



✧ Highlights ✧

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LIVING WITH DOGS

Motivating Your Dog

Does your dog's response to cues seem lackluster? You may not have found the right motivation. Like humans, dogs work harder with strong motivation. Here's how to turbocharge your dog's drive—whether to come when called or break her agility speed record.



Find What Drives Your Dog

We are all motivated to action by different things. Maybe it's that afternoon caffè latte we promise ourselves if we finish the report, or the massage we feel we earned after a month of gym visits. But the wrong reward would leave us cold. If you wanted chocolate, would you toil for a carrot? What does your dog most want? If in doubt, parade different treats past your dog to see what really gets her attention. Most dogs go nuts for meaty, greasy, and smelly. A few dogs prefer bread-based items. Some dogs, particularly working breeds like Border Collies and some terriers, find toys (tennis balls, squeakers, tug ropes) highly motivating.

Practice Scarcity

Whatever your dog loves, make that thing scarce. If your dog adores her rope toy, anytime-access diminishes its training power, so put it away whenever you're not actively training. If your dog's top motivator is a treat, you have to make sure she's hungry for it. Pick up your dog's food bowl between meals, check with your vet that you are not overfeeding, and if you're really finding motivation a challenge, try feeding your dog from your hands only. This teaches her that all good things come from you—a great reason to pay attention to you!

Use Your Motivator In Training And Real Life

Ask your dog to earn access to her favorite things. She can earn it by practicing sit or weaving through agility poles a bit faster. Use real-life situations throughout the day, too. For example, rather than only working on sit during training sessions, ask your dog to sit for leashing and unleashing, before going in or outside, and before jumping onto the couch to hang with you, etc.

"Before you get a dog, you can't quite imagine what living with one might be like; afterward, you can't imagine living any other way."

- Caroline Knapp

DID YOU KNOW?

The Shelter Pet Project?

What?

An initiative formed by The Humane Society of the United States, Maddie's Fund, and The Ad Council (top producer of PSA campaigns).

Why?

To make shelters the first place people look when they're thinking about adding a dog to their family.

How?

By challenging negative myths about shelter dogs (and cats) and promoting their credo: "A person is the best thing to happen to a shelter pet. Be that person. Adopt."

Where?

Find them at
www.theshelterpetproject.org

The interactive website lets you search for local shelters or specific pets available for adoption where you live.



A WORLD OF DOGS

Tripods Don't Stop

A common reaction when people see a three-legged dog is sympathy. ("Poor thing...") Another is admiration. ("What a brave pooch!") Both are entirely understandable. For humans, amputation can involve complex psychological and emotional issues. For dogs? Less so. Dogs have no notion of body image, no mental image of what they are supposed to look like. What they care about falls into two major categories: One, whether they are in pain. Two, whether they can do things they love: go for walks, play with toys, eat yummy food, get belly rubs, snuggle on the couch, etc. Nature is kind to animals in this way. A pain-free, well-fed dog with a loving home doesn't give a hoot that her daily walk happens in the characteristic tripod hop instead of a lope.



Amputee dogs, often called tripods, generally lose a limb either as a result of an accident or as a means to prevent cancer from spreading. In rarer cases, a congenital deformity makes the leg nonfunctional. The number one cause is canine osteosarcoma, or bone cancer, an aggressive disease that can rapidly spread into other parts of the dog's body. Treatment for this kind of tumor is limited to surgical removal and chemotherapy, and the prognosis is often dire. Radical as it may sound, amputation is usually the best option. Many tripods go on to live normal lifespans after surgery. Because dogs carry about 60 percent of their weight up front, losing a hind leg is easier than losing a front leg. But front-leg amputees adapt too. Even dogs with moderate arthritis can do well on three legs.

Also, guardians of amputee dogs can do a lot to make the transition easier. A tripod-friendly home has nonslip surfacing on stairs and smooth floors, and ramps for climbing up on sofas and into cars. A harness with a handle allows for helping the dog navigate difficult stairs, uneven ground, etc. And a whole range of fitness gear has been developed to help tripods strengthen their remaining limbs and improve their balance. For the rest of us, encountering tripods out and about? Love them up like nothing has changed, because, to them, nothing that really matters has.

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DOGS IN ACTION

Water Rescue

Water rescue is the umbrella term for the lifesaving feats of dogs like Newfoundlands and Portuguese Water Dogs (PWDs). Newfies are legendary in this area, crowding the history books with acts of courage in aid of humans. PWDs were primarily bred to work alongside fishermen retrieving nets and even herding schools of fish, but have in modern times also been highly successful partners in lifesaving teams at beaches and watersports destinations. Both breeds are strong working dogs with extraordinary lung capacity and swim-stroke propulsion, webbed feet, muscled tails that act as rudders, and waterproof coats that protect them in icy water.



A healthy, fully trained Newfie can swim over two miles and can keep a drowning victim afloat for more than an hour. He can bring a lifeline or rescue tube to a victim or tow an inflatable rescue boat with 10 people to shore. Where a human lifeguard must stay back from close-to-freezing water because of the danger of hypothermia, a Newfie can keep going. PWDs, in addition to performing lifeguard duties in many places around the globe, were handpicked and trained to retrieve baseballs batted into the sea for the San Francisco Giants, whose stadium sits on the Bay. Learn more at waterrescuedogs.com, website of the one-of-a-kind Italian School of Water Rescue Dogs.



HEALTHY DOG

When Pooches Get Pudgy

Studies show we are notoriously poor at assessing our pets' weight (My dog isn't fat; he's just furry!). Our affectionate blindness does little to alleviate the growing—pun intended—problem of canine obesity. Some breeds are prone to overweight and likely need their guardians to be extra vigilant about helping them fend off the pounds. But no dog is immune, and the list of possible consequences is long and chilling. Arthritis, hip dysplasia, diabetes, kidney stones, cancer, heat intolerance, hypertension, and a decreased lifespan, to name but a few.

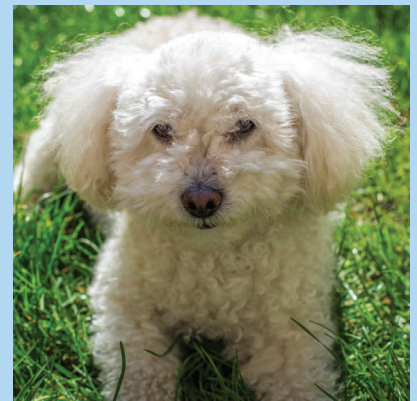
If your pooch is flabby, take action. The first item on your list should be to consult your vet about the appropriate amount of food and measure carefully at mealtimes. Switch to low-cal cookies or treat with carrots. Then amp up the exercise. If time is in short supply, consider hiring a dog walker or enrolling in a doggie day care.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Bichon Frise

This cheerful and companionable powder puff hails from the Mediterranean area; bichons traveled widely as companions for sailors, minstrels, and circus groups. Beginning in the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, they found favor with one royal European family after another, from Spain to Italy to France (King Henry III of France reputedly carried his bichon in a basket hanging from his neck). Bichons are the star performers of the dog world. Consummate entertainers, they love attention and can play and clown around for hours. The well-socialized bichon is friendly, resilient, and quick to learn. This, combined with a sturdy build, makes him an equally great buddy whether traveling or lounging at home. Despite his classification as a nonsporting dog, the bichon is a terrific little athlete that, with training, can excel at agility, K9 Nose Work, and Rally obedience.

To give a bichon frise a home, search online for a rescue organization near you.



OUR SERVICES

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4 Dog Food Storage Tips

Food-borne illnesses can affect dogs as severely as humans. Here are four tips for keeping your dog—and his dinner—safe:

Use sealed containers. Clean, sealed containers are essential. Store dry food in a cool, dry place and wet food in the refrigerator. Wash and dry containers between uses. Be sure to label the container with the expiration date of the food.

Wash your hands. Before you prepare your dog's food, wash your hands in warm soapy water, just as you would before handling food for your family.

Wash his bowls. Would you reuse your plate tomorrow without giving it a wash? Probably not and neither should your dog. Wash his food and water bowls daily.

Mind the expiration date. Don't risk feeding your dog expired food. Even if it's safe, the nutritional value is likely to be greatly diminished.



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