

• Canine Connection •

from Sarah Richardson's Canine Connection

It's Spring Training Time!



Exercise, Play and Positive Training are Critical to Your Dog's Wellbeing - Spring 2009



✦ *Highlights* ✦

The Importance of Play

So much has been written and said about our love affair with dogs. I believe one reason we love and need our dogs so is that they invite us to engage in more play. Play comes so naturally to dogs. Just watch the dance of play bows, wiggles and happy faces that is part of dog play. But play comes less naturally to humans with our busy, serious, and over-stressed lives. If we let them, our dogs can provide us with pathways to more play, exercise, laughter, and fun.

Playing with our dog can take many forms, from an energetic game of frisbee to participation in sports like agility or freestyle (see article in this newsletter).

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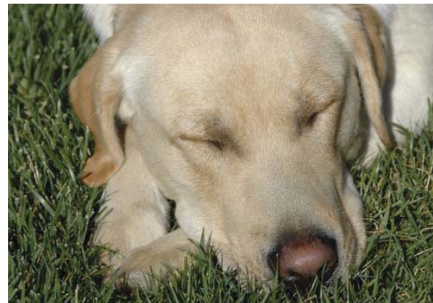
LIVING WITH DOGS

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A Tired Dog is a Good Dog

Exercise, we all know, is fundamental to good health. For dogs and humans alike, slothful ways lead to, at best, diminished well-being and poor muscle tone, at worst obesity, heart ailments, and joint problems. But in dogs a couch potato existence can also prompt behavior problems. Sometimes just quirks, sometimes full-on neuroses similar to those seen in caged dogs.

Almost all dogs were bred with a working purpose in mind. The seemingly sedate Basset Hound? Bred for rabbit hunting. The Corgi? A herder. It makes sense, then, that all dogs need to run their engine, whatever its size, frequently



and vigorously to function well. (And contrary to popular belief, dogs rarely self-exercise if left alone outside. They stalk birds, bark at strangers, and lie around in the shade.)

Exercise earns you a happier, better-behaved dog. Tired dogs bark less, chew less, sleep more, and rest easier if left home alone. And exercise has profound effects on a dog's personality. The same dog can either tear through the trash and disembowel the couch cushions or snooze peacefully, depending on the quality of the workouts he gets.

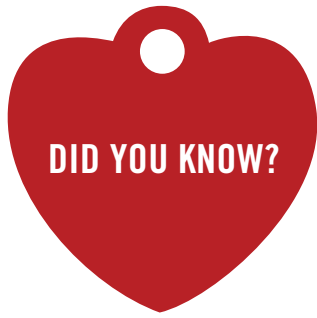
So, must you take up marathon running with your dog? Of course not. But a stroll around the block is not enough. Train your dog to fetch or play Frisbee. Sign up for a dog sport or activity like tracking, flyball, or agility. Let your dog play with other dogs regularly, if he enjoys being social. Learning new things—whether in a class or a training session in the backyard—is also wonderfully tiring for dogs. Mental calisthenics can be every bit as wholesome as jogging.

And knowing you've upheld your end of the bargain as a loving guardian, that's healthy, too.

"Reinforcement principles are laws, like the laws of physics.

They underlie all learning as surely as the law of gravity underlies the falling of an apple."

- Karen Pryor



The ACE Awards

- American Kennel Club's Award for Canine Excellence (ACE) was first presented in 2000. It is awarded annually at the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship.
- The award spotlights 5 remarkable dogs, one in each of the following categories: Exemplary Companion, Search & Rescue, Therapy, Law Enforcement, and Service.
- Winners receive a \$1,000 cash prize and a silver collar medallion, and have their names engraved on plaques displayed at the AKC Library in New York.
- One 2008 winner was Zadok, an Akita, who won the Therapy category for bringing comfort to children in hospital and to prison inmates. Zadok consoled students after the Virginia Tech school shooting and often educed a response where human therapists failed. Zadok is certified with, among other organizations, the National Animal Assisted Crisis Response, and works tirelessly with her owner Julie to fundraise for Akita rescue.



A WORLD OF DOGS

Dogs, Dogs Everywhere

Imagine a bedouin hunting in the desert. The temperature is close to 120 degrees, too hot for horses to move beyond a plod. The desert hare, or dinner, is out of shooting range. Enter the Saluki. Light-boned, sharp-eyed, with the lung capacity of a cheetah. An expert hunter, specialized for this harsh environment, the dog is a partner the bedouin depends on for his survival. Now consider a pack of huskies in the Arctic. They do more than pull the sled. They alert the Innuits to weaknesses in the ice surface. Locate air holes that give away the presence of seals. Warn of approaching polar bears. The huskies are born onto the ice and live their entire lives without seeing the inside of a house...



Such scenarios, common in our recent past, are moving onto the pages of history books. These days, a dog's job description is more likely to involve search & rescue or national security. And then there's the main occupation for the modern dog. Pet. Twenty years ago, 51 million pet dogs shared our homes; today, 74 million do.

Meanwhile, we have moved into cities and suburbs in unprecedented numbers. A dog's life now takes place in houses and apartments, in parks, in suburban backyards, and on sidewalks thronged with people and other dogs. Dogs have become family members. We buy them toys, we have their teeth cleaned, we take them to classes. They accompany us on vacation and to the office.

But amid this loving assimilation of dogs into the inner sanctum of the family universe, we tend to forget that dogs are, well, dogs. Our tolerance for natural canine behavior shrinks year by year. We frown on barking. We dislike scuffles among dogs. Biting, naturally, is abhorred.

The Saluki in the desert and the huskies on the ice, then, are reminders of a time when dogs had vast spaces around them, physically taxing jobs, and license to bark, jump, pull, dig, and bite if threatened. We radically changed the environment of dogs in what amounts to an evolutionary blink of an eye and it's up to us to help them be successful in our world by providing plenty of training, exercise, and stimulation. In return, they'll follow us wherever we go.

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Dogs that have outlets for play are healthier and happier and the same is true for us! As we move toward summer, think of activities you and your dog would enjoy. Start a positive training program at the Canine Connection so your dog can learn skills necessary to fully enjoy your new activity. Your dog-and-you-will benefit from a wider selection of opportunities for playful engagement. And through play, you and your dog will exercise more, smile more, meet new friends, and have more fun!



DOGS IN ACTION

Musical Freestyle

Cha-cha with your Chihuahua. Shimmy with your Sheltie. Do the mambo with your mutt. Canine Musical Freestyle is, in essence, dancing with dogs. Together, a richly robed dog and her handler carry out a choreographed sequence of moves to music, mixing great motivational dog training with fun, exercise, and showmanship. Little wonder, then, that the popularity of Freestyle has exploded in recent years. In what other dog sport can you expect to see satin and sequins, tights and tutus? But don't be fooled by the theatricality of the costumes. Freestyle, especially at competition level, is much more than show—though its entertainment value is undeniable. Teaching a dog to bow, weave, prance, jump, and back up requires creativity, patience, and much practice. Of course, beyond a show-stopping routine, you might well end up with a more attentive dog that loves to train—and loves to rock and roll.

Freestyle classes are sprouting up all around the country. Any breed or mix of breeds is allowed; the only rule is that a dog be handled by its owner. Ask at your local training facility or check for classes in your area at www.worldcaninefreestyle.org or www.canine-freestyle.org.



HEALTHY DOG

Beyond Kibble And Cans

The past decade has seen what amounts to a revolution in commercial pet food. Not long ago there was kibble and canned wet food—now all good pet food stores or catalogs offer a choice of high-quality options like human-grade dehydrated diets, food rolls, and fresh-chilled raw or cooked food. Many dog owners are troubled by the prospect of mass-produced commercial food (who doesn't remember the 2007 pet food recall?), but find the new pet food selection perplexing.

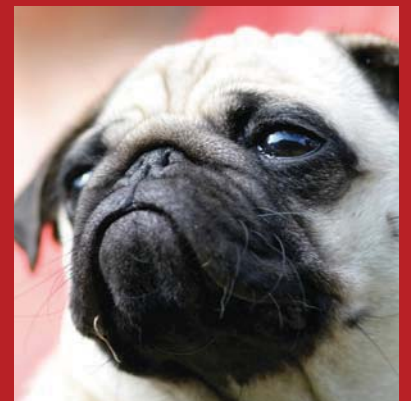
The words to look for on the packaging are 'complete and balanced.' That guarantees nutritional content to AAFCO (American Feed Control Officials) standards. For thorough information about all types of dog food, subscribe to *The Whole Dog Journal*, a monthly newsletter, at www.whole-dog-journal.com. And for a fascinating examination of the subject, read *Pet Food Politics* by Marion Nestle, PhD.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Pug

One of the so-called smush nose dogs, the pug packs a big personality in a compact container. Clownish, fun-loving, wheezy, affectionate, and dignified, pugs can be traced back to pre-B.C. China. Marie Antoinette had a pug, so did Queen Victoria. Pug charm conquers high culture (William Hogarth's 1745 self-portrait *The Painter and his Pug*) and popular entertainment (memorably in *Men In Black*; less so in *Beverly Hills Chihuahua*) with equal ease. Some pug facts: Their puppies are called puglets; they make first-class couch companions; they're great with kids; they inspire fan festivals called Pug-O-Ramas, and they happen to be the number six hottest dog for attracting positive attention from the opposite sex while strolling in the dog park, according to *The Dog Lover's Guide to Dating*.

For a pug to call your own, find a rescue organization near you at www.pugrescue.com



OUR SERVICES

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OUR FACILITY: Our safe, modern, indoor training center is complete with climate-control, cushioned rubber flooring, comfortable seating, restroom, and outdoor play yard. At our store you'll find only the best training equipment, treats, toys, and food - supplies that will enhance your dog's training, behavior and well-being.

OUR STAFF: As a nationally Certified Pet Dog Trainer and Certified Dog Behavior Consultant, Dr. Sarah Richardson is one of a handful of people in the nation to have achieved the highest levels of certification and education in dog training. For more than a decade, she has worked professionally with dogs of all breeds and behaviors . Sarah and her dogs are frequently featured in the national publication, "Whole Dog Journal", a leading information source on positive training and holistic dog care. She and her staff are passionate about providing information and assistance to help you bring out the best in your dog!

OUR SERVICES: For dogs of all ages, sizes, and temperaments!

Group Classes

- Puppy Kindergarten (socialization & training for pups 3 to 5.5 months)
- Levels Obedience (flexible, self-paced program for dogs 5.5 months up)
- Small Dog Obedience (just for dogs 25 pounds and less, 5.5 months up)
- Freestyle, Agility-for-fun, Tricks and Clicks (for fun and teamwork)

Private Training and Specialized Semi-Private Classes

Therapy Dog Certification

Educational Seminars and Events

Dog Day Care (oops, we mean "Play Care" since it's so much fun!)

VISIT OUR WEB SITE FOR INFORMATION, SCHEDULES, AND REGISTRATION - www.TheCanineConnection.com



Safety At Your Fingertips

- ✓ **Spotting illness.** Aside from things you can see, smell, or hear (rashes, discharge, wheezing, etc.) look out for loss of appetite, disorientation, lethargy, persistent scratching, coughing, or head shaking. All warrant a trip to the vet.
- ✓ **Doggie First-Aid kit necessities.** Antiseptic wipes, triple antibiotic ointment, eye wash, petroleum jelly, Pepto Bismol and anti-diarrhea tablets, buffered aspirin, pad bandages and bandage scissors, syringe, tweezers, vet wrap, pill splitter, rectal thermometer.

Plus a copy of Amy D. Shojai's *The First Aid Companion for Dogs & Cats*. (For all human meds, find out the right dosage based on your dog's weight!)

- ✓ **Safeguard your pooch with...** A reflective vest or lighted collar, a life jacket for any water sports, up-to-date ID tags, and a microchip implant with your contact information.



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