

The Dog Dialogue

from Pawsitive Manners



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Positive Methods. Positive Outcomes.

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Vocal Language



LIVING WITH DOGS

Up With The Dog...

Some dogs don't appreciate a good lie-in—or know the difference between workdays and weekends. Young puppies and senior dogs can't be expected to hold it all night and are legitimately excused, but adult dogs should let you sleep. If your dog has taken it upon himself to be your personal alarm clock, here are some tips:



Visit the vet. The first step is always to rule out a urinary tract infection or other medical conditions that might be causing bladder discomfort.

Increase activity. It can't be said often enough: a tired dog is a well-behaved dog. This includes early morning manners. More time spent hiking the trails, chasing a ball, and playing with friends at the park or doggie daycare will help everyone enjoy a full night's sleep.

Delay evening toilette. Make your dog's last toilet trip as late as you can. Get in the habit of taking your dog out just before bedtime so you can be reasonably sure he isn't desperate to go in the morning. (Rewarding the evening elimination with a tasty treat can help encourage a quick outing.)

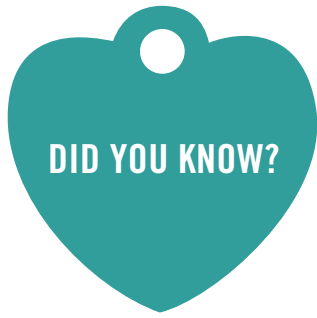
Reschedule breakfast. If your dog knows that one of the first things you attend to in the morning is his breakfast, you have provided powerful motivation for him to get you out of bed. Don't set this trap for yourself and if you already have, change it.

Push the snooze button. When the pawing or whining begins, turn onto the other side (provided, as per the previous tip, you're fairly certain it isn't a bathroom emergency). Whatever you do, don't reinforce your dog's behavior by acknowledging it with eye contact, soothing noises, a groan of exasperation, a scratch on the head, or—worst of all—by getting up.

continued on page 2

“Don't expect all dogs to grow up to behave like Lassie. Lassie was, in fact, several highly trained dogs.”

—Dr. Ian Dunbar



These Separation Anxiety Facts?

- SA is a genuine phobia of being left alone, in which dogs experience mild anxiety to deep terror
- Upwards of 50% of dogs worldwide suffer from a separation-related problem
- That number is on the rise due to the pandemic
- Common signs of SA include frantic behavior before you leave and when you return, and barking, house soiling, and destruction while alone
- SA is not a phase and sadly does not resolve on its own; it typically worsens over time when not addressed properly
- For most dogs, the company of another dog does not ease SA—it's their people they want

If you and your dog are suffering the effects of SA, contact a qualified professional dog trainer for help.



A WORLD OF DOGS

We Can't All Be Social Butterflies

We all want our dogs to play nice with other dogs—and shouldn't it come naturally?

Dogs are social, after all. So why does an otherwise sweet-natured canine buddy turn into a killjoy at the park? Well, dogs can be introverts, too. Like humans, they can have bad days and they



occasionally form instant dislikes to new dogs. But where we get to choose our friends and are free to avoid anyone we can't stand, dogs pretty much have to go wherever we take them. What's more, they are territorial creatures, protective of their favorite things, their home turf, and us. Adding another dog to the equation, familiar or not, always holds the potential for fireworks.

Why are some dogs more social than others? Genetics play a role, and so does early socialization. Here, too, the human analogy is apt. Some of us come out of the womb gregarious, others are born shy and unsure of how to negotiate the dynamics of social groups. We also are greatly affected by our earliest experiences. An otherwise confident and social child finding herself the target of bullies on the playground could be forever changed as a result. Similarly, dogs are the sum of their parts: DNA and experiences thrown into a pot. Some herding or hunting breeds, for example, were bred for the ability to work independently and might find playtime at the park a monumental waste of time. And many dogs raised during the pandemic missed out on their chance to build early social skills.

If a dog's anti-social tendencies go beyond polite disinterest, positive training is an option. Working through a program to build positive associations to other dogs using rewards and comfortable distances can greatly improve relations between a dog and her peers. But if a dog is civil to most dogs, but doesn't play or gets grumpy when approached by bouncy youngsters, a bit of situational awareness might be all that's needed: favoring open spaces and less-busy trails for walks, crossing the street if there isn't room to circumnavigate another dog on a sidewalk, etc. After all, why shouldn't dogs be allowed to be who they really are?

(continued from page 1)



DOGS IN ACTION

On The Job: Arson Dogs

For more than 12,000 years, dogs have worked alongside humans. Most modern dogs are companions, of course, but those who do work have ever more extraordinary job descriptions. Accelerant-detection is one example.

Arson dogs work with fire investigative units to sniff out minuscule amounts of anything from lamp oil to lighter fluid (they can detect more than 60 different ignitable petroleum-based hydrocarbons) in scenes flooded with water or covered in snow or mud. They use their 200 million scent receptors (compared to our 5 million) to help investigators accurately assess the flammable products present at a fire scene and increase the chances of collecting a positive sample.



This can help rule arson in—or out. With billions of dollars in property and hundreds of lives lost every year as a result of intentionally set fires, arson dogs can play an important role in bringing arsonists to justice.

What makes a good arson dog? At the top of the list is a high level of energy. Dogs that might be considered the problem child in other settings are often prime candidates—Guide dog training “dropouts,” for example. Other key characteristics are curiosity, high trainability, an excellent nose, and an easy going demeanor.



HEALTHY DOG

What Is That Bump?

Few things are more unsettling than giving your dog a good scratch and finding a growth under your fingers. Conditioned as we are to think “cancer,” the experience can be quite a scare. Take a breath and take heart: Lumps and bumps should always be taken seriously, but there’s no need to panic right away. Growths are common on dogs and thankfully the vast majority are benign. Two common types of lumps are lipomas, fat deposits just under the skin, and sebaceous cysts, caused by obstructed oil glands. Other types of cysts are also frequent, as are infected hair follicles.

The only way to know for sure, however, if your dog’s bump is nothing to worry over is to consult your veterinarian, who in many cases will turn to a veterinary pathologist for a microscopic examination of a cell sample. Also, even benign lumps can become problematic if left alone, so best to make that appointment.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Bernese Mountain Dog

These large beauties have their roots in the Roman mastiffs and were originally bred in the Swiss Alps as farm dogs. Their traditional jobs included herding, protecting the property, and being loving companions.

Their easy-going temperaments make Bernese equally suited to modern domestic life, if you have the room. While generally on the calmer side of the canine spectrum, like all dogs Bernese need regular activity and exercise to be at their best physically and behaviorally.

Berners (as some aficionados call them) have gained a reputation for their rescue instincts. In 2015 an adopted Bernese named Nico was proclaimed a hero after he saved the lives of two swimmers caught in a California rip current. And Berners Bella, Oakley, and Ben became famous for saving their respective human companions from house fires.

To share your life with one of these brave, gorgeous giants, search nearby shelters and rescues for a Bernese looking for a home.



Dog Body Language

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From Sour to Sweet

Dogs smell like... well, dogs, but some smell more than others. Regular bathing and grooming should be enough to keep your dog's natural fragrance to a pleasant minimum. If not, a change to your dog's diet or visit to your vet may be in order. These are common culprits of canine odor:

Bacterial or fungal infections. Ear infections can emit a pungent smell. So can skin infections, common in dogs with overlapping folds of skin. Dental infections, in addition to being painful and dangerous to a dog's health, can smell of rot.

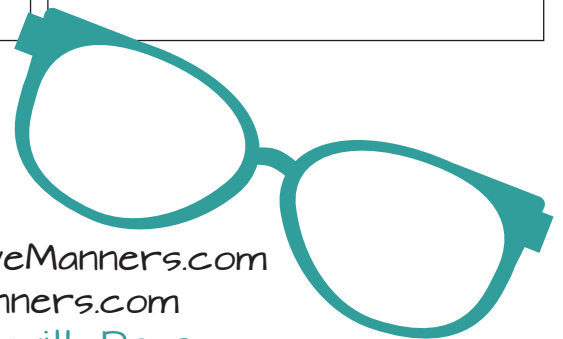
Diet problems. Food allergies, poor food quality, or a diet high in starches and low in fatty acids can cause dry skin, bad breath, excessive flatulence, and other health-related issues that add to the bad smells around the house.

Overdoing the bath products. Shampoos, powders, and perfume with strong fragrances can irritate your dog's skin and make matters worse. Stick to natural, gentle formulas.



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Live Harmoniously with Dogs



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