

Your New Puppy:
Training, Tips & Fun

by

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Dog Breeds

Experts disagree on the exact number, but estimate there are more than 300 breeds of dogs. Each is valued by someone or by a group of people. In fact, they exist because they were bred to have characteristics that make them well suited for specific tasks. Over thousands of years, dogs were bred to meet a variety of human needs.

Toy breeds are the very small types of dogs, often weighing less than ten pounds. This group is the only one in which the dogs were bred to be mainly companions and "intruder alarms" rather than perform physical labor. Natural "lap" dogs, these cute canines are great for small dwellings.

Dogs in the **Hound group** were all originally bred to assist with hunting. Many hound types have an amazing sense of smell; others are best known for their stamina during the chase. Their talent for hunting is the main trait these dogs share, since hounds come in a wide variety of sizes and shapes.

Working dogs have the size and strength that makes them well suited to guarding property, pulling carts and other intense physical tasks. They are well known for their extremely high intelligence and deep devotion to their human companions. German shepherds, Doberman pinchers, Rottweilers, Mastiffs, Giant Schnauzers and Boxers are just a few of the better known types of working dogs.

Like the Hounds, dogs from the **Sporting group** were bred to assist with hunting. Alert and active by nature, sporting dogs fit in well with active owners. If you plan on adding any type of Sporting dog-spaniels, pointers, setters and retrievers-to your family, keep in mind that these high-energy dogs need frequent exercise.

The dog breeds included in the **Non-Sporting group** vary greatly in appearance and abilities. Dalmatians, because of their amazing stamina and strong sense of territory, were set to run alongside carriages to guard the travelers inside. Later, firemen employed these unique dogs to guard fire wagons. Poodles, which most people associate with high-society, were originally bred as work animals. In addition to pulling small carts, poodles were used to retrieve items from the water.

Terriers are known for their distinctive personalities. Tenacious by nature, these lively dogs require owners willing to provide lots of physical and mental stimulation. Their group name is derived from the Latin "Terra," meaning earth. Bred to hunt vermin, terriers are instinctive, active diggers.

Sight hounds were bred to assist the hunter by virtue of their excellent eyesight. Instead of finding prey by scent, these lean hunters spot their quarry from a great distance. They have amazing stamina and energy and all members of this group need plenty of exercise.

Today, most breeds are partially "unemployed." Many of their jobs have been taken over by machines. Yet, no machine can comfort you when you're down, make you laugh with its antics or see into your soul the way a dog can. Until a machine is invented to fill the human need for companionship and devotion, dogs will always have a place in our homes and hearts.

Adopting a New Dog or Puppy

Thinking of adding a dog to your family? Did you consider adopting a dog or puppy from a local animal shelter, humane society, or rescue program. Not only will you feel good about making a place for a homeless pet, you'll also adopt an outstanding companion. Right now, most animal shelters have taken on an extra burden, due to the recent hurricane disasters hitting the United States, by sheltering pets affected by Katrina. So if you're looking to adopt a dog from Hurricane Katrina, check your local shelters and humane societies.

Shelter Puppies and Dogs: Are They Safe?

Shelter staff and rescue volunteers carefully check each dog for good health and good temperament before placement. Often, your puppy or dog will come to you already spayed or neutered, microchipped or tagged, and with a clean bill of health from a veterinarian. Rescue pups, especially, may already have some basic obedience skills.

Through no fault of their own, many wonderful dogs end up in animal shelters, hoping for a second (or third!) chance at happiness. Pets are relinquished when their owners are no longer able to care for them. It may be because the owner didn't realize just how much time and responsibility comes with owning a pet (but you're not like that, right?). Or possibly a family member developed an allergy. Even more frequently, however, caring owners struggling with life changes or family tragedy find their dog would be better off elsewhere. It's never an easy decision to give up a pet, but sometimes, it's the only choice.

Animal Shelters: A Puppy and Dog Buffet!

Shelters and humane societies are an excellent place to find your new best friend. Just about any age, size and breed of dog is available.

You may even find puppies there, as people often underestimate how difficult it is to care for a litter of puppies. In other cases, young dogs are relinquished because their previous owners didn't have time to provide regular exercise for a very active dog. If you have your mind set on a puppy, then a shelter is an excellent place to start your search.

Looking for a more mature dog, one that is probably housebroken and may already know some basic obedience? Then you'll also find these kinds of dogs at the humane society or animal shelter. Sometimes you'll also have the previous owner's experiences available, so you can learn about each dog before considering it for adoption.

If you have your heart set on a specific breed, consider a rescue program.

www.petfinder.com is an excellent source for locating breed-specific rescues and foster homes in your area.

Remember: it's in the shelter or rescue's best interest, too, to find the right home for each puppy or dog that comes through their doors. Shelter staff and rescue volunteers not only evaluate each pet for physical and behavioral soundness, but they will also make note of any quirks (not good with children or cats, for example) and work to eliminate any negative behaviors. Many shelters have adoption counselors who interview potential adoptees, working to understand their needs and lifestyle so they can make a perfect match.

Bringing Your New Dog Home

It's exciting to bring your new puppy or dog home, but it may be overwhelming for him. Keep him on a leash while you take him from room to room, giving him plenty of opportunity to sniff around. Your first stop may be a trip to the backyard (or wherever your dog will relieve herself) for a quick sniff and a pee. Reward him with lots of sweet talk and pets as you go through his new home: your voice and kind actions can help smooth the transition.

Establish a firm routine soon, as dogs are creatures of habit. This helps your dog become more comfortable quickly. Feed her in the same spot and at the same time each morning and evening. You'll soon discover that she grows excited, in anticipation for what's coming, as she becomes acquainted with your routine. Always set out her breakfast after you get the paper? She'll know before you realize it what the routine is. Dogs learn quickly.

New Dog Essentials

Now that you've decided to get a puppy or dog, the next few weeks will be busy and at times, more than a little bit crazy. That's why it's important to plan in advance for the arrival of your new pet. If possible, get as many necessities ready before your puppy comes home.

The Basics

- Travel crate: Even if you don't plan on crate training your dog, consider the benefits of owning a crate for other reasons, like transporting an ill or injured puppy to the veterinarian.
- Food and water bowls: If you have a puppy, keep the bowls low and shallow. Tip-proof works well, too. As they grow, you'll likely need to upgrade to larger dishes to accommodate your pet's size.
- Food: Choose an age-appropriate food. Ask your vet or local pet store for recommendations if you're not sure what kind to purchase. Remember that high quality dog food keeps your puppy healthier and happier.
- Collar: Pick a collar that fits properly now. You can always upgrade later if necessary.
- Leash: A six-foot lead works well. Choose the right thickness and strength for your dog. A Chihuahua's needs are very different from the needs of a Rottweiler.
- ID tag: As one of the first things people search for when finding a stray dog, an ID tag can help make sure your puppy makes it home safely. At a minimum, have your phone number engraved on the tag.
- Grooming supplies: Different breeds require different levels of grooming. However, every pup can benefit from a good weekly brushing. It's also a great way to have quiet, bonding time with your new dog.
- Housebreaking supplies: Even adult dogs have accidents, so be prepared with good cleaning supplies.
- Veterinarian: If you don't have a favorite vet already, ask family, friends and neighbors for a recommendation. Have an appointment scheduled within the first few days of bringing your puppy home, so your vet can check for worms, other health conditions, and start her vaccination regimen.
- Flea control: Make sure your new pal is protected from fleas and other pests by getting her a top-notch flea control product. You no longer need prescriptions to purchase items like Frontline or Advantage, so visit today and order!

Keep reading for the extras every lovable pup should have!

The Extras

- Obedience classes: Every dog can benefit from learning some basic obedience skills.
- Puppy treats: Yummy treats are the perfect reward when you're working on obedience. Or for when they're just being adorable.
- Toys: Chew toys help satisfy your new puppy's teething needs. If you'd like to teach your dog to retrieve, look at purchasing a few balls, but make sure they're not so small that your dog chokes. A lot of people swear by Kong, an awesome rubber toy you stuff with treats to keep your new pal busy.
- Sour apple spray: Use this product to spray on spots your puppy loves to chew on. It's a terrific deterrent for naughty puppies.
- Baby gates: Want to keep your dog in one area of your house? Use baby gates to corral him. Let's face it; for a lot of us, dogs are our babies anyway!
- Dog house: If your pup will spend any time outdoors, he'll love having his own little house. Fill it with great chew toys and a cozy blanket, and it will be the perfect home away from home. Find an awesome selection of houses to choose from at www.doghouses.com.
- Doggie door: Training your dog to use a doggie door when she needs to go outdoors makes life easier for you and your pal.
- Clothing: Depending on where you live, sweaters or snow boots may be required outdoor gear for your dog.

Now that you have the basics on hand, don't forget **the most essential items** for your new puppy: **lots of hugs, kisses, and sweet talk**. Best of all, they're free!

If, like me, you're looking for one stop shopping, try our partners for all the puppy must-haves you need, like www.entirelypets.com or www.petco.com.

Puppy Power

Raising a dog from puppy to mature adult is rewarding experience, but also pretty exhausting. Much like human babies, puppies tug at our heartstrings and we sometimes give into their whims. But, just as with humans, it is very easy to spoil a puppy and end up with an annoying pet instead of the sweet companion you wanted.

Puppies need almost **constant supervision and guidance**. They actively explore the world around them, which puts them at risk for injury or poisoning. Puppies, like all dogs, use their mouths to learn about items that interest them. If they mouth an object and like the taste or texture, they will continue to chew on it. If that object is a roach trap or electrical cord, your puppy's curiosity might prove fatal.

If you can't supervise your pup at all times, use baby gates or other barriers to create a large, confined space for her to play in. Try to choose a spot that people spend a lot of time in. The more time spent with family members, the more quickly and deeply your puppy will bond with them. Give her something soft to lie on, a few toys to play with, and a bowl of clean water.

People often ask pet experts when is the best time to begin training a puppy. Most experts agree that **training should begin the moment your puppy enters your home**. They aren't talking about learning to heel or sit and stay for long periods of time, but the fact that the first thing you must train your puppy to understand is that you are the boss. Usually, dog trainers refer to this as making yourself the "leader of the pack." Dogs are pack animals by nature, and therefore instinctively look to a leader for approval. If you don't make it clear that you are the leader, your pup may try to take that role. You don't have to be aggressive to assert your dominance. Small, subtle acts communicate your leadership more successfully than loud roughness. In fact, handling your puppy harshly will only make her afraid and diminish her ability to bond with you.

One of the first behaviors you can **teach your puppy** at a very young age is **to sit**. Place one hand on her chest, and the other on her rump. As you give the command to "sit," push down on her rump and up on her chest to guide her into a sitting position. Give her lots of verbal praise in a high-pitched voice, and perhaps a treat. Now, every time you feed her, make her sit before you put her bowl down. Trainers refer to this as the "nothing in life is free" technique. Your pup learns quickly that you control the food, and that she must please you in order to eat. This establishes your leadership in her eyes.

The key to raising the "best dog ever" is compassion, patience, and love. Give your puppy plenty of those things, and you'll reap the rewards for many years to come.

Naming Your New Dog

You've picked out the perfect puppy. You spent hours on the internet, researching the right breed for you and your family. Then you went from breeder to breeder or humane society to humane society, meeting and greeting pups until you find just the right match.

Now what? He needs a name!

Over the course of its life, you will use your dog's name more than 35,000 times. So be sure you're picking a name you can live with and love.

With these seven simple steps, the key to finding the perfect puppy name is at your fingertips!

- Dogs understand short commands. Easy names with two or fewer syllables work well.
- Your puppy's name shouldn't sound like any commands. "Stacy" and "stay" are too close for comfort. Such a name will only confuse the issue.
- Remember, you'll be using your pup's name in public. "Boner" may be cute among your fellow fraternity members, but it won't go over well at the veterinarian.
- Make your kids part of the decision process. Kids like it simple, too, so if calling your Champion Cavalier King Spaniel "Bootsie" works for them, consider keeping the hoity toity name strictly for AKC purposes.
- You may think it's an honor to name your pup after you're favorite Uncle Norbert. Naming your baby after him may keep you in the will, but naming your puppy after him may not. Ask sweet Uncle Norbie before bestowing such an honor.
- If you're bringing home an older dog, ideally, stick with the name it already owns. Can't stand it because "Barney" was the first boy who broke your heart? Then stick with similar sounds when choosing a new dog name. "Barney" morphs into "Farley" easily.
- Once you've chosen a name, try it out for a day or so. You'll know right away whether it's a keeper. If not, there's always more puppy names on your list!

Take a look around you. Everywhere you are, you'll find a variety of terrific ideas on what to name your pooch.

At first glance, a couple things will stand out about your new puppy. Enjoy him or her for a day or two and take these into consideration.

- Appearance. What's your dog look like? His color, size, and personal style inspires a variety of name choices. "Stubbs" would be a great name for a dachshund pup. Or you may call a cream colored cock-a-poo "Buffy."
- Personality. Given a couple of days, your new dog's personality will really shine through. Try "Cuddles" for the sweet little guy who loves to get cozy or "Puddles" for

the pooch who can't seem to find the doggie door.

If you want to go beyond the basics, many famous dog names or foreign dog names can fit the bill. Consider these favorite puppy names when making your decision.

- Celebrity puppy names. Today, pooches have more celebrity following than their famous owners. Chew on "Lola," a name used by both Hilary Duff and the Osbournes.
- TV dogs. "Scooby" and "Astro" come to mind if you want to honor a famous TV pup.
- Movie dogs. Cool movies and cool dog names seem to go hand in hand. Cool Hand Luke's "Blue" would be a fitting label for a variety of dogs.
- Comic dogs. "Snoopy" will always be a favorite, but also consider "Daisy" or "Odie."
- German dog names. For starters, try out "Fritz" or "Kaiser."
- Irish dog names. "Finn" fits well for any pup, as does "Murphy," which just happens to mean "hound of the sea."
- French puppy names. "Pierre" and "Gigi" are top contenders for any dog, especially those with a little oo-la-la in their genes.
- Star Wars puppy names. "Yoda" is a great name for your new chihuahua pup, but nothing quite says "fan" like naming him "Sora Bulq."

The choices are endless. However, with these simple tips and some thought, before long, you'll have found the perfect puppy name!

Keeping Your Dog Safe: ID Tags, Microchips and GPS

According to the American Humane Society, just 15% of dogs in shelters ever find their way home again. Thankfully, these loved pooches had identification, enabling shelter personnel to contact and return them to their owners. With such discouraging statistics, it becomes clear how important it is to tag or identify your new puppy.

Even if your dog doesn't go outside much or is always in your company, **you must identify him or her**. Windows and doors can be left open, offering your pup a too-tempting escape to the outside world. What should you do to keep your pup safe at home?

There are **several ways to ID** your pet to prevent against loss or theft. Ideally, implement at least two methods to ensure a safe return should your dog go missing.

Tattoos and microchips provide permanent ways to identify your dog. Shelters, veterinarians, and research laboratories know to look for these keys when animals are brought to their facilities.

- **Tattoos:** this permanent identification system involves tattooing a code onto the dog's skin, often inside the outer ear or on the inside of its leg. Veterinarians or trained specialists will ink the code for you. You will need to list your dog with one of the many tattoo registry programs around the country.
- **Microchips:** these minuscule electronic chips are embedded under your dog's skin. Because special scanners are needed to read the information located on the chip, most veterinarians, shelters, and research laboratories have these on hand to scan all strays for identification. Several registries offer membership for dogs with microchips.

While tattoos and microchips offer excellent safety measurements at a reasonable cost, the fact is most people don't know to look for a tattoo or have the means available to scan for microchips. As a result, **it's essential you provide your pup with an ID tag worn on its collar**. ID tags are often the first thing searched for when a stray is found by someone.

At a minimum, the tag should list a current phone number. Because people move and phone numbers change often, a second phone number of a trusted friend or family member is also recommended. If space is available, additional information to include is: your puppy's name, your address, and any medical conditions.

Luckily, dog ID tags are not expensive to purchase, so it should be one of the first things you get your dog, once you've chosen a name. You can usually find just the right tag, too, that fits your lifestyle and your pet's personality. Tags come in different materials, such as aluminum, brass, stainless steel or plastic, and in a variety of shapes and colors. Today's glamour pooch can even have his or her own tag made of Swarovski crystals! When it

comes to choosing a fun dog ID tag, the choices are limitless.

And, if you take your dog's safety very seriously, considering purchasing a **GPS collar** for him. If you're looking for the latest in proven technology to help keep track of your pets, then look no further than GPS and two-way wireless technology.

GPS, or global positioning system, provides an excellent way to track your pet's whereabouts, no matter where you are. Simply attach the GPS collar to your animal and voila! You can locate him or her in a flash.

Here are just a few situations where GPS for pets will give you peace of mind:

- The backyard escape artist. If your pooch loves to climb that fence, then keep him in sight with a GPS dog collar.
- While you travel. If you lose your pet in unfamiliar surroundings, having a GPS pet tracker handy will make finding him or her easier.
- Theft prevention. Pets nowadays are a valuable asset. Protect your investment and your best friend with pet GPS.

To learn more about the various ways of tagging your dog, check out our sister site www.id-a-pet.com.

Whatever methods you use when protecting your pet against loss or theft, please remember to **keep the contact information current**. Just a few minutes of your time to update registry information or purchase a new dog tag can make all the difference in the world in your beloved dog's life.

Myths and Facts About Spaying and Neutering

Pet overpopulation is a problem worldwide. There are more dogs than homes available, and the number of canines increases daily. Homeless dogs suffer from starvation and disease. Yet, there is a simple solution to this serious problem. Spaying and neutering pet dogs would drastically affect overpopulation. To "spay" a female animal is to remove her ovaries. When a male dog is neutered, his testicles are removed.

Unfortunately, this solution only works if people use it. And too many people have the wrong idea about spaying and neutering pets. Their understanding of spaying/neutering is based on myths. Here are the facts:

Myth: Spaying/neutering makes pets lazy so they get fat.

Truth: Removing her reproductive organs doesn't affect your pet's metabolism. If you feed her too much and/or don't give her enough exercise, she will get fat. Whether your dog is spayed/neutered or not, you need to monitor her weight and control her food and exercise to keep her in top health.

Myth: Female dogs should have one litter before they are spayed.

Fact: Veterinary studies show that female dogs are actually healthier if they are spayed before they ever go into heat. If a female has even one litter, it increases her chances of developing cancer later in life.

Myth: It is cruel to put a dog through the pain and discomfort.

Fact: Dogs that are spayed and neutered have a much lower risk of painful, fatal cancers of the reproductive organs. Veterinarians have found that dogs spayed/neutered as puppies-as young as 8 weeks old-recover much more quickly and need less pain medication than older dogs.

Myth: Dogs become less protective of territory if spayed or neutered.

Fact: the biggest effect spaying/neutering has on a dog's personality is that it becomes more predictable. The lack of hormones means your dog won't tend to roam in search of a mate, and won't go into erratic, aggressive fits. She will, however, still have a strong sense of territory and the desire to defend it from strangers.

Myth: Watching a female dog give birth is educational for children.

Fact: The chances of children actually witnessing the birth are very small since females seek privacy when they go into labor. Observing puppies develop is fascinating, but children experience great trauma and sadness when they have to give up the friends they've grown attached to over eight weeks.

Myth: Having a dog spayed/neutered is expensive.

Fact: the cost of the procedure depends on the size of your dog, since the amount of anesthesia needed is based on weight. If having a private practice veterinarian perform the operation is too expensive, check with local humane societies and other animal welfare groups. They often run low-cost spay/neuter clinics so that cost doesn't contribute to the problem of pet overpopulation.

Socialization

They may seem to be bold explorers, sniffing at and mouthing just about anything, but all dogs have an instinctive fear of anything unfamiliar to them. Fear causes stress on the body, which affects long-term health. To help your dog avoid the negative health effects of stress, it is important to socialize her. Socialization is the process of exposing your dog to a wide variety of places, situations, objects and people. **A well-socialized dog is a confident, healthy dog that you can take anywhere.**

The things that startle their dogs often surprise owners. Hats, balloons, garden statues, and other mundane things that seem to pose no threat. To your dog, however, it is an unknown. If you are a subdued person, your dog might show fear around a bubbly extrovert. Basically, any situation or object your dog is not accustomed to can create fear and stress in her. It is best if the socialization process begins when the dog is a puppy. This is a key learning time for dogs, so they become socialized more quickly. However, even older dogs that were not socialized as puppies can reach that confident, relaxed state. Socializing a dog that is more than one year old may take a little longer, but the results are rewarding.

Socializing a dog is a very simple process: take the dog to as many different places as you can. Your dog will pick up on your body language and follow your lead, so it is important for you to act confident and relaxed, especially when your dog hesitates. While you are walking about, stop every so often to pet your dog and talk to her in a happy voice. Naturally, feeding her a treat or two will give her a positive association with the environment.

At some point during socialization, your dog will plant her feet and refuse to budge or try to hide behind you to avoid a stranger. How you react in this situation sends an important message to your dog. If you pick her up or talk soothingly while you pet her, you are telling your dog that she is right to be frightened. On the other hand, if you ignore her behavior and go about your business...perhaps walking a different direction to distract her...her fear is not rewarded. Since your goal is to give your dog confidence, not traumatize her, never force your dog to accept a person or situation. Respect her feelings, and try again later.

While you are out and about, remember that you are your dog's guardian. Keep an eye out for excited children running towards your dog. A good way to handle this kind of situation is to stop the kids verbally about 10 feet from your dog. Explain to them that your dog is just getting used to new places and new people. Ask them to approach quietly and one at a time so that your dog learns that children are nothing to be afraid of. Letting the children feed your dog a treat is sure to help her learn to accept these high-energy, enthusiastic strangers.

Housebreaking Your Dog

Dogs are creatures of habit; and once they develop a habit, breaking it can be a long, frustrating process. Your dog needs **guidance and encouragement** from you to develop a toilet habit you can live with. Animal behaviorists have learned a lot about dogs over the last couple of decades, including tidbits that will make housebreaking your pet a less frustrating task.

It might be difficult to believe (considering some of the things your dog will roll in or put in her mouth), but dogs have specific sanitary requirements. They will go to great lengths to avoid soiling near where they eat and/or sleep. That means any "accidents" an un-housebroken dog has will be far from its food dish and bed. To a dog, "far" in this case means about 6-10 feet. This leaves lots of "fair game" space in your home, unless you guide her to identify a suitable spot.

Whether your dog is a puppy or an adult dog, new to your home, the process is the same.

Every few hours, as well as 30 minutes after she has eaten, take your dog outside to a designated "bathroom" spot. Stay in the vicinity, and praise her lavishly when she finishes relieving herself. If she fails to "go," take her back inside, and keep her confined and under careful watch for about 15 minutes, then take her back outside. During the interval, if you see her circling and sniffing intensely, take her outside immediately. Sniffing and circling are signs she is about to empty her bladder or bowels. By recognizing the signs and taking her outside, you are helping her connect the urge to go to the bathroom with going outside.

How quickly your dog becomes housebroken depends partly on her personality (is she eager to please or a rebel) but mostly on your diligence in taking her outside at the right time. If your puppy is less than four months old, you should plan on getting up during the night to take her outside. Puppies over four months of age can usually "hold it" through the night, but if your dog cries to be let out, it is best to get up and let her tend to her urge. It is vital that you give your dog every chance to succeed during this time. Positive reinforcement of the proper behavior is the fastest way to teach your dog anything.

Accidents happen, and when they do, your response will affect how quickly your dog learns to "go" outside. If you catch your dog in mid-squat, clap your hands or call her name loudly. Your goal is to distract her. Once you have her attention, quietly and calmly take her outside. Be sure to praise her when she finishes relieving herself. If you find a wet spot or droppings on the floor when your dog is not around, simply clean it up. If your dog approaches to investigate what you are doing, ignore her. Do not talk to her or pet her at this moment. Above all else, avoid yelling at her or physically punishing her. She will not connect your rage to the mess she made, but your violence will make her afraid of you-and that's not what you want from your canine companion.

For tips on housebreaking your new puppy, download the ebook [*How To Potty Train Your Puppy in 7 Days.*](#)

And for those times when your pup's stuck inside, consider [Wizdog](#), the indoor dog potty - no mess!

Crating or Kenneling Your Dog

Dogs love to curl up in snug spots. This is a natural "**denning**" instinct left over from their wolf ancestors. Many people view a kennel or crate from a human perspective—a cage, or prison. Yet, if it is properly introduced, a dog crate provides a sense of security for your pet; a place of her own. At the same time, a dog that is comfortable in a crate is easier to housebreak and travels well.

Crates, or kennels of various sizes are easily available at pet supply stores. There are two main styles to choose from: thick, hard plastic crates with small openings on each side to allow ventilation, and open wire kennels. Pet supply manufacturers realize that dog crates are quickly becoming an essential piece of furniture for dog owners. Some now offer a line of high-end kennels with decorative finishes on the sides and tabletops so the crate does double-duty as an end table. Our favorite online stores to get these items are www.petco.com and www.entirelypets.com.

It is important to get the right size crate for your dog. If she is a puppy now, it is best to get a crate that will fit her as an adult—she'll quickly grow into it! Ideally, the crate should be large enough to allow an adult dog to stand up and turn around, with about four inches of extra space in length. If you are unsure how large your puppy will grow to be, you can find information in books or on the Internet that give approximate sizes for each breed.

You will need to teach your dog that the crate is hers. Some dogs take longer than others to "catch on" to their special place. This is not an indication that the dog doesn't like the crate, just a result of unique personalities each dog has. Training your dog to use the crate requires a number of small steps, as well as patience. The kennel should always be associated with pleasant moments. If you force your dog into the crate or get angry at her, she will see the crate as a bad thing.

To introduce the crate to your dog, sit beside it with treats in your pocket and call her to you. When she comes to you, give her a treat and lots of verbal praise in a happy voice. Place a treat at the entrance of the crate, and after she takes it, toss one into the crate. Each time you place a treat inside, give a unique command, such as "kennel up" or "kennel in" so she begins to associate the behavior with the command. End the session before the dog loses interest. Once your dog enters the crate, begin feeding her regular meals inside the crate. Nothing says "special moment" like food.

Crates and kennels are comforting for dogs and excellent tools for housebreaking, but they should be used carefully. Puppies will need to be taken out of the kennel during the night to relieve themselves. **Never leave any dog confined to a crate for more than 6 hours.** They will become bored and can develop behavior problems as a result.

Training Your Dog

Obedient dogs make the best companions. Time spent training your dog will reward you with a pet that is deeply bonded to you, respects you and is a joy to have around. Training your dog doesn't mean extinguishing her unique personality, it is simply a means of setting boundaries-something that makes dogs feel secure.

Some owners unconsciously train their dogs to exhibit bad behaviors. Since dogs are social animals, they are interested in doing whatever gets them attention. Positive attention is best, but if negative attention is all they can get from you, they'll try to obtain that. This is why yelling at a dog that has had an "accident" in the house doesn't teach her to not do that. All your excitement reinforces her behavior. The best way to let a dog know you are displeased with her is to ignore her.

Positive reinforcement is the key to training your dog. Basically, this means rewarding desired behavior. A reward might be a food treat, lots of verbal praise in a high voice and/or a good pet or scratch in her favorite spot. Rewarding your dog's behavior accomplishes two things: it makes her want to repeat the behavior to reap the reward and establishes you as her leader. Some dogs are more assertive than others, and will try to become dominant over you. It is important that you remain the "leader of the pack," and obedience training helps with that. However, even, and perhaps especially, less assertive dogs benefit from training. Following a leader is instinctive in dogs. Training your dog allows her to employ that instinct to follow someone else, and makes her feel more secure.

There are many training approaches within the realm of positive reinforcement. Some behaviors will be captured-rewarded as they occur-while others can be shaped by gently coaxing the dog into the desired action. Most professional trainers recommend using both a verbal commands and hand signals to communicate with your dog. Besides words/signals for behaviors such as sit, stay, and come, you will need a "release" signal. This is a word or sound that tells your dog she's done something correctly. The release signal is always immediately followed by a reward, so that the dog comes to associate it with something positive.

You have lots of option as to how you go about training your dog. Libraries, bookstores and pet stores offer plenty of "how-to" training books. You can also find a lot of great information by surfing the Internet. If you prefer to have a professional by your side every step of the way, enroll in a basic obedience class. Major pet supply chains, humane societies and dog clubs usually offer classes. These classes are an excellent way to socialize your dog and educate yourself. If your schedule doesn't allow you to participate in a class, check your community phone book for personal dog trainers. Most will come to your home on a regular basis, and provide in-depth training custom-tailored to your needs.

An ebook I highly recommend is [*Secrets of a Professional Dog Trainer*](#).

Taking Rover for a Ride

A dog is a great constant companion around the home, but Rover will love joining you on road trips-short or long-as well. If you've tried taking your dog along in the car before and met with bad results, don't give up. It might take a little longer to help your pet feel comfortable after a bad experience, but you can train your dog to ride quietly in the car. It requires foresight and patience on your part, but the rewards are worth it.

What kind of personality does your dog have? Is she a confident, mellow pooch or a high-energy, somewhat fearful animal? Consider, too, your relationship with your dog. Does she see you as the pack leader and obey your commands? Both of these factors have an impact on how much work you'll need to do before the two of you hit the road. A dog that is calm by nature and obedient will more quickly adjust to sitting still in a moving vehicle. On the other hand, a "hyper" animal that doesn't respond to basic obedience commands requires specific training to ensure her (and your) safety in the car.

An uncontrolled animal is a serious car accident waiting to happen. It is important to keep your dog confined to one area of the car. This might be the back of a truck or SUV, a kennel, or simply sitting on the seat, secured by a safety harness designed for use in cars. If you plan on using a safety harness, introduce it to your dog outside of the car. Let her sniff and otherwise investigate it. Drape it over her and praise her when she stands quietly. If she shakes it off and runs, try again using treats and only placing it against her so she gets the feel of it. Once she accepts having it placed over her, let her wear it while you take walks or lounge at home. Be sure to give her treats and verbal praise whenever you put the safety harness on her. You want your dog to associate the harness with positive things.

The same holds true for car rides in general. If the only time your dog rides in the car is to go to the vet's office, she'll associate the car with an unpleasant experience. Once your dog is used to sitting confined in the car, take her for short rides. If she has gotten carsick in the past, drive slowly along as straight a path as possible. Take her for a ride at least once a day, slowly increasing the distance and speed. Talk to her in a happy voice as you go, and give her a treat before you take her out, so she connects the car ride to something yummy.

The sight of a dog with her head out the car window, nose in the wind, makes just about everyone smile. Smell is your dog's best sense. With the window down, she's picking up all kinds of new, interesting smells. This stimulating experience is fine at slow speeds for short distances, be careful about letting your dog make it a habit. While dogs love the feel of the wind in their noses, dust and debris can cause respiratory problems.

Excessive Barking

A dog's bark can mean any number of things: hello, go away, what was that, pay attention to me, etc. Some dogs have a bark that is as bad as a bite. These are the dogs that are more vocal than we-or our neighbors-think is acceptable. If your dog seems to bark excessively, the first step in stopping her behavior is to identify the reasons for it.

Some dog breeds tend to bark more than others. Beagles and certain toy breeds have a reputation for being "yappy." It is a trait they were bred for; a beagle barks constantly to alert the hunter as to the location of the prey, and toy dogs often served as early "invader alarms." Yet, even within breeds, some individuals are just more "talkative" than others.

Some owners unknowingly train their dogs to bark excessively. Anytime you reward your dog for barking, you are encouraging her to repeat the behavior. The reward doesn't have to be a treat; any attention you give her reinforces the behavior. For example, if your dog goes into a barking fit when you walk in the door, the best thing to do is ignore her. If you bend down and give her attention to quiet her, you have just given her what she wanted. Another common scenario is yelling at your dog to stop barking. You yell, your dog barks again, you yell, dog barks, and on and on. Every time you yell, you are joining the dog in her negative behavior, and therefore encouraging it.

There are many ways to **break an excessive barking habit**. Anti-bark collars release either a blast of citronella scent (which dogs dislike) or a mild shock when the dog barks. Some people use these collars to break barking that is associated with certain times of day. However, the long-term success of this technique varies. The most humane and effective way to change a dog's negative behavior is through training. Whether you choose to follow a how-to training book or work in person with a professional dog trainer, using positive techniques to break a barking habit is better for your dog and your relationship with her.

Barking to alert her owner to potential danger is what your dog's ancestors were bred to do, and the behavior has been genetically passed to her. It is her instinct to bark at the garbage truck when it pauses in front of your house. Even though the truck comes every week and causes no damage, she still must warn you that something big is outside. However, barking for extended periods of time at every new sound quickly becomes a problem. **With patience, training and treats, you can teach your dog when and how much barking is acceptable.**

Bad behavior

There's a popular saying among dog trainers: "There's no such thing as a bad dog."

While that may be true, any trainer will admit that there are dogs with very bad habits. Simply put, behavior is a way of acting and reacting. When a dog acts or reacts to a situation in a way that has a negative impact on her owner or others, the behavior is considered to be "bad." Yet, to the dog, it's just what she does.

Eliminating a bad behavior requires training to give the dog a new behavior or habit.

One of the most common bad behaviors is jumping up on people. This habit is established when a dog is a puppy. Puppies jump at their mother to get her attention so she will feed them. Dog owners find it adorable that their puppy works so hard to get their attention as she jumps. The naive owners come down to the dog's level or pick the puppy up, not realizing they have just rewarded the dog for jumping and barking.

Unfortunately, behavior that is cute in a puppy often becomes annoying in an adult dog. Large dogs that jump on people for attention easily knock down and accidentally injure children and older people. Small dogs have less ability to injure someone, but usually dirty clothes and snag stockings. In both cases, while you might not mind your dog jumping up on you, other people probably don't feel the same way.

Training your dog to sit to be petted is the easiest way to break the jumping habit. To help her develop the "sit for attention" habit, you must ignore her when she jumps on you. You might turn your back or simply walk away. If she follows you, turn quickly and tell her to sit. If she does, pet and praise her. You can reinforce this behavior by having her sit before you put her food bowl down. Every time she sits, she gets a reward of either attention or food. Every time she jumps she gets nothing.

Another unpopular behavior is chewing. Destructive chewing is most often an indication your dog is bored. If your dog chews up the couch cushions or destroys a wicker chair while you are at work, it is probably because she had nothing else to do. If you look up from a book or television to find your dog chewing on your favorite shoes, realize that she is releasing pent-up energy.

Give your dog the chance to exercise her body and brain. Plenty of physical exercise will tire her out so that she naps while you relax. Pet supply stores carry a variety of toys that provide mental stimulation-doggie puzzles to keep your pooch busy while you're away. Also, if your dog is a chewer, make sure you give her chewing toys of her own. It is never a good idea to give your dog an old shoe or sock to chew on; she can't tell the difference between your favorites and your discards and they all smell like you.

Digging Dogs

Digging is a natural, instinctive behavior in dogs. The most well known reason dogs dig is to bury or retrieve bones or treasured toys. On hot days, some dogs naturally dig and lay in a hole to escape the heat. Breeds such as terriers were bred to dig up and kill rodents and other vermin, and haven't lost the instinct. In some cases, digging may be a dog's way of trying to escape either physical confinement or boredom.

While we know digging is instinctive in our pets, we sometimes can't help but wish they wouldn't do it. Compulsive diggers and dogs that dig excessively are frustrating. Their owners don't want to punish their pets for doing what comes naturally, but they also don't want their yards to be covered by craters. Luckily, **there are ways to reduce and even stop dogs from digging.**

Before you can treat the behavior, you need to understand your dog's reason for digging. Does she only dig when left alone? Does she always dig in the same spot? Is she digging under a fence? Does she tend to take her rawhide chews outside the minute you give them to her? Answering these questions can help you determine the right approach to take in training your dog.

If your dog digs only when she is left alone for long periods of time, she is probably trying to alleviate her boredom. A good physical workout before you leave will tire her out so that she sleeps part of the time you are gone. Be sure to equip her with toys that engage her mind as well as her body, so she can stay busy when she wakes up. Pet supply stores have an amazing array of chew toys and dog "puzzles." These are hollow cubes or balls into which you place small pieces of treats. Your dog will be able to smell the treats inside, and must figure out a way to get to them. Usually, this requires nosing and rolling the puzzle until a treat falls out of one of many small openings.

Another way to deal with a digging dog is to channel her behavior to an acceptable spot. Some dog owners create special digging pits for their dogs. These are small areas of soft dirt in which the owners bury treats. Some are placed deeper than others, so that dogs have to use their sense of smell to find the treats. To make this technique successful, bury treats on an irregular basis, and never let your dog see you placing them in the dirt.

You may have to make an extra effort with very compulsive diggers. If your dog repeatedly digs in a favorite flower bed, you might need to put up a physical barrier to prevent her from gaining access to the spot. Remote punishment is another technique that sometimes works well. This is simply something—a blast of water, for example—that distracts the dog the moment she begins to dig. Some people suggest that the owner distract the dog personally, either with a blast from a squirt gun or by shaking a can of coins. However, this is only feasible if you are with your dog constantly. Your dog may stop digging in your presence, but she will likely continue to dig.

Bad behavior is fixable...and I recommend [*Sit Stay Fetch: Stop Your Dog's Behavior Problems*](#) for additional assistance.

Your Dog's Health

You love your dog and want to give her the best life possible. Good news! Amazing advances in veterinary medicine are making it possible for dogs to live longer, healthier lives than ever before. The quality of your dog's health is the result of a partnership between you and your veterinarian.

When you first get your dog, be sure to have your veterinarian examine her within 10 days. In addition to getting baseline weights and measurements on her, your vet will want to check her blood and stools for illness and parasites. If you have never had a dog before-or at least within the last five years-this first visit is a good time to get an education in modern pet care. If you ask, your vet will be glad to give a demonstration in cleaning your pet's ears and clipping her toenails properly.

A proper diet and sufficient exercise are key factors in keeping your dog healthy. You must make sure the food you give your dog is of good quality to provide her with the correct amounts of nutrients to keep her systems running. If you are confused by the variety of brands of dog food available, ask your veterinarian for some help. Don't be embarrassed to tell him how much you are able/willing to spend for pet food. There are some excellent brands that are not very expensive, and some expensive brands that are not very good.

Exercise not only keeps your dog's weight under control, it strengthens her muscles and enhances her immune system, and prevents many destructive behaviors. Some dogs are naturally active. Others need anywhere from a little to a lot of encouragement from you to get moving. If your dog seems to lean toward "couch potato," you must take control. Set aside some dedicated time for activity each day with your dog, and she'll be more inclined to get physical.

Yearly "well-dog" appointments with your veterinarian help track your dog's health. A thorough going-over under the vet's expert eye can catch early skin or eye conditions and other physical changes that you might not notice on a day-to-day basis. Blood and stool samples allows your vet to diagnose and treat disease and parasites before they reach a critical state.

The yearly vet visit is also a good time to mention any "strange habits" your dog may have developed over the last year. Often, these have simple explanations, but some behaviors, such as licking paint or eating strange substances can indicate a medical condition.

One of the most important aspects of the yearly vet visit is updating your dog's **vaccinations**. These are not only required by law in many areas, they can literally save your dog's life.

The process for selecting a veterinarian is very much like choosing your own personal physician. You want to **find a doctor that you feel comfortable talking with**, someone who encourages all of your questions and supports you in all the health care choices you make on your dog's behalf.

Dogs and Children

Dogs and children need your guidance and supervision to live together happily ever after.

Most dogs see children as littermates, and treat them as such. Your dog might know not to jump up on you, the pack leader, but she may decide it is alright to do to your children. Dogs are easily stimulated by the exuberance of children. To a dog, a running, shrieking child is an invitation to chase and play rough. In addition, children love to hug dogs. Unfortunately, in dog-language, a hug is an attempt to dominate. If your dog resents your child's dominance move, she might become aggressive. It is up to the adults of the household to supervise all child/dog interactions to ensure a safe and respectful bond develops between the two.

If you don't have a dog now, but are planning on getting one soon, **start exposing your child(ren) to dogs and how to act around them**. Help them learn to respect each dog's space and preferences. Teach them to only approach leashed dogs, always ask the dog's owner first, and then to move slowly. Explain that the dog will want to sniff them-that's how a dog identifies you. The old method of meeting a new dog is to offer an outstretched hand for her to sniff. **Experts now recommend** keeping hands down along the sides of the body. Dogs have such a keen sense of smell that they don't need us to hold hands out-and if a dog has been abused in the past she may snap at a hand coming towards her. It is safer to let the dog approach and sniff where she wants.

Just as you will establish house rules for your dog (stay off the couch, etc.) it is important to establish boundaries for children in regards to your pet. Teach your child(ren) to never take a toy from your dog, and to leave her alone while she is eating. Dogs are often especially possessive about their toys and food. Kids and dogs make great playmates, but teach your children that if they play roughly, the dog will respond in kind. Even though the dog doesn't mean to hurt your child, accidents happen. Playing fetch is a better game than wrestling between kids and dogs.

An excellent way for your child to bond with your dog is to take part in training her. Giving her treats as a reward for correct behavior is a delight to kids, and it raises the child's position in your dog's eyes. Just as your dog develops respect for your child, help your child do the same. Teach your children that dogs are living beings with likes, dislikes, and fears of their own. Help them see their pet as more than entertainment, but as a cherished member of the family.

Your Dog's Diet

When humans first domesticated dogs, we fed them scraps from our meals. Those early dogs did just fine on that diet. As our affection for dogs has grown over the centuries, so has our understanding of what our canine companions need to eat to live long, healthy lives. Research conducted by veterinarians and pet food manufacturers over the last decade have revealed more specific details about what a dog's diet should contain.

Your dog's food must be appropriate for her size, age, state of health and activity level. As you stroll the aisles of pet supply stores or grocery stores, you'll find a variety of food brands in a wide range of prices. A good basic rule of thumb is to buy the highest quality food you can afford. If you buy the cheapest food because you have a big dog that eats a lot, you must understand that what you save in food will affect your pet's health.

It is important that your dog always eats some dry food. The crunchy pieces help keep her teeth clean and her gums healthy, and provide necessary fiber. If you choose to give your dog moist food in addition to dry, use it sparingly; a small spoonful mixed with warm water makes a good gravy over dry kibble. Some devoted dog lovers feed their pets home-cooked food. Dog-specific recipes can be found on the Internet and in books, but understand that this is not just giving your dog leftovers from your own meals. Homemade dog food is designed to meet the nutritional and digestive needs of dogs. Spices, fats, and fillers in human food often makes dogs ill.

Adult dogs should be fed two meals each day. Puppies need to eat more often. They should be fed three to four meals daily until they are 12 weeks old, then three meals daily until they are six months old. Many dog trainers advise against leaving food available all day, to prevent dogs developing picky eating habits. They suggest you allow 20 minutes for each meal. After this time, whatever has not been eaten should be picked up. Dry food can be held until the next meal, but moist food should be thrown away. It is very important to make sure your dog has plenty of clean water available at all times.

The amount you feed your dog depends on her age, weight and activity level. Check the back of food or with your veterinarian to get an idea of how much your dog should be eating. Monitor your dog's weight by running your hands along the sides of her body. If she is at the right weight, you will be able to feel her ribs without pressing. If you can't feel her ribs, she is gaining weight and you should either slightly decrease the amount of food or increase the amount of exercise she gets. If you can easily see your dog's ribs, she is underweight (except in certain breeds).

Grooming

Dogs take care of some of their grooming needs on their own, but still need a helping hand from their owners. Taking the time to groom your dog on a regular basis has its own rewards; it strengthens your bond with her and allows you to notice health problems before they become serious. If you find your dog won't sit still for an ear-to-tail going over, do one task each day. As she gets used to you handling her, you can begin to combine tasks so that you spend your time more efficiently.

Licking, scratching and shaking are ways dogs keep their coats clean and somewhat free of debris. A good brushing performed by you will keep her fur clean and free from painfully matted hair. Longhaired dogs should be brushed every day, to prevent tangles in their fur. Dogs with shorthair or smooth coats can be brushed once each week. Some dogs love the massage of a good brushing, but others take a while to get used to it. If your dog tries to escape while being brushed, get her used to it in small steps. Start by just running the brush along her coat two or three times while you talk to her in a happy voice. Give her a treat at the end of the session. Each time you work with her, increase the length of time you brush her.

As you brush your dog, run your hands through her fur down to the skin to look for plant debris and fleas. If you notice lots of dark specks on her skin, she has fleas. **The specks are flea droppings.** A very obvious amount of droppings indicates a flea infestation that should be treated immediately. As you brush the hair on and around her tail, look for rice-like debris. These are usually a sign that your dog has worms of one sort or another. You will need to have her checked by your veterinarian to determine the type of worm and get the proper medication.

Dental problems are common in dogs. To avoid costly veterinary treatments, keep your dog's teeth in top shape by brushing her teeth each day. You can use a child's toothbrush, or a finger toothbrush designed for use on pet's teeth. Be sure to only use toothpaste labeled for use on pets; human toothpaste can be toxic to your dog. In addition to brushing, give your dog rawhide chews to gnaw on—they help keep her teeth and gums healthy.

Some grooming tasks don't need to be done everyday. Ears and nails can be checked weekly and monthly, respectively. Once each week, look inside your dog's ears. If you see coffee-ground-like specks, your dog may have ear mites. You should check your dog's nails at least once each month. If you walk your dog frequently on sidewalks, she is probably wearing her nails down on the concrete. However, it is important to check to be sure they have not grown too long. Dogs with overgrown nails develop physical problems as they shift their weight as they walk to avoid discomfort. You can learn the proper way to clip your dog's nails from a standard pet care book, or your veterinarian.

Keeping Your Dog Safe

For thousands of years, dogs have been "man's best friend." Friendship is a two-way street, and dog-loving humans have tried to keep their pets safe in return.

As our world moves faster and becomes more complex, **dogs need our extra attention now more than ever** to stay safe. With a little foresight and action, dog's best friends can create a "home, safe home" for their precious pooches.

Dogs have a keen curiosity. If you look at your home from your dog's perspective, you'll probably find all kinds of interesting things to examine. What most people don't realize is that dogs first sniff, then mouth items to learn about them. So, be sure to **keep the following out of your dog's reach**:

- roach and ant traps
- electric and phone cords
- cigarettes in ashtrays
- open doors and windows
- rubber bands
- housecleaning chemicals
- candles
- Christmas trees ornaments
- paperclips
- uncovered trash cans
- human medications
- chocolate
- grapes
- anti-freeze
- plastic bags
- valuable books
- wedding rings and other jewelry
- batteries

Dogs, especially puppies, find plants irresistible as playthings. They love to dig in the dirt of houseplants, and seem to enjoy pulling off branches of shrubs. Because of this, it is important to make sure the plants in and around your home won't pose a health risk to your dog. The following are some common house and landscape plants that are **toxic to dogs**:

- Philodendron
- English ivy
- caladium
- dieffenbachia
- "elephant ear"
- poinsettia
- mistletoe
- azaleas
- holly berries

- boxwood
- wisteria
- hydrangea
- oleander
- chinaberry tree

Keep your pet safely confined to your home. A wandering dog is much more likely to be injured by vehicles or unkind people. In most cities, by law, your dog may only be off your property if she is on a leash controlled by a person. To prevent escapes, make sure the fencing in your yard is high enough and strong enough to keep your dog from roaming. Frequently check for gaps between the fence bottom and the ground; watch for signs your dog is trying to dig out under the fence. Teach all the members of your family to carefully close doors and latch gates.

If you live in an area prone to natural disasters, keep an **emergency pet supply kit** with your own. Include a week's worth of food as well as any medication your dog takes on a regular basis. A photo of your pet is also good to keep with your emergency supplies, in case you are separated from your dog during the event, you'll have a way to get the word out to locate her.

Every dog, regardless of age or living situation, should **wear a collar with an identification tag**. Most municipalities require that all dogs wear a collar and tag. To ensure your dog finds her way home if she ever loses her collar, consider having your dog micro-chipped. In micro-chipping, a small silicone chip containing the owner's contact information is painlessly inserted under the dog's skin. Most animal shelters automatically scan lost pets to read the owner contact information. However, if your dog is found by an average citizen an identification tag will speed up your reunion. For more information on the right identification system for you and your dog, visit our sister site, www.id-a-pet.com.

First Aid

If your dog is badly hurt in your home or while out and about with you, you should know how to administer first aid until you can reach a veterinarian. A first aid kit tailored to your dog's needs can truly be a lifesaver. If you're your dog on frequent outings far from home, you would be wise to keep a second first aid kit handy in your car.

A first aid kit for a dog contains many of the same items it would for a human. A roll of absorbent cotton and some cotton balls, gauze pads and tape, a pair of small scissors with rounded tips, tweezers, instant ice pack, hydrogen peroxide, a bulb syringe for suctioning mucous from mouth or nose sterile eyewash solution made specifically for pets, a clean, white cotton sock (to cover wounded paws), small flashlight, rectal thermometer, injection syringe without the needle (to give liquid medication), and unflavored electrolyte liquid (like Pedialyte).

Keep everything in a sturdy plastic container with a secure lid. Write your veterinarian's name and phone number on the lid, as well as that of the closest emergency pet hospital. If you travel often and leave your dog with another person, put several copies of a signed release form in the first aid kit authorizing the caregiver to approve necessary treatment.

Dog owners often have to tend to pets that have been stung by a bee. If your dog is stung while sniffing around, restrain her and remove the stinger either with tweezers or by scraping it out (moving parallel to the skin surface). Bathing the stung spot with a mix of water and baking soda will ease some of the pain. Swelling can be reduced by applying ice packs or giving a dose of Benedryl-be sure to ask your veterinarian for the proper dosage.

If your dog is injured, approach her calmly and carefully. Don't assume that she won't snap or bite you - injured pets often react negatively at first to any attempt to touch them. Talk soothingly and move slowly so she can see that you mean her no harm.

If your dog is bleeding heavily, it is important to slow or stop the flow as soon as possible. Use a clean towel or cloth to apply pressure directly to the wound. Change towels/cloths as needed, but keep pressure on until you reach a veterinarian. If necessary, you can apply thick gauze pads and use tape to secure them while you transport your cat. It is best, however, to keep pressure on the wound and have someone else drive.

If your dog seems to be choking, use a flashlight to check her throat. If you see and can easily remove the object, do so. If you can't see the object but are certain your dog is choking, you might need to perform a modified Heimlich maneuver. It is important to get proper training for this, as it can cause serious injury if done incorrectly. **Many humane societies and animal welfare organizations offer classes on pet first aid**, that include the Heimlich maneuver, CPR, and techniques for dealing with serious injury and poisoning.

Try [Veterinary Secrets Revealed](#), an excellent resource for at-home remedies to help keep your dog healthy.

Diseases and Parasites

A good diet and plenty of exercise are important to a dog's health, but they can't make a dog totally immune to illness. Early detection is the key to helping your dog overcome any health problem. If your pet's stools become very loose, or you notice a marked decrease in your dog's appetite and/or that she is very lethargic, she may just have a short-term "bug." On the other hand, if any symptoms continue for more than a few days, you should have your veterinarian examine her for parasites and infections.

Diarrhea is a common symptom in dogs, especially puppies. It can be triggered by stress or a sudden change in food, but also by a virus, bacteria or parasites. Diarrhea causes dehydration, which can be deadly to dogs. It is extremely dangerous in puppies, because they dehydrate faster than mature dogs. If your dog has diarrhea for more than a day, contact your veterinarian for further instructions. You will probably be asked to collect a sample and bring it in so they can examine it to determine the cause and proper treatment.

Coughing, sneezing, and discharge from your dog's nose and/or eyes often indicate a respiratory infection. A lethargic dog with no appetite is likely fighting an Upper Respiratory Infection (URI). URI, caused by airborne viruses and bacteria, is highly contagious among dogs, but is not transmitted between dogs and humans. Early detection of URI is important; ignored dogs suffer from severe dehydration and risk developing pneumonia.

Bordetella, also called "**kennel cough**" is another contagious respiratory disease commonly contracted in animal shelters, boarding kennels, or anywhere groups of dogs have close contact with one another. It is a short-term disease, and most dogs get over it with a few days of rest and tender loving care from you. It is possible to have your dog vaccinated against Bordetella—a good idea if you plan on boarding her or placing her in "doggie daycare."

Vaccinations are also available to protect your dog against more deadly diseases such as rabies, distemper and parvovirus. Most municipalities require that all dogs are vaccinated against rabies; some include distemper and parvovirus as well. Making these vaccinations mandatory protects the health of all dogs, and, in the case of rabies, human health as well. If your dog was vaccinated as a puppy, she's off to a good start. However, without yearly booster shots, your dog is at risk of great suffering from one of these diseases.

Dogs serve as hosts to a number of parasites. You will probably be asked to bring a fecal sample to your dog's yearly vet appointment, so that the staff can check for the presence of internal parasites. If you notice small, rice-like granules on your pet's bedding or around her anus, she is suffering from an infestation of worms and needs to be seen by your vet to get proper treatment.

Other parasites take up residence on the outside of your dog's body. Mange and sarcoptic mites live on the hair follicles and skin of dogs, while ear mites live on the inside of the ear. These parasites are so small you might not see them, but they cause your dog extreme discomfort. Head shaking and pawing at ears are signs of ear mites. Frequent scratching and skin-biting can indicate either skin mites or a dog's worst enemy—fleas.

Fun Activities with Your Dog or Puppy

Every dog needs a good amount of exercise on a daily basis. It helps regulate their appetite, control weight, and is vital to their mental health. Left to her own devices, your dog will probably find ways to give her mind, body and teeth a workout, but you might not be happy with the results. A bored dog is a destructive dog. You can channel your dog's energies in the right direction by providing appropriate toys as well as actively participating in exercising her.

When it comes to exercising your pet, quantity is as important as quality. A 15-minute round of fetch is nice, but not nearly enough physical exercise or time bonding with you. Plan a walk or jog through your neighborhood daily. Since dogs are creatures of habit, scheduling your outing at the same time each day will give her something to look forward to. You can also use this "special time" to explore a new area of town or visit an off-leash dog park where your canine companion can make some new pooch pals. A change of scenery...or in your dog's case, "scentery"...keeps things interesting.

Another way to exercise your dog's body and mind is by taking part in dog "sports." **Frisbee tricks, flyball and agility** are some of the dog sports gaining in popularity.

Most dog lovers have seen **Frisbee** competitions on television or in live demonstrations. A human, usually the dog's owner, tosses a Frisbee and the pooch leaps and twists in mid-air to catch it on the fly. The owner usually trains the dog to perform a choreographed routine that is breathtaking for spectators and just a whole lot of fun for the human/canine team.

Flyball is a team relay sport. Each of the four dogs on a team take turns racing down a course, leaping over hurdles along the way. At the end of the course, the dog triggers a spring loaded box that pops a tennis ball into the air. The dog catches the ball and races back over the hurdles. Once the dog has crossed the finish line, the next dog on her team takes off. The winning team is the one that scores the best time with fewest errors.

The goal in the dog sport of **agility** is to run an obstacle course in the shortest amount of time. Unlike in flyball, the dog's owner runs alongside the dog directing her to the next obstacle. Agility dogs must focus on their owner's directions while trying to maneuver through pipe tunnels, over see-saws, across narrow planks and over various jumps. These physical competitions give any dog a good workout, and require training that keeps her mind sharp.

At home, be sure to give your dog toys to keep her mind and mouth busy while you are away from home. Pet supply stores have an amazing array of chew toys and dog "puzzles." These are hollow cubes or balls into which you place small pieces of treats. Your dog will be able to smell the treats inside, and must figure out a way to get to them. Usually, this

requires nosing and rolling the puzzle until a treat falls out of one of many small openings. The treat rewards the dog's effort, and encourages her to continue solving the puzzle using her mind and body.

A terrific online store where you can get all sorts of gear for you and your dog is www.youractivepet.com.

Traveling with Your Dog

As the world becomes more pet friendly, it's become easier than ever to take your beloved pal with you while traveling. Even posh hotels have jumped on the bandwagon, providing luxurious digs for pup and owner. Some even organize doggy spa treatments for your main canine.

Below are a few tips to remember when you're planning for a trip with your dog.

Whether you're traveling by car or by plane, we can't say it enough: get an ID tag and collar for your pet! It's scary enough to lose a dog in your hometown, but imagine losing him in an unknown city. For in-depth information about choosing the best identification method for your pet, visit www.id-a-pet.com.

Tips for Traveling by Car

- Schedule a visit with your veterinarian before your trip. Make sure your puppy has all the necessary vaccinations and is in good health for the trip.
- Train your puppy to ride in the car. If your pet is prone to motion sickness, then consider anti-nausea medications to help her through the trip. Also bring some wet wipes or paper towels along, because accidents happen.
- Consider a travel crate. With your dog comfortable and contained, you're able to focus your attention where it's most needed: on the road.
- If crating isn't an option, a harness that attaches to the seat belt is a terrific alternative to keeping your dog safe.
- Make regular pit stops. Give your pup a chance to stretch his legs and have a bathroom break. And remember: be courteous and pick up any doggy droppings left behind.
- Other items to pack: food and water, two leashes (in case one is misplaced), dog first aid kit, and any other creature comforts your dog enjoys, like a favorite pillow, blanket or toy.
- Don't leave your dog unattended for long periods of time in a car. Heat rises quickly, even with windows cracked open.

Tips for Traveling by Plane

- Every airline has different rules and regulations for pet travel, so check with yours before embarking on your trip for their current policies. Most require a current (no more than 10 days old) health certificate from your veterinarian, stating your pet is healthy enough to travel.

- Make reservations for dog. Airlines limit the number of animals allowed per flight, so you'll want to make sure you and your pup are able to travel on the same flight.
- If at all possible, book a non-stop flight.
- Avoid busy weekends and holidays. More travelers on those days means less attention by airline personnel for your beloved pooch.
- Train your dog to be comfortable and behave in its crate. Whether she's in the cabin or in cargo, your dog will remain in her crate during the duration of the flight.

[Take Your Small Dog Everywhere](#) is a super resource for traveling anywhere with your precious pooch.

Dog Treat Recipes

We frequently make and bake our own doggy biscuits for our Aussie Shepherd, Foster.

Home-made dog treats are often healthier, as they're made of all natural ingredients and our kids LOVE to help us, especially if we use a variety of fun cookie shapes to cut out the dough. Who says a dog treat has to be shaped like a bone?

Here are a couple of our favorite recipes.

PEANUT BUTTER COOKIE TREATS

These goodies are a great dog pick-me-up!

3 cups whole wheat flour
1 cup soy flour
2 tablespoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups peanut butter (best bet: peanut butter without sugar, salt or hydrogenated oil)
1 ½ cups milk

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease baking sheets.

Combine whole wheat flour and soy flour, baking powder, and salt in a mixing bowl. Add peanut butter and milk to dry ingredients, mixing until completely blended. Knead dough until it has formed a soft ball. Hands work great!

Roll or press dough out onto lightly floured surface to desired thickness. Use cookie cutters or bone-shaped cutters to cut dough and place on baking sheets.

Bake for 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Yields approximately 36 treats.

CORNY CRISPS

Dogs love corn so treat them to these canine pancakes!

1 cup cornmeal
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup buttermilk
1 ½ tablespoons corn oil
1 tablespoon honey
Butter

Mix cornmeal, baking soda, salt, buttermilk, oil, and honey into the food processor or blender. Process until the batter is smooth.

In a skillet set on medium heat, melt enough butter to coat the bottom of the pan. Pour 2 tablespoons batter into the pan and fry 2-3 minutes on each side until golden brown and cooked through. Yields approximately 12 pancakes.

For more excellent healthy food and treat recipes for your puppy, download [Healthy Food For Dogs](#) today!

Resources

Ebooks

[*How to Potty Train Your Puppy in 7 Days*](#)

[*Veterinary Secrets Revealed*](#)

[*Secrets of a Professional Dog Trainer*](#)

[*Sit Stay Fetch*](#)

[*Healthy Food for Dogs: Homemade Recipes*](#)

[*Take Your Small Dog Everywhere*](#)

Online Pet Stores

www.entirelypets.com

www.petco.com

www.youractivepet.com

www.doghouses.com

www.wizdog.com

Recommended Websites

www.id-a-pet.com

www.petfinder.com

www.favorite-puppy-names.com