essences in their hands-on work, as do practitioners of canine acupuncture. Applying flower essences to a chakra or an acupuncture point and then pressing, holding, massaging, or tapping the point can increase the treatment's effectiveness – especially if the flower essence addresses an emotional issue affecting the dog.

### Flower essences at work

Every blossom used in flower essences has a unique significance. The bewildering assortment of remedies and their unusual application methods make the study of flower essences confusing at first. But

there are many resources and guides to help the novice.

"The most reassuring thing about these products," says flower essence practitioner and manufacturer Christina Blume of Denver, Colorado, "is that they are totally safe. You cannot overdose on flower essences. If you use an inappropriate remedy, nothing happens. There are no adverse side effects."

And if you use the right remedies, the results can be amazing.

One of Blume's neighbors, who is not a dog person, got a guard dog for protection. She called Blume in a panic when the dog tangled with a porcupine and his face was covered with quills. "As soon as I saw him," says Blume, "I ran home and mixed trauma and fear remedies with water in a spray bottle."

Blume stood on one side of the gate while the dog, who didn't know her, slavered, growled, and barked. "I sprayed and sprayed and sprayed him," she says. "Within about two minutes, he let me come through the gate, load him into the car, and take him to the vet. He even stayed calm at the vet clinic."

Many dog lovers discover flower essences during the summer. "Fourth of July fireworks and summer thunderstorms send people scrambling for anything that might help their frightened dogs," she says. "Fear is also the underlying cause of separation anxiety. I have received more e-mail messages, letters, and phone calls about dogs who have overcome their fears with the help of flower essences than any other topic."

Consider Kaniq, an American Eskimo Dog living with Carol Allen in Denver. "I am blessed to be able to take him to work every day. My co-workers all adore him, and as a result he is very spoiled," says Allen. "But all this attention during the week leaves him with a major case of separation anxiety when my husband and I leave him home alone when we run errands or go out for dinner on the weekend."

For the first 18 months of Kaniq's life, the Allens came home to chewed clothes, papers, books, and shreds of whatever else their dog could reach. "He would even pull things down off the wall and destroy them," she says. "It didn't matter if we

were gone for 15 minutes or two hours, he got into everything and drove our family crazy. And, of course, he was just as miserable as we were."

After several unsuccessful attempts to solve the problem, the Allens met Christina Blume, and tried one of her flower essence products that she calls "Loneliness Blend."

"To be perfectly honest," says Allen, "my husband and I were quite skeptical that anything like a flower remedy would work any better than the hundreds of hours we had put into training. But it came free with a class we attended, so we tried it."

At the end of day one on the Loneliness blend, Kaniq had not destroyed anything. "Holy cow," says Allen. "That was exciting! Then we thought it had to be a coincidence. We just didn't leave anything where Kaniq could reach it. Right?"

On day two, they tested him. "We gave him his dose and left him for half an hour with a cardboard box. We expected to find the box torn up. Nope. Totally wrong. We returned to find a happy dog greeting us at the door, pleased to have us home."



**Flower essences are readily available from health food stores and via mail order. Some sources sell kits containing all of Dr. Bach's original remedies.**

Now when they leave to go out to dinner or attend other events in the evenings or on weekends, they get Kaniq's blend out. "He sees it and comes running," says Allen. "As long as we give it to him, we return to a happy dog and a happy house. I would definitely recommend flower remedies to anyone whose dog suffers from fear, anxiety, or any other harmful emotions."

Loneliness remedy has worked well for many re-homed dogs, including Beagles placed by a local Beagle rescue group. "Like Kaniq," says Blume, "these dogs would panic and wreck the house. Some tore sofas apart. But they responded really well to the Loneliness remedy. Its key ingredient is prickly pear cactus, which

blooms here in Colorado. Its vibration seems to work especially well for all of the issues that can result from being alone.”

In addition to making and distributing individual essences and her Loneliness and Trauma remedies, Blume creates blends such as Confidence, for overly sensitive dogs or to help dogs feel courageous; Focus and Concentration, for distracted dogs; Competition, for increased courage and strength; Transportation Ease, for traveling dogs; and Antzy Pantz, for hyperactive dogs or dogs with a lot of nervous energy. Instead of alcohol, she uses a vegetable glycerine base, which has a sweet taste that dogs enjoy.

“For all flower essence applications,” says Blume, “I recommend putting 12 drops in a 4-ounce atomizer bottle filled with distilled water. You can spray the essence in the air and on the dog’s bedding, and brush or rub it into the dog’s coat. I also apply the essence to the dog’s chakra points and massage it between her eyes and on her gums, put it on her paw pads, on the inside of her ears, and on her nose. While the dog is licking the essence off her nose and toes, I apply it to her abdomen and give her a tummy rub. I also put the essences on treats and dog biscuits and add it to her broth or food.”

The key to success with flower essences, she says, is frequency of application.

“When I’m serious about getting good results,” she says, “I’ll apply diluted or full-strength remedies as often as possible. I suggest to clients that they apply the essences first thing in the morning, just before they leave for work, as soon as they get home, and again just before bed. But if you can apply them more often, such as every hour, that works even better.”

Blume adds four drops of a flower essence to dogs’ water bowls, including communal bowls. “The wonderful thing about flower essences,” she says, “is that if a dog drinks a remedy that he doesn’t need, it doesn’t hurt him. I don’t worry, in multiple-pet households, about separating animals and remedies. The animal who needs the remedy will respond and the others are never harmed.”

To help newcomers use flower essences, organizations like the Flower Essence Society in the U.S. and the Bach Centre in England provide books, training guides, online resources, workshops, and other assistance. A growing number of flower essence practitioners specialize in animal care, and the American Holistic

Veterinary Medical Association directory lists 300 veterinarians who treat animals with flower essences.

In recent years, remedies made from materials other than plants have become popular. For example, “gem elixirs” are infused with the energy of semiprecious and precious stones. Essences are also made from water, ice, or sunlight collected at sacred sites. These experimental remedies have not yet been systematically tested by thousands of practitioners the way most flower remedies have, but in time they may be shown to affect the emotions in much the way flower essences do.

## Animal communication

Can you talk to animals? Of course you can – but do they understand you? And if they answer, do *you* understand *them*?

Many have observed that humans are reasonably good senders of information, and dogs are good receivers. But while dogs are also good senders, we humans are all too often poor receivers, obtaining static, blurred images, tangled hunches, or nothing at all. That’s why so many of us look askance at people who claim to know what animals are thinking – and why we’re amazed when their reports from animals are specific, detailed, and on target.

Jessica Westleigh works with animals in person and from a distance using a variety of energy healing modalities. Her background involves dogs, horses, and other animals. She worked as an Animal Veterinary Technician at Tufts University in Massachusetts, as a registered instructor for the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, and as a professional dressage instructor and trainer. A breeder of champion Australian Shepherds, she now lives near a rain forest in Puerto Rico.

In her energy treatments, Westleigh works with an animal’s aura (the subtle multicolored luminous radiation or electromagnetic field that surrounds all living creatures) and chakras (the seven energy centers discovered in ancient India and used in many healing techniques) using methods such as channeling, streaming, Reiki,

and consulting a pendulum to receive information, unlock chakras, and re-energize the animal’s system.

“What’s given me a great insight into the different healing modalities,” she says, “is that by communicating with the animal while I’m doing everything else, I can use or recommend the herbs, flower essences, and long-distance energy or Reiki healing that will work best for the patient. I work with animals to get their exact symptoms so that I know how to treat them.”

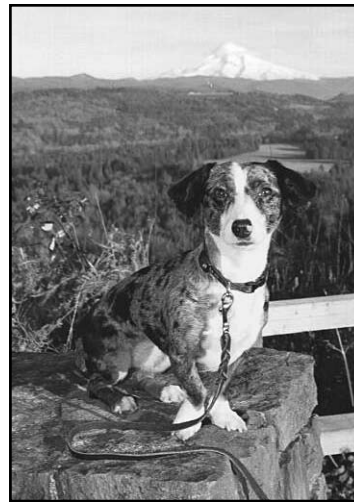
Westleigh speaks with her animal clients and interprets their images, thoughts, and emotions for general information. She then performs what’s called a body scan. “That’s where I pick up on physical issues,” she says. “When I receive this information, I might feel a temperature change or a sensation of numbness or tingling or even physical pain. In many cases I get words from the animal, and some dogs give me specific and detailed descriptions of what’s going on in their lives. All of this helps me determine what form of energy healing will be most beneficial.”

Westleigh relies on the phone and e-mail to schedule appointments, but she does all of her animal work in a meditative state in the rain forest or on the beach. “I receive everything directly at that time,” she says. “The patient can be hundreds or thousands of miles away and engaged in normal everyday activities. The animal doesn’t have to be in any particular place or doing anything special.”

She usually works with new canine clients in daily 90-minute sessions for one week, at the end of which she and the owner or caregiver assess the dog’s progress.

Puka is a five-year-old Corgi mix from the island of Kauai in Hawaii who now lives in Boring, Oregon, with Kathleen Kane. Raised in a feral pack that was used for boar hunting, Puka was five months old when she was taken to a shelter. That’s where she met Kane, who was in Hawaii on vacation.

“Puka has had both physical and emotional problems,” says Westleigh, “everything from urinary



**An animal communicator helped Puka become more sound, confident, and happy.**

incontinence issues to severe separation anxiety, and she has a hitch in one of her hind legs, where she skips a beat every few strides.

"I started by doing long-distance Reiki and EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique, another form of energy medicine), and by the end of that first week, Kathleen reported significant changes in Puka's character and personality. She suddenly became much more outgoing and confident. Kathleen could leave her and she didn't experience her usual panic and separation anxiety. But what surprised her most was Puka's physical improvement. A lot of the heat that had been in her back was gone, she stopped urinating in her sleep, and she just became a happier dog."

Another long-distance client is Nitro, a 14-year-old German Shepherd Dog belonging to Roseanne Carbone in St. Paul, Minnesota. Nitro has degenerative myelopathy, or DM, a neurologic disease that affects the spinal cord and eventually results in paralysis.

"I've been working with Nitro for a year and a half," says Westleigh, "and Roseanne credits the combination of energy work he's been receiving and the care of Dr. Deb Brown, his holistic veterinarian in Pequot Lakes, Minnesota, for keeping him alive. I work with him every other Friday. Roseanne says that when she leaves for work, he'll be uninterested in breakfast and dragging his hind end, but when she comes home after our session, he's standing at the front door, tail wagging, with a toy in his mouth, and his appetite is back."

Dr. Brown treats Nitro with acupuncture and herbs. "I get information, sensations, and symptoms directly from Nitro," says Westleigh, "and at Nitro's next veterinary appointment, which is usually a day or two later, Roseanne passes this information on to Dr. Brown, who incorporates it into her treatments. I open up his chakras and his meridians to help get his body ready for the work that she's going to do."

Westleigh often works with or is referred by holistic veterinarians and other healthcare providers who make up a team that exchanges information. "Usually it's the owner who coordinates this," she says. "There might be a kinesiologist in the pic-

ture who is able to verify my observations with muscle testing. Then a veterinary homeopath or other practitioner prescribes specific treatments. Energy work, flower essences, homeopathy, chiropractic adjustments, acupuncture, acupressure, massage therapy, nutrition, and other holistic therapies all work very well together."



**Despite degenerative myelopathy 14-year-old Nitro can still walk, thanks to energy work from an animal communicator working with his holistic vet.**

Can anyone learn how to communicate with animals, or do you have to be born with the skill?

Many animal communicators, such as Penelope Smith in Prescott, Arizona, say we can all learn how to exchange ideas with our animal companions. Smith, who has written several best-selling books about animal communication, edits a quarterly journal, *Species Link*, and provides training programs and DVDs.

In fact, many adult schools and training centers offer classes and workshops. If you'd rather work with an expert, your holistic veterinarian, groomer, trainer, or dog club may be able to refer you to an animal communicator. Check local metaphysical magazines and newsletters as well.

Do you know what your dog really thinks?

"You probably don't," says Jessica Westleigh, "but I can promise you this. Your dog has important things to tell you, and she probably wishes you could read her mind!"

## Kinesiology

Now that you know your dog can talk to you, did you know that your body can talk to you, too? Not only that, but your body knows things that your conscious mind knows nothing about.

That's what George Goodheart, DC, discovered in the early 1960s, when he

found that muscles could be tested in ways that revealed information about the rest of the body. Dr. Goodheart called his discovery Applied Kinesiology.

When the person performing the test asks questions and checks the strength or weakness of indicator muscles, the individual being tested unconsciously communicates internal information.

Healthcare practitioners use muscle testing to determine what specific imbalances or chemical sensitivities exist in the body; the health status of different organs, acupuncture points, and meridians; and the best specific treatments for enhancing health.

To test whether an indicator muscle is strong or weak, the tester usually presses down on the hand or arm of the person being tested, while that person resists by holding the arm straight. The body's muscles are strengthened by statements with which it agrees and weakened by statements with which it does not agree. You can be convinced that dark chocolate is your personal health food, but if holding, looking at, or thinking about a chocolate bar leaves you weak all over, a tester's light pressure will send your arm to the floor.

Factors that can impede accurate muscle testing include dehydration, unwanted distractions, loud noises, and electromagnetic interference. In ideal conditions, all parties have had plenty of water, the room is quiet, and there are no environmental problems.

For those too young, incapacitated, or infirm to test, or for testing animals, surrogate testing works just as well. In surrogate testing, an intermediary person touches the person or animal being tested with one hand and resists the tester's gentle pressure with the other. Today in many veterinary clinics, staff members are experienced surrogate testers.

Wendy Volhard, co-author of the best-selling *Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog*, has introduced kinesiology to thousands. In the early 1980s, when she planned to add muscle testing to the nutrition and health curriculum at her training camps, Volhard's staff warned her not to even mention the subject. "It's quackery!" they exclaimed.

"But I had so much success with it that I felt driven to teach it," she says. "If you can accept Einstein's theory that all matter has energy, sooner or later you will believe in kinesiology, too."

Volhard devotes a chapter of her book to kinesiology and gives detailed instruc-

tions. To test your dog, she explains, have her lying on your left while you sit on the floor next to her. Remove the dog's collar if it contains metal. If it isn't already in a closed container, place whatever you plan to test (a small amount of dog food, a treat, a flower essence, medication, etc.) in a plastic bag or glass jar. Hold it in contact with the dog's body anywhere except the head area.

Extend your right arm parallel to the ground. Have your tester push down on your wrist. "You will immediately know the result," she says. "A strong response means the item being tested is okay for your dog. A weak response means it is not the best choice. If you get a weak response, test several items, such as several different foods or treats, until you find one that tests strong. All individuals have their own body chemistry, so results are bound to vary."

Another way to do surrogate testing is to test yourself without needing an-



**Kinesiology or "muscle testing" can be used to help choose an appropriate diet or treatment. One person, the "surrogate," holds the substance to be tested in contact with the dog; the other person checks the surrogate's response.**

other person's help. Kinesiologists have discovered many methods for obtaining clear "yes" or "no" answers (see a list of online descriptions in the resources, below). Christina Blume uses a pendulum to determine which remedies a particular

dog's needs by going down her printed list of flower essences, pointing to each one, and noting the answers.

"Whatever method you use," she says, "whether it's holding a pendulum and waiting for it to move clockwise or counterclockwise, or forward and back or sideways, or whether you use one of the many finger, hand, or body muscle self-tests, the keys are practice and experience. It took only a few days to discover my personal 'yes' and 'no' indicators, but it took three months for me to trust the results. The energetics of intention are powerful. Trust that your desire to aid your beloved dog is coming through in your search for answers." 🐾

*CJ Puotinen, a frequent contributor to WDJ, is the author of The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care, which describes several energy healing techniques. See "Resources," page 24, for more information.*

## Resources Mentioned in This Article

### ANIMAL COMMUNICATION

**Animal Talk: Interspecies Telepathic Communication**, by Penelope Smith. Council Oak Books, 2004

**Hands-on Healing for Pets: The Animal Lover's Essential Guide to Using Healing Energy**, by Margrit Coates. Rider, 2003

**Hear All Creatures: The Journey of an Animal Communicator**, by Karen Anderson. New River Press, 2007

**What Animals Tell Me: True Stories of an Animal Communicator**, by Dr. Monica Diedrich. Llewellyn Publications, 2005

**Penelope Smith**, Animal Communication Specialist, Prescott, AZ, (928) 776-9709, [animaltalk.net](http://animaltalk.net)

**Jessica Westleigh**, Animal Communicator and Energy Healer, Puerto Rico, [theholisticbeing.com](http://theholisticbeing.com)

### FLOWER REMEDIES, FLOWER ESSENCES

**Animal Healing and Vibrational Medicine**, by Sage Holloway. Blue Dolphin Publishing, 2001

**Bach Flower Remedies for Animals**, by Helen Graham and Gregory Vlamis. Findhorn Press, 1999

**Bach Flower Remedies for Dogs**, by Martin J. Scott and Gael Mariani. Findhorn Press, 2007

**The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe**, by Lynne McTaggart. Harper Perennial, 2002

**Flower Essence Repertory: A Comprehensive Guide to North American and English Flower Essences for Emotional and Spiritual Well-Being**, by Patricia Kaminski and Richard Katz. Flower Essence Society, 1994

**American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association**, directory of holistic veterinarians using flower remedies. [holisticvetlist.com](http://holisticvetlist.com)

**Blumes Farm**. Christina Blume, Denver, CO. (303) 477-5585, [blumesfarm.com](http://blumesfarm.com)

**Dr. Edward Bach Centre**, Mt. Vernon, England. Information and resources. [BachCentre.com](http://BachCentre.com)

**Flower Essence Society**. Research, Q&A, online repertory. See [flowersociety.org/animals.htm](http://flowersociety.org/animals.htm) for articles and reports on using flower essences for animals. [flowersociety.org](http://flowersociety.org)

### KINESIOLOGY

**Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog**, by Wendy Volhard and Kerry Brown, DVM. Howell Book House, Second Edition, 2000

**American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association**, directory of veterinarians who use applied kinesiology. [holisticvetlist.com](http://holisticvetlist.com)

### Online descriptions of muscle self-tests:

[empyreanquest.com/Healing/muscle.htm](http://empyreanquest.com/Healing/muscle.htm)  
[geocities.com/sunmoonessences/muscle.html](http://geocities.com/sunmoonessences/muscle.html)  
[feelingfree.net/awareness/selftest.htm](http://feelingfree.net/awareness/selftest.htm)  
[perelandra-ltd.com/Self\\_Testing\\_W75.cfm](http://perelandra-ltd.com/Self_Testing_W75.cfm)




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- A natural shampoo formula that can help keep your dog flea-free (p. 354)
- The taboo training technique that can cause aggression (p. 67)

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## RESOURCES

### BOOKS

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

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

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### HOLISTIC VETERINARIANS

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

### TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

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

Sarah Richardson, CPDT, The Canine Connection, Chico, CA. Positive reinforcement dog training and owner education. Group classes, private lessons, and behavior consultations. (530) 345-1912; thecanine-connection.com

The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) has references to member trainers in your area. Not all members employ similar training methods, nor does APDT set standards of skill or competence. APDT encourages (but does not require) its members to use training methods that use reinforcement and rewards, not punishment. (800) 738-3647; apdt.com

### FITNESS AND CONDITIONING

Carol Helfer, DVM, Canine Peak Performance Sports Medicine & Physical Rehabilitation Therapy, Portland, OR. (503) 291-7400, caninepeakperformance.com

*Building the Canine Athlete: Strength, Stretch, Endurance, and Body Awareness Exercises*, DVD by M. Christine Zink, DVM, PhD, and Laurie McCauley, DVM. Canine Sports Products, (443) 535-9144, caninesports.com

## WHAT'S AHEAD

### You CAN Teach Old Dogs!

*Training senior dogs keeps them sharp and active – and it's really fun to watch when they learn a new trick!*

### Product Review: Winter Coats

*The warmest, best-fitting, and truly waterproof coats you can easily put on your dog.*

### Keeping Fit When It's Cold

*Winter activities you and your dog will enjoy – and how to enjoy them safely.*

### Energy Healing

*Part three of a series on methods that can improve your dog's health without invasive procedures.*

### A Sudden Loss of Balance

*"Vestibular disease" can have a sudden onset . . . it's also difficult to determine which of its many causes has afflicted your dog, and to find the appropriate treatment.*

### Terrible Odor, Terrific Food

*Green tripe smells awful! But it offers special benefits to dogs who eat it.*