

Positively Speaking.

FROM VICTORIA STILWELL DOG TRAINING



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✦ Highlights ✦



LIVING WITH DOGS

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Will Work For Food

Does your dog scarf down meals in mere seconds? Then both of you are missing out. For dogs, eating should be work. First of all because searching and hunting for food is natural for canines whose ancestors spent the majority of their time this way. And second of all—and here's the major benefit to you—switching to a work-to-eat strategy keeps your dog wonderfully occupied during your absences. That means he won't be splitting apart the couch cushions or getting into the trash or barking up a storm at the squirrels in the garden. In other words, you won't return home to a stack of written complaints from your neighbors.

Instead of just serving up your dog's meals, try feeding him in treat puzzles or Kongs that he gets when you're not home. This way, your dog will spend half his day retrieving his food and the other half sleeping off the mental effort. The result? A calmer, more content dog.



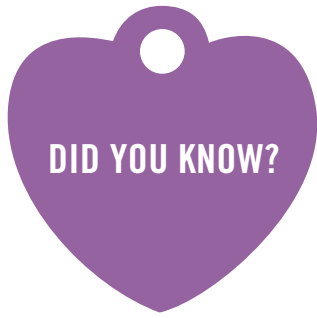
The key to a successful work-to-eat program is to start simple and only gradually increase the level of difficulty. You can go low-tech by hiding your dog's food under a laundry basket or cardboard box, or inside an empty cereal box. Or you can use interactive food toys like BusterCubes and Kongs.

Kongs in particular are great because you can easily make the food retrieval task more difficult—and more rewarding—by varying the type of stuffing and the tightness of the layers. An easy Kong might contain loose kibble and chicken bits and be plugged by peanut butter or wet food. An advanced Kong might be a many-layered masterpiece that includes Natural Balance cubes, dog biscuits, wet food, and your dog's favorite table scraps if you indulge him in such culinary delights. (For recipe inspiration, visit kongcompany.com)

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**"There is no faith
which has never yet been broken,
except that of a truly faithful dog."**

- Konrad Lorenz



These Remarkable Things About Dogs?

Hot air. Dogs have sweat glands between their paws, not, as commonly believed, in their tongues. But they do cool themselves somewhat by panting, which allows heat to escape through their breath.

Trifold protection. Dogs have three eyelids. The third one, a thin membrane that can extend across the eyeball, is there to keep the eye protected and lubricated.

Born to run. Like other running animals, dogs have no clavicles and have shoulder blades that are unattached to the skeleton for greater flexibility.

A singular snout. Your dog's nose print is as unique as the human fingerprint and can be used equally well for identification.



A WORLD OF DOGS

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A Dog's World View

How often have you found yourself thinking your dog is sad because he gazes at you with mournful eyes? That a sigh signals boredom? We are prone to anthropomorphizing animals. It's hard not to, because our ability to imagine what a dog might want is limited by our knowledge of a dog's experience of the world. Not that dogs don't have feelings or thoughts; they surely do.

But we get into unfortunate territory when we interpret canine expressions and behavior by our own standards (an upturned mouth is a smile and indicates happiness, etc.) and then proceed to scold, comfort, discipline, outfit, or medicate our dogs based on our faulty assumptions. Despite the best of intentions, we might do more harm than good—or at least miss the mark by a mile.



How can we adopt a more canine perspective? A good first step would be to better understand what the world looks like to dogs. Take their sense of smell. It's not just that dogs pick up more with their two to three hundred million scent receptors than we with our measly six million or that the very mechanics of their noses are so different from ours. Rather, a dog's whole world is a web of complex smells. Objects are first assessed not by eyeballing or handling but by sniffing. Time is a matter of smell—strong means new, weak means old, older, ancient. We humans each have our own signature odor, as distinct to a dog as a fingerprint to the FBI. Hence dogs' ability to track a person's route through a crowded street days, even weeks, later. They track a cloud of molecules.

A dog's world is fascinating and you don't need a degree in ethology to explore it. Books by Temple Grandin, Alexandra Horowitz, Marc Bekoff, or Jean Donaldson can serve as excellent initiations into the world of dogs. After all, as nature writer and essayist Edward Hoagland said, "In order to really enjoy a dog, one doesn't merely try to train him to be semihuman. The point of it is to open oneself to the possibility of becoming partly a dog."

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DOGS IN ACTION

Herding

Few things are more satisfying than knowing you've put in a good day's work, especially when you get to do something for which you feel uniquely suited. And herding dog breeds and breed mixes? Made (literally) to herd. People who share their lives with these



energetic and intelligent dogs report that no amount of off-leash activity induces a fraction of the blissful tiredness in their dogs that they see after a couple of rounds on the field with the sheep (or goats, ducks, etc.). Given the number of herding dog breeds—the AKC lists 24, but there are more than 70 worldwide—and their popularity as pet companions, it's not surprising that many people take up herding recreationally.

A sheepdog trial commonly involves using whistles and calls to direct your dog to move three sheep through an obstacle course of slatted panels and a Y-shaped plywood chute into a pen. But there are many different herding events and different courses within each type. Also, plenty of enthusiasts never compete, but simply go once a week to have fun with their dogs.

Interested in herding with your dog? Google the term plus your locale—or check out herding breed associations' websites for info on sheepdog or cattledog trials.



HEALTHY DOG

Bad Breath In Dogs

Bad breath is a common but highly treatable problem in dogs. The smell, caused by bacteria in your dog's mouth, stomach, or lungs, most often signals a dental or gastric issue. Sudden or unusually foul breath, however, can indicate serious illness. In all cases, a visit to the vet is important. Don't assume that unpleasant "dog breath" is normal and something you have to live with. Think of your dog's oral hygiene as you would your own: An integral part of daily well-being and long-term health. Some prevention tips:

1. Feed your dog high-quality food.
2. Brush your dog's teeth regularly. Every day is ideal; twice a week is a minimum.
3. Give your dog hard chew toys. Chewing is nature's teeth-cleaning tool for dogs.
4. Use breath-improvement products. Good ones exist, but do your research so you don't buy something that's essentially a biscuit and nothing more.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The German Shepherd Dog

A recent breed (officially created in 1899), the German Shepherd Dog is popular around the world—and has long been in the Top 10 of AKC's most registered breeds. In this country, early silver-screen stars like Strongheart and Rin Tin Tin boosted the GSD's status. Athletic, hard working, highly trainable, and with a keen sense of smell, the GSD excels as a working dog, distinguishing himself in tracking, detection, and search & rescue. Though the GSD is the quintessential law-enforcement dog, he also finds time to goof around. A GSD, for example, holds the record for most golf balls swallowed (28, at a 2004 tournament). GSDs can be found throughout popular culture, from comic books (Batman's Ace the Bat Hound) to blockbusters like the post-apocalyptic science fiction movie *I Am Legend*.

To give a German Shepherd Dog a home, search online for your local rescue organization.



OUR SERVICES



How To Pill Your Dog

If you can, sneak pills into your dog either by getting chewable medication from your vet, mixing the meds in with your dog's meal, or sticking the pill inside a soft treat like cheese or hot dog. If that doesn't work, the procedure is:

1. Hold the pill with one hand. Place that hand on your dog's lower jaw, the other on his upper jaw. Lift up his head.
2. Open your dog's mouth and put the pill to the side of the tongue as far back as you can reach. Quickly remove your hand and close your dog's jaw.
3. Keep your dog's head tilted upward and his jaws closed. Encourage him to swallow by gently stroking his throat downward with the other hand. As soon as you think your dog has swallowed the pill, release him and offer him a yummy treat.

(Instructions courtesy of ASPCA)

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