

CANINE



CORNER

From CLICK-Canine Learning:
A Good Dog is Just a CLICK Away



✧ Highlights ✧



LIVING WITH DOGS

Your Baby-Preparation To-Do List

Firm up your dog's obedience and social skills. Attend a Dogs & Storks workshop early in your pregnancy to get a good overview of what you will need to do. At home, practice giving your dog commands in any position: Sitting back on a couch, lying in bed, or sitting on the floor. Socialize your dog to children in a positive and controlled environment.

Practice "baby reality." Vary your dog's feeding times. Crate her often for short times. Vary her exercise routine. Ignore attention-seeking behavior.

Introduce baby equipment. Put a teddy bear in the baby's carrier and move through the house, yard, and in and out of the car with it. Practice training your dog while using the carrier. Walk your dog with an empty stroller to find out which commands your dog needs to learn before there's a baby in the seat.



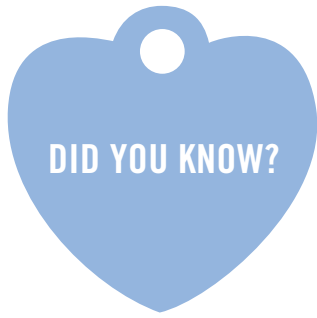
Make baby sounds and smells commonplace. Play a CD of baby noises to get your dog used to the sounds. Combine the sounds with yummy treats to create a positive association. Put the scent of baby lotion on the baby carrier, car seat, the teddy you carry in the sling, and any other items your dog will associate with the new baby so she learns to recognize this new, interesting smell. Bring the same lotion with you to the hospital so you can put a little on your baby's clothing.

Last trimester logistics. If your dog is due for her annual check-up and vaccinations, schedule the visit well ahead of time and stock up on all necessary medications and supplies. Familiarize your dog with friends that will help look after her as well as your chosen pet sitter and dog walker. Find a good and safe spot for your diaper pail.

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"If you can look at a dog
and not feel excitement and affection,
you must be a cat."

- Anonymous



That Your Dog Makes You Healthier?

Lower blood pressure. Dogs (and other pets) relax us, it's that simple. This is true even in stressful life situations like job change, illness, or divorce.

Better heart health and fitness. Through the beneficial effects of dogs' companionship and because we have to get them out for a walk several times a day, dog parents are generally healthier than dogless folks.

Fight the blues. Dogs lift the spirits of people around them, from trauma victims to autistic children and people suffering with depression.

Lower health-care costs. Why? Because of all of the above. People who have a dog (or other pet) make fewer visits to the doctor's office.



A WORLD OF DOGS

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Service Dogs With Unusual Trainers

The concept of service dogs—dogs trained to help disabled people carry out tasks like answering phones, turning on lights, or crossing the street safely—has been around as we know it since World War I. And the demand for service dogs is consistently high, with waiting lists in many areas. But in the decade since the US went to war in Afghanistan and Iraq, the need for service dogs has exploded as, thanks to medical advances, more soldiers survive despite serious injuries. Add to this that it is becoming more difficult for service dog organizations to find families willing to take puppies into their home and commit to the year-long program of training and socialization.



But one handful of service dog training programs never faced problems recruiting volunteers: Prison dog programs. Inmates, after all, have time on their hands. And training dogs has proved one of the most popular activities a prison can offer. Inspired by the idea, people in many states founded similar programs during the 2000s and today there are dozens. Puppies Behind Bars, Project Pooch, Prison Pet Partnership, Hounds of Prison Education, and so on. Most puppies are eight weeks old when they arrive at the prison and they live in crates within their trainer's cell. The pups are trained and socialized in several sessions every day, learning 80 or more commands in the year-and-a-half the program takes to complete. Qualified instructors come to the prison on a regular basis to teach the inmates how to carry out the specialized training.

Aside from the considerable benefit of providing more service dogs to disabled people, including thousands of combat vets, the program reportedly does the prisoners a world of good, too. The puppy trainers—from maximum security inmates to juvenile offenders—learn a skill and get to be responsible for an important project that will change another person's life for the better. And there's the therapeutic effect. Dogs shower people with affection regardless of any rap sheet and such judgment-free love is hard to come by behind prison walls.

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THE FAMILY DOG

Music Does Mom, Dog and Baby Good

Including your dog in daily baby routines is a great way to keep your dog mentally active. Mental stimulation is so important for our dogs and keeps them out of trouble. You can be really creative in finding ways to do this. One way that works well for babies from newborns to about four months of age is dancing. Nothing calms us down or keeps our spirits up like dancing. Put some great music on, hold your baby in a carrier or in your arms and move around the room. As you move around the room, have your dog follow you to different locations. And as you do, ask your dog to perform sits, downs, or any other commands he knows.

This activity is wonderful to do at different speeds and in different rooms. It will continue to be something you and your dog will benefit from as your baby grows. This creative way to practice your dog's skills will soon elicit huge belly laughs from your baby while she enjoys meals in the highchair or jolly jumper. The more you practice these basic manners skills, the more your dog can be safely included in the daily routines as your baby grows. Keep it simple, fun, and safe!



HEALTHY DOG

Skin Problems

Skin insulates, regulates temperature, and protects against water loss and pathogens, so skin health is important. Skin also serves as a barometer of many internal conditions, and keeping a close eye on your dog's skin condition is a must. Things to look out for include scabs, rashes, redness, swelling, dry or bald patches, sores, and hair loss. Also be aware of behaviors that betray skin problems, such as scratching, licking, or chewing. Aside from the obvious—fleas and ticks—the big culprit is allergy: Seasonal allergies to pollen, weeds, mold, etc., and food allergies, often to ingredients like wheat, corn, beef, chicken, or soy.

If you spot a skin problem, it's important not to self-diagnose. Even chronic problems like allergies need to be checked by a veterinarian to exclude more serious health issues. For good skin health, use natural soaps and shampoos, feed your dog a healthy diet free of additives, and brush her coat often.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Chihuahua

Chihuahuas, also known as Chis, probably hail from Mexico (debate rages on the topic of origin). Certainly the breed is very old—and very popular. Chis are typically bright, alert, and sensitive to cold weather, and often possess a terrier-like disregard for their own lack of size. As Dorothy Hinshaw Patent put it, "Even the tiniest Chihuahua is still a wolf at heart." The breed inspires strong loyalty in its fanciers, known to get together at events with names like Chihuahua Palooza. Due to diminutive proportions and a sky-high cuteness factor, Chis are sometimes treated as accessories instead of real dogs with real training and socialization needs. In reality, and in contrast to their high-society image, Chis thrive on size-appropriate versions of activities like agility, flyball, obedience, and tracking.

For a Chi to snuggle up with, search online for a rescue organization near you.



OUR SERVICES

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How To Remove A Tick

Found a tick? Hurry slowly! As in, get it out right away, but be slow and deliberate about the actual procedure. If you accidentally leave parts of the tick behind, it can cause serious problems. Put on rubber gloves to protect yourself and have a partner hold your dog still. Then:

1. Dab the area with rubbing alcohol.
2. With a pair of tweezers, grab the tick as close to your dog's skin as possible.
3. Pull straight upward. Don't twist, jerk, or squeeze the tick.
4. Disinfect the area, wash your hands, and sterilize the tweezers.
5. Monitor the bite site for the next few weeks, especially if any parts of the tick have been left behind. If you see redness or swelling, bring your dog to the vet right away.

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