



✧ Highlights ✧



LIVING WITH DOGS

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Play It Safe

It can't be said often enough: Toys are great. As training rewards, for dog-dog play, for dog-human play—and yes, as mental stimulation when Fido is home alone. Dogs left in a moonscape environment can get awfully bored and idle minds often turn to mischief. Toys can make all the difference. However, not all toys are created equal, so choose carefully which you leave your dog unsupervised with. Here are some guidelines.



Supervise first encounters. Every time your dog plays with or chews on something new, it should happen under your watchful eye. Make sure your dog plays with the toy appropriately, that is, uses it the way it's meant to be used. Gnawing on rather than swallowing a chew, for example. Or rolling a treat ball rather than trying to crack it open with his teeth.

Choose chews and toys carefully. Look for durable, non-toxic materials (some rawhides have been preserved with arsenic, for example), and always buy toys created for dogs, not plastic things from the one-dollar bin at the supermarket. Treat balls should have two openings not one, so a vacuum effect can't cause your dog's tongue to get stuck.

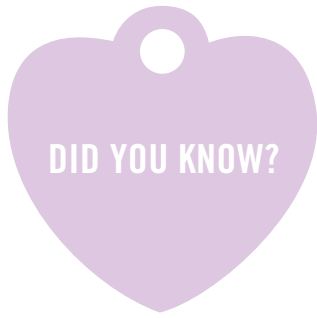
Never leave your dog alone with... 1. A rawhide or other edible chews. You need to be around to take the chew away before it's small enough for your dog to swallow and potentially choke on. 2. Anything your dog hasn't played with before. 3. Anything with parts small enough to swallow: Squeakers, buttons, eyes, etc.

Know your dog. Some dogs play gently with all toys and never break or tear anything. Others are on a mission to take things apart at the seams—nothing gives them greater pleasure. The goal is for you to find a collection of toys that keeps your dog happy and constructively occupied during alone time through mental stimulation and food-and-fun delivery. If in doubt about what's safe to give your dog, always consult your veterinarian.

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**"A door is what a dog
is perpetually on the
wrong side of."**

- Ogden Nash



These High Tech Doggie Products?

(Please note that we don't endorse any product, we simply aim to keep you up-to-date on dog-related innovations.)

GPS pet locators. GPS dog collars allow you to locate your dog anywhere using your phone, computer, a text message, or by calling an 1-800 number. (Example: Spotlight GPS)

Soothing pet music. Music to calm your dog on New Year's or during thunderstorms has been around for a while, but now there are systems built specifically for dogs' sensitive auditory systems. (Example: Pet Acoustics)

iPhone apps. Too many to count. For example, Pet MD's GPS-enabled Finder application that lets you locate dog services in your area: Vets, dog parks, dog groomers, doggie daycares, etc.

Webcams. Easy-to-install miniature cameras let you keep an eye on your dog from any computer or from your cell phone. (Example: Vuezone)



A WORLD OF DOGS

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Doctor Dog

Some dogs are just story hounds. Open a book, any book, and bingo! You have their undivided attention. If that doesn't sound familiar, you probably don't know any READs. Reading Education Assistance Dogs accompany their human partners to libraries, schools, youth clubs, and other places where kids and books can be found, and they listen. Children who struggle with confidence and reading skills flourish when the audience is canine. The reason, experts say, is the complete absence of judgment.



The same nonjudgmental affection is cited by many Animal Assisted Therapy professionals as the reason dogs (and animals in general) have such curative effect on humans.

Examples can be found throughout history, but AAT programs as we know them gained traction in the 1980s when medical studies first confirmed what any pet owner can tell you: That animals are good for our health. By their mere company, they reduce our blood pressure, slow our heart rates, and provide mental stimulation and healing. Three decades later, AAT programs can be found in many nursing homes, hospitals, prisons, homes for disabled children, residential treatment facilities, and indeed libraries and schools. More recently, therapy dogs have been putting their healing paws to crisis response work, too. In the aftermath of disasters like 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, dogs were on hand to comfort not only survivors and the bereaved, but disaster responders, from firemen and nurses to police and National Guard members.

The positive effect of canine company both in everyday life and during times of emotional trauma is an established fact, but the reason for it largely eludes researchers. Why does petting a dog loosen tongues otherwise silenced by grief and shock? Why can dogs connect with autistic children or patients with Alzheimer's? And why does living with a dog lower our risk of heart attack? *Unconditional love* is a satisfying answer, but not a scientific one. Fortunately, ignorance of the precise biological process behind the effect in no way hinders dog lovers everywhere from reaping the benefits. So go on, pet that dog. It's good for you.

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DOGS IN ACTION

Canine Disc (aka Disc Dog or Frisbee Dog)

A popular sport open to all dogs. At competition level, Canine Disc is for canine athletes. Think whippets, border collies, retrievers, etc. Both the standard toss-and-fetch distance catching and the multiple-disc freestyle events demand a great deal of speed, flexibility, and endurance from dogs, as well as skill, precision, and dog training prowess from humans. But the discipline has much to offer amateurs, too. The basics of disc throwing are easy to learn, the equipment is cheap and portable, and there are local clubs throughout the country where you can learn technique and get together with other so-called disc doggers. An estimated one million dogs participate in organized but non-competitive disc play in the US alone.



History snippet: The sport has been around since the 1970s, when college student Alex Stein crashed the centerfield at an LA Dodgers–Cincinnati Reds game to show what his dog, Ashley Whippet, could do with a Frisbee.

For training tips and general info, visit www.skyhoundz.com (the for-profit organization behind the Hyperflite Skyhoundz World Canine Disc Championship). To find a club, Google “disc dog club” and your locale.



HEALTHY DOG

Canine Arthritis

Just as in humans, arthritis in dogs is a painful joint disease that damages bone cartilage. Some larger dogs are more prone to arthritis (Great Danes, for example), but the condition can occur in all dogs, especially as they age or if they have been injured. Symptoms to look for: A stiff gait, limping, swollen joints, sensitivity to touch, reduced flexibility, reluctance to jump up on couches and beds or climb stairs.

There’s no surefire way to prevent arthritis, but your best shot is to keep your dog at a healthy weight, feed him high-quality food, and make sure he gets plenty of exercise. Once the disease has developed, reducing inflammation and keeping your dog pain-free and comfortable becomes the goal. Ask for your vet’s recommendations, and if she agrees, look into dietary supplements and gentle holistic treatments like acupuncture and massage. Exercise is still a must, but focus on low-impact activities like walking and swimming.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Greyhound

This sleek, smooth-coated Olympic athlete of the canine world is engineered for speed, from the narrow head and muscular hindquarters to the extra-large heart and lungs. Greyhounds, affectionately known as ‘greyts,’ are the fastest of all dogs, capable of speeds of up to 45 miles / hour. Sight hounds originally used for deer and hare coursing, greyhounds are race animals in many countries today—which sadly means 20-hour-a-day crating and euthanasia for underperformers. Thankfully, rescue groups work to re-home as many greyts as possible.

One of the oldest dog breeds known to man, the balletic greyhound is ubiquitous in art and literature, turning up in Egyptian tombs, on Turkish temple walls, and on the pages of Homer’s *Odyssey*. The first ever Crufts show in 1928 was won by a greyhound. Best known modern-day greyt? Probably Santa’s Little Helper in *The Simpsons*.

To adopt a greyhound, contact your local rescue group.



OUR SERVICES

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Cleaning Doggie Stains & Odors

- ✓ **Carpets and upholstery.** Soak up as much of the mess as you can. Rinse the area with plenty of cool water, then soak up the water. Repeat as needed until the accident spot is clean and barely damp. Finally apply a high-quality pet odor neutralizer. Avoid steam cleaners—the heat can make stains and smells set permanently.
- ✓ **Clothes and linens.** Machine wash either with an enzymatic cleaner or by adding a pound of baking soda to your regular detergent. If possible, air-dry the items. Again, heat can make remaining animal protein bond to the material.
- ✓ **Floors and walls.** Washable enamel paints and some types of wallpaper can be cleaned with enzymatic cleaners, but generally, if varnish or paint is damaged, you'll have to refinish the surface. Consult with your local hardware store for options.

(Compiled from advice by Dumb Friends League)



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