

Your complete guide to natural dog care and training

# Whole Dog Journal™



**On page 3. It's a grind!** – Instruction on how to use a rotary grinder, and how to get your dog to go along with it, noise and vibration and all.



**On page 8. Let me tell you about my best friend** – If you're looking for a dog to adopt, and have children, you must look for a sterling, kid-loving candidate.



**On page 20. Stacked!** – Awesome offerings from the best makers of canned dog food.

*In the issue*

3

**ROTARY CLUB**

A look at the benefits of grinding nails versus clipping, and recommendations for good rotary grinders.

7

**LEARNING TO LOVE IT**

A counter-conditioning protocol for your nervous nail-trimming client (your dog!).

8

**FAMILY PLANNING**

Are you thinking about adding another dog to your family? Consider the commitment and take your time to select the right dog. Here's how!

13

**ARE TWO PUPS BETTER THAN ONE?**

The pros and cons of adopting littermates, and the precautions and planning required to pull it off.

16

**A CAN/DO ATTITUDE**

Our annual review of canned dog foods: Good quality canned foods offer a number of advantages over kibble – and dogs love them! Here's how to identify the ones that will suit your dog.

20

**APPROVED CANNED FOODS**

A list of the manufacturers offering the best canned dog foods today, with descriptions of their product lines.

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email Jennifer Jimolka at

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Minimum order 1,000

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ACCEPT COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING**

**B** *Whole Dog Journal* (ISSN #1097-5322) is published monthly by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 535 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Chief Content Officer; Philip L. Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Chief Marketing Officer; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Chief Circulation Officer. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, CT and at additional mailing offices. Copyright ©2020, 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.

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Subscriptions: \$39 annually (12 issues).

Bulk rate subscriptions for organizations and educational institutions available upon request.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to

*Whole Dog Journal*,

PO Box 8535, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535



# Adopt New Habits

*It's worth learning new skills (like nail trimming), whether you want to or not.*

Every month, it seems, we have an opportunity to share with you another pandemic-inspired article. This month, it is Stephanie Colman's piece on "do-it-yourself" nail trimming. It's important that your dog's nails stay trimmed to a healthy length, whether or not your favorite grooming shop is open. Stephanie offers tips on equipment, positioning, and what to do if you accidentally cut or grind a nail too short and it starts to bleed. If your dog isn't cooperative, check out the instructions on page 7 from WDJ's Training Editor, Pat Miller, about how to counter-condition and desensitize your dog to nail trims.



We've included *two* articles about adopting dogs in this issue. If you're looking to add a canine family member to your household, read them both!

Starting on page 8, Pat also shares her expert advice about how to identify and choose a dog who will fit well into your household and/or family. Pat's descriptions of the specific behaviors that would indicate a sound adoption candidate are so incredibly helpful. I've volunteered for a long time at my local shelter and have witnessed countless would-be adopters meeting dogs that they were considering adopting, and I can honestly say that most of them don't have a clue about what they are seeing when they interact with the dogs they think they want.

Trainer Kathy Callahan, author of the most moving dog book I've read in years (*101 Rescue Puppies: One Family's Story of Fostering Dogs, Love, and Trust*), contributed a companion piece to Pat's article. As someone who fosters homeless puppies for a few different rescue groups, Kathy loves to see puppies get adopted – but as you will see on page 13, she warns against any family casually adopting littermates on the spur of the moment. A multiple-puppy adoption can work out, she says, but it takes a lot of planning and effort.

Kathy's article made me curious: Only once in all the years that I have raised foster puppies for my local shelter was I informed that an adopter wanted to adopt two of "my" puppies – and they were Great Danes. I was horrified that my shelter allowed this to happen and certain that two of the big galoots were going to be way too much for a family that had come to the shelter planning to adopt just one. Some time ago I posted an old video of my young dog in his "Fun Uncle"



role, playing with that litter of puppies, and someone I know had commented that they knew someone who had adopted two of those pups. After reading Kathy's article, I tracked down the adopter and the story. I was thrilled to find out that, four years later, they are still firmly embedded in their adoptive family. Yay!

NK



# Rotary Club

*A look at the benefits of grinding nails versus clipping for do-it-yourself nail trims.*

Maybe it's the telltale click-clack as your dog moseys across the kitchen floor. Or the unmistakable and often painful raking sensation when she jumps up to greet you. Or maybe it's when you're lounging together on the couch and you realize your dog's nails have grown so long, you're not sure if you should trim them or see what they'd look like if painted a sizzling shade of fire-engine red!

Whatever prompts you to notice that your dog's nails need attention, good for you. Nail care is important, and it's often overlooked by owners who either aren't sure how to do it, are afraid to trim nails themselves, or can't quite get their dogs to go along with the program. If this describes *you*, we can show you how to do it most easily and how to get your dog to not just cooperate, but to willingly volunteer for a trim.

## GRIND AWAY

There are two main ways to shorten nails: clipping with either a guillotine-style or a scissor-type clipper and grinding with a rotary tool such as a Dremel or a similar product designed specifically for grinding dog nails.

Between the two methods, many groomers (and I) prefer using a rotary nail-grinding tool, even though many dogs need to be desensitized to the sound and the vibrating sensation.



The biggest advantage of using a nail grinder over clippers is that with clippers, if you cut off too much – either because you misjudged how much to cut, or the dog wiggled just as you squeezed the handle – you're more likely to “quick” the nail by mistake. (“Quicking” a nail happens when you cut into the blood supply of the nail. It can be painful and, as a result of the yelp and reflexive action that the pain elicited from the dog, traumatizing for both the dog and the person doing the nails.)

*While many people visit a vet or groomer for their dogs' nail care, pandemic-induced restrictions have limited the availability of this option. So it's even more important to learn how to (and stay in the habit of) trimming your dog's nails yourself.*

## The Benefits of DIY Nail Trims

*There are many benefits of do-it-yourself dog mani-pedis, especially when you take the time to teach your dog to cooperate during the procedure by slowly and carefully desensitizing and counter-conditioning first. (See “A Counter-Conditioning Protocol for Nail Trimming” on page 5.) Some of the DIY benefits include:*

- **Improved health.** *Walking on long nails can affect how the dog moves and potentially contribute to the development of orthopedic problems, such as arthritis, later in life.*
- **Decreased stress.** *Teaching your dog to calmly tolerate a nail trim prevents stress and, potentially, fear-based aggression.*
- **Increased safety.** *The dog is less likely to be injured as a result of active resistance or panic-induced flailing, and you (or your vet or groomer) are less likely to sustain a bite.*
- **Body awareness.** *Time spent trimming nails is also the perfect opportunity to familiarize yourself with your dog's physical topography. Regularly getting your hands on your dog – beyond basic petting – is a great way to quickly recognize changes that could indicate health problems.*
- **Financial benefits.** *The cost of professional nail trimming adds up over time!*



In contrast, grinding the nail involves high-speed filing where the excess growth is ground down incrementally but quickly, as long as the tool is in contact with the nail. You can “quick” a nail by going too short with a grinder, too, but in our experience, you have to work harder to do so.

The other advantage of grinding vs. clipping is how the high-speed filing makes it easy to round off the tip of the nail, whereas clipping often leaves sharp edges. If your dog tends to paw at people for attention, this can be problematic until the nails naturally wear down into a more rounded shape.

We’ve published a number of articles in the past about *clipping* a dog’s nails; what follows here is all about using a grinder instead.



*Author/trainer Stephanie Colman has taught her Golden Retriever, Saber, to relax on his back between her outstretched legs, which cradle and support him. It’s a great position for trimming his nails, as well as checking his paws for foxtails or other burrs, and giving belly rubs and face and chest massages.*

**POSITIONED FOR SUCCESS**

It takes a little practice to figure out what position is most comfortable for you *and* your dog during the nail trim. Both of you on the floor? Him on the couch and you on the floor?

On a grooming table? Some people find it easiest to trim the dog’s nails when he is laying flat on his side.

I find it easiest to sit on the floor, legs outstretched, with my dog on his back and cradled between my legs. I find this allows for the most com-

fortable angle of approach to grind the nails, and especially for rounding the edges, as I like to round up from the bottom of the nail. I teach and build value for this position early in my dogs’ lives, and we use it often – it’s an opportunity for quiet massage and “together time” – not just something we do when it’s time to trim nails.

No matter what position you use, don’t forget to first build a positive association with simply being in that position and having his paws handled before you add any of the steps that involve trimming nails. I feel strongly that all dogs should be taught to accept all the different behavioral pieces of a nail trim regardless of whether you

**WHAT TYPE OF TOOL IS BEST FOR YOU AND YOUR DOG?**

TOOL	PROS	CONS
<b>Clippers</b>	<p>Inexpensive; \$5 to \$25 depending on style and size.</p> <p>Until the “snip” sounds occurs, clippers are quiet.</p> <p>Different sized breeds benefit from different sized clippers.</p>	<p>Can be unforgiving. Much easier to cut too much by misjudging or if dog wiggles. This is big “con!”</p> <p>“Guillotine” style clippers require the operator to insert the dog’s nail through a hole before squeezing the handle to clip; they can be particularly difficult to use with dogs who are wiggling.</p> <p>Leaves sharp edges that can scratch until naturally rounded by daily wear.</p>
<b>Grinders</b>	<p>Much less likely to accidentally file too short and “quick” the dog.</p> <p>Creates a comfortable rounded edge.</p> <p>Some models have a built-in LED light to illuminate the working area.</p>	<p>More expensive than clippers. \$15 to \$35 for nail grinders designed for pet nails. \$40 to \$75 for products intended for use as rotary tools for woodworking or similar projects.</p> <p>Noise and vibration: Most dogs benefit from taking time to first desensitize to the sound of the tool before attempting to use to shorten nails.</p>

# What's the best tool for the job?

There are dozens of grinding tools on the market – products specifically for trimming dogs' nails, as well as rotary tools designed for woodworking or other projects. We polled a dog trainers' group – people who habitually trim their own dogs' nails – about the type and models of grinders they like best: Which products consistently get four tidy-nailed paws up for usability and effectiveness?

The consensus was that while the dog-specific rotary grinders are quieter, they take much longer to reduce the dogs' nail length, especially on breeds with thicker nails. However, a few people said they find the grinders branded for use on dogs to be useful when initially training young or fearful dogs to tolerate nail trimming or for small breeds with thinner nails.

## ENTRY-LEVEL DOG-SPECIFIC GRINDER

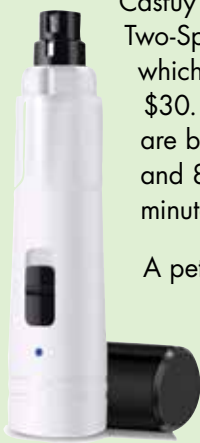
A quick search on Amazon reveals dozens of dog-specific nail grinders to choose from. Most all of them have a low-profile plastic guard covering the grinding bit. The plastic guard has a cut-out area that exposes just a small portion of grinding surface, and this is where you position the nail.

While I like that the presence of a guard appears to prevent the hair of a dog with a long coat (or the human operator's hair) from accidentally getting wrapped around the quickly spinning tool head, it does seem to require better aim to get and keep the nail aligned with the cut-out. We noticed the guard on some products is removable in order to accommodate larger nails or for faster filing.

A good entry-level pet-specific grinder is the best-selling Casfuy Upgraded Professional Two-Speed Pet Nail Grinder, which sells on Amazon for \$30. Note that the two speeds are both relatively low: 7,000 and 8,000 revolutions per minute (RPM).

A pet-specific grinder might be a nice addition to your toolbox, if you're working with a breed with thin nails, or young, small, or fearful dogs, or you're brand new to grinding and don't want to start

with a higher-power tool. If your dog has thick nails and/or you feel confident you can safely handle more power, it's worth stepping up to a multi-purpose rotary tool.



*Casfuy's Two-Speed Pet Nail Grinder comes with Ni-Mh batteries that can be charged in three hours via a USB cord (included).*

## HOBBYIST'S ROTARY TOOLS

When it comes to rotary tools that are not made specifically for pet nails, our panelists agreed on a top pick: The Dremel 8050 Micro. This grinder runs on an 8-volt rechargeable lithium battery. The tool features five variable speeds ranging from 5,000 to 25,000 RPM. Note that 5,000 RPM is too slow to accomplish much grinding and that 25,000 RPM will get the nail too hot too quickly. Overall, this product is quieter than older models – a plus for working with dogs.



Three features help give the 8050 its top ranking:

- ✓ The LED light that's built into the tool's nose cap (this illuminates the nails as you work – brilliant!).
- ✓ The docking station that keeps the tool fully charged and ready for use.
- ✓ If caught on something, the tool automatically stops.

This last point is especially important when working with long-coated dogs or if you have long hair. (Pro tip: If your dog has hairy feet, try snipping a tiny hole in the end of a baby sock or nylon stocking. Cover the paw with the sock or stocking and use it to keep the dog's long hair at bay. Don't forget to pull your own long hair back, too!)



*If your grinder doesn't have an automatic stop feature in case of a tangle, you must keep your own and your dog's hair out of the way of the spinning tip. A baby's sock with a hole in it protects your dog well.*

Dremel also offers a clear plastic "nail guard" attachment that clips onto a variety of its rotary trimmers. The guard is said to help achieve a 45-degree angle for trimming, manage nail dust, and hold a long-haired dog's fur out of the way. If you already have a Dremel but aren't comfortable using it, the Pet Grooming Nail Guard might make for nice "training wheels." The guard is sold individually as the "AT01-PGK Pet Grooming Nail Guard," but costs almost as much (\$33!) as a kit that includes the guard and a Dremel 7760 rotary tool (\$47 on Amazon.com). Get the kit if you don't already have a rotary tool and like the idea of using a guard.



will do nails yourself or if you plan to send the dog to a vet or groomer for routine trims.

It's wise to "assume the position" often – for praise, treats, and calm petting – to help keep your dog from learning that your request for that particular position always accompanies nail trimming, in which case you may find your dog becomes reluctant to cooperate.

## READY TO GRIND

The goal of nail trimming is to shorten the dog's nails so that they don't quite touch the ground when she is standing on level ground; she should be able to walk across the kitchen floor without a tap, tap, tapping sound. Nails that touch the ground will push the toes out of their natural position as the dog stands and moves; the longer the nails, the more displacement the toes will experience.

Remember, the innermost core of the nail consists of a vein and nerve, usually referred to as the "quick." The longer the nail, the farther toward the tip of the nail the quick will extend. If your dog's nails are far too long, it will take a *lot* of sessions of removing tiny bits of nail at a time to gradually return them to a healthy length without cutting into the quick, hurting the dog, and causing the vein to bleed (called "quicking" the nail).

Fortunately, taking tiny bits off at a time is exactly what rotary grinders are best at! *Frequently* removing the excess nail a millimeter at a time will help the "quick" recede back toward the base of the nail. For very long nails, see if you can fit a few minutes of nail grinding once a week. It might take months of this to get the nails to a short and strong condition, but if you stick with it, your dog's feet and legs will be much healthier for it. Once your dog's nails have reached an appropriate length, just one or two short sessions of grinding each month should maintain them.

A few final tips:

- Don't grind on any one nail for more than a second or two, as the friction creates heat, causing a burn-

ing sensation. Touch the grinder to the nail for one or two seconds and pull it away – a grind-release, grind-release pattern.

- To maintain the effectiveness of the grinder, be sure to replace the sandpaper-like sanding band once it's worn. Replacement bands are inexpensive – about \$6 for a package of 6 – and can be purchased through many online pet-supply stores.

- Using a diamond bit (instead of sanding bands) helps reduce the noise and vibration of grinding. These bits are more expensive (anywhere from \$20 to \$20) but they last a long time.

With a little product research and some training and practice, you, too

*Diamond grinding tips for rotary grinders are more expensive than sandpaper bands, but they grind more smoothly and don't wear down quickly or need frequent replacement like sanding bands do, making them the preferred grinding tip of many professional groomers.*

might soon find yourself a member of the rotary club. 🐾

*Stephanie Colman is a writer and dog trainer in Southern California. She works in the puppy department at Guide Dogs of America, helping to recruit and manage volunteer puppy raisers.*



## Quick! What to do about bleeding

*Whichever tool you use to trim nails, don't get started without having some styptic powder on hand.*

*Styptic powder is used to quickly stop any bleeding that will occur if you accidentally cut into the nail's blood supply. It's an anti-hemorrhagic agent that works by constricting tissue to seal injured blood vessels.*

*Failing to have the powder nearby when you start nails is a great way to simulate a crime scene; if you have a "whoops!" moment when trimming your dog's nails and have to go into the other room to get the powder, you can be sure your dog will leave a bloody trail – either following you or trying to run and hide from you!*

*Styptic powder is sold in a variety of containers with various applicators that are supposed to make it easier to get onto a cut nail quickly. Most commonly, however, it comes in a small jar. Some people tap some of the powder into the palm of their hand and then press the cut nail into the powder in their hand. I like to keep a little dish of water nearby so I can wet my finger without needing to lick it, especially during these pandemic times, where I'm being extra mindful of keeping my hands off my face in general. I coat my wet finger with a generous layer of styptic powder and press the powder directly onto the affected nail tip. I give a little tap to help pack the quick with powder.*



*Reapply as needed if the nail continues to bleed through the first layer of powder. If needed, you can temporarily occupy the dog with a favorite chew bone to prevent him from smelling and then licking the nail, re-starting the bleeding.*

*No styptic powder? In a pinch, cornstarch also works.*

*If the bleeding hasn't stopped within 20-30 minutes, contact your vet, as that can be a possible sign of clotting issues.*



# A Counter-Conditioning Protocol for Nail Trimming

**1** Determine the location of touch your dog can tolerate without reacting fearfully or aggressively. Perhaps it's her shoulder, perhaps her elbow, or maybe just above her paw. She should be a little worried, but not growl or try to move away. This is "below threshold" – the emotional state where we want her to remain for all this work.

**2** With your dog on leash, touch her briefly and gently at the spot where she is slightly below threshold – aware of your touch and somewhat concerned, but not highly concerned. The instant your dog notices your touch, start feeding her bits of chicken, non-stop. After a second or two, remove the touch and stop feeding the treats.

**3** Keep repeating steps 1 and 2 until touching your dog at that location for one to two seconds consistently causes your dog to look at you with a happy smile and a "Yay! Where's my chicken?" expression. This is a **conditioned emotional response (CER)**; your dog's association with the brief touch at that location is now positive instead of negative. Note: Feed the treats whether or not your dog displays the desired CER. The happy CER is a product of this process, but you don't *wait* for it to happen each time.

*Jessie touches Woody's foot and he instantly looks at her with a happy, "Where's my chicken?" expression; at this point, the touch on his foot elicits the desired happy conditioned emotional response (CER). She feeds him several bits of chicken, then stops touching his foot and simultaneously stops feeding the treats to him.*



**4** Now increase the intensity of the stimulus by increasing the length of time you touch her at that same location, a few seconds at a time, obtaining the desired CER at each new touch and continue to feed for the duration of the touch. Do several repetitions of two to four seconds, until you get consistent "Yay!" looks, then several repetitions for four to eight seconds, then several four eight to 12 seconds, etc., working for that consistent CER at each new duration of your touch.

**5** When you can touch your dog's body at that spot for any length of time with her in "Yay" mode, begin to increase the intensity of stimulus again, this time by increasing the *duration* of your touch, then the amount of pressure, before moving your hand to a new location very slightly lower than the spot you were previously touching.

I suggest starting at your initial touch location and sliding your hand to the new spot, rather than just touching the new spot. Continue with repetitions until you get consistent CERs at the new location.

**6** Continue gradually working your way down to your dog's paw, an inch or two at a time, getting solid CERs at each spot before you move closer to the paw.

**7** As you work your way down the leg, be sure to add duration and pressure at each step before proceeding; each is a separate step in the CC&D procedure.

**8** When you can touch, grasp, and put pressure on the paw, add lifting the paw, very slightly at first, then more and more, as you achieve the desired CER with each increase in lift. Then repeat the process with each leg. The other legs probably won't take as long, but still, go slowly and be sure to achieve the happy CER with each step.

**9** Did you think we were never going to get to the nail grinding part? We're almost there! Start the process over again, this time with the nail grinder (or clipper) in hand. Show the tool to your dog at a sub-threshold distance until you achieve consistent CERs, then gradually move it closer (CERs at each step!) until you can touch the tool to her nail. Gradually increase the duration of the contact with her nail, and feed her a treat, again and again, until the appearance of the nail trimmer elicits a "Yay!" response. Then counter-condition the sound of the grinder (or the clipper action, by squeezing the clippers), starting again at a distance and gradually moving closer as you achieve consistent CERs at each step.

**10** Go through the whole touch sequence again, this time with the trimming tool in your hand, also touching her with the tool, then again while you turn on the grinder or squeeze the clipper. Remember that you are still feeding yummy treats and obtaining the desired CER throughout the whole process. When you can hold her paw and use the tool right next to her nail with a happy response, grind or clip one nail, feed lots of treats, and *stop*. Do one nail a day until she's happy with that, then advance to two nails at a time, then three, until you can grind or clip all her nails in one session.

The more complex the stimulus, the more successful the dog's avoidance or aggressive strategies have been, and the more intense the emotional response, the more challenging it is to modify a behavior. Take your time. Be patient. A few more weeks – or months – of long nails isn't the end of the world, and the result – a dog who *willingly* participates in the nail trimming procedure – is well worth the effort. – Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA



# Family Planning

*Are you thinking about adding another dog to your family? Consider the commitment you are about to make and take your time to select the right dog. Here's how!*



*A dog who is going to live with children shouldn't merely tolerate kids; she should adore children – and even prefer playing with them to being with adults. This dog is friendly, but not all that interested in the little girl.*

Those of us who love dogs find the prospect of bringing home a new canine family member intoxicating and exhilarating. Well-planned in advance or not, the adoption of a new dog likely triggers a rush of oxytocin unparalleled by all but a few other high-end life experiences.

That said, while some spur-of-the-moment adoptions can and do turn into successful relationships, when possible, we highly recommend that your next dog adoption be well thought out in advance, and you select your new dog carefully, to maximize the likelihood that you will be able to provide a lifelong loving home for the fortunate canine who joins your family.

## THINK IT THROUGH

The process of adopting a dog can be daunting. We encourage you to do some pre-planning before you start looking for the newest member of your family, to increase the chances that you will find an ideal lifetime companion.

If you are single and living alone, you are free to consider only your own needs and wants; the process becomes considerably more complex if you have family or housemates. In either case, *before* you begin your search in earnest, it behooves you to think about your prerequisites and preferences, including:

- **FAMILY/ROOMMATE BUY-IN.** Is everyone in the household on board with getting a dog (or another dog)? If not, work through all the reservations before you proceed any further. It doesn't benefit the dog to bring her into a home where there will be simmering resentment or outright conflict over her presence.
- **BREED AND SOURCE.** Do you already have your mind set on a specific breed or breed-type? If so, does everyone in the family or household feel comfortable with your choice? Have you researched the breed thoroughly so you understand its behavior propensities and common medical issues?

If you are looking for a particular breed or type, you might consider adopting from a breed rescue group, getting pre-approved and putting yourself on a waiting list at your local shelters, or purchasing from a reputable breeder. Private-party adoptions are also a reasonable option – a friend or co-worker who needs to rehome a canine companion, or even, carefully, a private adoption from a classified ad, or Craigslist. No pet-store puppies, ever, please. (*For more about where to look for your next dog, see "Adopt or Shop," WDJ August 2020.*)

- **SIZE.** If you don't already have a breed in mind, does size matter? If so, what size dog are you considering – toy, small, medium, large, or giant?

Be aware that toy and giant breeds are at greater risk for significant medical problems. In general, the giant breeds tend to have short life spans while the smaller breeds tend to live longer. A recent analysis of veterinary records



revealed that dogs under 20 pounds had an average lifespan of 11 years, with some smaller dogs living as long as 14 years or more, while those over 90 pounds typically lived for an average of only eight years. Small dogs may be a greater tripping risk – but they are more portable! – while large and giant breeds may be more likely to knock you over (or your senior grandparent).

- **AGE.** Puppies are undeniably adorable. On the plus side, starting with a baby dog means you can have a huge influence on her development and know that her world has been force-free from very early on. Still, that's not a guarantee that she will turn out to be the perfect dog, especially if she wasn't well socialized before you adopted her. (Despite what you may have heard, an eight-week-old puppy is not a "blank slate.") And they are a lot of work.

As we recently contemplated the adoption of a 3-month-old Australian Cattle Dog-mix, my husband and I realized that we don't want to adopt a puppy. They are a lot of work!

In contrast, adult dogs are more likely to be a "what you see is what you get" proposition – although they can deliver behavioral surprises too, as they adjust to their new life with you. They are past the "needle-sharp puppy teeth" stage, thus less likely to shred your flesh (and your possessions) with puppy mouthing. And while some adults still may enjoy chewing, there's a good chance they will be less destructive (barring anxiety-related behaviors) and are more likely to already be house-trained (or easily house-trained).

On the other hand, it's also possible that they may come to you with some already-well-established behavior challenges...

*When considering an adoption prospect, those of us older adopters would be wise to consider our own health, strength, and energy level, in addition to the dog's. The fact that we have owned big dogs our entire lives is, sadly, not a guarantee that we can still safely handle one for the next 10 or so years.*

- **COAT.** Are you thinking short or long coat? Does it matter to you? It matters a lot to some people.

First, consider grooming. Is someone going to be happily responsible for brushing that long Afghan Hound, Collie, or Pomeranian fur on a regular basis – at least once a week, and maybe more? Will you happily bear the cost of routine trips to the groomer for that Poodle or Doodle clip? Will your Roomba handle the carpet of long white Great Pyrenees fur that covers your rug?

You're not off the hook with short-coated dogs either – those prickly Labrador Retriever hairs are great at infiltrating the fabric of your furniture (or business suit) and can be a *bear* to get out! Of course, there's always the Mexican hairless dog... the Xoloitzcuintli (pronounced "show-low-eats-QUEENT-lee").

- **DOG-KEEPING DETAILS.** Which family members will be responsible for which dog-related chores: feeding, clean-up, walks, grooming, trips to the vet, training? Where will the dog sleep? Is she allowed on the furniture? Who will be your vet, groomer, pet sitter, dog walker? There is an endless array of minutiae that comes with sharing your life with a dog; the more of the details you work out in advance, the better!



## SELECTING YOUR DOG

Okay: You've given all of the previous prerequisites and preferences some consideration. You've read the "Adopt *or* Shop" article in the August issue of WDJ, so you know *where* you are going to look for your next dog. It's time to go meet some prospects!

When my husband and I both worked at animal shelters, selecting our next dog was easy. We never actually set out to look for one; instead, while we met dozens of dogs every week, sooner or later a dog would enter the shelter that one or the other of us would have a near-instant connection to. Our "love at first sight" moments would then be enhanced by the opportunity to get to know the dog better over the next few days as he went through the intake process.

Since leaving shelter work, we've learned just how challenging it can be for most people to find the perfect dog! You go to the shelter or rescue meet-and-greet location, you see a dog that appeals to you, spend a few minutes with him, and the next thing you know you're filling out adoption papers. You wouldn't get married that way!

Today, it's common for people to receive very little information about the dog they adopt. When we worked in shelters, we would get extensive information from owners who were surrendering their dogs. We generally had less information about stray dogs that our officers picked up, but at least we conducted behavior assessments (flawed as they may be) and kept notes on the dog's behavior during her stay with us. Anything we learned about the dogs was passed on to the adopter.

In contrast, today it seems like few organizations have much information about their dogs other than "she came from a shelter in North Carolina." They sometimes don't even seem to know if the dog was owned or stray! When it's time to adopt, you may have to rely entirely on your own observations and instincts about the dogs you meet – and purchasing from a breeder can be equally fraught with challenges.

Here are some suggestions to help you succeed in your adoption quest:

■ **Get help.** If your adoption organization doesn't provide skilled adoption counseling and you aren't confident in your own abilities to make a good choice, consider taking a dog-savvy friend with you, or even paying a qualified force-free professional to help you with your search. The same holds true if you are purchasing from a breeder. Take someone with you, unless you are 100% confident that the breeder is ethical, knowledgeable, and well-qualified to help you select your pup.

■ **Insist on meeting the dog in person.** I am a professional dog trainer/behavior consultant and I wouldn't even *consider* adopting a dog sight unseen. I don't care what information or assurances the organization has given you, or how many videos of the dog you have watched – you don't know who the dog is until you meet him.

I am appalled by the prevalence of internet adoptions happening these days with no actual meeting between dog and human until after the paperwork is signed and sealed and the dog is delivered halfway across the country. While it is fairly common practice for breeders to ship puppies across the country (or across oceans!) to buyers, sight unseen, I wouldn't do it, no matter how great the breeder's reputation.

■ **Know what you're looking for (as described above) – and also know which qualities might be negotiable.** Perhaps you're looking for a female Border Collie and you go to the shelter and the most perfect male Australian Shepherd is there in the kennel, begging you to adopt him. Close enough? Maybe so!

It doesn't necessarily even have to be that close. A husband/wife couple, clients of mine, were recently looking to adopt a small dog. They went to the shelter to meet a 20-pound terrier-mix they had seen on the website, but when they got there the dog was

already adopted. They came home with a purebred Akita who is one of the nicest dogs I've met in a long time. They are quite thrilled with their new family member.

■ **Resist the pity party pup.** It's easy to feel sorry for the poor, scared dog huddled in the back corner of her kennel run. But you should know that if you adopt this dog there's a very good chance you are looking at a significant behavior-modification project; it's possible that this dog will have fear-behavior challenges for the rest of her life. Note: I am a dog behavior professional and I would not adopt such a dog!

Truth be told, most people want a behaviorally healthy dog they can take with them to the beach, to the office, to their child's soccer game, on hikes, to family reunions, to dog training classes – and shy, frightened dogs may never be able to do those things. Adopt only if you enjoy the challenge of a behavior modification project and understand the possible long-term ramifications of adopting a fearful dog.

■ **Consider foster-to-adopt.** More shelters and rescue groups now offer this as an option, both to give you a chance to evaluate the dog in a home setting and to free up shelter and foster home space for incoming dogs. Fostering can give you and the dog the opportunity to see if it is a good fit – and allows you to feel less guilty about returning the dog if it doesn't work out. You hadn't made a full commitment, and you are now able to provide the adoption agency with information that can help them make a better fit with another adopter.

■ **Conduct your own behavior assessment.** It doesn't have to be as extensive as the ones that some organizations utilize, but there are

some basic things you can do to see how the dog responds and make adoption decisions accordingly.

## A DO-IT-YOURSELF BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT

Studies in recent years have found shelter assessments to be unreliable and non-predictive; behaviors seen in assessments are often not seen in the adoptive home after the dog leaves the shelter, and behaviors not seen in the assessment may appear after

the dog is in a home. Even so, it helps to walk through a structured assessment, if only to extend the amount of time you spend with the dog before making a commitment.

I'm not suggesting you do an extensive assessment protocol, just try a few reasonably non-aversive things to see how the dog responds. If you're headed out to assess a potential new family member, take this list with you and circle the appropriate letters for the behaviors you see. Having

a rubric like this can help guide you to a smart decision.

Before you start, ask if the shelter or rescue group is comfortable with you performing an assessment, and share with them the protocol you intend to use.

**1 Watch the dog.** Before actually interacting with the dog, observe her from a distance. Is she:

[A] Comfortable and relaxed in her kennel or other housing? (This would be ideal.)

[B] Pacing, stressed, and barking?

[C] Charging at dogs and humans who pass?

[D] Huddled in the back?

Note that B, C, and D are red flags; however, some dogs who are stressed or fearful in the kennel are reasonably



*Too scared to approach you? Do not adopt unless you want a "project" dog who may never get comfortable with humans.*

normal when in a less intimidating environment, so this doesn't have to be a complete rule-out.

**2 Walking on leash.** Out of the kennel and on leash, does she:

[A] Walk happily with her handler? (This is ideal.)

[B] Pull hard on the leash and/or sniff? (This is your basic training project.)

[C] Flail wildly or put on the brakes and refuse to move? (This represents a more significant training and/or behavior challenge.)



*It's wonderful when you find a dog who walks super nicely on a leash. Not walking on a leash is not necessarily a deal-breaker, however.*

**3 Take her off leash.** In a safely enclosed area, remove her leash. Does she:

[A] Happily greet and stay somewhat near humans? (This is ideal affiliative behavior.)

[B] Cling desperately to humans? (This might be fear or separation-related behavior.)

[C] Confidently explore the room with occasional check-ins with the humans? (This is nice, somewhat independent behavior.)

[D] Confidently explore the room and ignore humans? (This might indicate a very independent dog, which can be challenging.)

[E] Go wild and crazy, racing around the room non-stop with glee? (High-energy dogs can be a challenge.)

[F] Pace back and forth, perhaps whining, never calming or settling down? (A stressed, anxious dog can be a significant behavior challenge – or could settle once out of the shelter environment.)

[G] Cautiously explore the room? (She may lack confidence and need some behavior modification.)

[H] Hide in a corner and refuse to move? (This is a very fearful dog who will need extensive behavior modification.)

**4 How is she with handling?** With the leash back on, do some general handling: Pet her all over, touch her paws, look in her ears, look at her teeth. (Stop at any time if she appears uncomfortable or resistant to a degree that is unsafe.) Does she:

[A] Enjoy your touch, warm and wiggling and asking for more? (Best.)



*This affectionate dog loves being handled and touched all over, but her contact is loose and relaxed. An anxious, insecure dog would be more clingy and tense.*

[B] Tolerate your touch but not really enjoy it or invite more interaction? (This is acceptable if you aren't looking for a touchy-feely snuggle-dog.)

[C] Move away from you? (If she's clearly not comfortable with handling, she may be a behavior-modification project.)

[D] Freeze, give you a hard stare, growl, and/or snap? (These indicate significant behavior issues; do not adopt unless you are a behavior professional or very skilled and experienced dog owner looking for a project.)

**5 Check for any training.** Ask the dog to sit, lie down, and shake – three behaviors that owners are most likely to have taught her. Then see if you can get her to do anything by luring with treats that you brought with you. Does she:

[A] Appear to have already have some training? (This is best.)

[B] Easily perform new behaviors that you try to get her to do with a treat? (This is also great.)

[C] Show interest in the treat but doesn't understand what you are trying to get her to do? (This is acceptable; she may just need more time and patience to help her understand.)

[D] Show no interest in the treat? (She may be too stressed to be interested in food – but her lack of interest in food may present a more significant training challenge.)

**6 Is she playful?** Try offering the dog a variety of toys you have brought with you – a ball, a stuffed squeaky toy, a tug, a food-dispensing toy. Start with gentle play; you can intimidate some dogs if you play with them too much or too hard. Does she:

[A] Play with you happily and appropriately? (This is best.)

[B] Play with you happily but gets too



aroused and a little mouthy? (This is acceptable, but she will need management and training.)

**[C]** Love to play with the toys but gets a little (or a lot) tense when you try to take the toy? (This indicates a tendency to guard her “stuff,” better known as resource-guarding; she will need management and training to improve this behavior.)

**[D]** Declines to play at all? Avoids you or looks at you like you’ve lost your mind? (This is okay if you don’t mind a dog who doesn’t play, or you want to try to teach her to play; see “Let the Games Begin,” November 2014.)

**7 Kid considerations.** If you have children you *must* have your potential dog meet them before finalizing the adoption. Some dogs who are perfectly wonderful with all of the above simply cannot live with children. For a dog to live safely with children she should *adore* them, not just tolerate them. When the dog sees your child or children, does she:

**[A]** Appear happy to approach *and* interact appropriately, as if she were saying, “Yay! Kids!”? (This is best.)

**[B]** Appear happy to approach and interact, but is a little too excited? (She will need management and training.)

**[C]** Appear to ignore or tolerate the presence of the child or children? (If you have kids, this is not acceptable; do not adopt this dog.)

**[D]** Is she cautious, fearful, reactive or aggressive? (Do. Not. Adopt!)

**8 Do you have other dogs?** Ideally, you will have brought along your home dog(s) so they can be introduced in a neutral environment. If not, if at this point you are still very interested in the dog, ask to have the dog put on hold so you can go home to get your home dog(s) for an introduction. Introduce them carefully, of course, and again, have a qualified dog training professional or dog-savvy friend present to help.

When the dogs see each other from across the room or yard, do they:

**[A]** Both appear reasonably calm and happy to approach and meet each other? (This is best.)

**[B]** One appears more assertive, the other more appeasing? (This is also great, as long as the more assertive dog doesn’t come on too strong.)

**[C]** Both appear happy to approach but are very excited? (This is acceptable, though you will need to manage their behavior with each other.)

**[D]** Dogs ignore/avoid each other? (This is not a good choice; avoidance often turns into a significant behavior challenge.)

**[E]** Either or both dogs show signs of tension: stiff body language, hard stares, growling, reactivity? (This is not a good choice.)

**9 Do you have other animals in your family?** If you have other small or large companion animals (cats, pigs, birds, horses, etc.), ask if the dog has any history around those, and if there are any available on the premises where you are meeting the dog.

With the dog on leash at a distance, observe her behavior. Does she:

**[A]** Watch calmly from a distance? (This is best.)

**[B]** Watch with happy excitement from a distance? (This is okay, though she will need management and training.)

**[C]** Become highly aroused and / or reactive, barking and lunging? (With excellent management and modification, this might be acceptable if you have large animals – but it’s not acceptable if you have small animals.)

**[D]** Go into predator/stalking mode, or crouch, with a hard stare? (With excellent management and modification, this might be acceptable if you have large animals – but it’s not acceptable if you have small animals.)

### A CHALLENGING QUEST

It’s been eight years since my husband and I have been closely affiliated with a shelter. Two years ago, in the same year, we lost our last two shelter adoptees to old age and cancer.

Our current dogs are *not* shelter alumni; we were unable to find the dogs we wanted through any of our *local* shelters or rescue groups. After lengthy searches we adopted one from a rescue group in New York (we live in Maryland) and the other was privately adopted; he was being rehomed through Craigslist. Now we can better empathize with the struggles of dog lovers to find good candidates for their own families.

Even so, scarcity isn’t a good reason to be less than scrupulous in your assessments. Remember, you are making a commitment of thousands of dollars for food and veterinary care, and countless hours of time spent with your dog over at least the next decade or more. Take your time! Good luck with your search. 🐾

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*A dog who favors attention from and interaction with a child over an adult is an ideal prospect for a family with kids.*



# Are Two Pups Better Than One?

*The pros and cons of adopting littermates.*

I hear it all the time: “Honey, maybe we should get two! Look how much they love each other! How can we possibly split them up?”

My family and I frequently foster litters of rescue puppies, and when approved adopters come over to make that big decision – which one will it be? – the conversation often takes this detour. Watching two darling pups snuggling or romping together, somebody says, “Why don’t we just take two?”

It’s a natural impulse. In fact, keeping littermates together was very much my own hope when we fostered our first litter almost a decade ago. Back then, when a potential adopter expressed an interest in getting two pups, my heart raced. Think of it: Little Ben and Pretty Girl, together forever! I *loved* this idea! The advantages quickly added up in my mind:

- The transition would be so easy! No sad pup crying through those initial nights without the warmth and company of littermates.
- The pups would be so happy to have a friend to play with every day.
- There would be guaranteed exuberant exercise, which would decrease household destruction and mouthiness.
- The owners would be less stressed by the demands of puppyhood because, rather than having a bored puppy constantly seeking their attention, they’d have two pups pretty darned content with each other. After all, I vastly preferred fostering two pups to one, because it was way less work for me.

Filled with excitement, I let the shelter know that one of our potential adopters wanted *two* puppies. Their response? “We don’t actually adopt out littermates together.” I was stunned. What kind of anti-puppy-happiness policy was this?

## A PREPONDERANCE OF CONS

It turns out I had a lot to learn. While every one of the bullet points above is true, there are even *more* bullet-point reasons why most dog trainers and animal shelter professionals recommend *against* adopting littermates, including:

■ **Puppies need to learn to be alone.** One of the key things I try to teach my foster pups is that they’re okay without their littermates. If I were to let them hang out in the same room with their mom and siblings every single minute for eight weeks, then adoption day would be terrifying for them. In the beginning that means simply holding one pup outside of the puppy pen for a moment, and immediately returning. Then I might take just two pups

*Adopting siblings can work, but it takes a truly special owner who has double the time and energy to give to puppyhood. These sisters, Icebox and Spaz, have committed owners who knew how much extra time it would take to make a littermate adoption succeed.*





into the kitchen to play while I do the dishes. Finally, I'll take just one pup upstairs with me to hang out with a chew toy while I work on the computer.

Adopting siblings can delay this vital bit of the puppies' education indefinitely. Now there are *two* pups who may have never taken one breath when they weren't next to another pup. The longer that goes on, the more deeply attached they become. Some owners realize they have a giant problem only months later when they casually separate the pups – perhaps for a vet appointment – and find both dogs in an absolute panic, destroying walls and escaping from crates.

Of course, you can combat this issue just the way I do with a litter at my house: by making time to take each pup alone somewhere, every day. They need to have regular, varied experiences where they are separated from their siblings: in the house, on a walk, in the car, on a playdate. If you have the time and perhaps the household structure to allow that, this may not be a problem. However, experienced trainers and shelter staff will tell you that most owners find they barely have time for one pup, much less two – even though they *thought* they were prepared.

■ **Having an always-present playmate isn't enough to properly socialize a puppy.** Daily play with a live-in packmate helps tire out both puppies, which is great – but the giant

downside is that, without the urgent impetus to find another puppy or dog to help tire out a singleton pup, owners tend to get complacent.

A lone puppy's chewing, biting, and jumping will push a good owner to seek out other dogs to exhaust the little guy, which enlarges the pup's world beautifully. There is far greater value in playing with all kinds of dogs – big and small, runners and wrestlers, floppy-eared and pointy-eared. They each play differently, and by interacting with a number of play partners, a pup learns a more nuanced, expanded language of doggy communication. That, in turn, makes the puppy comfortable with future dog encounters – on leash walks, at your sister's house for Thanksgiving, at the beach with your friend's dogs.

In contrast, the littermates who play only with each other may well end up being dogs who can play only with each other! Unaccustomed to play styles they are unfamiliar with, less-socialized dogs may take offense at playful overtures from dogs who are new to them, and erupt in defensive aggression out of fear.

Again, an owner who is well aware of this issue can completely mitigate the effects by arranging for plenty of play time with other puppies and dogs as the puppy matures.

■ **When people own two puppies, they tend to take the pups on fewer walks and adventures.** When I first started fostering, I was always drawn

to the adopter whose application mentioned their big fenced yard. Sure, the city apartment dwellers said all the right things, but then I'd think about this little pup who'd have to go down an elevator and then pass strangers and hear loud trucks every time he just had to pee! "Poor pup," I thought.

I'd like to slap my old self. I've learned over the years that those city dogs become fabulously socialized! Because exposure to all of those things is an automatic part of their life, they inevitably become incredibly relaxed about it all. It's wonderful.

What does that have to do with littermate adoptions? Well, often littermates don't get out into the world if they live in the same house. They are nicely tired from all of their playing, so they don't nudge their owners into walks. And even if they do, sometimes the owner remembers that last walk where two dogs were awfully hard to manage and opts out.

Again, the dedicated owner will get around this by remembering how critical it is to get a young pup out and about in the world and will make the time (and enlist the helpers) to make adventures into the wider world a regular part of the routine for both puppies – preferably, one at a time, for most of those walks.

■ **It's more than twice as hard to train two puppies than it is to train one.** I love to teach young pups to sit, stay, spin, touch, and shake. In fact, I

really can't help myself – whenever I have just one pup here. But if I have more than one pup? The best I can do is "sit." I'm a dog trainer, for goodness



*Littermates Twilight and her brother TikTok joined a family that includes another dog and three cats, so the duo is rarely alone together, and each gets critical one-on-one time with their human.*

Photo by Sara Taylor



*Lots of individual training plus the owner's robust support system has made the adoption of brothers Bristol and Bedford work beautifully. They are each other's best friend and comfort – but they also settle down just fine when separated.*



Photo by Jane Scott

sake, and I can't teach two dogs a new thing at the same time.

Teaching well requires giving split-second feedback to the dog. When you have two dogs doing different things, the feedback loop becomes meaningless. "YES!" you say as Pretty Girl sits nicely. But Little Ben heard that too, while he was jumping up on you. Hmm. What exactly did he just learn?

To train two pups, you need to separate them. And perhaps the trainee needs to be out of earshot so that the distressed barking of the left-out pup does not distract our student of the moment. Do you have a set-up where you can easily take one pup away and work with her a few times a day – and then turn around and do that with the other pup? Can you sustain that for a year? Maybe you can!

But most can't, and, sadly, what often happens is that an owner calls a trainer in tears, reporting two completely unruly 9-month-old dogs who "can't" be walked. The pups are bonded strongly to each other, but not with the owner. It's a heartbreak that often results in one, if not both, being rehomed.

### THE IDEAL SCENARIO

Trainers and shelter staff will almost always advise against a littermate adoption; instead, they frequently give the very sound advice to simply wait a year, so that your well-trained adult dog can set a fantastic example for a new pup.

That said, taking in two siblings

*might* be the right decision for you. The key is to be fully informed about the tricky issues and committed to a plan. When that happens, it *can* work out beautifully.

As I was preparing to write this article, I reached out to a handful of people who adopted littermates from my rescue group. Every one of them wrote back using exclamation points about how much they love their doggies and how the double adoption was the perfect approach for them. My follow-up questions revealed that these folks truly walked the walk. They've poured a *lot* of time and resources into these pups, carefully shaping their experience so that each dog is well trained and confident on their own – and also darling together. Clearly, it *can* be done.

Even so, any time I hear an adopter say, "Hey honey, how about two?" I'll still suggest my very favorite option: "Do you have a neighbor who needs a puppy?" *That's* the best of all worlds: each of the pups will have a buddy close enough so they can get happily tired from everyday playdates, the owners can get little breaks while their pup is visiting next door, and each puppy will get plenty of individual attention back at home. 🐾

*Kathy Callahan, CPDT-KA, is the author of 101 Rescue Puppies: One Family's Story of Fostering Dogs, Love, and Trust (New World Library, 2020). Callahan specializes in puppyhood coaching in Alexandria, Virginia. See page 24 for book and contact information.*

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NUTRITION

# A Can/Do Attitude

*Good quality canned dog foods offer a number of advantages over dry foods – and dogs love them! Here's how to identify the ones that will suit your dog.*



*There are so many food choices available to dog owners today; it's easy to get overwhelmed. But whatever you do, don't just feed the same thing month in and month out; rotating foods from different manufacturers helps provide your dog with nutritional balance over time. It also reduces the potential danger of any pet food company's formulation error or production problem.*

Were you aware that dogs don't have a biological requirement for carbohydrates? The fact that this bit of trivia sounds so crazy is a testament to how thoroughly we all take carbohydrate-laden kibble for granted. But it's true: Dogs require protein and fat, but they can live and thrive quite well without *any* carbs at all.

Perhaps you've seen canned foods with labels indicating that meat makes up 93% or 95% (or sometimes even 96%!) of the product. This is possible because nearly all of a dog's nutritional requirements can be met in a diet mainly comprised of meat; add some vitamins and minerals, and he's all set!

But dogs *can* eat and benefit from carbohydrates – and the foods that provide carbs are much less costly than the foods that provide just protein and fat, so pet food makers can provide adequate nutrition to dogs for a lower price by using a certain amount of carbohydrate-based ingredients in their food. Generally, the more carbs there are in the can, the less the food will cost.

Cost isn't the only reason to add a non-meat ingredient to a diet for dogs, however. Some ingredients provide non-nutritive functions that benefit the dog. For example, some fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes provide fiber that can modify or improve the dog's intestinal microflora, so he can better digest his food. Some foods can reduce

inflammation or provide antioxidant action. Certain herbs and spices have been shown to improve mobility or cognition.

All of the “complete and balanced” foods you can buy for your dog will meet his requirements – whether his requirements are just for the basic maintenance of life or the higher nutritional needs of a growing puppy. But, as you'll see, each pet food maker will approach the task of meeting those needs in any number of ways, with any number of ingredients.

## YOU CAN DO THIS

Your task is to find foods that “perform well” in your dog – that improve or maintain his digestion (helping build a nice stool, not too hard and not too soft, and reducing or eliminating excessive gas); maintain or improve his health, appetite, and energy; and, if he's a puppy, provide for an appropriate rate of growth (not too fast, not too slow).

How the heck are you supposed to find the foods that perform like this in your dog? Well, like everything: It takes a little bit of economics (buy what's in your budget), a little bit of science (keep track of what you are feeding and observe and record the results) – and more than a little luck.

Does this sound daunting? C'mon, you can do this. You're *already* doing it – you're currently feeding your dog *something*, right?

**1 Check the “nutritional adequacy statement.”** Some foods are not complete and balanced! If they are not, they must indicate that they are “for intermittent or supplemental use only.” These products are fine for short-term use, but they will not provide everything your dog needs over time.

Growing puppies have higher requirements for a number of nutrients than adult dogs. Complete and balanced dog foods must state whether they have been formulated to meet the nutritional standards for “growth” (puppies) or “adult maintenance.” If the label says the food is for “all life stages,” it has met the “growth” standards.

If you are feeding a dog who is still growing, you must check to see if the nutritional adequacy statement indicates the food is meant for dogs who are expected to mature to more than 70 pounds or less. For more information about these statements and feeding puppies, see “Puppy Needs New Food,” WDJ September 2020.

**2 Note the amount of protein and fat in the food.** You should have an idea of how much protein and fat you are already feeding your dog and whether that’s too much (is he overweight?), too little (is he underweight?), or about right. Look for products with protein and fat levels that are appropriate for your dog.

Be aware that these values range very widely in pet food; one can of food might contain three times as much protein or fat as another.

*The nutritional adequacy statement is also known as the “AAFCO statement.” AAFCO (the Association of American Feed Control Officials) is the nongovernmental group that develops and changes the model regulations for pet food that are adopted by the states. This statement tells the consumer which set of nutritional standards the product has been formulated to meet.*

Check the “guaranteed analysis” on the label of the food you have at home, and check it on any food you are considering.

**3 Now look at the ingredient list for hallmarks of quality.** Look for things you can readily identify as food – *real* food. Chicken is chicken, but do you know what poultry by-product meal is? No? Then don’t buy it for your dog. (This sounds simplistic, but it’s a good guide when it comes to sorting out the higher-quality ingredients from the highly processed and not scrupulously managed waste products from the human food industry.)

For more guidance on what ingredients are acceptable and appropriate, see “Dog Food Selection Criteria: Ingredients” below.

**4 Look at the ingredient list for what suits your dog – and what disagrees with him.** If your dog is allergic to beef, don’t trust that a food manufacturer hasn’t changed its formula and added beef to that stew; check the ingredients every time you buy a food.

If you have observed that grains exacerbate your dog’s gas produc-



tion, look for grain-free – or perhaps even carbohydrate-free foods. (Many grain-free foods are chock-full of alternative carbohydrate sources, such as peas, lentils, chickpeas, and other legumes; pumpkin; sweet potatoes, potatoes, and various byproducts of these ingredients (i.e., pea flour, pumpkin powder, etc.).

**5 Any time your dog displays a change in his health, energy, appetite, or elimination habits, write it down somewhere.** Note what you were feeding him. Keep track of when you change foods. Look for patterns in his response to various ingredients, protein or fat levels, or even different manufacturers’ products. Change accordingly!

## CANNED DOG FOOD SELECTION CRITERIA: INGREDIENTS

### HALLMARKS OF QUALITY

- ✓ Lots of *animal* protein at the top of the ingredients list. For dogs, plant-sourced protein (from peas, potatoes, corn, soy, etc.) is less appropriate than animal protein (chicken, fish, beef, etc.).
- ✓ In canned foods, a whole named meat (or more than one named meat) should be first on the ingredients list or second only to water (or broth).
- ✓ Whole vegetables, fruits, grains, and/or carbohydrate sources (as opposed to food “fractions”).

### DISQUALIFIERS

- ✗ Unnamed meats (i.e., “meat,” “poultry”).
- ✗ Meat byproducts, poultry byproducts, meat byproduct meal, and poultry byproduct meal.
- ✗ “Generic” fat sources (e.g., “animal fat”).
- ✗ “Animal plasma” or blood meal as a protein source.
- ✗ Artificial colors, flavors, or preservatives (such as BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin). None of these are needed or common in canned foods.



## COVID-19 Being Unfairly Blamed for Poor Customer Service

**Reaching the pet food manufacturers with questions or concerns right now is difficult – and that’s ridiculous.**

We’ve long advised readers to reach out to the makers of their dogs’ food if they have questions or concerns about the products – and to decline to buy food from companies who are not attentive to consumers or who can’t seem to provide basic information about the company’s products, such as a complete nutritional profile for any of its foods.

That advice stands today, even with the pandemic going on. *Many* people are working from home today; there is a wealth of technology available that should enable any customer service team to continue to communicate with consumers. But in the course of compiling information about the products featured on our “Approved Canned Foods” list (starting on page 20), we had to call quite a few companies for information – and we heard an

unprecedented number of recordings that stated no one was available to take our calls.

We understand that having someone available to provide knowledgeable support to consumers can be costly and difficult at times. But given the fact that our dogs’ lives depend on these foods, it seems like the least a pet food company can do is to equip some employee or the owner of the company with a cell phone so they can respond to consumer inquiries.

If you can’t reach anyone at a pet food company to ask a question about their products, our advice would be to avoid buying that company’s food. Period.



*Time to update  
the technology!*

## Mind Your Peas and Legumes

**No correlation between DCM and these ingredients has been proven. We’d advise limiting how much you feed to your dog anyway.**

In recent years, there have been a plethora of headlines about a possible connection between certain canine diets and a potentially fatal health condition called dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM). Early reports blamed grain-free diets for causing DCM in dogs of breeds that were not usually predisposed to the disease. As more data were collected, the blame started to shift toward foods with a preponderance of peas, lentils, and other legumes.

In the past decade, these ingredients have become increasingly common in *all* dog foods, but especially so in grain-free foods, where they are used as both a carbohydrate substitute for grain and as a low-cost source of additional protein for the diet.

In reports that were part warning to pet owners, part fishing for news of previously unknown cases, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has published a series of announcements on the topic.

We published our own analysis of the FDA reports in “Diet, Dogs, and DCM,” in the November 2019 issue. We agree that there is reason to be concerned about feeding dogs diets that contain significant amounts of peas and/or lentils. As the article stated, “The FDA reported that 93% of all products involved in the reports they were investigating contained peas and/or lentils. Our analysis

confirmed that 89% of the reported foods appeared to contain significant amounts of these ingredients (generally appearing before the first fat or in multiple combinations, sometimes with other legumes).”

Peas are a relatively new ingredient whose popularity has exploded in the last 10 years. The fact that so many foods today contain significant amounts of peas (and other legumes) and the increase in the number of dogs that are reportedly developing DCM (especially those in categories not typically associated with this disease) seems significant. Remember, however, that correlation does not equal causation; again, we are speculating, as no one knows the cause at this time.

We recommend avoiding diets with legumes listed high in the ingredient list (before the first fat or oil) or that include several legumes, even if they appear lower in the ingredient list. Alternatively, it’s advisable to feed such diets on a short-term basis only, or as one of a number of legume-free foods in a rotation. In the table of “Approved Canned Foods” starting on page 20, we’ve noted which manufacturers offer products that have peas and other legumes appearing in moderate concentrations.

For more information about canine DCM and possible links to diet, please see the November 2019 issue.

# Test Your Label Reading Skills!

What's important on the label – and what's inconsequential?



**Pay attention to:**

- Name of pet food company
- What dogs the food is formulated for (note that this is not the complete, legal nutritional adequacy statement, but it is nice to have the information up front)

**Disregard entirely:**

- Pretty pictures of fresh vegetables
- Ingredients called out on the front of the can (they are just there to tempt your own appetite; the position on the legal ingredient list may be very different)

**Pay attention to:**

- Ingredient list, at least to the 10th or so ingredient. Once you reach the salt on a label, the amounts of the ingredients are vanishingly small (so don't get too excited about foods, herbs, or nutraceuticals that appear low on the ingredient list)
- Guaranteed analysis: There are consequences for pet food makers if the product does not deliver these the amounts of any nutrients that are present here. The minimum amount of protein and fat, and maximum amount of fiber and moisture must appear here. Anything else included here is optional.
- Calorie content. Helpful if you are not as familiar with the fat and protein content.
- Location information for the manufacturer must appear on the label. A phone number is not required by law but c'mon! One should be present.



**Disregard entirely:**

- Verbiage about what the food does NOT contain.

## Approved Foods

On the following pages, you'll find a list of pet food companies that make the kind of foods that meet our selection criteria. You should notice that even among these better- and best-quality products, there is quite a wide price range. All of the products made by these companies are better than most of the products on the market. But some companies take food production to an art form, with certified humanely raised meats, organic ingredients, functional ingredients such as glucosamine, prebiotics, and probiotics, etc. Some of these products – more all the time! – are actually made in human food manufacturing facilities, which means they contain only human-edible ingredients. Wow!

But what's most important is that you find products at the price point that you can afford and that suit your dog. So, to that end, we've included the price range of each manufacturer's offerings, expressed by "price per ounce" (since can/carton/tub sizes are all different).

Using the steps described on the previous pages, choose some foods that are new to you and your dog and give them a try! If your local pet supply store doesn't carry them, try online. If the products really work for your dog, ask your local store manager if she can carry them for you.

And don't forget: One-size-fits-all recommendations don't work when it comes to diet. You have to feed the individual what works for him. It's wonderful when you have more than one dog and they can both digest and thrive on the same variety of food, but we wouldn't take it for granted that any two dogs can.



# WHOLE DOG JOURNAL'S APPROVED CANNED DOG FOODS FOR 2020

Products appear alphabetically by best-known name. In some cases this is the name of the company that makes the food; in others, it's the name of the food line.

Products in yellow rows are new to this list.

PRODUCT NAME Company Information	# of varieties	Range of Protein (as fed) Range of Fat (as fed)	Price per Ounce	Notes
<b>ARTEMIS OSOPURE</b> La Habra, CA (800) 282-5876; artemiscompany.com	5	8% 4% - 6%	\$0.28 - \$0.34	All five varieties grain-free, and formulated for dogs in all life stages. Pea protein used in all varieties, @ 7th-8th on ingredients list.
<b>AVODERM</b> (Breeder's Choice, a division of Central Garden & Pet) Walnut Creek, CA (866) 500-6286; avodermnatural.com	13	5% - 9% 3% - 8.5%	\$0.19 - \$0.27	About half of the offerings are grain-free. All but two (weight control, vegetarian) are for all life stages. Peas appear @ 4th-8th on ingredients list.
<b>AZMIRA</b> Tucson, AZ (520) 886-8548; azmira.com	2	10% 5%	\$0.19	Both products formulated for dogs of all life stages. Lamb formula contains peas (7th on ingredients list). Whole brown rice used as carb source/thickener: Nice.
 <b>BIXBI RAWBBLE</b> Boulder, CO (303) 666-1070 bixbipet.com	4	8.5% - 9% 8.5%	\$0.28 - \$0.34	All Rawbble canned foods are formulated for all life stages, and contain no grain, potato, tapioca, meals, or gums. (Pumpkin used as a carb/thickener, 4th-5th.)
<b>BLACKWOOD</b> Lisbon, OH (888) 843-1738; blackwoodpetfood.com	4	9.5% 8.5% - 9%	\$0.23 - \$0.27	All varieties are formulated for all life stages and are grain-free. Each contains pumpkin (@ 4th), peas (@ 5th-6th), and green-lipped mussels (@13th).
<b>BUCKLEY LIBERTY</b> Boulder, CO (720) 726-3193; buckleypet.com	3	8.5% - 9% 7.5% - 8.5%	\$0.26	Each variety is formulated for all life stages and is free of grain, corn, and soy. Each contains a single animal protein source but also peas (@ 3rd!). Sweet potato is used as carb/thickener (@5th-9th).
<b>CLOUDSTAR WELLMADE</b> St. Louis, MO (800) 361-9079; cloudstar.com	5	7% 3% - 4%	\$0.24	Each variety is formulated for all life stages and is free of grain, corn, soy, and potato. Pea protein appears in each (@4th). Sweet potato, pumpkin, tapioca starch, and/or chickpeas used as carb/thickeners (@ 5th-7th). Company says "made in a human grade facility."
<b>CORE</b> (See WELLNESS)				
<b>DAVE'S PET FOOD</b> Agawam, MA (888) 763-2738; davespetfood.com	29	7% - 10% 4% - 9%	\$0.14 - \$0.20	Dave's offers five lines: 95% meats, grain-free, "naturally healthy" (with rice), "restricted diet" (each addresses a medical issue and most are not complete & balanced), and "stewlicious." Not thrilled with company's incomplete AAFCO "nutritional adequacy" statements on website.
<b>EAGLE PACK</b> (Wellpet) Tewksbury, MA (800) 225-0904; eaglepack.com	4	9% 6%	\$0.17 - \$0.18	All varieties are formulated for dogs of all life stages. Each food contains brown rice (@ 4th) and some also contain barley (@ 5th). No peas or other legumes.
<b>FIRSTMATE, KASIKS</b> North Vancouver, Canada (800) 658-1166; firstmate.com	14	8% - 12% 3% - 8%	\$0.27 - \$0.40	Made in Canada. Company says chicken and turkey used in all varieties are cage-free, salmon and tuna are wild-caught. Many varieties are grain-free and extremely low-carb. Many varieties use a single animal protein source. All varieties are formulated for dogs of all life stages. Firstmate owns and operates its own cannery.
<b>FROMM</b> Mequon, WI (800) 325-6331; frommfamily.com	32	7% - 10% 2% - 8.5%	\$0.20 - \$0.39	Fromm offers three lines: Shredded meats, vegetables, and legumes in gravy; pâtés contain meat, legumes, potatoes, and vegetables; "Frommbalya" stews contain potatoes, rice, and peas. All varieties are formulated for dogs of all life stages. Fromm owns and operates its own cannery.



PRODUCT NAME Company Information	# of varieties	Range of Protein (as fed) Range of Fat (as fed)	Price per Ounce	Notes
<b>GO!</b> (Petcurean) Chilliwack, British Columbia (866) 864-6112; petcurean.com	14	7.5% - 10% 2.5% - 8%	\$0.30 - \$0.32	All varieties are formulated for dogs of all life stages. Some varieties are packaged in Tetra Pak cartons. Some varieties contain grain and other carbs, others are grain-free. Always read the ingredients list: A few varieties include porcine plasma (we're not fans of this ingredient).
<b>HALO</b> Tampa, FL (800) 426-4256; halopets.com	9	5.75% - 11% 3.5% - 9%	\$0.32 - \$0.44	All varieties formulated for adult maintenance except one: the "Puppy" variety. Peas, pea flour, and/or pea fiber appear in many varieties. Three varieties are grain-free.
<b>HEALTH EXTENSION</b> Melville, NY (800) 992-9738; healthextension.com	15	7% - 9.5% 2% - 9%	\$0.20-\$0.21	All varieties formulated for adult maintenance only. Most varieties are grain-free; three are 95% meat. Company offers a few novel protein varieties (quail, rabbit, venison).
<b>HOLISTIC SELECT</b> (Wellpet) Tewksbury, MA (800) 225-0904; holisticselect.com	6	11% - 12% 6% - 7%	\$0.25 - \$0.28	All varieties are formulated for all life stages, all are grain-free pâtés. Ground dried peas appear (@ 4th-6th) in each formula, as does potato protein (@ 5th-8th).
<b>HOUND &amp; GATOS</b> (Gott Pet Products) St. Francis, WI (888) 896-2951; houndgatos.com	11	10% - 13% 3.5% - 10%	\$0.29 - \$0.60	All varieties are grain-free, 98% meat. Are products formulated for all life stages or adult maintenance? Website doesn't say; label suggests ALS but isn't explicit. In our opinion, this is irresponsible.
<b>INSTINCT</b> (Nature's Variety) St. Louis, MO (888) 519-7387; instinctpetfood.com	13	8.5% - 11.5% 3% - 8.5%	\$0.23 - \$0.60	All except the three "limited ingredient" varieties are formulated for all life stages. No grain, potatoes, corn, wheat, or soy. Peas appear @6th-9th on ingredients of most varieties, higher (@4th-5th) in limited-ingredient varieties.
<b>JUST FOOD FOR DOGS</b> Irvine, CA (866) 726-9509; justfoodfordogs.com	4	6% - 10% 4% - 7%	\$0.40 - \$0.48	Foods packaged in Tetra Paks; company says foods are made in a USDA kitchen with 100% human-grade ingredients. All varieties except Chicken & Rice are formulated for adult maintenance only. One (Beef & Potato) contains peas.
<b>KASIKS</b> (See FIRSTMATE)				
<b>KIWI KITCHENS</b> Christchurch, New Zealand (64) 21 706621; kiwikitchens.nz	11	7% - 10.7% 1% - 7.5%	\$0.30 - \$0.42	All varieties formulated for dogs of all life stages. All contain 93% meat from a single animal protein source. Two varieties are made with green tripe (lamb tripe, venison tripe). Made in New Zealand.
				
<b>KOHA</b> Delray Beach, FL (800) 478-7713; kohapet.com	20	8% - 12% 2% - 11%	\$0.24 - \$0.54	Koha offers two lines: limited or minimal ingredients, and "homestyle stews." All "limited ingredient" varieties save one (Venison) are formulated for adult maintenance only. Each contains 90% meat from a single animal protein source. All but one of the stews (Beef & Salmon) are formulated for all life stages. Koha is made in three locations (U.S., Canada, Thailand).
<b>LOTUS</b> Torrance, CA (888) 995-6887; lotuspetfoods.com	16	8% - 14% 4% - 10%	\$0.29 - \$0.48	All varieties are grain-free and formulated for all life stages. There are three types: loafs, stews, and "just juicy" (95% meat) varieties. Loaf varieties use pea flour (@3rd-5th) and sweet potatoes as carb source. Stews contain no peas or other legumes. Lotus owns and operates its own cannery.
<b>MERRICK</b> (Nestlé Purina) Amarillo, TX 806-364-0002; merrickpetcare.com	57	7% - 10% 2% - 7%	\$0.23 - \$0.51	Fifty-seven varieties? Oy. Some are sold only seasonally. All are grain-free. Some are for adult maintenance, some are for all life stages; some contain peas; some are legume-free; some are 96% meat or limited ingredient varieties. Always read the ingredients list!

PRODUCT NAME Company Information	# of varieties	Range of Protein (as fed) Range of Fat (as fed)	Price per Ounce	Notes
<b>NATURAL BALANCE</b> (J.M. Smucker) Burbank, CA (800) 829-4493; naturalbalanceinc.com	18	5% - 9.5% 3% - 8%	\$0.19 - \$0.23	Only about half of these are formulated for all life stages; check the label. Most do not contain legumes, instead using rice, potatoes, and/or sweet potatoes as carbs; some also contain meat and meat meal (unusual for canned foods).
<b>NEWMAN'S OWN</b> Westport, CT (203) 222-0136; newmansown.com	8	8% - 10% 5% - 12.5%	\$0.19 - \$0.24	Half of the company's offerings are 95% organic; the rest are made with a preponderance of organic ingredients: Nice! All are formulated for adult maintenance only.
<b>NULO</b> Austin, TX (512) 476-6856; nulo.com	30	7% - 10.5% 3% - 12%	\$0.21 - \$0.39	Most of these foods are formulated for adult maintenance only; all are grain-free. Company says the varieties packed in cartons (Tetra Paks) are made in a human food facility (all "human grade" ingredients). Products in conventional cans all contain legumes and/or sweet potatoes.
<b>NUTRISOURCE, PUREVITA</b> (KLN Family Brands) Perham, MN (800) 525-9155; nutrisourcepetfoods.com	20	8% - 12% 4.5% - 9%	\$0.14 - \$0.24	All varieties are formulated for all life stages. About half of the Nutrisource varieties are grain-free and contain legumes (the grain-inclusive ones use rice or barley). PureVita formulas are all grain-free and 96% meat.
<b>OPEN FARM</b> Toronto, Ontario (833) 399-3403; openfarmpet.com	4	8% 5% - 6%	\$0.64	Company says all meat sources used are certified humane and 100% of the ingredients are "human grade." Products packaged in Tetra Paks. All varieties except one (Harvest Chicken Rustic Stew) are formulated for all life stages.
<b>PARTY ANIMAL</b> West Hollywood, CA (855) 727-8926; partyanimalpetfood.com	8	9% - 11% 5% - 12%	\$0.29 - \$0.31	All varieties are grain-free, limited-ingredient, and formulated for adult maintenance only. Coccolicious line uses one animal protein source and coconut.
<b>PETGUARD</b> Sewickley, PA (929)-515-1436; petguard.com	8	7.5% - 9.5% 4.5% - 8%	\$0.24 - \$0.30	All varieties but two (Turkey/Sweet Potato, Chicken/Brown Rice) are formulated for adult maintenance only. Two varieties (Chicken/Vegetable and Vegan) are organic.
<b>PET-TAO</b> Franklin, TN (615) 934-3832; pettao.com	2	8% 6%	\$0.32	PetTao's foods are formulated for all life stages, according to the principles of Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine's food therapy.
<b>PUREVITA</b> (See NUTRISOURCE)				
<b>RAWZ</b> York, ME (844) 480-8672; rawznaturalpetfood.com	14	9% - 11% 1% - 9%	\$0.27 - \$0.37	96% meat formulas are formulated for all life stages; shredded meat and "hunks" varieties are for adult maintenance only. None of the products contain grain or gums, using tapioca starch and pumpkin for a carb source/thickener.
<b>REDBARN</b> Long Beach, CA (800) 775-3849; redbarn.com	13	8% - 15% 4% - 9%	\$0.20 - \$0.25	All varieties are grain-free and formulated for all life stages. Most of the pâté varieties contain peas (@ 4th-5th). All but one of the stew varieties (Beef) contain peas (@4th-9th).
<b>SIMPLE</b> (See WELLNESS)				
<b>SOLID GOLD</b> Chesterfield, MO (800) 364-4863; solidgoldpet.com	14	7.5% - 9.5% 3% - 8.5%	\$0.20 - \$0.69	Five of the 14 varieties are formulated for adult maintenance only (Fit & Fabulous, Green Cow, Leaping Waters, Sunday Sunrise, Hund-N-Flocken). Twelve varieties are grain-free. Mighty Mini varieties are packed in tubs, not cans.
<b>STELLA &amp; CHEWY'S</b> Oak Creek, WI (888) 477-8977; stellaandchewys.com	6	9% - 10% 2% - 3%	\$0.36	All six varieties are formulated for adult maintenance only. Beef, chicken, lamb, turkey varieties use a single animal protein source; two "medley" varieties mix animal protein sources. Packaged in Tetra Pak cartons. All are free of grains, legumes, and gums – and company says the products are 100% human-grade. Sold only in independent "neighborhood pet supply stores," not online or in chain pet supply stores.



PRODUCT NAME Company Information	# of varieties	Range of Protein (as fed) Range of Fat (as fed)	Price per Ounce	Notes
<b>TASTE OF THE WILD</b> (Diamond Pet Products) Meta, MO (800) 342-4808; tasteofthewildpetfood.com	5	7.5% - 9% 3.5% - 4.5%	\$0.17	All varieties are formulated for all life stages. Each contains peas (@7th-9th), potatoes, and/or potato starch. Creative "ingredient splitting" with the water sources in the ingredients lists (to avoid having water appear first): For example, in the Southwest Canyon variety, ingredients are "beef, beef broth, lamb broth, vegetable broth, beef liver..." Aw, c'mon!
 <b>THE HONEST KITCHEN</b> San Diego, CA (866) 437-9729 thehonestkitchen.com	6	8% - 12.5% 2% - 8%	\$0.33	All varieties are grain-free and formulated for all life stages. Peas appear in just one variety (Salmon/Chicken Stew). Products are packaged in Tetra Pak cartons. Company says products are 100% human edible and made in a human food facility. Company includes a full nutrient analysis of each product on its website; we're in love.
<b>TIKI DOG</b> Chesterfield, MO (866) 821-8562; tikipets.com	27	7% - 17.1% 2% - 12%	\$0.24 - \$0.66	Some TikiDog foods are formulated for all life stages; others are for adult maintenance. Some are packaged in large cans, some in small cans, some in plastic tubs. Some are manufactured in Thailand, some in the U.S. Read the labels!
<b>ULTRA</b> (Nutro, a div. of Mars) Franklin, TN (800) 833-5330; nutro.com	14	8% - 9% 3% - 7%	\$0.51 - \$0.57	We prefer the Ultra line over the rest of the Nutro foods. All of these foods are formulated for adult maintenance only and seem to be offered only in small tubs now. Porcine plasma shows up in a few varieties; read the ingredient list!
<b>VERUS</b> Abingdon, MD (888) 828-3787; veruspetfoods.com	12	7% - 8% 4% - 5%	\$0.30 - \$0.40	All varieties are formulated for all life stages; all are free of carrageenan. Five varieties are grain-free, seven contain grain. About half contain peas (@5th - 7th).
<b>WALK ABOUT</b> New Holland, PA 717-519-7622; walkaboutpetproducts.com	5	7.5% - 8% 2%	\$0.15 - \$0.33	All varieties are grain-free, contain peas (@5th), are formulated for adult maintenance, and contain a single novel animal protein source (boar, duck, kangaroo, rabbit, quail), and contain peas (@5th). We advise saving these for dogs with proven allergies to common proteins.
<b>WELLNESS COMPLETE HEALTH, CORE, SIMPLE</b> (Wellpet) Tewksbury, MA (800) 225-0904; wellnesspetfood.com	46	6% - 12% 2% - 9%	\$0.19 - \$0.56	We like this company, but as with Merrick's foods, we don't get the need for so many varieties: pâtés, stews, cans, plastic tubs, limited ingredient, grain, grain-free, 95% meat: You name it, they make it. About half are formulated for adult maintenance only, so check the label. Note that "growth and maintenance" is the same thing as all life stages.
<b>WELLMADE</b> (See CLOUDSTAR)				
<b>WERUVA</b> Natick, MA (800) 776-5262; weruva.com	20	6% - 10% 1.2% - 6%	\$0.29 - \$0.35	All products are formulated for adult maintenance and free of grain and carrageenan. Peas, potato starch, pumpkin, and sweet potato are used in various combinations as carb sources/thickeners. Products are manufactured in Thailand in a human food facility.
<b>WET NOSES</b> Monroe, WA (866) 938-6673; wet-noses.com	8	10% - 14% 4.5% - 7%	\$1.00	Gorgeous, crazy expensive food packed in glass jars. Website fails to state this, but all foods are formulated for adult maintenance. No legumes included; some varieties contain rice or barley, others are just meat and veggies.
<b>WHOLE EARTH FARMS</b> (Merrick) Amarillo, TX (800) 323-3353; feedgoodness.com	15	8% - 10% 3% - 6.5%	\$0.20 - \$0.40	All foods are formulated for dogs in all life stages. All varieties are grain-free, start their ingredient lists with a whole, named meat, and all contain peas (@4th - 6th).
<b>ZIGNATURE</b> (Pets Global) Valencia, CA (888) 897-7207; zignature.com	13	8% - 11.5% 4% - 7%	\$0.25 - \$0.32	All foods are formulated for all life stages; all but one contain a single animal protein source (the outlier is Zessential, which uses several animal proteins). None contain grain; all contain legumes including peas (@3rd - 7th) and chickpeas. Many varieties use novel protein sources (catfish, duck, goat, guinea fowl, kangaroo); we advise saving these for dogs with proven allergies to common proteins.





## What's ahead...

### ► Winter Foot Care

How to recognize, provide emergency treatment for, and prevent canine paw frostbite. Also, helpful product options (boots, socks, and balms).

### ► Pet Insurance Update

The offerings are always changing; do you know what plans can help you and your dog the most?

### ► Just Eat It

How to train when your dog won't take treats (or can't have them due to a severely restricted diet).

### ► Heartworm Prevention

Serious as a heart attack.

### ► GPS Tracking Devices/Activity Monitors

A review of the top-rated products that purport to keep you apprised of your dog's activity and whereabouts at all times.

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This publication is supported by sales of subscriptions and back issues.

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## RESOURCES

### BOOKS

WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of many books on force-free, pain-free, fear-free training, including:

- *Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance at a First Class Life*
- *How to Foster Dogs*
- *Play With Your Dog*
- *Positive Perspectives*
- *Beware of the Dog: Positive Solutions for Aggressive Behavior in Dogs*

All of these are available from [Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products](http://Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products).

*101 Rescue Puppies: One Family's Story of Fostering Dogs, Love, and Trust*, by Kathy Callahan (New World Library, 2020). Over the past decade, Kathy Callahan's family has taken in more than 100 rescue puppies. This delightful photo-filled book features the wonderful stories that emerged as these foster pups were suddenly surrounded by a nurturing family complete with patient adult dogs and curious cats. With a gift for capturing the moment in both words and images, Callahan brings readers inside the poignant and ultimately uplifting work of fostering. This inspiring read is indeed about puppies, but it's also about family and human connection and finding your own way through that one special thing you can do to light a light, instead of cursing the darkness. Available now from [Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products](http://Whole-Dog-Journal.com/products).

### TRAINING AND EDUCATION

**Kathy Callahan, CPDT-KA**  
Alexandria, VA. [puppypicks.com](http://puppypicks.com)

Kathy is a regular contributor to WDJ and the author of the book *101 Rescue Puppies: One Family's Story of Fostering Dogs, Love, and Trust*. She's a Certified Professional Dog Trainer who specializes in puppyhood coaching.

**Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA**  
Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training  
Fairplay, MD. (301) 582-9420  
[peaceablepaws.com](http://peaceablepaws.com)

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