



## **The Secrets to Raising a Happier Dog: Common Canine Questions and Answers!**

### **Introduction**

Hello and welcome to ***The Secrets to Raising a Happier Dog: Common Canine Questions and Answers***. This guide was created to help answer some common questions asked by new pet owners. It will also assist prospective pet owners in better understanding and communicating with any dog they bring into their home.

The ultimate goal, however, is to help prevent “mismatches” between dogs and humans. There is nothing more tragic than seeing a dog abused or abandoned repeatedly by people who simply lacked the training and knowledge needed to create a good, working relationship with their animals.

For that reason, I'd like to take a moment to present you with a series of questions about dog ownership. These questions will help you decide if you're really ready to own a dog. If you already have a dog, these questions may shed light on your situation if things aren't going the way you imagine they should.

### **Question #1: Is the 'timing' right?**

One reason many dogs end up neglected and abandoned is that their owners took on the responsibility at the wrong time. If your living situation is unstable, it is best to put off getting a dog until you have the resources and secure environment necessary to care for him properly.

No matter how badly you want a dog in your life, do not give in to temptation or impatience, and don't fool yourself into thinking you'll "make it work somehow."

Dogs need food, walks and loving attention on a regular and daily basis. It is neither fair nor humane to deny a dog proper vaccinations simply because you can't afford them. Nor is it fair to force a big, active dog into a tiny apartment.

Caring for any pet is a commitment, so make sure it is the right time and place for both of you.

### **Question #2: Can I afford it?**

Caring for a pet properly costs more than you think. Spaying or neutering, vaccinations and lifelong vet visits need to be factored in along with nutritious food.

Many people wrongly assume that if they can just cover the basics upfront, they'll be set. This assumption is based on the shaky premise that their dog will not have some hidden health issue crop up, or encounter some kind of injury outdoors.

Can you afford to provide the best care for your dog in the event of an emergency? Think carefully about this and answer honestly. You'll save yourself some potentially serious heartbreak.

There's nothing worse than having to 'put down' a young pet simply because you couldn't afford their health care.

### **Question #2: Dependency needs**

Dogs are like babies that never grow up. If you have children, you know they eventually use the restroom on their own, make their own snacks and actively communicate with you when they need something.

Dogs, however, can't do this. They can't open their food and pour it into the bowl. They can't open the door when you're not home if they need to go outside. Think twice about getting a dog if you are easily frustrated by creatures being dependent on you 24/7 for their well-being.

Also, be especially cautious if your children or your spouse are the ones wanting a dog. They may insist that they will do their share of the care taking, but what if they don't?

### **Question #3: Do I want a dog because I'm bored?**

Dogs can add much to your life when you find your match, and when the

timing is right. However, buying a dog out of boredom is a sure recipe for disaster. What will you do when the novelty wears off? Will you still be willing to care for your dog and offer him a generous share of your time and attention?

#### **Question #4: Lifestyle and Scheduling**

Do the daily needs of a dog fit into your lifestyle? If you have a high-powered job or a full schedule at school, will you really have the time to walk and play with your dog each day?

Who would tend to your dog's needs during the day if you're away from home for 12 hours a day?

What if you decide to start a family? Will you and your spouse be able to care the dog even after you've got your hands full with newborn babies?

Do you travel frequently? Who will take care of your dog when you're out of town? Do you even spend enough times at home between trips to maintain a bond with your dog?

#### **Question #5: Home Environment**

Is the atmosphere in your home casual and relaxed, or is it fraught with tension? Dogs pick up on people's emotions. Disruptions in family relationships affect your dog as much as you. Fights and screaming will scare your dog and lead to new behavioral problems.

Also consider how you feel about cleanliness and order. Dogs need a clean, healthy environment, but not one in which they are prohibited from acting like dogs.

Accidents and messes are inevitable. Are you going to go ballistic on your dog if he knocks over a \$1,000 vase? Do you have a sick or elderly person living with you who could be injured or disturbed by a dog's barking?

If any of the above apply, now is not the time for you to bring a dog into the home.

If you can honestly say that you've answered all the questions in favor of getting a dog, then your next step is to find the right breed for you and begin learning about dog [training](#). The list of common questions contained in this guide will give you a good foundation, and help further your understanding of the responsibilities involved in dog ownership.

You'll find the guide an easy read as it is organized into the following logical sections:

#### **Section I: Animal Instincts and Behavior**

The secrets behind your dog's eccentricities and how they affect training.

## **Section II: Canine Emotions**

How your dog thinks and feels, and the impact of his thoughts and feelings on his behavior.

## **Section III: The Reproductive Urge**

Mating behavior and tips on preventing pregnancy and STDs.

## **Section IV: Diet**

Healthy diets and feeding behaviors

## **Section V: Grooming**

Caring for your dog's coat.

## **Section VI: Health and Wellness**

How to know when your dog is sick, conditions to look out for and [preventative](#) measures.

## **Section VII: Fun and Play**

The benefits of exercise, 'tricks' and more.

## **Section VIII: Breeds and Temperaments**

Background information on popular dog breeds.

Let's get started!

## **Animal Instincts and Behavior**

### ***Why does my dog ignore my commands?***

While there may be a variety of factors influencing a disobedient dog (illness, poor training by previous owners, etc), it is usually the case in a healthy canine that he or she is simply asserting 'dominance'.

In other words, your dog wants to be the 'pack leader', and views you as a non-Alpha member of his pack! This desire to be Alpha-dog exists in both the male and the female, and is not limited just to big dogs. Even little dogs may try to assert dominance, although they'll often do it in more subtle, manipulative ways.

Some signs your dog is trying to 'one-up' you:

- ✓ Ignoring commands to 'come', 'sit', 'stay', etc.
- ✓ Refusing to eat or being a 'picky' eater - make sure there is no underlying physiological cause, however.
- ✓ [Whining](#) to be picked up, held, or carried.
- ✓ [Jumping](#) up on the furniture
- ✓ Shows of [aggression](#) during play or other times (not directly attributable to a threat or spotting of prey) when there is no known history of past abuse that could account for fear and/or aggression in your dog.

It is important to note that dominance displayed through aggression *is* more common among certain breeds of dogs. Most pet owners realize this for what it is because it is such a stereotypical behavior.

The subtler tactics, like whining for attention, jumping on furniture and arbitrarily ignoring commands, are often a dog's way of "leading you around" *without* aggression. Once your dog learns that he can get you to give in from frustration, he will continue with the behavior.

### ***Why does my dog need to sniff absolutely everything?***

Your dog's sense of smell is one of his survival tools. Far more developed than our human sense, your dog can 'read' a variety of information from the scents he picks up.

When your dog stops to sniff another dog's bodily waste products, he can determine that dog's sex, level of dominance, readiness to mate (if female), how long ago that other dog was in the area, and even some 'psychological status' cues about the other dog's level of fear or contentment.

Dogs also perform the famous 'crotch sniff' on humans to gather similar information when the human is a stranger. Once a dog knows you, however, he or she is more likely to sniff your legs and armpits. No one is sure yet what the difference is between these two sources of scent-based information.

### ***Why does my dog kick up dirt after 'going to the bathroom'?***

Both male and female dogs possess an instinctual drive to mark territory. Males, however, are more territorial as a general rule and more likely to display the 'dirt-kicking' behavior.

There are two reasons for this behavior, and both have to do with your dog's desire to increase the likelihood of his territorial marker being noticed by

another dog.

First and foremost, kicking up dirt and grass creates a visible change for another dog to notice and investigate. Second, your dog is releasing fresh, new scents from the ground that will catch attention. Both of these are 'flags' designed to catch the attention of other dogs and lead them towards the waste product.

### ***Why does my dog like to roll around in things that stink?***

Every dog owner has faced this scenario at one time or another: Your out for a pleasant walk when, all of a sudden, your dog races towards a pile of droppings, garbage or unknown dead thing, then he rolls around in it with perverse glee.

It's not simply that your dog has bad taste in cologne!

Dogs prefer the smell of decomposing organic matter to hide their own scent from predators as well as prey.

### ***Why does my dog howl to certain types of music?***

The short answer is: Because he likes it! A dog's range of hearing is similar to that of a human (about eight-and-a-half octaves), but slightly more refined. Your dog can distinguish differences in musical notes as small as 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a tone.

So, unless you're playing music at unbearably loud levels, don't worry: your dog is not howling from displeasure. Any sound (musical or not) that your dog dislike will usually cause him to move to a quieter location.

### ***Why does my dog get along with the other household pets, yet chase the ones in the neighborhood...especially the cats?***

It is well known that dogs can live with a variety of other creatures, especially when introduced to them at a young age. Even some older dogs just have a gentler disposition and will befriend cats, birds, rabbits and more, taking them in as part of the 'pack'.

Strange animals, however, aren't afforded this tolerance. Anything that is furry and running away from your dog outside is, in your dog's mind, fair game.

One should be careful, though, even where other household pets are concerned. Your dog and cat, for example, might be the best of friends most of the time - but this does not preclude your dog's hunting/chasing instincts from being triggered if the other pet exhibits 'prey behavior'.

### ***What's up with all these holes my dog is [digging](#) in the yard? Should I give him something to bury?***

Dogs dig holes mainly by instinct. This is their way of storing and hiding food in the wild. Domesticated dogs still retain this instinct, but don't act on it as often because their being fed on a regular basis.

If your dog seems to dig excessively, there's a good chance he's just bored. Digging is good exercise, and he enjoys all the new smells being unearthed. Try giving him a bone to bury in-between meals if he's a casual digger. If he's tearing up the whole yard, try to schedule more vigorous exercise into play time.

## **Canine Emotions**

### ***My dog seems jealous of other dogs and/or family members, even though he gets plenty of attention. Why?***

It is not uncommon to have rivalries in multi-dog households. This almost always an issue over dominance, regardless of whether the dogs were raised together or one was introduced at a later time.

The dominant dog is usually the one to act out. He does so because he feels it is his right as 'pack leader' to receive your attention before you acknowledge the rest of the pack. He may growl or bark or even bite the non-dominant dog in retaliation.

Some similar issues come into play regarding humans. The human 'pack leader' is often the one who feeds, walks and spends the most time with the dog.

More innately dominance-oriented dogs can become jealous and protective based on sex, as well. A dog of either sex may choose a same or opposite sex human as pack leader. For example, a male dog raised by a single woman may 'hate' her boyfriends or male friends if he is not exposed to them frequently before he reaches sexual maturity.

To reform this behavior as much as possible, it is necessary to have the 'mistrusted' human take over some of the care and feeding responsibilities for the dog. The more time the animal spends growing accustomed to that person's voice and scent, the more willing he'll be to allow that person 'into the pack'.

### ***My dog seems depressed after a major change in his life. Is this normal?***

Dogs can experience reactive [depression](#) just like their human counterparts. Dogs enjoy routine and consistency. Major changes to their environment, such as the death of a pack-mate or primary human caretaker, can be very upsetting.

If a fellow house pet had passed away, it can be beneficial to let the dog see and sniff the body, as gruesome as it may sound. Your dog *will* understand death, and will mourn it in his own way. What's harder for him to understand is

when his companion has simply disappeared.

In the case of a human caretaker's absence, the best approach is to establish the new primary caretaker as quickly as possible, and make sure the dog receives plenty of affection and attention.

### ***Why does my dog tear up the house when I leave him alone inside?***

Dogs are highly social. The two things they hate the most are being left alone, and being left out. It is boring to them and also increases their [anxiety](#).

The mistake pet owners often make (this is true for cat owners as well) is that shower affection on their dog *just before leaving him* alone in the house. We naturally feel guilty for having to leave our pets alone, so we try to make up for it by petting them and telling them "We'll be right back".

Unfortunately, your dog can read even the most subtle stress signals in your voice. He hears this at the same time you are showering him with attention and, essentially, it "crosses his wires". He is stressed by the stress he hears in your voice, so he wants your attention *back*, to comfort him, the moment you walk out the door.

Avoiding this problem is best accomplished by setting up the proper routine when your dog is still a puppy, but you can still implement these same procedures with an older dog to help break the pattern:

- ✓ Provide your dog with play and attention well in advance of when you intend to leave. For example, if you intend to go out at 7:00 p.m., play fetch with him from 5:30 to 6:00.
- ✓ Leave a few of his favorite toys out for him to play with while you're gone. You can also leave on the T.V. or radio if you'll be gone more than an hour.
- ✓ When you leave, do so without petting or talking. It may feel 'cruel' at first, but your dog will not be upset by you neglecting to tell him 'goodbye'.
- ✓ Once you return, avoid showering him with attention right away. Take 5 or 10 minutes to do what you need to do, and then very casually turn your attention to him. Over time, this will help alleviate the clinging and over-excited behavior your dog displays when you return home.

### ***I have an older dog who seems to be getting grouchier as he ages. Should I worry?***

Mood swings and irritability in aging dogs is common, but still warrants a trip to the vet. Some causes of this behavior are treatable and others are not. If your dog has a treatable illness you can alleviate his pain, and restore him to

a happier frame of mine.

Other age-related conditions, such as [arthritis](#) and vision and hearing loss, can be soothed to a point, but will continue to progress to the end. These types of changes require that you make life as comfortable as possible for your dog. If your dog has hearing or vision problems, for example, you'll need to approach him more slowly and gently so that you don't startle him.

It is also important to maintain as much of your dog's routine as possible. Older pets have a much harder time adapting to change, and it is even more important to them that their environment remains consistent and stable.

***My dog is 'possessive' of food and/or toys, and is aggressive when he feels either are being threatened. What should I do?***

This guarding instinct is another type of dominance behavior, and may be difficult to treat in some cases depending on your breed of dog. Breeds known for working in packs are less prone to guarding their 'possessions', while Terriers and other independent types are more competitive.

Dealing with this behavior is mainly a matter of asserting *yourself* as 'alpha dog' when the conflict arises.

***My dog seems overly 'passive', fearful or submissive. Is this just a personality quirk?***

Yes and no. Some dogs are actually shy. However, a 'normal', shy dog will still display a fair degree of confidence under most circumstances.

The time to worry is when you have evidence of past abuse, and your dog's fear-based, [submissive](#) behavior is causing problems. Fearful dogs typically have issues with when, where and how you pet them. They may crouch, tremble or tail-tuck frequently, even when your approach is non-threatening. Some especially apprehensive dogs will involuntarily 'relieve themselves' on the floor.

If this describes your dog, you'll want to look into some gentle, 'desensitization' methods to include in his training.

## **The Reproductive Urge**

***My male dog likes to 'expose' himself, especially in mixed company..what's the deal?***

Whether your dog is revealing his private parts, or rubbing them against a hapless visitor's leg, you shouldn't worry about his psychological well-being. Although this behavior is disconcerting for humans, it is a normal activity for sexually mature male dogs.

Why the 'flaunting' around humans, though?

If your dog is exhibiting this behavior, it is likely because you (or a previous owner) raised him in the absence of female dogs. Lacking a suitable companion to 'experiment' with, your dog will gravitate towards female members of the household.

In cases where your dog 'flirts' with any and everyone, he's likely doing so because he's learned the behavior gets attention (even negative attention is better than none at all).

Having your dog neutered before he reaches adolescence can help curb some of this behavior, but he may still do it. These urges generally decline with age. Your best bet is to take a firm but compassionate approach. Ignore the 'flashing' and be consistent in your 'down' and 'sit' commands when your dog tries to mount a human leg.

***I have a female dog I would like to breed at some point in the future, but would like to prevent pregnancy for the time being. Can this be done?***

Yes, there are both oral and intravenous forms of contraception available for dogs. For the inexperienced, it is usually easiest to provide oral contraception to your dog because it can be mixed in with her food.

Birth control will prevent your female dog from ovulating so that, even if a persistent male dog still attempts to mate with her, she will not conceive.

Keep in mind, however, that birth control does not prevent the transmission of disease. If your dog *is* still sexually active, you should have her tested every 3 months.

***I think my dog may already be pregnant. What should I do?***

If you witnessed your dog mating, there's still time to prevent pregnancy. Your vet can administer an injection to prevent the fertilized eggs from reaching the womb.

For the future, your best bet is to have your dog spayed. Spaying (and neutering) is the duty of every responsible pet owner. There is no reason not to have the procedure done if you are not a professional dog breeder.

It is a proven fact that spayed and neutered household pets lead longer, healthier lives. They are also much more well-behaved and easier for their human companions to deal with due to the reduction in food requirements, territorial behavior and inhibition of the urge to 'run away' in search of a mate.

## **Diet**

***My dog chows down on the droppings of other animals. Does he really like the taste or is there a deficiency in his diet?***

Dogs have fewer taste buds than many animals. They enjoy the waste products mainly for smell and texture, rather than any particularly exciting taste.

Also, some types of manure are actually nutritious and healthy for your dog's digestive system. This doesn't mean you have to let him eat it, however. If your dog is eating droppings or manure despite your best efforts to break him of the behavior, there's a good chance something is missing in his diet.

Try adding to his diet with enzyme-containing supplements or raw fruits and vegetables.

### ***My dog has really bad [gas](#). Will changing his diet help?***

The short answer is: "Maybe." You can experiment with your dog's diet, but keep in mind that some dogs are just prone to imbalances in gut bacteria and will still have gas no matter how much you reduce gas-causing foods.. You can help restore balance by giving your dog yogurt along with enzyme supplements.

### ***My dog has plenty of food, but wants to eat everyone else's, too. Why?***

This is both a dominance behavior, as well as a survival instinct. In a dog pack, there is no sharing and alpha-status is enhanced by taking resources for oneself. This instinct really can not be trained away, so the best bet is to feed your dogs in separate rooms.

### ***How important is variety to my dog's diet?***

As long the food you're feeding to your dog is nutritionally balanced, there is no harm in feeding him the exact same thing every day. If he already loves his food, all the better. Remember that routine is important to dogs. Changing food too frequently is likely to upset him.

### ***My dog is well-fed, but still eats garbage, bugs and just about anything else he can find. Why?***

Dogs are natural scavengers, and they love the thrill of 'the hunt'. However, a well-fed dog will almost never seek out food in this way unless he is bored. In other words, he isn't hungry. He's just dying for more stimulation and exercise.

If you tend to keep your dog indoors a majority of the time, and notice scavenging behavior when you let him out, take this as a sign to add more variety and physical exercise to his play time. Ramp up the frequency of 'walks' or make an effort to take him somewhere new and exciting.

### ***Why does my dog eat grass?***

Dogs are omnivores. Having a meal of fresh grass is a lot like having a salad, and your dog will eat it when he feels the need for a little extra fiber. There is

no harm to your dog in eating grass, and even certain weeds, so let him have at it!

Occasionally, your dog will eat grass when his stomach is upset, too. This helps him regurgitate the offending items, and is also a perfectly natural and healthy behavior.

## **Grooming**

### ***How often should I bathe my dog?***

Commercial soaps and shampoos, even those designed for dogs, contain chemicals that can strip your dog's fur of moisture and dry out the skin. Therefore, it is important that you don't bathe your dog more than necessary.

You can and should give your dog a bathe if he has rolled in something smelly, gone swimming or romped through the mud. Overall, though, daily combing will keep your dog very clean, and he shouldn't need more than one bathe per month.

### ***When I do bathe my dog, what are the best shampoos to use?***

Choose a shampoo and/or conditioner suitable to your breed's texture. Soft, silky-haired breeds need conditioner to keep their hair in top shape. Coarse or wire-haired breeds need only shampoo, and using a conditioner on them is wasted effort.

### ***How often should I clip my dog's nails?***

Dog's should have their [nails](#) clipped on a monthly basis. It is best to use clippers designed especially for a dog's nails rather than human clippers or scissors.

Additional care should be taken if your dog is one of the breeds with dark nails, as it can be much harder to tell how close to the 'quick' you are.

### ***What are the health risks of fleas?***

[Fleas](#) are more than an annoyance! Aside from the itching and 'hot spots' they can create on your dog's skin, they are also carriers of tapeworms. All your dog has to do is eat a flea that happens to be carrying a tapeworm egg, and you've got an additional problem on your hand.

Fleas, however, are easily controlled with topical solutions, some of which can offer continuous protection for up to 3 months. Make sure that you treat your dog as soon as possible when you find evidence of fleas. Untreated, the fleas will multiply and invade not just your dog's fur, but also your carpets and bedding.

## **Health and Wellness**

### ***How can I make vet visits easier for my dog?***

There are several factors at play with dogs who have excessive fear of the vet's office.

First, there is the drive itself. Many dogs enjoy a ride in the car, but this excitement can mutate into anxiety once your dog arrives at the office.

Dogs are easily distracted, however, and you can help instill a sense of calm by performing a few 'comfort' routines once your dog reaches the office.

It is important for *you* to remain calm, above all, and not transmit your own fears to the dog. From there, it is a matter of diverting your dog's attention at key points. For example, you can offer a treat once in the waiting room, and again while your dog is receiving shots.

Also, you may work on your dog's fears at home by including 'medical' style examinations in the grooming process. At least once per week, make a point of lifting your dog's tail, opening his mouth to check his teeth, examining his ears, and so on.

### ***How important are vaccinations?***

Very! Every single vaccination is important to your dog's health, and none should be skipped over. It only takes a few untreated animals to spread disease. [Parvovirus](#), for example, was almost unheard of before the 70's. Once it took hold, however, it spread rapidly and the effects were devastating.

Prevention is the best cure, so don't shirk on your dog's vaccinations!

### ***I've heard you can tell whether a dog is sick by whether his nose is wet or dry. Is this true?***

This is an old wive's tale. Neither your dog's nor your cat's nose can tell you how he's feeling, or whether he needs to see the vet. Changes in the moisture and temperature of your pet's nose can vary based on the weather, recent physical activity, sleep and more.

A warm, dry nose *can* accompany a fever, but this information is only valuable when your pet is displaying other signs of illness, such as lethargy, disinterest in food/water, etc. If you suspect your pet is sick, you're better off being safe than sorry. Take him in for a check-up.

### ***What are some of the most common health problems faced by dogs?***

A wide variety of bugs and parasites would love to make a home on and/or inside of your dog. Some problems, like mange, are seen primarily in strays and not a big concern for well-cared for animals.

Awareness is the key to prevention, however, so let's look at a list of potential health conditions to look out for:

- ✓ Internal and External [Parasites](#) (worms, fleas, ticks, mites, etc)
- ✓ Sarcoptic mange (caused by mites)
- ✓ Follicular mange
- ✓ Ringworm
- ✓ Heartworm
- ✓ Clogged [Anal](#) Glands
- ✓ Hip dysplasia
- ✓ Lyme disease
- ✓ Heat stroke
- ✓ Rabies

One of the biggest keys to protecting your dog's health is to be aware of what's going on in the outside environment. Pay attention to the seasons. Fleas and ticks can afflict your dog any time of year, but are much more abundant in warm weather months.

Keep an eye out for 'local vermin', too, especially if your dog loves to run through tall, grassy or wooded areas. Rodent and snake bites can be lethal to your dog.

## **Fun and Play**

### ***What are the benefits of teaching my dog to do tricks?***

Tricks are fun and rewarding for both you and your dog. If seeing your dog perform tricks make you happy, it also makes your dog happy!

Your dog lives for positive attention. He learns that performing these tricks gets him plenty of love and affection from you *and* other people. This positive attention aids in socializing your dog as well because his trust will grow when he receives approval from a variety of people in his environment.

Teaching your dog to do tricks will also help *you* interact with others, especially people who might be somewhat afraid of dogs. A dog that can

'shake hands' or 'roll over', for example, automatically appears friendlier and less-threatening, and this can put others at ease.

### ***What are some tricks I can teach my dog, and how do I do it?***

The main ingredient when teaching any kind of trick is a healthy dose of praise and treats. Always reinforce the positive, and avoid scolding. In fact, when your dog fails to perform the trick, don't do anything at all. Just pretend it didn't happen and try again.

#### Trick #1: 'Shake Hands'

You can teach your dog to 'shake hands' or 'high five' once he's learned to follow the 'Sit' command. Begin by having him sit as you kneel down to his level. Give him the command ("shake", "shake hands", "high five", etc), then pick up one of his front legs and gently 'shake' it a few times.

As soon as you let go, give him some praise and a food treat. Repeat the whole process no more than 5 times per session. It may take several weeks but, eventually, your dog will automatically raise his front leg the moment he hears your verbal cue!

#### Trick #2: Say "Hi"

You can teach your dog to say "Hi" in his own way. Some dogs may actually mimic you and make a human-sounding 'Hi', but most will bark or squeak.

To begin, you have to get your dog a bit riled up and excited. Find his favorite toy or treat. Show it to him, but don't let him have it. The key is to 'tease' him as you say the cue word 'Hi' (or whatever word you want to teach him) over and over again.

When his excitement level reaches its peak, he should make some sort of sound. He might bark or let out an open-mouthed whine. Go ahead and give him the toy or treat and then praise him lavishly. As with the previous trick, limit the training to 5 repetitions at a time.

#### Trick #3: Sit Up

This trick teaches your dog to sit up on his hind legs, front paws off the floor. Your dog will need to learn to maintain his balance, and it is a good idea in the beginning to teach him this trick close to a corner or wall so that he can catch himself if he loses his balance.

Begin by issuing the command: "Sit up." Now, show him a toy or treat, holding it just above his nose. Slowly move your hand upwards so that his eyes follow. Once his head is looking straight up, begin to move backwards a bit, so that his only choice is to stretch his body to reach the reward.

Watch him closely and give him the treat the moment he sits up on his hind

legs. Praise him and repeat 5 times, then give it a rest for a couple of hours.

### ***What are some other fun activities to do with my dog?***

Dogs enjoy all sorts of games. You can play games that are purely for fun, for exercise or even for 'education' or 'sport.'

Indoors, you can play "hide and seek", tug-of-war, wrestling and even 'fetch', so long as you have the space for it and train your dog not to get *too* excited or rambunctious.

Outdoors, you can go for walks, play frisbee, play soccer and variety of other games that involve running, hunting/tracking or retrieving. In fact, you can even teach your dog 'agility' games which involved running and jumping over a series of hurdles.

All of these games can be fun for you and your dog. They can also be a way to 'show off' your dog if you believe he has enough talent for serious competition. If that's the case, you can look for training programs in your area to nurture your dog's abilities and get him ready to compete.

Oh, and don't forget the lake in those hot summer months! Many dogs love the water and will happily play 'fetch-swim'.

### ***How Much Exercise Does My Dog Need?***

All dogs need daily exercise for optimum health, but some dogs need more than others. Certain breeds have very high energy levels and, somewhat like hyper-active children, need your assistance in 'burning off' this excess energy.

If your dog is destructive and never seems to "mellow out", it's likely you've got a high-energy dog on your hands, and he is in need of far more exercise than he's getting.

In addition to daily walks and 'backyard time', the high-energy dog will need to engage in something that satisfies his instincts. This usually involves play that includes plenty of vigorous running and jumping.

Depending on the breed, your dog may also need to hunt, track, herd or retrieve something. If you have a Border Collie, for example, you've got a breed known for herding cattle.

This instinct does not disappear simply because there are no cattle around. Instead your dog will try to herd you, other animals and even passing cars. The healthy way to satisfy that kind of instinct is to play ball games such as soccer.

Likewise, if you've got a retriever, then you'll want to play games like 'fetch' and 'hide-and-peek' to satisfy his urge to capture prey.

## **Breeds and Temperaments**

### ***How are the different dog breeds classified?***

[Breeds](#) are divided into 'groups', and further categorized by size and coat type. Under the guidelines of the American Kennel Club (AKC), there are 7 'official' breed groups.

### **Group #1: The Sporting Group**

The sporting group includes **retrievers**, **pointers** and **spaniels**. These dogs can be high-energy, but they do not need to hunt in order to be happy. They just need plenty of stimulating playtime. They are also usually very loyal and protective of their human families and make great companion animals.

#### **Retrievers**

Chesapeake Bay Retriever

Curly-Coated Retriever

Flat-Coated Retriever

Golden Retriever

Labrador Retriever

Irish Water Spaniel (classed with retriever for hunting purposes)

#### **Pointers**

Brittany

Pointer

German Shorthaired Pointer

Germain Wirehaired Pointer

English Setter

Gordon Setter

Irish Setter

Vizsla

Weimaraner

Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

#### **Spaniels**

American Water Spaniel

Clumber Spaniel

Cocker Spaniel

English Cocker Spaniel

English Spring Spaniel

Field Spaniel

Sussex Spaniel

Welsh Springer Spaniel

### **Group #2: The Hound Group**

The hound group includes **scent hounds** and **sight hounds**. These dogs were bred for hunting and tracking. Their favorite prey includes fowl (birds, ducks) and rabbits. They can be very mellow and loving, but hard to train as they are always preoccupied with the scents and sights of their environment.

### **Scent Hounds**

Basset Hound  
Beagle  
Black and Tan Coonhound  
Bloodhound  
Dachshund  
American Foxhound  
English Foxhound  
Harrier  
Norwegian Elkhound  
Otterhound  
Petit Basset Griffon Vendeen

### **Sight Hounds**

Afghan Hound  
Basenji  
Borzoi  
Greyhound  
Ibizan Hound  
Irish Wolfhound  
Pharaoh Hound  
Rhodesian Ridgeback  
Saluki  
Scottish Deerhound  
Whippet

## **Group #3: The Working Group**

The working group is not divided into further classifications except those relating to size and coat. As the name suggests, these dogs were bred for strength and willingness to follow commands. They're the 'guarders', 'sled pullers' and 'rescuers'.

Their temperaments and activity needs can vary widely, though, so it is best to investigate individual temperaments before making a decision.

### **Working Dogs**

Akita  
Alaskan Malamute  
Bernese Mountain Dog  
Boxer  
Bullmastiff  
Doberman Pinscher  
Giant Schnauzer

Great Dane  
Great Pyrenees  
Komondor  
Kuvasz  
Mastiff  
Newfoundland  
Portugese Water Dog  
Rottweiler  
Saint Bernard  
Samoyed  
Siberian Husky  
Standard Schnauzer

#### **Group #4: The Terrier Group**

The terrier group is not divided into further classifications except those relating to size and coat. Coming from the Latin word "Terra", meaning earth, Terriers were bred to dig in pursuit of prey. They are masters at flushing out underground rodents and snakes. They tend to be very intelligent and energetic, with dominant personalities.

#### **Terriers**

Airedale Terrier  
American Staffordshire Terrier  
Australian Terrier  
Bedlington Terrier  
Border Terrier  
Bull Terrier  
Cairn Terrier  
Dandie Dinmont Terrier  
Fox Terrier (Smooth)  
Fox Terrier (Wire)  
Irish Terrier  
Kerry Blue Terrier  
Lakeland Terrier  
Manchester Terrier  
Minature Bull Terrier  
Miniature Schnauzer  
Norfolk Terrier  
Norwich Terrier  
Scottish Terrier  
Sealyham Terrier  
Skye Terrier  
Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier  
Staffordshire Bull Terrier  
Welsh Terrier  
West Highland White Terrier

#### **Group #5: The Toy Group**

The toy group consists of the very small dogs. They're cute, but don't let their size fool you. Tiny dogs can be high-energy and prone to aggression. Even the sweetest little chihuahua can turn into a fierce ankle-biter if not properly socialized. These dogs sometimes have fear issues due to their size, so it is important to work on their self-confidence.

### **Toys**

Affenpinscher  
Brussels Griffon  
Chihuahua  
Chinese Crested  
English Toy Spaniel  
Italian Greyhound  
Japanese Chin  
Maltese  
Manchester Terrier  
Miniature Pinscher  
Papillon  
Pekingese  
Pomeranian  
Poodle  
Pug  
Shih Tzu  
Silky Terrier  
Yorkshire Terrier

### **Group #6: The Non-Sporting Group**

The non-sporting group is diverse. You'll find a range of temperaments. Not bred for any particular purpose, you can consider this group a 'variety show' of all different temperaments and activity levels.

### **Non-Sporting**

Bichon Frise  
Boston Terrier  
Bulldog  
Chinese Shar-Pei  
Chow Chow  
Dalmation  
Finnish Spitz  
French Bulldog  
Keeshound  
Lhasa Apso  
Poodle (miniature)  
Poodle (standard)  
Schipperke  
Shiba Inu  
Tibetan Spaniel  
Tebetan Terrier

## **Group #7: The Herding Group**

The herding group includes those dogs bred through the centuries to move large flocks of sheep and cattle. They are muscular, agile and highly energetic. These dogs are happiest when they have a job, or a game that simulates work. They are very good at following commands, and this can make them a joy to train.

### **Herders**

Australian Cattle Dog  
Australian Shepherd  
Bearded Collie  
Belgian Malinois  
Belgian Sheepdog  
Belgian Tervuren  
Border Collie  
Bovier des Flandres  
Briard  
Collie (rough)  
Collie (smooth)  
German Shepherd  
Old English Sheepdog  
Puli  
Shetland Sheepdog  
Welsh Corgi (cardigan)  
Welsh Corgi (pembroke)

### ***What breed of dog is right for me?***

It all depends. The first thing you have to do is determine whether you can provide the right environment for your dog. Smaller breeds can do okay living in apartments and romping through small backyards. You just need to take them out for regular walks and playtime.

Larger dogs, on the other hand, really need a more spacious living situation. Big house, big backyard. In some cases, the herding and working dogs fare better living in rural areas with plenty of land to sniff and plenty of scents to chase.

The next thing to consider is the dog's natural 'dominance'. Can you live with a bossy Terrier? Would you prefer a more mellow and submissive Labrador?

Keep in mind, too, that there are variations within breeds as well as with an individual dog's personality. Not all Terriers are fiesty, and not all Labs are easy-going.

The best thing to do is read as much as you can about each type of dog that interests you, then go out and interact with some real, live examples.

## **Conclusion**

Dogs are great company. They can bring us years of joy, laughter and healing. The right dog at the right time is a match made in heaven. The wrong dog, or even the right dog at the wrong time, can be a disaster. Make absolutely sure you're prepared for the commitment.

Also, I would suggest avoiding the trap of thinking you have to get a puppy in order to truly bond with your dog. There are thousands of older dogs just waiting for someone to give them a second chance, and many of them are superb dogs who simply didn't work out for the smallest of reasons.

Just because a dog is out on the streets or in a shelter does not mean that the dog has serious behavioral issues. True, he made need some retraining and socialization if he was dumped early, but the reasons for being abandoned may be as innocuous as "barking too much", "owner had allergies" or the dog ran away from an abusive environment.

If you need help, there are plenty of [training](#) programs and expert advice available both on and offline.

Finally, remember that there are no bad dogs, just bad dog behaviors. Take the time to provide your dog with a stable environment, proper training, and plenty of attention. You'll create a love that lasts a lifetime!

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