

The Dog Dialogue

from Pawsitive Manners



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Positive Methods. Positive Outcomes.

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✦ Highlights ✦



LIVING WITH DOGS

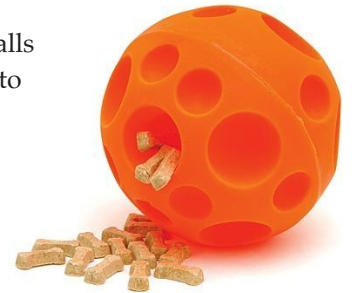
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5 Tips for Keeping Your Dog Busy

Dogs get stir-crazy, too. If yours is climbing the walls and driving you to distraction, here are five ways to help him chill.

Lots of exercise. "A tired dog is a good dog"

is a cliché for good reason. It's easy to be well-behaved when you're sleeping off a good run. If a run isn't in the cards, there are plenty of other ways to tire out your best friend. Try a brisk leash walk, a game of fetch or keep away in the yard or hallway, or a round of hide-and-seek or catch-me-if-you-can.



Put away the food bowl. Extend your dog's mealtime by putting his food in a Kong or treat ball or other food delivery toy. He'll enjoy the challenge and expend extra energy.

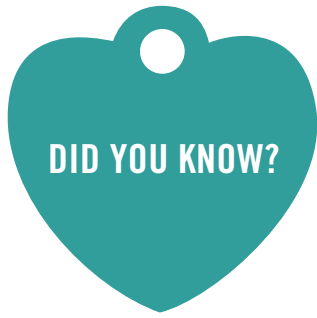
Let 'em chew. Dogs are born to chew, and many are content to spend hours on a good project. Talk to your vet and local pet supply store about safe options, then try a variety to discover what tickles your dog's fancy. Whatever you choose, always supervise for safety and remove the item before it becomes small enough to swallow.

Work the mind. We all know dogs are smart, and mental exercise can tucker a dog out as well as the physical kind can. Do an online search for canine puzzle toys and you'll find an impressive selection of creative products to keep your dog's mind occupied for long stretches. For best results, read and follow the training directions that accompany the toys you choose.

Reward the calm. Here's an easy one that's often overlooked. Tell your dog "thank you" when he's being calm. Reinforced behavior increases in frequency. Reward your dog's calm moments with a treat, some attention, a chew, or a puzzle toy, and he'll reward you with more calm moments. Ahhhh...

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Dogs don't need a pack leader, they need a benevolent guardian



Nose Jobs

1. **Land mine detection.** Dogs' sensitive olfactory receptors can pinpoint mines four inches underground or more. Mine detection dogs prevent thousands of deaths and injuries every year.
2. **Scat sniffing.** Dogs help wildlife researchers by locating scat from endangered species.
3. **Termite detection.** Beagles and Labs are the exterminator's (and homeowner's) best friends. The dogs identify infestations in the hidden crawl spaces of houses that show no outward signs of termites.
4. **Truffle sniffing.** Why have dogs replaced pigs as the favorite tracking animal of Italy's truffle hunters? Pigs tend to eat what they find. Dogs settle for a biscuit.
5. **Lifeboat rescue.** When rivers flood or boats sink in lakes, dogs help track down survivors caught in vegetation.



A WORLD OF DOGS

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The Human-Dog Bond

You're not imagining it. Your dog really does understand what you're feeling. Dogs can't read our minds, no, but when it often seems like they do, it's because of a special connection between our two species that's increasingly well understood. Dogs don't just seem attuned to our emotions. They are. Eye-track studies of dogs have shown that they read human faces for emotional cues in the same way we ourselves do.



No other species do this, not even chimps. Scientists speculate that this skill has evolved in dogs to enable them to communicate with us on an emotional level. To better understand us. Which makes sense. When you rely on humans for your survival, there's obvious biological advantage to reading their moods for signs of intentions, impending danger, etc.

The same goes for barking. Wolves rarely bark, and when they do, it's to warn other pack members. Dogs, on the other hand, possess an impressive vocal repertoire that spans yowls, yelps, grumbles, whines, acoustic sighs, and many types of barks, suggesting another trait dogs may have developed exclusively to strengthen their teamwork with humans. Arguably, dogs have learned to speak a second language specifically to support their bond with us.

And the connection goes both ways: We've become skilled interpreters of barks. In experiments in which researchers played recordings of dog barks to dog guardians, they were capable of distinguishing between request barking, anxious barking, territorial barking, and other kinds, without seeing the dog's body language or the situation. We use the tonality, frequency, and interval of barks to decode the message.

So, the science backs us up: We do indeed have a special bond with dogs. It's so strong that we mostly take it for granted and lump dogs in with the rest of the family—because they are family.

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DOGS IN ACTION

Doga (Yoga for Dogs)

Humans have engaged in yoga since ancient times, and our modern era has seen a surge in the practice all over the world. Recently that surge even includes our best friends. Given the trend of extending human health practices to our canine companions (think canine massage, acupuncture, aromatherapy, Reiki, etc.), it should come as no surprise to hear about dog, or yoga for dogs.

A growing number of yoga studios are offering doga classes, inviting dogs and their people to enjoy the benefits of yoga together. But you don't have to attend class to get your dog in on the action. Like cats, dogs seem to have a built-in understanding of the healing and wellness-boosting properties of stretching. It's a priority to them and most stretch thoroughly several times a day. Yoga for dogs can be a natural extension of this stretching habit—a fun, healthful, and relaxing activity you can share with your dog in your own living room with the aid of YouTube videos, DVDs, and books on the subject.

For dogs who get into the practice, yoga can promote flexibility, increased blood circulation, and quicker recovery from strenuous walks or play sessions. And for dogs who don't quite catch on, doga sessions are a great way to spend time together while you get your stretch on.



HEALTHY DOG

Ear Infections

Dog's ears are impressive. For example, they can swivel to locate the source of a sound in 6/100 of a second. However, the design of canine ear canals leaves something to be desired. Their shape (a downward plunge followed by a horizontal tract) can leave debris stuck too easily, which is why dogs—floppy-eared ones in particular—are prone to ear infections. Telltale signs include: Ear scratching, colored discharge, odor, redness, swelling, crusted or scabby skin, and impaired hearing. Also pay attention if your dog wipes his ear on the floor or furniture, or if he shakes his head a lot.

To prevent infections, gently dry your dog's ears after swimming or baths, and occasionally clean his ears with a cotton ball dampened with a solution recommended by your vet. If you suspect a problem, it's important not to self-diagnose. Bacteria or yeast causes most ear infections, and both require veterinary treatment.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Siberian Husky

If you've got a Siberian Husky, you'd better have a reliable vacuum cleaner (or maybe an army of Roombas). These gorgeous dogs are heavy shedders, built as they are for Arctic climes. Their beautiful coats and stunning faces have won them many a dog lover's heart, as have their intelligence. Originally bred by the Chukchi in eastern Siberia for sled-pulling, guarding, and companionship, Huskies were introduced to North America during the Nome Alaska Gold Rush in the early 20th century for sled-dog racing.

Huskies have starred in many movies and TV series over the years, most recently *Game of Thrones*. This show has been connected to a large increase in interest in the breed, which unfortunately has also resulted in an increase in Huskies finding themselves at public shelters.

Dogs bred for extreme activity require plenty of outlets for physical activity and mental stimulation. If you've got the time and energy for a Siberian Husky, search online for a rescue organization near you.



Resource Guarding

Resource guarding is when a dog controls access to things that he values all the time or at that moment. It could be food, toys, people, his bed and places that are important to him through defensive body language or overt aggressive display. This is a relatively common behavior and is influenced by a number of environmental and situational stimuli, including a dog's natural instinct to survive.

Because people often misunderstand their dog's behavior, many get angry and confrontational with their dogs. Confrontation, however, increases competition and causes the dog to guard the contested resource even more. Using physical punishment on a resource guarding dog is the exact opposite of what you need to do. Instead, make sure you understand the dog's experience and work to instill more confidence in the dog so that he feels less threatened.

The process of changing this behavior can take some time and varies depending on the dog and the situation, but with consistency and patience, you can stop this behavior

For a dog who guards his food, you can start by

- Get a new food bowl
- Place the empty dish in front of him
- After he's done sniffing it, add a little bit of food in it
- Once he's finished, wait for him to look at you, then add a bit more
- Repeat until he has eaten all of his meal
- Do this for at least a week to 10 days for every meal
- Then practice tossing a little treat into his empty dish when you walk by it

The above steps will start you and your dog on the right track. There are more steps to change this behavior however each dog is different and each case is unique. Call me if you live with a resource guarder or if your dog is starting to develop this behavior.



How To Pill Your Dog

If you can, sneak pills into your dog either by getting chewable medication from your vet, mixing the meds in with your dog's meal, or sticking the pill inside a soft treat like sweet potato fries. If that doesn't work, the procedure is:

1. Hold the pill with one hand. Place that hand on your dog's lower jaw, the other on his upper jaw. Lift up his head.
2. Open your dog's mouth and put the pill to the side of the tongue as far back as you can reach. Quickly remove your hand and close your dog's jaw.
3. Keep your dog's head tilted upward and his jaws closed. Encourage him to swallow by gently stroking his throat downward with the other hand. As soon as you think your dog has swallowed the pill, release him and offer him a yummy treat.

(Instructions courtesy of ASPCA)



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Live Harmoniously with Dogs



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