



*Savvy Dogs*

# Training News

Effective training solutions for a better behaved dog

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## ✦ Highlights ✦

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## LIVING WITH DOGS

### Home Alone & Not Happy

Dogs are intensely social creatures that find it hard to spend hours alone each day. Often, problematic dog behaviors can be directly attributed to boredom and loneliness: Chewing, digging, barking, and separation anxiety. Avoid these pitfalls by giving your dog activities to keep him happily occupied in your absence. The ideal combination is one of physical exercise and mental stimulation.

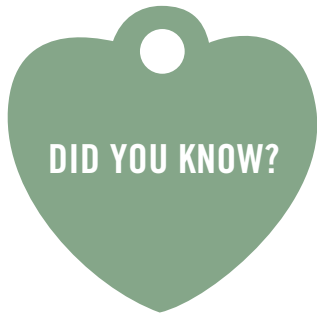


**Working out the body.** Passing the day is easier if you're napping. Exercise makes your dog healthier, happier, and much more calm. For absences of a few hours to half a day, be sure to give your dog a workout before you leave. Throw a ball or a Frisbee, play tug, or let your dog play with other dogs for 20–30 minutes. For absences of more than 4 hours, consider getting a dog walker (if you haven't got one already) or, if your dog is social and enjoys the company of other dogs, enrolling your dog in a doggie daycare.

**Working out the mind.** Mental stimulation—providing outlets for natural canine energy—will also help to keep your dog out of mischief. Interactive toys come in the brain puzzle variety (hide-and-seek boxes), chew or dissect variety (plush toys with squeakers, Nylabones), and food puzzles (stuffed Kongs, treat balls). If you have only one dog, another good option is the MannersMinder from Premier.

**Note:** Separation anxiety requires expert assistance. Call a trainer for advice if you see any of the following: Excessive barking, urination or defecation within minutes of your departure, excessive anxiety when you're getting ready to leave, frantic greetings when you return, digging or chewing at exit points (doors, window frames), self-mutilation, and escape attempts.

"A house  
is not a home  
until it has a dog"  
- Gerald Durrell



### These Doggie Superstitions?

A dog eating grass means it will rain soon.

A yawning dog predicts a change in the weather.

A dog that howls, growls, or whimpers for no apparent reason means a ghost is nearby.

Meeting a white-and-black spotted dog gives you good luck in business endeavors that day.

Conversely, it's apparently unlucky to meet a barking dog early in the morning.

A strange dog walking into your house means you will soon make a new friend.

A white spot on a dog's forehead brings wealth to her owner.

And finally, a timely one: Pet a dog before job-hunting and you will get the job.



## A WORLD OF DOGS

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### Making A Lassie: The Art of Puppy Raising

Service dogs—assistance dogs trained specifically to help people with various disabilities—embody a modern canine ideal. Mellow, stoic, and highly trained, these contemporary Lassies help their humans open doors, answer phones, navigate traffic, or respond to smoke alarms. Coming across a service dog calmly steering through a heaving shopping mall or lying placidly under a chair in a restaurant full of tantalizing smells, it's easy to think these dogs are made of special stuff, impervious as they seem to distractions. That's true to an extent—many service dogs are bred from particularly good-natured and trainable parents—but it's only part of the answer.



What else makes a service dog?

Socialization. That's where puppy raising enters the picture. Puppy raisers are volunteers who provide service dog puppies with a home for 12–18 months, usually from when the pups are eight weeks old. They teach the dogs basic manners and, most importantly, socialize them. Consider the many experiences and situations a service dog must be comfortable with. Cars, buses, ferries, and airplanes; hotels, libraries, shops, supermarkets, and movie theaters; escalators, fountains, strollers, garage doors, and construction noise. Not to mention all manner of people and everything in a home, from the vacuum cleaner to the hair dryer.

With the support of the service organization, puppy raisers undertake the mammoth task of helping to create a dog that has, more or less, seen it all. Few things are left to chance in this carefully planned program of experiences. Day after day, the handler takes her canine charge out into the world to encounter enough things enough times that most of them become mundane. All that effort and time spent early in the dog's life make the Lassie we see possible. And perhaps your dog doesn't need to be quite that sophisticated. Perhaps less will do. But it's worth remembering that, although some dogs are more naturally calm than others, no dog is born cosmopolitan. That takes training.

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## DOGS IN ACTION

### Earthdog Tests

As the name suggests, earthdog work tests a dog's natural instinct to delve underground in the hunt for small game (foxes, badgers, otters) or vermin (rats, rabbits). One step at a time, dogs are introduced to quarry, are encouraged to follow a scent trail, and finally learn to negotiate underground tunnels until the quarry is found—mind you, the quarry is protected by bars and is never touched. In advanced tests, problems like side tunnels and hidden entry points are introduced to challenge the dog's skills. Besides being exciting and satisfying for dogs, earthdog work is designed to be fun for you, the handler, at every level from beginner's to master's.



Earthdog work is another example of a sport created as an outlet for a specific group of dogs' innate gifts. For anyone sharing his life with a small terrier or Dachshund, this is potentially a great pastime. You can pursue earthdog work privately or in the organized setting of the AKC (American Kennel Club) or the AWTA (American Working Terrier Association) tests.

Interested in awakening your dog's hardwired instincts? The Getting Started in Earthdog Tests section on [akc.org](http://akc.org) has tips for practice sessions in your own area or back yard.



## HEALTHY DOG

### Bloat

Bloat, also known as twisted stomach, is a scary condition that results in death in 25–40% of cases. While the cause is unknown, we know risk factors include eating too fast or too much, drinking too much water, eating one large meal per day, stress, trauma, and a dry food-only diet. Any dog can get bloat, but the victims are overwhelmingly large, deep-chested breeds like akitas, boxers, basset hounds, Irish setters, great Danes, and German shepherds. Signs of bloat are a distended stomach, retching that doesn't produce anything, weakness, drooling, panting, pale gums, a galloping heart, and collapse. If you think your dog might have bloat, get him to a vet immediately.

**Preventing bloat:** Feed your dog several small meals per day instead of one large meal. Don't let your dog overeat or exercise vigorously right after eating. Don't use a raised food bowl unless your vet tells you to. Vary your dog's diet.

## DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### Miniature Schnauzer

Bold, playful, and expressive, the mustachioed mini schnauzer consistently ranks among the 10 most popular breeds in both the US and Canada. The mini, bred for vermin hunting in farm-country Germany in the 19th century, retains the watchful streak of his lineage of standard schnauzers, affenpinschers, and poodles. Famous for a bark that can penetrate industrial-strength ear muffs, the mini schnauzer is an allround conversationalist with a large repertoire of grumbles, bawls, yelps, and howls. Combining a compact size with grit and stamina, minis thrive equally in urban and rural settings—as proven by schnauzer mix Tramp in Disney's 1955 movie *Lady and the Tramp*, which sparked the schnauzer's enduring popularity. Famous mini owners past and present include politician Bob Dole, martial artist Bruce Lee, and actors Bill Cosby and Mary Tyler Moore.

To give a mini schnauzer a home, search online for rescue organizations near you.



## OUR SERVICES

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### How To Brush Your Dog's Teeth

Always use a toothbrush designed for dogs or a finger-cover brush of soft plastic. Use a canine toothpaste; the human variety can irritate your dog's stomach.

1. First, get your dog used to having her mouth touched. For a few weeks, gently massage her teeth and gums for a minute or so every day with a finger.
2. Lift your dog's lip, place the brush or your finger at a 45-degree angle, and brush in circular motions.
3. Be sure to work on the cheek-side of the teeth where the majority of tartar builds up.
4. Brush two or three times a week.

Whenever you brush, check for any redness, swelling, lumps, or loose teeth. See any? Then take your dog to the vet for a dental checkup.



### *Savvy Dogs, LLC*

Effective training solutions for a better behaved dog

Serving western Montgomery County, including Poolesville, Potomac, Darnestown, Gaithersburg, Germantown, North Potomac, Boyds and Clarksburg.

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