



# the Pawspective

NEWS FROM PEACEFUL PACK DOG TRAINING



## ✦ Highlights ✦



### LIVING WITH DOGS

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#### If You Don't Like It, Don't Reward It

It's a simple fact of biology: All organisms do more of what they are rewarded for. If you were given twenty dollars every time you smiled, you would walk around grinning. If wearing a certain coat predictably unleashed a rain of compliments on you, chances are that coat would spend little time in your closet.



Dogs are no different. Any behavior they think works to get them something they want becomes more frequent. Say your dog drops a tennis ball in front of you and barks, and you pick up the ball and throw it. You have just trained your dog to bark to have his favorite game perpetuated. As a strategy

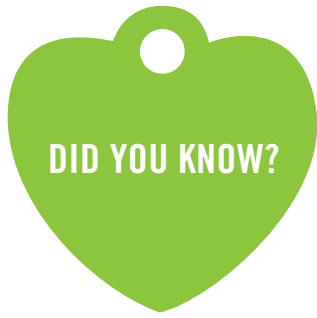
barking paid off and sure enough, your dog will bark more. By contrast, ignoring the ball and walking away teaches the dog that barking doesn't work. When he next drops the ball by your feet without barking, pick it up and throw it to reinforce the delightful quiet.

This simple exercise contains the essence of dog training: Ignore what you don't like, and be quick to reward what you do like. The principle applies to all situations and it pays to become aware of the many ways we accidentally reinforce behaviors we don't like. We often reward a dog for jumping up to greet us, either by petting and sweet-talking the dog, or by pushing him away and saying 'no,' which is more than enough attention to be reinforcing. Turning away or leaving is much more effective. Similarly, feeding your dog from the table reinforces begging. Better to reward Fido with a special tidbit when he is lying quietly on his bed. This has the added bonus of reinforcing calm indoor behavior.

To get a well-behaved dog quickly, always be on the lookout for ways to reinforce behaviors you like. Four paws on the floor when greeting, for example, should always earn a 'good dog' or a pet or a treat.

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**"Properly trained,  
a man can be  
dog's best friend."  
- Corey Ford**



### These Doggie Facts?

- With their swiveling ears, dogs can locate the source of a sound in 6/100 of a second.
- Dogs have far fewer taste buds than humans, but the 200 million scent receptors (compared to our 5 million) in their nasal folds nevertheless make some of them very finicky eaters.
- The hair on a dog's muzzle, eyes, and jaws are touch-sensitive hairs called vibrissae that can sense tiny changes in airflow.
- Dogs have 39 pairs of chromosomes. Humans have 23.
- Dogs have about 10 vocal chords. Cats have more than 100.
- Studies show dogs can learn to distinguish up to 100 words.
- Dogs' eyes are more sensitive to light and movement than ours, but lack our focal range flexibility—you spot the tennis ball in the grass right away; your dog notices a bug flitting a wing somewhere in the periphery instead.



## A WORLD OF DOGS

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### Cultivating Dog-Smart Kids

For half a century, the Lassie stereotype has endured in American hearts and minds. The ideal dog is noble, with the vocabulary of a college student and near-telepathic understanding of what's expected of him. It makes for lovely storytelling, but the imprint left on generations by Lassie and similar fictions, from Dorothy's Toto to Disney's Bolt, is one that sets many first-time dog owners up for disappointment and frustration. Oh, we know dogs are not people. But surely they understand the difference between a chewie and an Italian shoe?

In fact, dogs are more akin to happy-go-lucky aliens trying to plot a course through our strange world of rules and expectations. To better help them, a good place for us to start is with greater understanding of how they see the world. Here, humane education plays a crucial role. The term brings to mind

aproned children petting rabbits or fashioning cat toys from strings and feathers—and that's part of the picture, of course. But in many humane societies and classrooms, the curriculum has greatly evolved. Children now learn about all aspects of animal behavior, training, and care. They talk about cruelty-free shopping and responsible pet guardianship; they invent socialization plans for hypothetical puppies; they witness spay or neuter surgeries and discuss animal population management; they brush dog coats and learn poop scooping technique.



This is important because children educated about dogs are more likely to behave safely around them—meaning the dogs are safer, too. Also, dog-savvy children grow up to be dog-savvy adults, a necessity in a world with ever-increasing numbers of dogs living close together. Once primarily the domain of wannabe veterinarians and animal control officers, proficiency in dog behavior and training is today a vital life skill for people in cities and suburbs, whether it's about navigating a busy sidewalk or keeping the bark frequency and pitch at a level that won't drive neighbors to distraction. Luckily, humane education programs are more popular than ever and are expanding to allow more kids to get close and personal with pooches.

*(continued from page 1)*



## DOGS IN ACTION

### Rally-O (Rally Obedience)

Rally-O is a fun, less formal version of traditional obedience trials and one of the fastest growing dog sports in America. Competitors traverse a course of 10–20 stations, each marking an exercise for the dog and handler team to carry out. Unlike traditional obedience, Rally-O allows the handler to talk to and encourage her dog along the way, use hand signals, and go through the course along a designated route on her own without a judge calling out the exercises. The not-so-strict rules reflect the philosophy behind Rally-O, namely that the focus in dog training should be on teamwork between handler and dog—and should be an enjoyable experience for both. Exercises include a variety of basic and advanced obedience maneuvers like heel, stand, turn, sit, back up, etc.



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There are several sanctioning bodies for the sport in the US, including the American Kennel Club, which tries purebred and PAL/ILP listed dogs, and the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, whose program, APDT Rally, is open to all dogs.

For more information and to find trials, visit [www.apdt.com/po/rally/](http://www.apdt.com/po/rally/) or [www.akc.org/events/rally/](http://www.akc.org/events/rally/)



## HEALTHY DOG

### Pet First Aid & CPR

Prompt and informed first aid saves lives—for pets as well as humans. Losing a dog to an asthma attack, a snakebite, or a common type of poisoning is all the more tragic in cases where CPR skills could have kept the dog alive until his owners reached a veterinarian. And not just those who hike backcountry trails or live far from the nearest pet hospital need to consider such scary scenarios. Dogs can choke on bits of kibble on the kitchen floor. Thankfully, courses for pet owners are available in most parts of the country. Learn to perform pet CPR, tend to wounds, and recognize emergencies—or go further with Pet Tech’s 8-hour Pet Saver™ Program, which includes Choking Management, Insect Bite, Stings & Snakebites, Heat & Cold Injuries, Vitals Assessment, Seizures, and much more.

To take a Pet First Aid class, check with your local humane society or animal shelter, or visit [www.pettech.net](http://www.pettech.net) or [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

## DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### The Golden Retriever

Few dogs appear on more ‘best of’ lists than the Golden Retriever. The second most popular breed in the US also ranks fourth in Dr Stanley Coren’s *The Intelligence of Dogs*, boasts the most well-known dog blogger (Max on CNN.com), and holds the world record for most tennis balls in a dog’s mouth: five, all at once. Golden Retrievers are eager-to-please, gentle, prone to over-exuberance, confident, patient, and highly social. They don’t care for extended alone time and are famous for loving kids—of any species: Golden Retrievers have been known to make excellent surrogate mothers to everything from kittens to tiger cubs. Originally a gundog bred to retrieve waterfowl, Golden Retrievers make ideal sporting and activity dogs, and vigorous daily exercise is a must. The priority command to teach a Golden is *leave it*, an all-purpose tool for being within twenty feet of any remotely edible-seeming substance.

To re-home a Golden Retriever, visit your local shelter or rescue group.



## OUR SERVICES

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### Moving With Dogs

Moving Day is often an exciting, stressful, exhausting blur—and that's just to the human family members. To make the organized chaos of geographical relocation less taxing for your dog, leave her with a friend for the day if possible. Otherwise:

- ✓ **Use a crate.** Doors are left open, unfamiliar people come and go, loud noises abound—enough to make even serene pooches run and hide. If your dog is crate trained, crate her with a favorite blanket in a quiet part of the house. If not, put her in a quiet room with a sign on the door saying 'do not enter.' Make sure her ID is up-to-date, just in case.
- ✓ **Limit stress.** Again, a crate or a quiet room does wonders. Other than that, give your dog plenty of exercise that morning and preserve your mealtime and potty break routine as best you can. For very sensitive dogs, consult your vet ahead of time about a solution.



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