

VOLUME 12
NUMBER 10

The Whole Dog Journal™

A monthly guide to natural dog care and training



October 2009

\$5.95

FEATURES

3 Good Growling?

Five things to do when your dog growls at you (most important: do not punish him).

6 Passing Fancy

How to teach your dog to calmly walk on-leash past other people, other dogs, bicyclists, skateboarders – you name it!

10 Needling Pain Relief

Acupuncture helps dogs with side effects of cancer (and its treatment, too).

13 Do As I Say, Not As I Do

Nobody's perfect! Even the best-informed owners can make mistakes with their dogs.

14 Positive Show-Offs

Clickers and treats work as well for training show dogs as they do for your family pet.

18 Rally Obedient Dogs

Handlers can encourage and even reward their dogs in the show ring in this very fun canine sport, "rally obedience."



Get past anything!
... page 6



Clicking in the ring
... page 14

Anything wrong
with these?
... page 4



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Editor's Note
- 4 Canine News
- 24 Resources

Rally fun,
for you and
your dog ...
page 18



PHOTO BY AMY BOEMIG

A Puppy From Hell

It's not a joke; puppy mills produce suffering.

BY NANCY KERNS

About five years ago, my then-next-door neighbors decided to get a dog, and not just any dog. They'd spent years dreaming about and planning for the day they'd have both a landlord who allowed dogs and the time to spend with a dog. Now they had both, and they wanted to get a miniature Poodle, preferably female, and "apricot" colored. And they wanted to know if I knew any Poodle breeders.

Well, gosh. No, I don't know any Poodle breeders, but had they gone to any of our local shelters? Looked into rescue organizations? Were they aware of petfinder.com?

Yes, yes, yes, the wife answered, impatient. The problem is, she had her heart set on a female, apricot-colored, and small. And she wanted to get a young pup, not an adult, so they could raise it from the get-go. And she didn't want to wait a year for a dog who met this description to show up in a shelter.

I tried to warn these folks (an educated couple in their fifties) about the evils of puppy mills. I gave them articles that describe how to identify a responsible breeder, and told them about the risks of buying from unprincipled or ignorant puppy producers. I suggested that they go to dog shows – the Golden Gate Kennel Club show was not far off – and ask Poodle exhibitors about retired show dogs, or pups that didn't meet conformation standards. Ask for references, I told them; somebody might know somebody who has a dog who needs a new home for some good reason – a divorce, say.

We had these conversations daily for a week or two. Then the wife announced gleefully, "I found our dog! There is a breeder in Texas who has a litter of eight-week-old miniature Poodle puppies, and one of them is an apricot-colored female! He's putting her on an airplane tomorrow!"

"I'm happy for you," I said (probably rather flatly). "I hope it works out." Inwardly, though, I was hugely disappointed in my neighbors. Should I have shouted,

"Don't you get it? That's a puppy mill! Goodness only knows what you are going to get!" Maybe. Would it have made any difference whatsoever if I had? I don't think so.

The couple drove to the airport the next day to pick up their pup. And it was weird, because then I didn't see them or get a telephoned "puppy report" for about a week. I guessed that maybe I hurt their feelings with my opinions about adopting (as opposed to buying) and my lack of enthusiasm for their luck in finding their dream pup.

Only it turned out even worse than I feared. They enjoyed only a few hours with their new pup when she started going downhill. She spiked a fever and grew listless. They took her to a veterinarian, who suggested that she was probably closer to five weeks than eight and diagnosed her with pneumonia. The vet was also pretty sure she wasn't a purebred Poodle, but only time would tell.

The pup spent the better part of the next three weeks in the vet's clinic as she fought for her life. My neighbors confessed to me that they spent almost \$8,000 on vet bills.

When the husband called the breeder to complain about the condition of the puppy – supposedly "100 percent guaranteed" – he was told, "Put it to sleep, send me a receipt for the euthanasia, a check for airfare, and I'll send you another one, no problem."

They didn't kill the puppy. She grew into a leggy (and fearful) white dog with a Poodle coat and a terrier face.

Meanwhile, on any day on petfinder.com, you can find hundreds of dogs who resemble Poodles as much as that pup did. As a matter

of fact, there's one in my local shelter now; she's what reminded me to tell this story. Feel free to give this page to anyone you know who's in a big hurry to buy a puppy of a certain description – or even a certain breed.

NK



The Whole Dog Journal™

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

EDITORIAL OFFICE

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

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

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

BACK ISSUES, WEBSITE INQUIRIES

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

REPRINTS

For price quote, contact Jennifer Jimolka at
 (203) 857-3144
 Minimum order 1,000

NEWSSTAND

Jocelyn Donnellon, (203) 857-3100

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

THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL (ISSN #1097-5322) is published monthly by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 800 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Executive Vice President, Editorial Director; Philip L. Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Executive Vice President, Marketing Director; Marvin Cweibel, Senior Vice President, Marketing Operations; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Vice President, Circulation; Michael N. Pollet, Senior Vice President, General Counsel. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, CT and at additional mailing offices. Copyright ©2009, Belvoir Media Group, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited. Printed in U.S.A. Revenue Canada GST Account #128044658. Canada Publishing Agreement Number #40016479.

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

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

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

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

Good Growling?

Five things to do when your dog . . . growls at you.

BY PAT MILLER

Growling is a valuable means of communication for a dog – something that dog owners should appreciate and respect rather than punish. Of course, we don't *want* our dog to growl at us, but neither do we want him to fail to growl if something makes him uncomfortable; that's very important information in a successful canine-human relationship.

It's very common for dog owners to punish their dogs for growling. Unfortunately, this often suppresses the growl – eliminating his ability to warn us that he's about to snap, literally and figuratively. On other occasions, punishing a growling, uncomfortable dog can induce him to escalate into full-on aggression.

So, if you're not supposed to punish your dog for growling, what *are* you supposed to do? The next time your dog growls at you, try this:

1 Stop. Whatever you're doing, stop. If your dog's growl threshold is near his bite threshold – that is, if there's not much time between his growl and his bite, get safe. If his growl *doesn't* mean a bite is imminent, stop what you're doing but

stay where you are. Wait until he relaxes, then move away, so you're rewarding the relaxed behavior rather than the growl.

2 Analyze the situation. What elicited the growl? Were you touching or grooming him? Restraining him? Making direct eye contact? Taking something away from him? Making him do something?

3 Figure out a different way to accomplish your goal without eliciting a growl. Lure him rather than physically pushing or pulling him. Have someone else feed him treats while you touch, groom, or restrain him. If you don't *have* to do whatever it was that elicited the growl, don't – until you can convince him that it's a good thing rather than a bad thing.

4 Evaluate the stressors in your dog's world and reduce or eliminate as many of them as possible. For example, if your dog is unaccustomed to strangers, then having your sister and her husband and three kids as houseguests for the past week would undoubtedly stress your dog. Noise-phobic dogs might be un-

der a strain if city crews have been digging up a nearby street with heavy equipment or there was a thunderstorm last night. The vacuum cleaner is a common stressor for dogs. A loud argument between you and your spouse could stress your dog as well as you, and *your* stress is stressful to your dog. Harsh verbal or physical punishment, an outburst of aroused barking at the mail carrier, fence fighting with another dog. The list could go on and on.

Keep in mind that stress causes aggression, and stressors are cumulative; it's not just the immediate stimulus that caused the growl, but a combination of all the stressors he's experienced in the past few days. This explains why he may growl at you today when you do something, but he didn't growl last week when you did the exact same thing. The more stressors you can remove overall, the less likely he is to growl the next time you do whatever it was that elicited the growl this time.

5 Institute a behavior modification program to change his opinion about the thing that made him growl. One way to do this is to use counter-conditioning and desensitization to convince him the bad thing is a good thing (see "Fear Itself," WDJ April 2007).

Another way is through the careful use of negative reinforcement as in a Constructional Aggression Treatment (CAT) program to teach him a new behavioral strategy when presented with the discomfort-causing stimulus. (For much more detail about CAT programs, see "Building Better Behavior," May 2008).

If you need help to create and implement a behavior modification protocol, contact a qualified behavior professional who is experienced and successful in modifying aggressive behavior *with positive, dog-friendly techniques*. Good places to start your search are ccpdt.org and trulydogfriendly.com, or my own trainer referral lists at peaceablepaws.com. 🐾



Don't punish your dog for growling; you need to know when he's uncomfortable so he's not pushed past his ability to cope. Note: Play-growling is perfectly acceptable. As long as you're sure he's playing, there's no need to modify this behavior.

Iverhart Plus Recall

Dogs weighing 75 pounds or more may not be fully protected

On August 13, Virbac Animal Health, Inc. announced that it was recalling certain lots of Iverhart Plus® Flavored Chewable Tablets, a heartworm preventative. Routine stability testing found these lots no longer contained enough ivermectin to be effective for dogs weighing more than 75 pounds.

Lot numbers 090093 and 090095 of Iverhart Plus Large (51-100 pounds) were recalled. A third lot for small dogs (up to 25 pounds), 090073, was also recalled because it was found to be nearing the potency limit. These lots were sold to distributors starting March 20, so any product purchased earlier would not be affected.

The recalled product is not harmful, but may leave larger dogs unprotected from heartworm infection. Virbac recommends that dogs who weigh more than 75 pounds who were given the recalled

product be tested five to six months after the last dose was given (I advise waiting the full six months to test your dog, since it can take that long for heartworm larvae to mature into adults that can be detected by heartworm tests).

Virbac will reimburse veterinarians for heartworm tests performed on 75-plus-pound dogs who were given the defective product. Their standard product guarantee will also cover heartworm treatment for any dog taking Iverhart Plus who is found to be infected with heartworms.

If you purchased the recalled product, you should return any unused portion to your place of purchase for replacement from a different lot number. The lot number is listed on the bottom lid/flap of the box in a white text field and on the blister foil of the individual doses. Note that even though dogs who weigh less than 75 pounds are

fully protected now, the product may lose further potency over time, so it's important to replace it rather than continue to use it even if your dog is under the weight limit. That also applies to the single lot for smaller dogs that was recalled.

Virbac has notified its distributors and are asking them to notify the veterinary clinics who purchased the recalled lots. Only those who received the recalled lots will be contacted, so your veterinarian may not be aware of this recall.

Testing has confirmed that all other lots of Iverhart Plus Flavored Chewable Tablets remain potent. Only the three lots identified are affected by this recall. – *Mary Straus*

For more information:
Virbac Technical Services
(800) 338-3659, ext. 3052;
virbacvet.com/news

Sales Outlets for Greenies Have Been Restricted

Distribution reverts to pet specialty retailers and veterinary clinics

In May 2009, the Greenies® line of pet dental chews disappeared from supermarkets and other mass markets. Some dog owners, aware that the maker of Greenies had been sued by owners of dogs who died, allegedly from intestinal obstructions caused by an undigested Greenies chew, assumed the company had ceased manufacturing the “dental treat.” Actually, beginning in June, the distribution of the product was reconfigured; now Greenies are available only through veterinary hospitals and pet specialty retailers.

A statement on the product website (greenies.com) explains the rationale for the change of distribution, stating, “Greenies products are marketed exclusively through pet specialty retailers and veterinary clinics where knowledgeable staff is equipped to answer pet

owner questions and make the right recommendation. This is particularly important for clinically proven canine Greenies dental chews, as each of the five sizes is specially formulated to deliver the maximum dental benefit to each weight range.”

In 2006, consumer complaints and a subsequent CNN investigation uncovered 40 cases over a three-year period in which the green chews had become lodged in a dog's esophagus or intestine. Reports indicate that 13 of those dogs died, despite veterinary treatment.

Following that investigation, the products were reformulated in order to make the chews “safe, soluble, and easily digestible.” Its website states, “Since the product was reformulated in 2006, there have been no reports of blockages or obstructions.”

Greenies may be more

digestible than they used to be, but we've never been fans of the chews. The products don't come in a large enough size to prevent rapid consumption by large dogs or dogs who tend to gulp or aggressively consume their chews. There are more natural products capable of helping to keep your dog's teeth clean that don't contain the highly processed ingredients used in Greenies – fresh, raw, meaty bones, for example. Please note that your dog must be actively supervised when chewing *any* product. Chews should be taken away from any dog who chews too aggressively or swallows large pieces. And when any chew is small enough to be swallowed, it should be taken away and safely disposed.

The Greenies line was originally invented by S&M NuTec, based in Kansas City, Missouri. Although the Greenies products are still manufactured by S&M NuTec, the entire line of Greenies products was acquired by Nutro Products, Inc., in May 2007. Nutro, in turn, was purchased by corporate food giant Mars, Inc.

– *Pat Miller and Nancy Kerns*



Illinois Mandates Reciprocal Child/Animal Abuse Reporting Law also protects those who report abuse to authorities

In August, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed new legislation that amends Illinois' Humane Care for Animals Act, as well as the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, affirming the link between animal abuse and child abuse.

The new law requires investigating animal welfare and child welfare agencies to report suspected abuse incidences to each other. Animal welfare investigators

who have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child is being neglected or abused must now make a written or oral report to the State Department of Children and Family Services. Investigators employed by the Department of Children and Family Services must report suspected animal abuse or neglect to the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Health and Welfare.

The measure also provides for immunity from liability and confidentiality of identity for persons, institutions, and agencies participating in good faith to report or investigate abuse or neglect.

At least one other state has a reciprocal reporting law. California humane officers are *mandated* reporters, while child protection workers *may* report but are not mandated to do so. — *Pat Miller*

Trilostane Approved by FDA Veterinarians treating dogs with Cushing's disease now have new tool

In May 2009, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the approval of the drug trilostane (Vetoryl) for the treatment of hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease) in dogs.

Trilostane has been used in the U.K. since 2001, but until recently, anyone who wanted to use this drug to treat their dog in the U.S. had to fill out a lot of paperwork to get permission to import it. The FDA's approval means the drug will now be readily available to veterinarians. There are, however, many unanswered questions about trilostane, including whether it's safer than traditional treatment.

Cushing's disease occurs when the body produces too much cortisol. It causes increased appetite and thirst, skin problems, muscle weakness, and panting. It can also predispose a dog to other conditions such as diabetes and pancreatitis.

There are two types of Cushing's disease: adrenal and pituitary.

Pituitary Cushing's is the most common, accounting for 85 percent of cases. Pituitary Cushing's is caused by a small, usually benign tumor of the pituitary gland that overproduces the hormone ACTH, which in turn tells the adrenal glands to produce excess cortisol. These tumors are usually too small to remove, so pituitary Cushing's is managed with medications that suppress the production of cortisol.

Adrenal Cushing's is caused by a tumor on one of the adrenal glands. It is often treated with surgery to remove the tumor.

There are three drugs that have been

commonly used to treat the pituitary form of Cushing's disease in dogs:

■ **Lysodren** (mitotane) is the traditional therapy, though its use is off-label. This chemotherapy drug works by eroding layers of the adrenal glands. Lysodren is relatively inexpensive, but careful monitoring is needed to prevent a life-threatening Addisonian crisis if cortisol levels are reduced too far. Lysodren can also cause permanent changes to the adrenals, requiring continued treatment for Addison's disease (hypoadrenocorticism).

■ **Ketoconazole**, an anti-fungal drug that suppresses cortisol as a side effect, is safer than Lysodren, as it does not affect the adrenal glands. However, it is very expensive, especially for large dogs, and it is not effective in 20 percent of dogs. Its use in treating Cushing's is also off-label.

■ **L-deprenyl** (Anipryl or selegeline) is an MAO inhibitor that acts on the pituitary gland itself. While considered very safe, it is questionable how well L-deprenyl works, particularly since it's more difficult to measure the response with this drug, and because it can take some time to begin working. The manufacturer's study found L-deprenyl helped more than 80 percent of dogs it followed. However, a separate, independent study concluded that only 20 percent of treated dogs improved. L-deprenyl is the only other drug approved by the FDA for treatment of Cushing's.

Trilostane inhibits an enzyme that is needed in the production of cortisol. As with Lysodren, this drug has the potential to cause a life-threatening Addisonian crisis if cortisol levels go too low. Initially, it was thought that trilostane would not cause permanent changes to the adrenal glands, but in a small percentage of cases, for reasons that are unknown, it's been found to cause sometimes fatal adrenal necrosis as well as permanent Addison's disease.

For these reasons, the same type of careful monitoring is needed as with Lysodren. Two studies found that the risk of either permanent or life-threatening Addison's was 2 to 3 percent for trilostane, and 2 to 5 percent for Lysodren. Unlike with Lysodren, these adverse effects of trilostane do not appear to be dose-dependent, so there's no way to predict which dogs may react. Trilostane is more expensive than Lysodren and must be given more frequently.

When switching from Lysodren to trilostane, it's best to wait at least a month in between. Dogs who have been treated with Lysodren in the past may be more susceptible to the effects of trilostane.

Both Lysodren and trilostane can also be used to treat the adrenal form of Cushing's, when surgery is considered too risky. — *Mary Straus*

For more information:
Dechra Veterinary Products
(913) 327-0015; dechra-us.com

Passing Fancy

How to teach your dog to calmly walk on-leash past other people, other dogs, bicyclists, skateboarders . . . you name it!

BY PAT MILLER

Passing by all manner of things in the real world – and being passed by them – is an important canine good manners skill. Unfortunately, it seems to be one that is absent in many dogs’ behavior repertoires. Some training classes don’t address this behavior challenge at all. Others do, but owners don’t always take time to generalize the behavior outside the training center. Their dogs, in the real world, still bounce over to greet any and all comers on the street, or on the opposite end of the continuum, shy away from people and things that frighten them.

My “Downtown Hound” class graduated in early September with a celebration at Nutter’s Ice Cream in nearby Sharpsburg. It was a 90 degree-plus day with high humidity, and the ice cream parlor was a popular spot in this small Maryland community. I watched with pride as the four dogs lay quietly at their humans’

feet, happily downing the occasional offered dog treat while their owners licked ice cream cones. More importantly, they rested quietly as people walked by with strollers and dogs, kids on skateboards flew past noisily, and motorcycles, trucks, and cars rumbled by a few feet away on busy Main Street.

I offer this class for students who want to a structured opportunity to work on their dogs’ real-life skills. It’s a summertime-only class; we take advantage of daylight savings time to give us enough light for evening get-togethers. We go to a variety of locations: the local outlet mall, a dog-friendly outdoor cafe, Hagerstown City Park, the C&O Canal, and downtown Sharpsburg. In each venue, the focus is on polite behavior as we pass by whoever else might be there: Shoppers at the mall; evening strollers, bird watchers, ducks, and swans at the park; walkers, bikers, joggers, and fisherpeople at the canal; and



The goal: A dog who does not try to greet any other dog or person when he’s on-leash, unless you give him a clear signal to do so. And when the cue to greet is given, his behavior is calm and polite. It’s achievable, but it takes hard work.

What you can do . . .

- Call around to see if any trainers in your area offer a Downtown Hound-type class where you and your dog can practice polite passing. If nobody does, try to talk your favorite trainer into starting one.
- Gather a group of your dog friends together for impromptu weekly Downtown Hound-type passing practice outings.
- Make sure the dogs are ready for public appearances, then take turns each week selecting the destination and running the “class.”
- Do individual downtown passing practice sessions, always remembering to reinforce your dog for focusing on you rather than on the passers-by.



town folks in Sharpsburg. And of course, occasional other dogs on leashes.

In order to participate in Downtown Hound, dog/human teams have to pass my Peaceable Paws Intermediate Class or, if they trained elsewhere, pass an evaluation. I want to be sure their leash-walking and owner-focus skills are solid enough to handle the excitement of the real world.

The first session is a refresher course here on my farm. Class members hike on the trails and practice passing each other. When the dogs pay attention to their handlers (over all else), the handlers respond

with a lot of clicks – a noise made by a small plastic box called a clicker, used to mark the moment a dog exhibits a behavior we want – and treats, to reward and reinforce the attention-paying behavior.

We set up the teams six to eight feet apart in an open meadow with the dogs on a sit-stay or down-stay. One at a time, the handlers ask their dogs to heel, weaving in and out of the living weave poles. As each canine and human pair takes their place at the end of the row, another pair walks by them. We also practice recalls in an open field, with the dogs on long lines (and off-leash when possible), to tune up that important skill, just in case a leash gets dropped in the real world and a recall is needed. The following six weeks we meet off-property.

Five tools for polite passing

Our first outing is usually to the outlet mall. The sidewalks there are wide and there are lots of grassy spaces, so it's easy for us to avoid people if one of our dogs is behaving in a rude manner.

Dogs should never greet a passer-by unless he's been invited to do so, and even then the greeting should be polite – a “say please” sit. I remind the group that they are supposed to be good canine ambassadors, always on the alert for human body language that says an approaching person isn't comfortable with dogs, and giving those people an extra wide berth.

Dog-dog interactions follow similar rules. Our canine pals should walk politely past another dog on the sidewalk, greeting only if and when both human parties agree to a meeting and the dogs are given permission to do so (hence our “living weave poles” exercise).

The key to polite passing is focused attention – assuming the dog already has reasonably polite leash-walking skills (see “Good Dog Walking,” WDJ March 2007). If you can keep your dog focused on you, he will walk politely; it's as simple as that. Simple, but definitely not easy! Here are the exercises we practice in my training center's basic classes to lay a focus foundation for real life:

■ **Good lookin':** When dogs come to class for the first time, they are understandably distracted – just as your dog is when he gets to go out with you in the big wide world. Lots of very exciting stuff happening! It's ineffective to beg and plead for your dog's attention. Instead, I tell my students to sit in a chair and wait. The instant their dog looks at them *or even glances in their general direction*, they should click their clickers and feed their dogs a treat.

You can do the same with your dog when you take him out in public. Sit on a folding chair on your front lawn, or on a bench in a park, or in front of the post office, and wait. The instant your dog looks at you, or *near* you, click and feed him a high value treat. You're reinforcing his offered attention, teaching your dog that if he *chooses* to look at you he can make you click and give him a treat.

Over time, “shape” this behavior (reward successively more precise behavior) for longer eye contact, and then for making eye contact with you when you're both walking. If he's making eye contact with you when you pass someone on the sidewalk, he can't be looking at them!

■ **Name game:** If your dog's not offering attention, you can always ask for it – if

you've taught him that his name means “Look at me for something wonderful!” Say his name, then feed him a tasty treat.

Repeat this game regularly, until your dog instantly swivels his head toward you at the sound of his name. Then practice with increasing levels of distraction. Now you can *get* his attention, if he doesn't offer it.

■ **Zen attention:** Getting your dog's attention is one thing; *keeping* it is sometimes an entirely different matter. This exercise makes it clear to your dog that eye contact with you, not just looking at the treat, is what gets reinforced. The game also allows you to “shape” for duration.

With your dog sitting in front of you, hold a treat out at arms' length to the side. He will likely watch the treat. Just wait. Here's the Zen part. In order to *get* the treat he has to look *away* from it – back at you. The instant he looks at you (as if to say, “Hey Mom, what's the deal here?”) you click and feed him the treat. Then do it again. Most dogs figure this out amazingly quickly. When he comprehends that looking at you – not the treat – *gets* the treat, you can add your “Watch me” cue, and start shaping for longer duration of eye contact.

■ **Me, not that:** Now it's distraction time. With your “Watch me” cue solidly installed, ask a family member or friend to walk past while you're reinforcing your dog for looking at you. Use a high rate of reinforcement at first (click and treat a lot) – then decrease the frequency as your dog figures out the game. If he looks away, use his name or your “Watch me” cue to get his attention back. Click and treat!



Trainer Sarah Richardson (left, of Chico, CA) and some of her students demonstrate the “living weave poles” exercise in a secure place. Increase distractions after your dog succeeds.



Practice getting your dog's attention in distracting places, too. Sit quietly, watching your dog and waiting. The moment he looks in your direction, click and give him a treat.



Author and trainer Pat Miller takes her “Downtown Hound” students and their dogs to a local park to practice “good manners” passing and calm, polite greetings.



The students reward and reinforce their dogs’ attention as strangers walk, jog, and bike past them. The dogs are permitted to greet only those people who express interest.

Gradually increase the intensity of the distraction: Start walking with your own dog toward your human distraction, have your friend whistle, clap his hands, or jingle car keys while walking past, then jog, then bounce a ball – get creative! Now take him to a low-distraction public place to start your real-life practice. With each successful session under your belt, you can plan for a more distracting venue the next time.

■ **The Premack look:** Perhaps your dog is a social butterfly and really wants to greet the people and other dogs you’re asking him to pass. You can use something called the Premack Principle to your advantage, by teaching him that polite passing *sometimes* gets reinforced by the opportunity to greet. Premack, also referred to as “Grandma’s Law,” says you can use a more desirable behavior to reinforce a less desirable one (you have to eat your vegetables before you can have dessert).

To use the Premack Principle for polite passing, start by hiding high-value treats in an open area (remember where you hid them!), and practicing polite leash walking in that area. Occasionally when your dog is giving you wonderful focused attention, say “Find it!” and run with him to the nearest hidden treat. You’re teaching him that great attention makes unexpected treasures happen.

Now bring your friend back into the picture. Practice your polite passing, and occasionally after an excellent pass-by, when you’re several feet beyond the person say “Go say hi!” and turn around to let him

(politely) greet. In public, when someone asks if they can pet your dog, ask them to play this wonderful game with you. Be sure to do the greeting randomly (sometimes but not always), and vary the distance you pass the other person before you greet, so your dog doesn’t start expecting to greet everyone he passes.

With these five strategies for gaining your dog’s attention at your disposal, you and your dog should be able to skate through any public polite passing opportunities. That is, unless your dog is fearful. If you’re having difficulty passing people, dogs and/or things on the street because your dog’s afraid of them, you’re looking at a whole different challenge – passing scary stuff.

Passing other dogs

Perhaps the most frequent transgression of canine passing etiquette occurs when dog owners routinely allow their canine charges to dash up to every other dog they see, often despite the other owner’s obvious and desperate attempts to avoid interaction.

“It’s okay,” they say. “My dog’s friendly!”

“Friendly” isn’t the point. The dog being approached may be fearful of other dogs, or may react poorly to dogs getting in his space – or face. He may be recovering from an injury or surgery. The human being approached may simply choose not to have her dog interact with others while on leash, for a myriad of valid reasons. Whatever the case may be, uninvited on-leash greeting is simply rude behavior.

The five tools for polite passing are

doubly, maybe even triply important when you and your dog are passing others with their dogs. The ultimate challenge is keeping your dog focused on you and passing politely *even when* the other dog is doing everything in his power to get your dog to engage. Now *there’s* good attention training!

Passing scary stuff

The dog who is fearful may exhibit one of a number of behaviors when asked to pass his fear-eliciting stimuli. He may cling to his owner’s side, seeking protection, trying to pass the monster as quickly as possible. He may try to flee, running away to the end of the leash and thrashing in panic when he feels the restraint. Or he may become defensively aggressive, offering a display of teeth and noise to try to ward off the scary thing. All of these behaviors are embarrassing and unacceptable in public, and the third one can pose a significant threat to the safety of passers-by. The fear-aggressive dog is quite likely to bite if he feels sufficiently trapped or threatened.

Ideally, you’ll avoid over-threshold public exposures for a dog who is fearful, until your behavior modification efforts succeed in building canine confidence using either counter-conditioning and desensitization (see “Fear Itself,” WDJ April 2007), operant conditioning (see “Building Better Behaviors,” May 2008), or a combination of the two. In a pinch, feeding your dog some high-value treats while retreating to a safe distance or moving swiftly past the scary thing can get you and your fearful dog out of a tight spot. If your dog loves targeting (see “Right

on Target,” February 2006), you can also use “Touch!” to temporarily give him a little more confidence and improve his emotional state while keeping him focused on you and the target you’re asking him to touch with his nose or a paw.

Note: Do *not* try to have the scary person feed your dog treats. This is a good way to get someone bitten: the dog is coaxed over threshold and temporarily distracted by the temptation of the high-value treat, but after he eats it he realizes he’s too close to the scary person and may be compelled to bite.

Emergency escape

Alternatively, if you know that hurrying past a scary person or thing is not a viable option, an emergency escape can get you and your frightened Fido out of a perilous predicament. Rather than passing, you’re going to turn and run the other way. First, however, you’ll take the time to teach your dog that “run away fast!” is a really fun game.

Pick a cue, such as “Run awaaaay!” that will easily pop into your brain in times of stress. In the comfort of your dog’s own familiar surroundings, practice polite leash walking. Occasionally, unexpectedly, announce, “Run awaaaay!” while you whirl and dash off as fast as you can in the opposite direction with your dog bounding along beside you. After you’ve run 20 to 30 feet, sometimes fling a handful of treats out in front of your dog, sometimes whip out a ball and throw it for him to chase,



Small dogs are not exempt from learning good manners! Many owners can easily out-muscle (or pick up!) their small dogs when the feisty fidos are behaving rudely, so they don’t bother to teach the dogs how to behave better. This perpetuates the stereotype of the small dog who jumps on people and starts fights.

and sometimes pull out a hidden rope toy and play a rousing round of tug.

Your goal is to make this an absolutely wonderful, fun game for him. When you succeed, you’ll have a powerful tool for those emergency encounters; your “Run awaaaaay!” cue will take advantage of his classical “Yay, fun!” association with the game to help manage his emotional state, and his operant response to the cue will get the two of you safely away from the scary thing.

Of course, fearful dogs aren’t good candidates for a Downtown Hound class. One of our class members, a Spitz named Dexter who showed up last winter as a stray on the doorstep of his owners-to-be, started out with some fear issues in our good manners classes. Thanks to the diligent work of his human, Maryann Hamilton, he overcame his fears and was able to graduate from the class with honors.

Our class also included three dogs without fear-related behaviors: Walden, a year-old Labrador Retriever/service dog-in-training; Harley, a hound-mix practicing his public good manners skills partly in preparation for upcoming rally trials, and Mo, an 11-month-old, 100-pound Rottweiler/Shepherd-mix, who needs good manners for his owner who doesn’t weigh much more than he does.

All of the teams became quite skilled at politely passing each other, strangers, and other dogs in public places. You could say they all “passed” the class with flying colors! 🐾

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

A Canine Kerchief Code?

I have often suggested we need a color-coding system for dogs, so owners know something in advance about the social skills of the approaching dog, and the social-interaction desires of the approaching owner. Horse people know, for example, that a horse who sports a red ribbon in his tail will kick if crowded from behind. Other riders universally recognize this sign, and give the nether regions of red-beribboned horses a wide berth. I propose that dogs wear colored scarves to indicate various behaviors as follows:

- **Red** – Dog is reactive. Keep a reasonable distance.
- **Blue** – Dog is friendly but owner chooses not to allow on-leash greetings.
- **Green** – Dog is friendly and owner welcomes on-leash greetings. (Green means “Go!”)
- **Purple** – Dog is timid or fearful. Keep a reasonable distance.

Wouldn’t that go a long way to reduce stress for us, and our dogs?

Needling Pain Relief?

Acupuncture helps dogs with side effects of cancer (and its treatment).

BY LISA RODIER

Nine-year-old Armond, a handsome Bouvier, had his right hind leg amputated after his veterinarian discovered osteosarcoma. His guardian, Fanna Easter, then enrolled him in a rigorous chemotherapy regimen designed to knock the cancer out of his system. Seven days after his first treatment, Armond was still reluctant to eat, and had lost close to two pounds. Easter tried everything, from home-cooked beef and pork, to McDonald's, Arby's, liverwurst, potted meat, sardines, four types of canned dog food, and more. The most Armond ate at any one time was two bites.

Two different veterinarians recommended that Easter add acupuncture to Armond's treatment regimen for help with his discomfort and lack of appetite. Easter is a self-proclaimed "huge skeptic," but, desperate to do something to help her dog, she made an appointment for acupuncture



In his battle with osteosarcoma, Armond reaped numerous benefits from acupuncture, including return of appetite, pain control, and overall improved quality of life.

with her veterinarian. Easter recalls sitting on the floor of the clinic with Armond as the veterinarian explained which acupuncture points she would focus on to treat Armond, including the nose area for nausea:

"The vet placed the needle on his nose leather first, inserted the rest of the needles, and left the room. She immediately came back in with a bowl that contained canned dog food, which she presented to Armond. He turned his nose away, which did not surprise me. Calmly, she removed the food, waited for a count of three, showed it to him again, and he wolfed it down. This all transpired about 20 seconds after she'd inserted the needles. I thought, 'This is not happening!'

"Still the skeptic, I declared to the vet that it was a fluke. So she left the room and came back with another bowl containing another can full of food. He promptly, without any hesitation, wolfed it down. And I just cried!"

Is it for real?

Randomized clinical trials in *humans* have shown that acupuncture is effective for dealing with chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, as well as post-operative pain, cancer-related pain, chemotherapy-induced leucopenia (excessive reduction in white blood cells), fatigue, xerostomia (unusual dryness of the mouth), and possibly insomnia, anxiety, and quality of life.

Further, esteemed U.S. cancer centers such as the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFC) in Boston, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, and M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston have begun to integrate acupuncture into their treatment plans.

The National Cancer Institute notes that the oldest medical book known, written in China 4,000 years ago, mentions acupuncture being used to treat medical problems. In the United States, acupuncture has

What you can do . . .

- Get a confirmed cancer diagnosis before seeking out the assistance of a veterinary acupuncturist.
- Look for a veterinarian who has earned the designation of Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist (CVA).
- Inform your dog's oncologist of your plans to utilize acupuncture in her treatment plan; a complementary approach is best.
- Maintain realistic expectations about how your dog will respond and focus on quality of life; acupuncture is not a cure for cancer.



been used for about 200 years, although research on acupuncture did not begin in the U.S. until 1976. And it was in 1996 that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the acupuncture needle as a medical device.

Susan Wynn, DVM, CVA, of Georgia Veterinary Specialists in Atlanta, has been using acupuncture with her cancer clients for 11 years. She notes that we've not yet seen studies conducted using dogs as subjects that are similar to the studies that have shown the positive results in humans. However, she adds, "Anecdotal evidence mirrors what has been shown in people. The species are similar enough, and there are enough historical data that we feel confident using some human studies as guides to what we do." In the long run, she

believes that we will need to see studies in dogs, simply to lend validity and credibility to the technique.

How it works

In a paper, “The Value of Acupuncture in Cancer Care,” published in 2008 in *Hematology/Oncology Clinics of North America*, the authors state that “. . . studies of acupuncture in animal models and humans suggest that the effect of acupuncture is primarily based on stimulation to and the responses of the neuroendocrine system involving the central and peripheral nervous systems.”

Dr. Wynn comments that, “In general, we see the systemic release of chemical mediators such as endorphins and serotonin.” In layman’s terms, those are the “feel good” chemicals of the body. Acupuncture is often used as a complementary method along with usual care to provide additional pain reduction and can, in fact, lessen the need for prescription painkillers.

The National Cancer Institute’s website says that, “Acupuncture may cause physical responses in nerve cells, the pituitary gland, and parts of the brain. These responses can cause the body to release proteins, hormones, and brain chemicals that control a number of body functions. It is proposed that, by these actions, acupuncture affects blood pressure and body temperature, boosts immune system activity, and causes the body’s natural painkillers, such as endorphins, to be released.”

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) guides the clinical practice of acupuncture in the U.S. During acupuncture, certain physical “points” or locations on the body are tonified (stimulated) or sedated (suppressed). Some points are indicated for common symptoms, but the patient’s overall symptom pattern or “picture” is also taken into account by the practitioner.

Diane Castle, DVM, CVA, of the Union Hill Animal Hospital in Canton, Georgia, has been using acupuncture in her clinic since 2001. She explains, “Points are chosen based on the pattern the patient presents with. Patients with the same type of cancer may present with different patterns and therefore be treated with different points.”

When to use acupuncture

Dr. Wynn uses acupuncture in her cancer patients to target nausea, neutropenia/



Electroacupuncture is one acupuncture technique that helps alleviate some of the side effects of cancer such as pain and nausea.

immunosuppression, and fatigue. She recommends it primarily for addressing side effects of chemotherapy and/or radiation treatments, but also uses acupuncture to alleviate cancer pain and for hospice situations.

Dr. Castle has seen acupuncture help in cases of anorexia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, oral ulcers secondary to chemo, bleeding, pain, and weight loss.

Dr. Castle and Dr. Wynn agree that there is not a typical protocol to follow, and both frequently use a combination of acupuncture, herbs, and diet to support cancer patients. Dr. Wynn has seen programs range from a single treatment, up to regular treatments for the life of the animal. Dr. Castle points out that, “Treatment intervals will vary with the pet and how they respond to treatment, how often the owner is able to get them in for treatment, and whether or not we have to work with a chemotherapy schedule.”

Karissa Carpenter’s white German Shepherd, Baby, was diagnosed with lymphoma at age 11. Two months after her diagnosis, Baby’s family added acupuncture to her treatment plan, taking her in for acupuncture anywhere from every week, to every three weeks, depending how the dog was feeling. “We would get there for our appointment, and Baby would take a nap while she was being treated,” says Carpenter. “She would just be so much more comfortable, and her old age creakiness seemed to be alleviated by acupuncture. We continued taking her in for acupuncture right up until she died.

We even had an appointment scheduled for that last week.”

Dr. Castle, Baby’s veterinarian, adds that in addition to helping Baby feel more comfortable, she used acupuncture to treat vomiting that occurred during chemo. At one point, the internist administering the chemotherapy took Baby off Metacam (a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory); since she was unable to stay on the medication for arthritis, acupuncture was the major treatment for keeping her comfortable. Baby lived for close to two more years after her cancer diagnosis.

Quality of life

It is possible that a dog will not respond to acupuncture. Dr. Wynn has seen this in some dogs who have had severe reactions to chemo and who do not respond to acupuncture alone; they need critical care support and time.

Dr. Castle concurs, but adds, “Of course there are some who don’t respond, but I feel I can generally improve the quality of life for the pet even if the time left is short.”

Both vets emphasize the importance of preserving or improving the patient’s quality of life – and have seen many clients turn to acupuncture when no other options were furthering that goal. Dr. Castle relates the story of a 12-year-old Corgi who was diagnosed with hemangiosarcoma of the spleen and heart. The internist gave the dog two to four weeks to live if the dog did not have surgery to remove the spleen. “The owners elected not to put him through



The practitioner bases his choice of acupuncture points to treat on that individual patient's pattern of symptoms. Dogs with the same type of cancer may be treated using different points.

the surgery, but a combination of Chinese herbs and acupuncture gave him and his family several happy months together.”

In humans, a study involving 40 ambulatory patients with advanced ovarian or breast cancer who received conventional palliative care (treatment of symptoms) also received acupuncture for 8 weeks (12 sessions). A significant decrease in symptom severity was seen for fatigue, pain, and insomnia. Quality of life measures showed higher positive scores during acupuncture treatment than before treatment and were sustained for 12 weeks relative to baseline.

Who's a candidate?

Really any canine cancer patient can benefit; the only contraindication is using needles near a tumor. This makes having a confirmed cancer diagnosis critical. Dr. Wynn explains, “I sometimes hesitate to do acupuncture on a patient for symptomatic therapy; if I suspect a tumor, I'm not comfortable until I know what's there.”

That brings up two points: using a veterinary acupuncturist who is certified in the technique, and informing your dog's veterinary oncologist about using acupuncture as part of your dog's treatment plan.

Look for a practitioner trained by one of the large acupuncture education organizations such as the International Veterinary

Acupuncture Society or the Chi Institute. They should have the knowledge to address cancer patients, and should have the designation of Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist (CVA). See “Resources Mentioned in This Article,” below, for listings of veterinary acupuncturists.

I asked Terrance Hamilton, DVM, ACVIM (Oncology), an oncologist at Georgia Veterinary Specialists whether he actively advocates the use of acupuncture for his oncology patients. The quick answer? No. However, he is supportive of those clients who wish to utilize acupuncture in their dogs' treatment plans, and fully believes in a complementary approach to dealing with cancer.

Dr. Hamilton's area of focus is nar-

row, he admits, and he feels “out of his comfort zone” actively recommending acupuncture. Nevertheless, he understands that acupuncture is great for pain control, having witnessed firsthand several years ago anesthesiologists using acupuncture to alleviate pain in dogs having head trauma.

Dr. Wynn comments, “The fact that many private specialty and veterinary school practices have acupuncturists speaks more to public demand and the curiosity of certain practitioners, usually anesthesiologists, rather than any interest by oncologists or other specialists.”

In memory of Armond

After Armond's difficulty with chemotherapy, Easter elected to abandon the chemo regime, despite the oncologist's suggestion to continue, opting instead to focus on his quality of life. She continued to take Armond for acupuncture biweekly; his veterinarian focused on building his immunity and relieving pain associated with the amputation (and later for arthritic areas). Easter reported that after each acupuncture session, “Armond slept the first day or two then he was hell on three legs! His Bouv grin came back and he was ‘busy in everyone's business’ again!”

On August 23, Armond lost his six-month battle with osteosarcoma. Would his owner have done anything differently? Nope, and she credits acupuncture with giving him more good days than bad as he fought his fight. “Acupuncture really helped Armond manage this nasty disease with pain control and quality of life. I can't say enough great things about it.” 🐾

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

Resources Mentioned in This Article

The Chi Institute (Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine)

Reddick, FL. (800) 891-1986; tcvm.com

American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture

Glastonbury, CT. (860) 632-9911; aava.org

International Veterinary Acupuncture Society

Fort Collins, CO. (970) 266-0666; ivas.org

There are a number of online groups that offer support for those dealing with canine cancer; one in particular that Fanna Easter found helpful was the Yahoo group associated with Bone Cancer Dogs (bonecancerdogs.org), a nonprofit public benefit corporation.

Do As I Say, Not As I Do

Every owner can make mistakes; sometimes, our dogs forgive them.

BY NANCY KERNS

Three months ago, I introduced Otto to canoeing. This was only a couple of weeks after my husband had unwittingly traumatized Otto by dragging him across some fast-moving streams on a fishing trip.

When I briefly described *that* event in the August issue, I don't think I mentioned that this fishing trip happened when I was out of town; I didn't learn that Brian was going to take Otto fishing until after it was all over. Brian tends to fish for many hours in a focused way; had I known about the trip, I would have tried to convince him that bringing the dog would be a distraction, and that Otto would need support and attention on a new type of adventure.

Otto has, on a number of occasions, shown himself to be a little anxious about new experiences. So I've tried very hard to introduce him to strange places or activities in stages, always leaving plenty of time to allow him to explore and learn to deal with novel situations at his own pace. And I don't take him *anywhere* new without a *lot* of high-value treats on hand, so I can reinforce any effort on his part to be brave – and to classically condition him to enjoy trying new things. In the long run, I want Otto to be able to confidently and happily go camping, backpacking, hiking, fishing, and, yes, canoeing with us.

However, I think Brian's view is that I'm coddling the dog. Despite his many years of proximity to WDJ's editorial office, he's really not a "dog person." On the other hand, he likes Otto! So he probably thought no further than to associate walking in the woods and by a stream with Otto (something we do all the time) with bringing the dog along on a fishing trip.

A fine point that didn't occur to Brian: Otto likes *wading* quite a bit, but he doesn't like to swim. He *can* swim; I've seen him paddle well when he accidentally steps into deep water. But he tries to avoid this.

So, anyway, it was a disaster. Brian had to cross the stream a number of times; the stream was deep enough (to a dog) that it involved swimming a few strokes; and it was fast enough that Otto was frightened and dug in his heels. Brian dragged him across, losing Otto's collar and tags at one point – and losing Otto's trust and interest in accompanying Brian out the front door for a week or two afterward.

Nobody is perfect

Fast-forward a few weeks; Brian and I had a free afternoon. He wanted to fish. I wanted to introduce Otto to our very long, wide, flat-bottomed, stable canoe. We decided to try to accomplish all our goals. This time, though, we had an alternate plan: If Otto was not happy in the canoe, I'd take him for a hike along the river instead, and Brian would fish from the canoe.

I brought Otto's life jacket, a bait bag full of cut up hot dogs, a thick mat for Otto to sit or lie on, and two leashes, so we could both hold leashes, in effect "cross-tying" him (without tying him to

What you can do . . .

- When venturing out in the world with your dog, try to anticipate any new challenges that might arise for him. Allow extra time, and perhaps an alternate activity, in case your dog can't cope with the new experience without being overwhelmed.



the canoe, of course!). We put the canoe in the water, and I put the mat on the floor. I stood in the water, holding the canoe steady, and said, "Otto, here!"

I expected him to sniff and stretch cautiously toward the canoe, and maybe put a foot on the edge. Instead, he jumped in! And immediately looked at me for some hot dogs. And then sat on the mat and looked at Brian like, "What are you waiting for? Get in the boat!" He rode calmly and quietly, watching birds, and occasionally getting up to lap at the water over the edge of the canoe. It was as if he spent his whole life riding in a boat.

Late that night, still excited, I bragged via e-mail to Terry Long, one of WDJ's regular writers and an experienced trainer. "What?!" she teased me, "You didn't break it all down into steps, by securing the canoe so it would rock *on shore* first, then doing some shaping to let him know where to sit, not to move around, how to get in and out?"

So, I'm almost as bad as my husband! I know a lot, but not as much as a professional trainer. Fortunately, the foundation of positive training that we've laid is sound enough that Otto forgives our occasional mistakes. But my goal is to make fewer in the future! 🐾



Otto is not fond of cars, and does not venture out in water far enough to swim. But he loves canoeing!

Please note: This photo was staged; Otto wears a life jacket when we really go canoeing!

Positive Show-Offs

Clickers and treats work as well for show dogs as they do for your pet.

BY VICKI RONCHETTE

Sitting at ringside at a large dog show recently, I spotted a woman getting ready to go into the group ring with her Visla. After watching for a few minutes I commented to a friend that I thought the dog was clicker-trained. There was something very telling in the way the dog interacted with her handler that led me to believe that the dog felt comfortable trying things to impress her handler. After speaking to the handler, I found that the dog *was* clicker-trained, and had, in fact, been trained entirely with positive reinforcement methods. It is always very exciting for me to see people using these methods for the show ring.

You don't have to be a judge to be able to recognize a show dog who loves what he is doing. A dog who *really* loves to show and enjoys what he is doing is obvious, even to the untrained eye.

Dog show basics

Almost everyone has been to a dog show or at least seen one on television, but not everyone knows how they work or why they exist. The original purpose of dog shows was for breeders to have their breeding stock judged. Many breeders will not breed a dog until the dog has completed its championship. The dogs who most closely match the breed standard in structure and temperament are the most desirable ones.

The largest registry for purebred dogs is the American Kennel Club (AKC). Most dog shows in the United States are AKC shows. There is also a United Kennel Club (UKC) and a Mixed Breed Club of America for people to compete in conformation with their spayed or neutered mixed breeds. I strongly recommend that anyone interested in doing dog sports with their mixed breed check out the Mixed Breed Dog Club.



Dogs who enjoy showing really stand out in the ring – and the best way to guarantee that your dog enjoys his “job” is to keep all his training positive!

What you can do . . .

- If you have a mixed breed dog, check out the Mixed Breed Dog Club, which offers conformation, obedience, and rally competition for mixed breeds.
- Keep all your training sessions short and positive with your show dog.
- Use a high rate of reinforcement when teaching a new behavior. Gradually reinforce your dog less with food and more with praise as he masters the tasks you are teaching him.
- Check out author Vicki Ronchette's book, *Positive Training for Show Dogs*, for more detail on this topic.



This organization allows mixed breeds to compete in conformation, obedience, and rally. It's a lot of fun and a great way to get started in showing.

What it takes

So, what does it take to be successful and win at dog shows? Besides having a dog who is a correct representative of his breed, you also need the dog to enjoy his “job.” Part of what makes a successful show dog is showmanship. A show dog needs to be able to perform *and* look like he enjoys it. The only way I know to preserve and enhance enjoyment of this work is through positive reinforcement techniques.

An important piece of the success puzzle is the relationship between the dog and the handler. In order for the dog to enjoy what he is doing and feel comfortable and relaxed in the ring, he needs to have a strong connection or relationship with the handler, whether the handler is his breeder, owner, or a professional handler. Positive reinforcement training can help strengthen that

bond. Training methods that focus on positive reinforcement, rather than physical punishment, allow the dog to trust and feel safe with his handler; that, in turn, allows the dog to relax and enjoy strutting his stuff in the ring.

Clicker training and other positive training methods have made their way into many different areas of dog training, from teaching good manners to family pet dogs, to agility and rally competition training for professional canine athletes. The behaviors that are necessary for agility or obedience are much more complex than the behaviors required of a show dog. It only makes sense that positive training should find itself a place in show ring training as well. My goal is to make it the norm!

Positive reinforcement training can not only teach a dog the behaviors that he needs to perform in the ring, but also teach them in a way that the dog can have fun with and enjoy. Positive training allows the dog to try things and figure stuff out without having to worry about getting physically punished in any way. This, in and of itself, is incredibly powerful, particularly when part of the end goal is a dog who looks like he's having fun.

There are three core behaviors that a show dog must learn to do well. He must be able to "gait," "stack," and be examined.

Gaiting means moving at the proper speed and in the proper position without pulling on the lead, so that the judge can evaluate how the dog moves.

Stacking means he must be able to stand still on the ground (if he is a small dog, he must



Ribbon has been hand-stacked on the table. Note how relaxed yet focused she seems. An experienced trainer can usually tell which dogs have been trained to hold their position through intimidation or force.

also learn to stand still on a table), so the judge can observe the dog and form an opinion as to how the dog appears when standing still.

Finally, a show dog must be able to stand still and remain calm while a judge examines him. The judge must actually put his or her hands on the dog to determine the overall structure of the dog.

These are not particularly challenging things to teach. In fact, I have found that they are quite simple when using the clicker and other positive reinforcement techniques.

Equipment

To best show your dog's conformation in the ring, you'll need a special collar and leash combination.

For small dogs I like to use a Resco, "all in one" style collar with lead. The Resco is basically a loop with a slider that slides down to keep it snug where you want it on the dog's neck.

For medium or large dogs, I recommend a martingale style collar that closes up enough to keep the dog's head from

slipping out, but doesn't continue to tighten like a choke collar would. There are "all in one" leash and collar martingales, or separate martingale collars that you can attach to a matching leash.

Clicker training

I use clicker training a lot when working with show dogs. I see clicker training as sending non-emotional information to the dog. If your tim-

ing is good and your training plan is well thought-out, the clicker allows you to clearly communicate to the dog what, exactly, you want him to do.

How does this happen? The clicker tells the dog that whatever it was that he was doing when he heard the click was the behavior you want, and that a reward is coming.

In order for a dog to understand this, you have to set up a few training sessions for teaching the dog the relevance of the clicker. You do this by simply clicking and then giving the dog a treat. Practice this about 10 times in each session, then take a break. Make sure that you and the dog are not always in the same position or in the same location. You want him to learn that a click results in a treat, no matter what. Once you have done this, you can begin training some behaviors.

Keep your training sessions fairly short. Three minutes is enough time for a good session. Several short sessions throughout the day is plenty to teach the show ring behaviors. It's fine to teach multiple new behaviors to a dog at the same phase of his training. However, it will help the dog if you work on each new behavior during its own, separate training session. For example, work on gaiting, and then take a break before moving on to stacking.

First behavior: Gaiting

Gaiting a show dog seems like a simple behavior, but if you think about it, it's pretty complex. You aren't just "walking the dog." Rather, you are asking the dog to walk at a certain speed, in a specific space in relation to



PHOTO COURTESY KATHY VEGLAN

Kayla, a positively trained Boxer, gaits beautifully in the show ring: forward, correct, and happy.

your body. You don't want the dog to pull on the leash, but you also don't want him lagging behind. You need his tail and his head to be carried in the correct position for his breed. You don't want him to sniff the ground or watch you as he moves. Oh, and he needs to look like he *loves* doing it! That's a lot to ask for! You must train in baby steps to get there.

I typically start with the dog off-leash. I put some treats in my left hand and the clicker in my right hand. I let the dog know I have treats, and then I walk off. I click if the dog comes with me or if he even *starts* to come with me. After I click, I give him a treat at my left side, always with the dog's head facing forward. I do not want the reinforcer to be delivered with the dog's head facing me. Unlike heeling, where you may want the dog looking at the handler, in conformation we always want the dog's head facing forward, so that the judge will always see the dog moving in profile.

Once the dog seems to understand what I'm rewarding him for, and is reliably moving alongside me, I will add the leash. At this point, I put the treats in my right hand and the clicker and leash in my left hand. Be sure to gather up the leash so it isn't hanging down in a distracting manner.

Once again, start walking and click and treat immediately if the dog walks off with you – always delivering the treat with the dog's head facing forward. If your dog pulls ahead, simply say "Uh-oh!" or "Oops!" in an upbeat voice, and go back to where you started. On the next attempt, try to click and treat *very* soon – *before* the dog has a chance to pull. Click and treat frequently, as long as he's by your side. Do *not* yank or jerk on your dog's neck; this will *not* help him understand what you want and it won't teach him to like the conformation game.

Once your dog learns to move alongside you without pulling, you can begin to slowly "raise your criteria" – that is, require that he do a bit more before you deliver the click and treat. Adding changes is challenging, so only add one at a time. For instance, if your dog is watching you and pulling while you move, you might need to ignore the fact that he's looking at you while you teach him not to pull. Once he isn't pulling, you can begin to click only when his head is forward. *Ask for small pieces at a time.* This is really important because if you ask for too much, your dog won't be able to figure it out and both of you will get frustrated.



PHOTO BY SUSAN JOSEPH

Josh is learning to free stack – and he makes it look easy. It's simple, but it takes a lot of time and practice. Take your time, look for improvement in small increments, and stay positive. Your dog can easily detect when you stop having fun!

Once the dog is moving correctly, in the right position and at the right speed, begin to click less often (lower the "rate of reinforcement"), until you are using mostly your voice as reinforcement, with infrequent treats. At this point, I put this on cue or command by telling my dogs, "Let's go!" just as we take off.

Stacking

Stacking is the behavior in which the dog stands in the proper position for the written standard for his breed. There are two kinds of stacking: free stacking and hand stacking. Free stacking is when the dog finds the position on his own; while you may prompt him to reposition a foot or two, you don't put your hands on the dog. Hand stacking is where you actually manipulate the dog into the position that you want.

The dog will have to be stacked a few times in each visit to the show ring: immediately upon entering the ring; before being moved as a group; individually for hands-on examination by the judge; and at the end, for the lineup with the other dogs.

Small dogs will be examined by the judge on a table, so they must learn to stack both on the ground and on a grooming table. Medium and large dogs will be stacked on the ground. Some shorter but heavy breeds such as Basset Hounds and Bulldogs may be examined on ramp, or a lower larger table that they walk onto.

Many people will hand stack the dog only for the judge's examination and let the dog free stack the other times.

Hand stacking

Don't use a clicker for the hand stacking; it's too easy to click right by the dog's ear, which won't be pleasant for the dog. Also, you will need both hands to hold the bait (treats) and reposition the dog. Small dogs will be hand stacked on the table and medium and large dogs will be hand stacked on the ground.

Start out with a good chunk of bait. With hand stacking, use bait the dog can nibble on, such as a slice of dog food roll (tubed food) or a chunk of chicken breast. Position the dog so he is standing sideways in front of you; you face his right side. With the food held securely and somewhat protected in your right hand, allow the dog to nibble and chew off little pieces as you position his body with your left hand.

Whether you place a small dog on the table or walk a large dog into a stack, always start with the dog's front feet in the proper position; that way you have to reposition only the rear feet. When positioning the front legs, move the legs at the elbows. When repositioning the rear legs, move the legs at the hock. Never, *ever* reposition the dog's legs by grabbing at his feet; this almost always makes him shift and reposition himself in a way that you don't

want. When hand stacking, always gently smooth your hands over the dog, keeping your hand on him, rather than pulling your hand off and back on his body, which can startle him and make him shift. Once he is in position, give him one last nibble, and then give him a break before you start over. Practice this until he is comfortable being hand stacked.

The next step will be to teach him to hold it. Stack him, then say “stay,” and pull the food away from his mouth for just a moment. If he holds his position, say “Yes!” and give him a bite of bait. Repeat this, slowly increasing the amount of time that you require him to stay put, as he becomes comfortable holding the position.

Some dogs will get too stimulated with a chunk of food and do better without the food being held at their mouths. For a dog like that, put the treats on a table nearby. Walk him in front of you (or put him on the table if it’s a small dog), then put your right hand into his collar, and gently talk to him as you reposition his front legs; then reach for a treat, give it to him, and then let him take a break.

Once he is comfortable with that, do the same thing, but then fix his rear feet as well. Gradually shape this behavior so you can stack him, have him hold the position, and then go and get a treat.

Free stacking

Just like everything else, train this behavior in baby steps. Begin by getting some treats and your clicker. Initially, click if your dog stands, whether or not he stands perfectly. If he continues to stand, click and treat again and again. Move away and allow him to walk up to you, and click and treat him before he has an opportunity to do anything else. Continue to do this until your dog *offers* the stand position. Do this until your dog easily stands very frequently.

Next teach your dog how to stack himself in the position that you want. I like to teach the dog to “back up” (which means “step backward and reposition your rear feet”) and to “step” (which means “step forward so that both front feet are side by side”).

To teach “back up,” step slightly toward your dog and click and treat *any* shift of movement backward. Do not expect a full “back up” initially; shape it by clicking and reward increasingly correct, successive approximations of the backing up behavior. Another way to teach “back up” is to have the dog walk toward you

in between two objects, such as the long narrow space between your couch and coffee table, and click and treat when he backs out. Once the dog is easily able to step back, say “back up” right as he backs, then click and treat.

To teach “step,” I simply prompt the dog by stepping back slightly and clicking and treating as soon as he moves a front foot forward. Once he can do this easily, say “step” just before you prompt him.

In the end, free stacking will look like a dance with you and the dog. If he doesn’t stack perfectly, you say “back up” and reinforce that, or “step” and then reinforce that. When he finally ends up just how you like it, say “stack” and then click and treat him! If he holds it, click and treat him again. Reinforce him *richly* when he finds the proper positioning.

Some people feel that show dogs shouldn’t be taught to sit because the dog will sit in the ring. This typically happens because the owners practice more sits than stands. If you reinforce standing a lot and make it very rewarding, there is no problem with teaching both sit and stand.

Judge’s examination

Most social, well-adjusted dogs don’t mind the gentle handling meted out by a judge. However, you just have to make sure that your dog is comfortable with people putting their hands on him. Get him used to this as early as possible. Make it a part of your daily routine to put your hands all over your dog. Get him used to you

examining his teeth. If you have a male dog, get him used to having his testicles touched. If you have a small breed that a judge may lift up (such as a Pekingese), get him used to this.

I like to let my dogs know what’s coming next by saying a word right before that part of the examination. Every time I examine my show dog’s bite, I say “mouth please!” so he knows it’s coming. I do this in the ring as well, to let him know that someone is about to look into his mouth. Once your dog is comfortable with *you* doing these things, practice by having friends do the same thing. Remember to let your friends know to be gentle and respectful when examining your dog.

Good handlers make showing a dog look easy. The truth is, the behaviors are not overly complex, but it will make your job – and your dog’s job – so much easier and more enjoyable if you really put the time into training them well. Using positive reinforcement techniques will not only help the dog enjoy the training process but also teach him to like the ring behaviors in general. 🐾

Vicki Ronchette, CPDT, CAP2, is a dog trainer and behavior consultant specializing in positive reinforcement training for show dogs. She is the author of Positive Training for Show Dogs: Building a Relationship for Success, and owns and operates Braveheart Dog Training, in San Leandro, California. See “Resources,” page 24 for contact information.



A show dog has to remain calm and attentive when being handled in a fairly intimate manner by the judge. Small dogs face the additional challenge of holding this position while standing on a table.

Rally Obedient Dogs

Handlers can encourage and reward their dogs in “rally obedience.”

BY TERRY LONG

Forward! The judge cues the team to begin. The handler cues her dog to “heel” and, with her left arm bent in at her waist, briskly moves forward with her dog on her left side, heading toward the first in a series of signs that prompt her to cue one of a variety of behaviors. As she completes an “about turn,” a particularly challenging behavior for her long-bodied dog, she smiles, praises him, and moves on to the next sign, attempting to keep up a steady pace around the course of 20 signs.

Wait! Did we hear her praise her dog in the ring? Horrors! Surely, the judge made note of that! He’s scribbling furiously now!

The handler moves toward another sign and executes the “halt / sit / down / walk around” maneuver. As she releases her dog, she praises him *again* and even sneaks in a quick pat on the head.

She can’t be serious! The judge must



Owners are permitted to praise, encourage, and reward their dogs while on course. This seems to be the reason that some dogs who did not enjoy traditional obedience like rally.

be grinding that pencil to a nub now! Does this handler not know that talking or touching your dog in the ring is not allowed?

Ah, but therein lies the unique nature of “rally obedience.” It’s not just the signs and the greater variety of behaviors involved; it’s the philosophy of this sport that makes it distinct from its cousin, traditional competition obedience. Rally obedience was envisioned as a sport that would promote the human-canine bond by allowing more natural communication in both training and competition than historically had been available in traditional obedience.

The game

This is a sport that takes a variety of useful real-life behaviors and strings them together into a “course” you take with your dog, guided by signs that call out behaviors in both text and graphics. Depending upon the level of competition and venue, there are anywhere between 18 and 22 signs. In addition to common behaviors such as sit, down, stay, come, and leash walking (heel), here are just a few of the behaviors required:

- ◆ Halt / sit / stand
- ◆ Halt / sit / down / walk around
- ◆ Halt / leave dog / recall over jump
- ◆ Halt / leave dog / send over jump
- ◆ 270-degree turn, right
- ◆ 270-degree turn, left
- ◆ Call front / finish right
- ◆ Call front / finish left
- ◆ Moving side step
- ◆ Moving back up / heel back three steps / then forward
- ◆ Moving stand / leave dog
- ◆ Serpentine weave (heeling around cones)

These are just some of the variety of behaviors that may be strung together in rally as your dog heels next to you around the course. There are many more, depending upon the venue and the level of competition. The dog’s rapt attention to the handler



PHOTO BY AMY BOEMING

In rally obedience, the handler walks with his or her dog around a “course” of signs, which indicate where each required behavior should occur.

and his quick and correct response to cues are critical to smooth completion of each course. There are time limits to complete each course, and your speed in completing the course can mean the difference between placements (e.g., 1st through 4th).

Each course is “designed” by the judge and, as a result, can vary widely from competition to competition. This is in contrast to traditional competition obedience where the heeling patterns are very similar, the judge simply calling out variations of “right turn,” “left turn,” “about turn,” “fast,” “slow,” and “halt.” In traditional obedience, the judge follows the team very closely, while rally judges give the teams more room to perform the behaviors. This can be helpful for dogs who might be fearful or stressed with strangers lurking nearby.

Many of the behaviors are useful behaviors to train for real-life use. As Pam Dennison, author of *Click Your Way to Rally Obedience*, says in her book, “Passing other dogs or people on the road or trail, getting around a show site, even taking your dog to a flea market will all be easier, more enjoyable, and safer if

your dog knows the rally moves outlined in this book.”

Originally a self-confessed traditional competition obedience “snob,” Dennison first attended a rally seminar only to see if it might be something she could offer her students as an alternative to traditional obedience. She was hooked. She teaches it to her students and has competed with her own dogs in events offered by two organizations – the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and American Kennel Club (AKC).

Dennison’s book is a good resource, detailing the differences between APDT and AKC rally and providing lengthy instructions about how to train rally behaviors. This includes how to use the clicker in training and how to “proof” your training using positive reinforcement instead of punishment. (See sidebar, below, for additional books and DVDs.)

Ann Ford of Hagerstown, Maryland, had also competed in AKC obedience before discovering rally. In 2004, she attended a rally seminar presented by Dennison. She was curious about this new sport because her Border Collie, Jenny, did not seem to enjoy traditional obedience. Jenny was a challenge because she was very easily stimulated by the environment, which made training very difficult.

“Because I can interact with my dog throughout an APDT rally course, by verbally praising her and giving her food rewards (and also a pat on the head!), Jenny learned that working *with* me can be a whole lot of fun for both of us. She would pull and tug on her lead in the traditional obedience ring and we were both miserable, but in rally, she enjoys all of the exercises and happily dances next to me in beautiful heel position. I never thought I would ever be able to do any



Ann Ford and her Border Collie, Jenny, did not enjoy traditional obedience, but are thriving in “rally o.”

Snapshot of the Sport: Rally Obedience

■ **What is this sport?** In rally obedience, dogs complete a variety of behaviors along a course designed by the judge. Each course has signs posted along the way that specify which behaviors are to be performed. In contrast to traditional competition obedience, handlers can talk to their dogs. In Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) rally, handlers can even pet their dogs and use food rewards.

■ **Prior training required?** Basic pet manners: attention, sit, stay, and leash manners.

■ **Physical demands?** On the dog: Mild.
On the handler: Mild.

■ **Best-suited structure?** There are no specific structural demands in this sport.

■ **Best-suited temperament?** Suitable for low- and high-energy dogs alike.

■ **Cost?** Moderate.

■ **Training complexity?** Moderate.

■ **Mental stimulation?** Moderate.

■ **Physical stimulation?** Moderate.

■ **Recreational opportunities?** Low.

■ **Competition opportunities and venues?** High.

■ For further information on rally obedience:

AKC (American Kennel Club) Rally
(919) 816-3904; akc.org/events/rally/

APDT Rally

(The Association of Pet Dog Trainers is a good source of information, and sells rally signs, too.) (800) 579-6546; apdt.com/po/rally/default.aspx

C-Wags (Canine Work and Games) Rally

(517) 764-3198; c-wags.org

UKC (United Kennel Club) Rally

(269) 343-9020, Ext. 105 or 106; ukcdogs.com

BOOKS/DVDS

Click Your Way to Rally Obedience, 2006,
by Pam Dennison

Rally On, 2006, by Marie Sawford

Rally-O: The Style of Rally Obedience, 3rd edition,
2005, by Charles “Bud” Kramer

Rally Obedience Signs
(2007), by Charles “Bud” Kramer

The Rally Course Book: A Guide to AKC Rally Courses
2004, by Janice Dearth

Ready to Rally! A Video Guide to APDT Rally
2008 DVD, by Clarissa Bergeman.
(Dogwise.com has a sample video clip from this DVD)

type of venue with her off-lead until we started rally, so I have a happy dog and I am a happy handler!

“That’s the most important part to me – that my dog is happy working with me. Rally has given that to us, for which I am so very grateful! Ribbons, placements, and titles are all icing on the cake. Rally has also benefited our overall relationship and communication. It has also very much enhanced our training for canine musical freestyle dancing, as many of the moves we use are rally exercises.”

History

Rally was conceived in 2000 by Charles “Bud” Kramer, a long-time obedience and agility aficionado. Kramer saw interest in competition obedience wane as agility’s popularity grew. He envisioned a fun, attractive alternative to traditional obedience. The AKC took his proposal under review in 2000 and launched its program in 2005. Meanwhile, the APDT launched its rally program in 2001 (see “A Brief History of a Rally Cool Sport,” below).

The United Kennel Club (UKC) and Canine Work and Games (C-Wag) both started rally programs in the past couple of years. We’ll describe some of the differences between APDT and AKC rally; UKC and C-Wag each have their own nuances, as well.

Attributes of a rally team

Rally obedience is a fun, upbeat sport, but does not favor dogs with any particular physical structure or temperament. Actually, it is the handler’s approach to the sport that is the most important contributor to successful training and competition.

Obedience training requires precision behaviors and focused attention and these can be a challenge for many dogs. Thus, the handler who is committed to making training fun and truly enjoys training as a conduit to better communication between the species will be most successful.

Although some handlers see rally as merely a stepping stone to “real” competition obedience, handlers who embrace rally as it was originally envisioned will get the most out of the sport. If you have previously thought that competition obedience is not your cup of tea, you might want to consider this version.

Rally competitor Ann Ford shares her view of the sport:

“Rally folks – especially APDT rally folks – *are* a bit different from the traditional obedience people, in that rally is a very bonded group of exhibitors. Everyone supports and encourages one another so very much. We have gained some very dear, lifelong friends thanks to rally trialing, laughed at our mistakes together, cried with our wondrous victories

together, encouraged those who didn’t have a good day to try again another time, critiqued each other’s runs with loving respect, and took the “newbies” under our wings in making them feel welcome and less nervous at their first trials.

“I have noticed that folks who gravitate to rally are those who have or are working to improve their relationship with their dog, to engage in a sport in which all dogs can participate and enjoy. APDT is open to all dogs (mixed breeds too!) as well as handlers with special physical restrictions and needs, so it’s a win-win situation!

“Retired agility dogs seem to excel in rally (especially with distance work), as do



PHOTO BY AMY BOEMING

No babysitter? No problem! In APDT rally, the dog’s and even the handler’s special needs are taken into account.

A Brief History of a Rally Cool Sport

BY PAT MILLER

When Charles “Bud” Kramer first released his vision for rally in the year 2000, several members of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) felt it was an ideal venue to showcase positive training, and one that would appeal to a much broader audience than many of the popular canine competitive sports. Rally titles could be within reach of many regular pet dog owners, and rally classes could be a great adjunct to the training repertoire of many APDT member/trainers. We put together a proposal and the APDT Board (of which I was a member at the time) voted to create a rally competition and titling program following Bud’s model. The APDT was the first organization in the world to offer rally competitions and titles.

The first rally competitions held anywhere in the world were at the 2001 APDT conference in upstate New York. Twenty-seven dogs earned their Level 1 Rally titles there – one of whom was my wonderful dog, Josie. APDT has since gone on to create and offer several levels of rally titles, including Rally Championship (ARCH) titles and other recognitions of achievement such as the annual national rankings based on points earned during the year.

There is no question that APDT rally has energized interest in a competition venue where dog owners can show off their dogs’ basic good manners skills without the formal rigidity of traditional obedience trials. APDT has remained true to the founder’s original vision of rally as a stand-alone sport that encourages positive reinforcement training and the use of happy, normal avenues of communication between dog and human, even in the show ring.

In APDT rally, handlers are allowed to use treats as reinforcers (not as lures!) during competition, with some restrictions as to where, when, and how treats can be carried and delivered. The atmosphere at these trials is relaxed and congenial as competitors cheer each others’ successes and commiserate the “oopses.” In contrast, because AKC tends to regard rally as a “training wheels” venue for obedience trials, there tends to be more stress and tension with competitors who are always mindful of their long-term goal: competing for “real” obedience titles.

I’m proud and pleased that APDT rally has turned out to be such a huge success.

traditional obedience dogs, who also enjoy the more relaxed interaction with their handlers. Puppies can get great obedience and trial experience in their early training, and older dogs who cannot physically perform actively like they used to can take advantage of APDT rally's willingness to modify some of the exercises so they can still participate."

Equipment and supplies

The sport does not require a lot of gear.

■ **Rewards** – Both toys and treats are used. As Pam Dennison stresses in *Click Your Way to Rally Obedience*, a variety of reinforcers are important in rally training. Using food alone limits handlers, especially with small dogs who can only eat so much! Reinforcing with toys can be a great stress reliever as well.

■ **Signs** – Trainers who teach rally classes will have the rally signs. You can also purchase your own.

■ **Jump/hurdle** – A single jump, similar to those used in agility training, is used. Other kinds, such as a broad jump or a panel jump, might also be used in AKC.

■ **Miscellaneous** – If competitions are held outdoors, you will need a shade canopy for you and your dog, as well as the usual accoutrements of water bowls, training kit, chair, and crate.

Expenses

This is a relatively inexpensive sport.

■ **Travel and lodging** – The most expensive part of competing is often the cost of travel and lodging, depending on how far you must go to compete.

■ **Classes** – Class costs vary widely throughout the country. But plan on anywhere between \$65 and \$150 for classes that meet once a week for six to eight weeks. Plan on taking classes for several months to prepare for competition.

■ **Entry fees** – Trial fees are about \$20 to \$22 per class. You might enter multiple classes depending upon prior titles achieved. APDT rally sometimes offers two trials in a day, which adds to your trialing cost (who can say no?), but also opens up the possibility of "titling" in a single weekend of trialing.

Training

Even if you never plan on competing, training rally behaviors is fun and those behaviors can be used in many day-to-day situations. You can train on your own or search out a class in your area.

There are many good books and DVDs available if you choose to train on your own (see "Snapshot of the Sport, page 19). If you are lucky enough to have a trainer nearby who holds classes, that's the way to go since seeing the exercises demonstrated and being coached by an instructor (especially one who competes with her own dogs!) will help a lot.

Ann Ford has been fortunate to have had many good trainers help her along the way. "At Pam Dennison's seminar in September 2004, a lady who was also taking the class turned out to be, without our knowledge at the time, our instructor at our own training facility. It was Kitty Bowman. We are still learning with Kitty, who has been our friend and instructor from October 2004 through the present and, I hope, long into the future. Pat Miller introduced me to the clicker, and Karen Allen taught me positive reinforcement and fun training. It has really been a group effort!

"Rally is the best venue I could ever recommend for any dog owner to learn. You can use it for teaching basic good manners and solid obedience skills that could even save your dog's life. What's better than to have your dog do a solid sit/stay or down/stay in an emergency situation or to learn a 360-degree left turn to where you don't step on your dog's feet or fall over them? Side-stepping, the dog moving with you as you are heeling, is great for maneuvering through a crowd."

Levels of competition

There are three basic levels in both AKC and APDT as well as additional, advanced levels of competition in each that have been added over the years. The following is a brief description of the titling requirements at each level. Books such as Dennison's contain lists of each venue's required behaviors at each level.

■ APDT rally

In APDT rally, you are encouraged to praise your dog throughout the course. Petting is allowed after the conclusion of the behavior(s) on a sign. Food rewards are also allowed at the conclusion of a sign, but food must be kept concealed in a pocket and you will have points deducted if you

reach for the food before the conclusion of the behavior.

◆ **APDT Level 1:** Performed on-leash. The course consists of 18 to 20 signs (or behaviors).

◆ **APDT Level 2:** Performed off-leash. The course consists of 20 to 22 signs, including behaviors from Level 1.

◆ **APDT Level 3:** Performed off-leash. The course consists of 20 to 22 signs, including behaviors from Level 1 and 2.

Three qualifying scores of 170 or higher under two different judges are required for each APDT title.

■ AKC rally

In AKC rally, you are encouraged to praise your dog throughout the course. Neither touching your dog nor using food rewards is allowed in AKC Rally.

◆ **AKC Novice:** Performed on-leash. The course consists of 10-15 signs.

◆ **AKC Advanced:** Performed off-leash. The course consists of 12-17 signs, including those from Novice.

◆ **AKC Excellent:** Performed off-leash. The course consists of 15-20 signs, including those from Novice and/or Advanced.

Three qualifying scores of 100 or higher under two different judges are required for each AKC title.

Other differences

Both AKC and APDT have additional advanced titles based upon an accumulation of points earned from these higher levels of competition, and AKC has team and pairs competition, as well.

The different venues each have their own challenges, although AKC is thought by some to be the easier of the two venues and commonly used to get versatility titles (titling in more than one sport) for AKC competitors seeking that distinction.

For APDT rally competitor Ann Ford, some of the most challenging exercises to train for were the directional jump, the "offset Figure 8 around food bowls with treats in them," and the "halt / leave dog while running" exercise. "At the higher levels, the hand cues should not be as pronounced as in Level 1. For example, a

cue for a 'down' should not be your hand and arm held high in the air and then going down to touch the floor.

"There are many challenges. In the advanced levels, you should not have to give multiple commands. A brisker, more flowing, confident pace and execution of exercises should be in place. Proper placement of handler's footwork for pivots is also very important, but especially at the higher levels. In addition, re-tries of an exercise should be minimal. Distance work for directional jumps, straight and recalls over jumps, and the stand / down / sit at a distance (with minimal hand cues) is a must at the higher levels of competition. This is indeed a challenging sport!"

Ford remembers a particular high point in competition:

"When we tried for APDT Level 3 for the very first time, Jenny was so beautiful on the course, her tail up over her back, her face totally lit up and smiling up at me the whole time, she was in her glory, even with all the demands of Level 3.

"I did have tears, remembering the days when I almost gave up doing any competition with her because she was unhappy in the ring and I didn't know what to do about it. Accomplishing our ARCHEX (APDT Rally Champion Extraordinaire) brought it all together: Jenny and I are a team. Rally helped bring our minds and hearts together."

How to get started

Check out some good books and DVDs and call local trainers to see if they offer rally classes. Many obedience clubs now offer rally. View the APDT website or contact its office to find a trainer who offers rally classes. Some trainers teach only AKC rally, so be sure to get a couple of books that detail the differences between the two venues if you want to compete in both. 🐾

Terry Long, CPDT, is a writer, agility instructor, and behavior counselor in Long Beach, CA. She lives with four dogs and a cat and is addicted to agility and animal behavior. See "Resources," page 24, for contact information.

APDT Rally: A Perfect Sport for Disabled Dogs

Maria O'Boyle is a firm believer in the benefits of dog sports to her dogs' emotional, physical, and mental health. She also has a soft spot for dogs with special needs. She already had a three-legged Bichon who competes in agility and in rally when another one of her dogs, her beloved 11-year-old Rat Terrier, Sally, became disabled. When Sally went completely blind over a span of three days, she had no idea what a critical role that Sally's sport – rally obedience – would play in her recovery to this emotionally wrenching disability.

O'Boyle adopted Sally when the little dog was seven years old. She had gone to the shelter looking for another male Bichon, but found two small female dogs who had been sent to the shelter when their owner died. No one wanted to split up the two dogs so they had been at the shelter for six weeks. O'Boyle fell in love and adopted both of them.

"Pearly is a Chihuahua/Terrier mix and has a very outgoing personality. Sally is a worrier. She was not abused; that's just way she is. It took me six months to be able to pick her up without her freaking out. I started both girls in basic obedience training and then rally. Pearly started to show in rally right away. With Sally, because she is such a cautious dog, I also started her in agility training, as well as continued her rally training to help her develop confidence. Sally was at the point of being ready to enter the rally ring and also do some 'jumpers' in agility when she went blind."

Sally's blindness was caused by "sudden acquired retinal degeneration syndrome." The sudden blindness threw the little worrywart terrier into a funk. She became depressed and even stopped wanting to go for walks, previously a much anticipated part of every day, causing her to spin in excitement. O'Boyle saw her little dog's confidence plummet.

Then one day about a month later, O'Boyle took Sally out in the front yard with treats in hand and started doing some

simple rally exercises. She remembers that moment vividly:

"Suddenly Sally was all attention; her stubby little tail started to wag and she was moving forward happily. When I saw how well she responded, I put her back into a rally class. It was a learning experience for us both. I had to figure out how to communicate to Sally what was expected, using verbal cues, different sound cues, and physical touches only. Sally blossomed doing rally and I found that the communication easily translated to every day. She got excited about going for

walks again. Just by working with Sally and letting her know what I want, I have seen her confidence grow by leaps and bounds. I believe rally has been the major factor in rebuilding the trust between us."

After three months of classes, O'Boyle entered Sally in her very first APDT rally competition this past January. She wanted to see how the training was progressing and which skills she still needed to work on to improve communication with Sally. O'Boyle and Sally not only got their

Level I title, but took third place. They have since gone on to get their Level 2 title which is off-leash, surely testing the trust and communication shared between these two companions.

"The more practice and competitions Sally and I do, the more confident she becomes," says O'Boyle. "I have found APDT rally to be a very positive experience for my dogs. I can make happy talk, feed, and also pet my dogs at the end of an exercise. And APDT rally allows *all* dogs to play – purebred, mixed breed, as well as handicapped dogs."



Maria O'Boyle; her blind Rat Terrier, Sally; and a few of their rally accomplishments.

DON'T PINE FOR A LOST ISSUE!

Back issues of
Whole Dog Journal
are available

Order back issues
in one of TWO
convenient ways:

Mail this order form (along
with a check or money order) to:

The Whole Dog Journal, P.O. Box 5656, Norwalk, CT 06856-5656

Or log on to
whole-dog-journal.com.
Click on "back articles"
to purchase articles and
immediately download
them to your computer!

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 9/09 Stop Urine Marking • Veterinary Rehabilitation • How to Teach Your Dog to Fetch • Dieting for Dogs • Lure Coursing <input type="checkbox"/> 8/09 A Break in Housetraining • Muzzling Your Dog • Prepare Your Dog for the New Baby • Fun Nose Work • Otto's Progress Report <input type="checkbox"/> 7/09 Stop Door Darting • Hemorrhagic Gastroenteritis • Dock Jumping • Probiotics • Extinguishing Demand Behaviors • Foster Care <input type="checkbox"/> 6/09 Dogs Who Chase Cats • DNA Breed Detection Tests • Socialization • Flyball • The Positive Approach to Otto's "Off!" <input type="checkbox"/> 5/09 Prevent Chewed Shoes • Interview With Victoria Stilwell • Find the Right Rawhide • Fence Sense • Earthdog <input type="checkbox"/> 4/09 Selecting a New Dog • Canine Health Insurance • Teach Your Dog to Swim • Wait Versus Stay <input type="checkbox"/> 3/09 Happy Nail Trimming • Bike With Your Dog • Social Matters • EPI • Acupressure for Injuries <input type="checkbox"/> 2/09 Annual Dry Food Review • Teach Your Kids to Train the Dog • Run With Your Dog • Hand Signals <input type="checkbox"/> 1/09 Gear of the Year • Top Wet Foods • Homemade Low-Fat Diets • Shelters, Good and Bad <input type="checkbox"/> 12/08 Sharing Your New Dog With Your Partner • Teaching the Recall • Canine Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome • More Novel Foods • Healthy Low Fat Diets <input type="checkbox"/> 11/08 Unconventional Foods • What to Do if Your Dog Goes Missing • Positive Trainer Interviewed • Causes, Treatment of Pancreatitis <input type="checkbox"/> 10/08 Case History: Agility for a Reactive Dog • Generalization • Kennel Cough • A Nocturnal Dog? • Help for Dogs With OCD <input type="checkbox"/> 9/08 Finding a Healthcare Team, a Healthy Food, and Stress Relief • Grass-Fed Meats • Tug of War • Pet Food Politics • Build a Powerful, Positive Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> 8/08 Use Play to Train Your Dog • Journal of a New Dog • Socializing a Shy Dog • Vaccinations 101 • Build a Digging Box • "Leave It!" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 7/08 Improve Your Dental Acuity • (Peace) Fully Equipped: Training Gear • Benefits of Green Tripe • Separation Anxiety <input type="checkbox"/> 6/08 Commercial Raw Frozen Diets Review • Calming Acupressure • Make Training Fun • Puzzles for Dogs <input type="checkbox"/> 5/08 Vestibular Disease • Stop Jumping Up • Shockwave Therapy for Arthritis • "Constructional Aggression Treatment" <input type="checkbox"/> 4/08 New Dog, Now What? • Calendula: Herb of the Year • Why Vinyl Stinks • Mixed-Age Dog Pack <input type="checkbox"/> 3/08 Tales of the Lost Appetite • Teaching Your Dog to be Calm • Grain-Free Dog Foods • Chiropractic and the Conditions It Cures <input type="checkbox"/> 2/08 Dry Dog Food Review • Behavior Myths • Acupressure for Vitality • Energy Med, Pt 5 (Color Therapy, Body Tapping, Directed Energy) <input type="checkbox"/> 1/08 Dog-Dog Introductions • Antibiotic-Resistant <i>Staph</i> • Nighttime Visibility Products • Energy Med, Pt 4 (Crystals, Energy Balancing) |
|--|---|
- To find more past topics, see www.whole-dog-journal.com/search

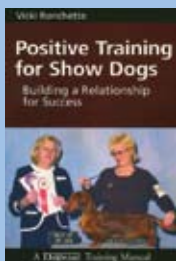
NAME _____	
ADDRESS _____	
CITY _____	
STATE _____	ZIP _____
# _____ BACK ISSUES @ \$7.50 EA.	\$ _____
POSTAGE & HANDLING	\$ 2.00
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED	\$ _____

RESOURCES

BOOKS

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

Positive Training for Show Dogs: Building a Relationship for Success, by Vicki Ronchette. Available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com



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 vets in your area, or search ahvma.org

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

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

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

Vicki Ronchette, CPDT, CAP2, Braveheart Dog Training, San Leandro, CA. Vicki is a dog trainer and behavior consultant specializing in positive reinforcement training for show dogs. She offers puppy through advanced level group classes as well as private behavior consulting. (510) 483-2631; braveheartdogtraining.com

Association of Pet Dog Trainers
(800) 738-3647; apdt.com

Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers; cpdt.org

Truly Dog Friendly Trainers
trulydogfriendly.com

WHAT'S AHEAD

Action Plan

Five things to do to if your dog won't take treats.

Herbal Safety

How to identify a "top quality herbal supplement."

Dancing With Your Dog!

Musical freestyle can restore the fun to the relationship between you and your dog.

What is Holistic Medicine, Anyway?

A veterinarian explains the terms: Complementary? Alternative? Integrative?

Tops in Treats

What to look for in a healthy treat – and what not to buy!

Car Talk

Train your dog to be safe and sane in your car.

In response to a number of requests from dog-related businesses, including veterinarians, pet supply stores, groomers, and trainers, our publisher offers a program to enable businesses to buy copies of WDJ in bulk for reselling to their customers.

If you are the owner of a dog-related business, and you would be interested in buying copies of WDJ for your customers each month (at a special price), contact Jocelyn Donnellon at JDonnellon@belvoir.com or (203) 857-3100.

GET IN ON THE FUN!!

