



The Rescue Crew  
SAVE A LIFE TODAY



---

LIFE-SAVING  
Dog Resource Guide

# Introduction








Thank you so much for fostering or adopting a companion animal in need from The Rescue Crew. Your willingness to open your heart and home to a rescued animal helps us in our shared goal to “Save a Life Today” of a companion animal in need.

The Rescue Crew was created specially to help fill a need in our local communities for shelter animals facing imminent risk of euthanasia without rescue support. Because of this, many of our companion animals come from local shelters, impounds and animal humane organizations and also tribal lands within Minnesota and neighboring states. As dogs and cats are creatures of habit and routine, its not uncommon that when they change environments and move to a new home you may encounter behaviors that were not previously seen. Because it’s important that we help to set you—and your new furry family member—up for success, we’ve pulled together some resources to help you. Please take the time to read through this Dog Resource Guide as soon as possible after bringing your new furry friend home. We’re confident that the tools, tricks and tips outlined will prove beneficial.

You have given the most wonderful gift to your new pet by providing a safe and loving home; be that temporary or permanent. We hope that you find it a rewarding experience and your new companion brings lots of happiness and love to your life.

**Thank you again for fostering or adopting a companion animal in need.**

# Table of Contents

 <b>Welcome Home</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
 <b>A Dog's Place in a Human Family</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Supplies you'll need</li><li>&gt; Kitten-proofing your home</li></ul>	<b>Page 5</b>
 <b>The Two Week Shutdown</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Caring for bottle-fed kittens</li><li>&gt; Weaning kittens</li><li>&gt; Caring for independent eaters</li><li>&gt; Cleaning up between litters</li></ul>	<b>Page 6</b>
 <b>Introducing Dogs to Each Other</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Bringing everyone home</li><li>&gt; Mom's care of her kittens</li><li>&gt; Problem Behaviors in momma cats</li><li>&gt; Separating kittens and moms</li></ul>	<b>Page 11</b>
 <b>How to Introduce a Dog to a Cat</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Veterinary care</li><li>&gt; Signs of illness and what to do next</li><li>&gt; Serious kitten ailments</li><li>&gt; Criteria for emergencies</li></ul>	<b>Page 13</b>
 <b>Socializing and Instilling Good Behaviors in Kittens</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Establishing good litter box habits</li><li>&gt; Discipline</li><li>&gt; Play time</li><li>&gt; Socializing and handling</li></ul>	<b>Page 17</b>
 <b>Appendix</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Guiding your foster kittens' behavior</li><li>&gt; Litter box training for kittens and cats</li></ul>	<b>Page 20</b>

# Welcome Home

*By Sherry Woodard, Best Friends animal behavior consultant*

Before you bring your new dog home, there are a number of ways that you can prepare for the new addition to your family. First, get the dog an ID tag with your information on it (name, phone number, address).

*The Rescue Crew recommends that you not list your dog's name on the ID tag, but only your name and contact information.*

You should immediately check that your new dog's collar is not too loose. Many dogs in new situations pull out of their collars and run. If your dog pulls out of their collar, they will be loose in a strange area. To be extra safe, you might want to purchase a martingale collar; a no-slip collar available at pet supply stores (The Rescue Crew will often send your new dog home with one) or a harness to use, in addition to a regular collar, until they have demonstrated that they can handle all of the sights, sounds and experiences of the new environment, such as other dogs, city noise, and traffic.

Keep your new dog on lead except in a fenced-in yard or an approved, fenced off-lead area. Always use a leash or lead near traffic, since your dog can be distracted or fearful for just a second and run into the street.

## What does my new dog need?

To be happy and healthy, your dog will need the following:

- Constant access to a bowl of fresh, clean drinking water
- A nutritionally balanced diet
- A safe place to eliminate outside, and
- Daily exercise

While your new dog may have had training and previously lived in a foster home and done well, they could still benefit from some training or a refresher course. Investigate the dog trainers in your area, or ask The Rescue Crew, and pick out one who you're most comfortable with. Your dog needs you to be the leader (albeit a gentle one), so you will also benefit from the training classes. If you don't function as the leader, your dog will start making decisions on their own, some of which may be inappropriate or dangerous.

Your dog also needs daily, loving interaction with you and a social life. Socialize your dog by bringing them on car rides, letting them be around children and other dogs, taking them to the groomer, shopping with them at pet food stores (most of them let you bring your dog in), and walking them in public places.

Strive for structure and consistency in your dog's daily routine to give them a healthy feeling of stability as a member of the family. The relationship between your family and your new furry family member can be great if you are patient and positive.

You should also select a veterinarian with whom you are comfortable, since you'll need to bring your dog in for regular checkups. Finally, find out what the local dog laws are (such as leash laws) and what the licensing requirements are for dogs in your area.

## **Do I need to dog-proof my house?**

If you haven't already, you should dog-proof your home in much the same way that you would child-proof your home for a toddler. Look at your home from a dog's eye level. What can he reach? If you don't want him drinking out of the toilet, tell everyone in the household to make sure they put the cover down. If anyone in the house smokes, put ashtrays out of reach, since cigarette butts, if eaten, can lead to nicotine poisoning. Will his wagging tail inadvertently wreak havoc on your prized possessions? Dog tails have been known to sweep the contents off the top of a coffee table. If you like to keep lit candles around, make sure they are above the dog's reach. Is there anything he can trip on or become tangled in such as electrical cords?

## **How can I prevent my new dog from chewing up my stuff?**

If your new dog has her own toys, she may not be as interested in chewing up human things (though leather shoes are hard to resist). Buy durable rubber or nylon toys that satisfy the dog's urge to chew. Toys that you can stuff treats into (like Kongs and Buster Cubes) should keep her occupied for a good long while. If she starts chewing one of your personal items, immediately get her interested in a dog toy instead.

## **What should I know about making my yard safe?**

Do a walkabout of your yard. Is your yard completely fenced in? Are there any spaces or gaps that your new dog or puppy can squeeze through? Is there anything that he can climb on that would allow him to escape over the fence (e.g. a wood pile, a fountain, latticework)? Some dogs know how to flip open gate latches, so latches should be clipped or locked if your dog can reach them. What sort of plants do you have in your yard? Snail bait and some plants (such as oleander, azaleas and rhododendrons) are poisonous to dogs. Antifreeze is another hazard for dogs - it is toxic and can be fatal. Dogs are attracted to its sweet taste, so don't allow your dog to drink from standing water near where cars have been parked.

## **Do you have an uncovered pond or pool in your yard?**

Dogs have been known to drown in backyard pools when they jumped or fell in and couldn't get out. You should also make sure your trashcans have tight lids to avoid "dumpster diving" by your dog. Besides the smelly mess that an overturned trash can creates, some of the items in your trash (like chicken bones) may be dangerous for your dog to ingest.

Ideally, you should check your yard for safety before your new dog comes home. If you haven't done this prior to the dog's arrival, supervise the time that your pet spends outside. Even a child's toy can be trouble if it is chewed up and swallowed.

# A Dog's Place in a Human Family

*By Sherry Woodard, Best Friends animal behavior consultant*

What does your dog expect from you? Most dogs need and want a leader. Dogs are social animals and like being part of a group, but every group must have a leader to prevent chaos. For your dog to feel relaxed, he needs to know that someone is in charge. If you don't take on the role of leader, your dog may feel that he has to fill the position. But your dog may not be the best leader - he may not make the best decisions for your family!

As your dog's leader, then, you are responsible for managing the following aspects of your dog's life:

**Safety.** You should make sure that your dog is contained - that she doesn't run loose and she's on lead when necessary. You provide her with I.D. on her collar and a registered microchip. You make sure that your home environment is safe for her.

**Social skills.** You must manage his behavior at all times. If your dog has behavior issues such as aggressive tendencies toward other dogs or irritability around small children, work with him and manage his behavior so that he doesn't get into trouble. Well-socialized dogs are able to go many places; they are comfortable in most situations.

**Manners.** Training is among your leadership duties. You must teach your dog basic cues and basic manners. Well-mannered dogs are much more welcome by other humans than badly mannered dogs.

**Medical concerns.** You are responsible for managing your dog's health. He cannot tell you if he is due for vaccines or if he needs to have blood work done because he is getting older.

**Keeping order.** In your home, it is your job to keep your dog from being destructive. If she is getting into the trash when you're not home, move the trash can or put a lid on it. If she is chewing the children's toys and shoes, teach them to pick things up and put them away, and give the dog some of her own things to chew.

*All animals adopted from The Rescue Crew have been microchipped. While we re-register all microchips to the new owner, The Rescue Crew will always remain listed as a Guardian.*

As a kind leader, you will gently teach your dog the things she needs to know to be comfortable in our human world. Don't expect her to somehow magically know how to live in a human family. She is a dog, after all! She will love being a valued family member, but she will still be a dog and will look to you for guidance.

# The Two-Week Shutdown

*By Sherry Woodard, Best Friends animal behavior consultant*

The big secret to many adopters' success with a new dog is often what we refer to as the "Two-Week Shutdown." What does this mean? Essentially, it means giving the new dog time to adjust to you and your family and the resident animals in the new environment.

## Why the Two-Week Shut Down?

The Two-Week Shut Down is a time familiar to a dog's mind, as it mimics the whelping box when first born, as the puppy's eyes are not open, and it relies totally on the mother's ability to take care of it. By smelling, sensing and listening, the puppy starts his journey into the new scary world. New adult dogs come into our home the same way, "a journey into a new and scary world." By giving the dog a "time out" the dog can learn its new world, its new people and begin to relax and blossom under the care of the new care giver.

Why? We all want to run out with our new dog, show everyone our new pet, we forget that even an adult dog is now back to a puppy newborn like mind, all is new, the voices speak a new language, cars might be new, leashes and handling under nice people might be new. Even petting and acceptance of a pet is stressful on a new dog, "Who are you? Where did we come from? Where are we going? What is expected of me?" - the dog thinks!

Just like a newborn baby, we wouldn't rush out and pass the baby from person to person. Rather, we set up a stable and safe environment. Our new dogs are just like that newborn baby. We also give the rescue dog a bit of time to heal, mentally and physically.

Step back for a minute and think how you might feel if you were never going to go back to your home and that you were expected to live with new people who didn't understand your language. What if these new people took you to all sorts of different places expecting you to greet everyone happily and feel comfortable with an overload of attention all at one time? How might you feel after all of that, to have to go to your new "home" and interact with a bunch of strangers? It's very likely that you'd feel exhausted, overwhelmed, and ready to retreat, but really have no place to go to. You might begin to act out and yell at people for coddling you and insisting that you do this and do that.

Well, many dogs are put in the very same position and the only way they know how to get their point across is to act out or "misbehave." The dog may act out by nipping at children for he didn't understand them and was corrected harshly before knowing how he was expected to be around them. When being moved off furniture - he didn't know he couldn't be here. What is expected? Where am I allowed?" Starting fights with the other animals in home - that dog here was giving me the evil eye my new humans are not leaders, "I must defend myself!"

## How to do a "shut down" period

For the first two weeks, (sometimes even longer depending on the dog) a dog takes in the new environment, who is the top person and who are these people? By pushing a dog too fast and throwing too much at the dog we look like we are not the leaders and the dog can feel like it needs to defend itself, as the leader is surely no one he has met so far. We coo, coddle, drag the dog from home to home, to person to person, and the dog has no idea who anyone is. Just think of the things you do physically once you get to know a person, you wouldn't run up to a stranger and hug them and squeeze them, would you?

Imagine, if on the first date, this new person was all over you touching you and having their friends hug you and pat you on top of the head, and jostle your shoulders, then he whisked you off to another stranger's home and they did the same thing. Would you think this person normal and safe? Likely not. Would you feel invaded and defensive and begin to get a bit snarky yourself? Probably yes. Wouldn't you think to push these people away for obviously they are out of their mind and they aren't going to save you from these strange people and places. Yet we do this to our dogs, and then get upset or worried that they aren't relaxed and accepting of everything instantly!

Why do we expect a dog to accept a situation when we ourselves could not? By shutting down the dog, it gives the dog necessary time to see you, meet you, hear and take in the new sounds and smells of your home. Crate the dog in a room by itself if possible. Dogs are sensory animals, they know more than you think without seeing it, it will be okay.

Leash the dog when he's out of his crate and inside the home. If possible, leash the dog right to your belt/waist so that they are forced to follow you wherever you may go in the household. This also stops the dog from reacting if you have to get him off of something like the couch, you are not reaching in and grabbing onto him, just tug gently on the leash and say "come on," and there you go. No conflict!

Don't concern yourself with obedience training during this two-week shutdown period. It's all just fun and exercise. Maybe throw some toys in for fun.

When outside, always have the dog on a leash. It's often best to not leave your yard at all during this period. That means no car rides, no other dogs, (unless crated beside them), no pet stores, no walks even, nothing but you, your home and your yard. Unless of course the dog needs to go to the veterinarian, or you don't have a yard and need to go for short walks to allow the dog to relieve themselves.

It will be difficult to control this impulse, but don't go crazy petting and handling the dog. Our tendency is to immediately shower the dog with love and affection, particularly a shelter dog that was likely facing imminent euthanasia. But try your best to avoid doing this. Even petting and being outside of the home puts pressure on a dog, as everything is so new. Allowing the dog time to absorb and the decision to come to you for petting and affection can do a lot in taking pressure off a new dog.



It's okay to allow the dog some time to exercise but do it in your yard or on a long line if no fence. Remember to just have fun, let the dog run and explore.

Again, no walks yet! Walks are stressful for there is so much coming at you. Being a new person to this dog you have no clue how the dog is reacting to the walking environment. The dog may react to something and we start correcting it with the leash and we just created a very stressful situation for the dog in what should be a fun and happy walk.

Teach your dog by doing the shut-down period, that you are the one to look to. That they can trust in you and look to you as its new leader!! Then on walks you will see the dog look to you when he sees something like a kid or a dog to see what your reaction is, lessening his mind about having to defend or control the environment, he has you, the dog now can relax and enjoy the walk more.

In the house, have the dog out only for about 20-40 minutes post exercise/yard times. And always on a leash. Then put them away. Let the dog absorb and think. Even if just for a little bit. If the dog goes to his crate on his own, he is telling you "I need a time out." Allow him this time. By having the dog out for long periods of time we are forcing the dog to keep accepting all new things, by putting the dog away we are asking him to accept a few things, then go think and absorb. When we get him out later we introduce a few more things, so the three new things are three new things, not 3 x 3 x 3, which could be possible overload for the poor pooch.

No new buddies! Do not introduce the dog to other residents or new animals for these two weeks. They can be side by side in their crates if you cannot totally separate, (not nose to nose for they can feel defensive). Some dogs will bond instantly with the other dogs if you don't bond first with the dog, and this can lead to some other issues, as the dog will look to the other dog(s) for guidance and not you.

### **Ignore bad behavior**

Ignore crying and/or barking. If you run to the dog each time they bark, whine, or cry, you are teaching the dog that doing those things gets your attention. The dog must learn to be secure when you are not there. Use the leash to correct jumping, exploring counter surfing, garbage diving, etc. Praise gently good behavior

As an example, the dog is sitting nicely next to you, touch or softly pet the dog "good boy/girl." Let them know you appreciate good, calm behavior. This makes naughty behavior not so fun if you ignore that but praise the good.

Literally in two weeks you will see a change in the dog and begin to see its honest and true personality. Just like a house guest. They are well behaved and literally shut down themselves these first few weeks, then post this time, they relax, and the true personality begins to shine thru!

So, please, if nothing else for your new dog, give him the time to learn about you as you are learning who they are. This method works on shy dogs, confident dogs, abuse cases, chained dogs that come inside, rowdy dogs, all temperaments.

You will see the way they start to look to you for guidance. Now you have gained their trust and showed them, calmly and fairly, what this new world is like. They literally relax and feel safe. There is no need to force that you are the leader. Slow easy guidance, patience, showing them what we want them to do in a new home instead of correcting them when they do wrong. We instill that we are worthy to the dog to be its leader.

## **Introducing Dogs to Each Other**

*By Sherry Woodard, Best Friends animal behavior consultant*

If you have a resident dog and a new one will be entering or visiting your home, there are things you can do to ensure that the meeting goes off without a hitch. A new dog can mean you are bringing home a foster or a new family member, someone who has a dog is moving into your house, or someone is visiting with a dog.

If you know that both dogs are very social with a variety of other dogs, the meeting should be easy. However, some dogs don't get out and mix with other dogs that much or may have only had one or two dog friends in their lives. These dogs may seem to have better social skills than they actually do, so introducing them to new dogs may require more care and effort. Another factor to consider is whether or not the dogs have been spayed or neutered; if not, the meeting may be more difficult.

If you are uncertain how one (or both) of the dogs will react, be cautious. First, plan to have the dogs meet on neutral ground. Choose a place where neither dog is likely to feel territorial. Even your dog's favorite park is not a good spot, unless it is a dog park (since dogs are often used to meeting other dogs there). If you are adopting a dog from a rescue (like The Rescue Crew) or a shelter, ask the foster, volunteer or staff member if they can help to introduce the dogs. If your dog is accustomed to meeting dogs at a pet supply store, you can ask the store's trainer to help with the introduction. The dogs could casually meet while you are on a shopping trip. If either dog has a history of difficulty getting along with other dogs, the best strategy would be to hire a certified professional behavior consultant to help you gradually introduce the two dogs to each other.

When the meeting occurs, have each dog on leash, each with a calm relaxed adult handler. Keep the leads loose, since tension on the leash communicates to the dog that you are fearful or anxious about their meeting. They can sense this and it will in turn make them more fearful and anxious. Walk the dogs side by side with a safe distance between the dogs.

Then, cross paths (still maintaining that distance) and allow the dogs to smell where the other has walked. If either of the dogs barks, snaps and lunges toward the other, consider hiring a certified professional dog trainer or behavior consultant to teach you how to do the "Look at That" game to help the dogs feel calm and happy around each other before proceeding to the next stage of introduction.

Next, let the dogs meet. As the dogs approach each other, watch their body language closely, paying attention to the entire body. The dogs may need to do a little posturing or make a little noise, but if you don't know how to tell the difference between dogs getting to know each other and dogs who don't like each other, have someone there who does.

If the dogs have shown no signs of hostility toward each other up to this point, take them to an enclosed area, drop their leashes, step back and give them space to get to know each other. We have a tendency to micro-manage these interactions, but in general it's best if we allow the dogs to work it out with minimal interference. Humans hovering and getting too involved can be frustrating to the dogs, which can make them tense and spoil the interaction.

For the most part, dogs in this situation respond well to verbal feedback from humans. For example, if the dogs are getting too tense around each other, saying something in a soothing tone of voice (such as "It's OK guys, cool your jets") can help them to take it down a notch, shake it off and start fresh. If one dog is getting too overbearing and the other isn't correcting her, we can often help out by saying something like "Hey, knock it off!" If the dogs do shake off their tension and engage with each other in polite, appropriate ways, we can reward them for those behaviors and encourage more of them by speaking in a happy tone ("Good dogs! Well done!"). In most cases, that kind of verbal guidance is all the interference they need from us. We must only step in and physically separate them when they are becoming too excited and cannot give themselves a break, or when it becomes clear that their relationship is headed for conflict.

### **Here are some general body language signs to look for to get a general idea of where the interaction is headed:**

If they stiffen their bodies and stare into each other's eyes with their hair up and their teeth bared, they probably aren't going to become fast friends. If they lunge at each other and try to fight, separate them and don't try further introductions without help from a certified professional behavior consultant. Some dogs cannot safely interact with other animals and therefore should be the only pet in the home. Most of these dogs can be taught to ignore other animals while out in public, but they may never be able to safely interact with them.

Be wary of nose-to-nose meetings. This type of greeting is very stressful for many dogs, particularly those who are fearful or feel threatened by eye contact. For these dogs, nose-to-nose greetings may cause them to make a bad decision and bite out of fear and defensiveness. When dogs first look into each other's eyes, the appropriate behavior is to give a glance and then look away. A hard stare into another dog's eyes is a challenge – not a friendly way to greet. If the dogs practice inappropriate behavior like stiffening or staring, try to get the dogs to calm down by offering verbal feedback. If that doesn't work, you can pick up their leashes and walk them around until they shake off and loosen up, then try again.

If the dogs rush up to each other — with or without the hair raised at their shoulders and at the base of the tail — and engage in loud, raucous play, stay alert. This type of play can often escalate to fighting if the dogs do not know how to calm themselves down.

If one dog pursues the other continually and ignores the other dog's corrections (e.g. lip curls, growls or air snaps) or requests to take a break, it can turn from play into bullying. These kinds of corrections are frequently mistaken for aggression, but they are actually part of healthy, normal dog communication. Dogs should be able to correct each other when one is being inappropriate; likewise, they should be able to pay attention to another dog's corrections. It is also important for dogs to take turns being the chaser and the one being chased, and to take breaks when they get too amped up. If they are not able to do that for themselves, pick up their leashes and walk them around until they shake off and loosen up, then try again.

If the dogs try to play by pawing or play-bowing with their legs stretched out in front of them, they may want to be best buddies. Allow them to get to know each other and give praise for each nice interaction.

If the dogs seem fine with each other, drive them home, preferably in separate crates or cars so that the close quarters of a vehicle won't create unnecessary tension between them. At home, let them settle in, but make sure you've put away your dog's toys, bones and food bowls first, since these items may be sources of conflict. Whenever you feed the dogs, and certainly if you're going to offer high-value items like Kongs or chews, it may be best to separate them while they eat. Once the dogs are good friends, they may be more willing to chomp side by side on food and high-value items.

To introduce a puppy to a dog, use the same procedure as above. If the puppy is under six months old, both the dog and the puppy may need frequent breaks from each other. Some adult dogs will quickly lose patience with puppy energy. If the dog does not like the puppy, do not leave them alone together.

Finally, if you are not confident or comfortable at any point, please seek help from a relationship-based trainer who has ample experience with dog to dog interactions.

# How to Introduce a Dog to a Cat

*By Sherry Woodard, Best Friends animal behavior consultant*

Some dogs do fine living with cats; others simply cannot live safely with felines. Sometimes, a dog can live with certain cats (depending on their age, temperament and activity level), but not others. Even if your dog has successfully lived with cats in the past, it is important to remember that each dog and each cat is an individual and therefore each introduction is different.

When introducing your dog to a cat, pay attention to the body language of both animals. If the cat's ears are pinned back or her tail is swishing back and forth, this is a good indicator that she is displeased. You particularly want to be aware of dog body language that could be potential warning signs. If your dog has a strong prey drive (the inclination to seek out, chase and potentially capture animals seen as prey — usually smaller animals such as cats or rabbits), she might become very focused on the cat. She'll stiffen, stare, and may start barking or whining. If you see these signs, do not let her near the cat. Ideally, her body language will be loose and relaxed around the cat. It's OK if she pays attention to the cat, but you don't want to see her fixated on him.

In addition, a dog's interaction with a cat can change depending on the environment. Just because your dog is OK with the cat inside the house doesn't mean she'll exhibit that same behavior outdoors. She might fixate on the cat and start stalking her when they are outside together. So, be aware of her body language around the cat in each new situation, until you know how she is going to respond toward him.

There are many different ways to introduce a dog to a cat. If the first method of introduction you try doesn't work or you don't feel comfortable with it, try a different option. Even if the dog has had experience with cats and the cat has lived with a dog before, proceed cautiously during the introduction. It's best to have two people present— one to intervene with each animal, if necessary. If you have more than one dog, introduce each dog separately to the cat.

## **Option 1: Slow and steady desensitization**

If your dog is too fixated on the cat, you can try desensitization, the goal of which is to reduce your dog's reaction to the cat by gradually increasing her exposure to him. Put the cat in a room (e.g., a bedroom, a bathroom or a spare room) with a tall baby gate across the door. The room you choose should be one the dog cannot access and doesn't need to access. For example, if the dog sleeps in the bedroom with you at night, don't pick that room for the cat. The idea is to separate them and only allow them to view each other during specific times.

In his room, give the cat all needed supplies: litter box, toys, food and water. Keep in mind that cats are good at squeezing through small gaps and are also good climbers and jumpers. So, make sure your cat can't get past the gate you put up. The gate needs to be a barrier that allows the cat and dog to see one another but does not allow them to access each other.

To begin desensitization, let the dog view the cat briefly through the gate, and then get the dog to focus on something else, such as playing with a toy or practicing cues. Sometimes it helps to keep the dog on leash so that you can move her away from the cat when you try to refocus her attention. Praise and reward the dog for being able to focus elsewhere. Continue to give the dog short viewings of the cat throughout the day.

Sometimes, even seeing the cat at first is too exciting for the dog. If this is the case, close the door and begin feeding each animal on his or her side of the door: The cat eats his food in his room, right next to the door, and the dog eats her meal on the other side of the door. This allows each animal to associate the smells of the other with something good: food. You can also swap out the blankets and bedding of each animal, giving it to the other. That way, the dog can get used to the cat's smell and the cat can get used to the dog's smell, without overstimulating either of them.

Hopefully, through this process of slowly letting the dog see the cat and get accustomed to the cat's presence, the dog will eventually become desensitized and lose interest in the cat. In some cases, the dog will lose interest in the cat within a couple of hours, but it can take days, weeks or even months. Each dog (and each cat) is an individual and will learn at his or her own pace.

With that said, though, it is possible that your dog may not ever be able to safely share space with a cat. If you don't feel you can trust your dog around your cat, you should keep them apart. Many dogs can injure or kill a cat very quickly, and your dog can also be injured by the cat. Your first priority should be ensuring that everyone stays safe.

### **Option 2: Face-to-face introduction**

This is a faster-more paced introduction. One person should hold the dog on a loose lead and watch the dog's body language. Someone else should watch the cat's body language. If the cat is not raising his back or hissing around the dog, he can be allowed to move around freely. A cat is rarely a threat to a dog, but some cats will be on the offensive when meeting dogs.

If the dog is calm around the cat, you can ask the dog to sit, or lie down and stay, if she has been taught those cues, while the cat moves about freely, sniffing the dog if he wishes. The dog should be praised and rewarded if she ignores the cat. If the dog is too fixated on the cat (e.g., staring at the cat, has stiff body language, will not listen to you when you call her name) or if she lunges and tries to chase the cat, you should try a different strategy for getting them to share space, such as Option 1 or Option 3.

### **Option 3: Look at That**

If the quick introduction did not work and your dog is not becoming desensitized to the cat, you might need to try some more structured training. By playing "Look at That (LAT)" with your dog, you can help to teach her not to fixate on the cat. You'll be teaching her to look at the cat and then look back at you for a treat. Essentially, she'll learn that it is more rewarding to not pay attention to the cat.

To start working on LAT, you need to figure out the dog's threshold while on leash: At what point does she notice the cat, but still respond to you when you say her name? That is her threshold. Each dog has a different threshold. For one dog, five feet away from the cat might be her threshold; for another dog, it might be 25 feet. You'll know you have gone past the threshold when she starts barking or lunging at the cat. Another sign that you're getting too close to the cat is if she starts moving more slowly, staring and stiffening her body. If you call her name and she doesn't respond to you, move a few feet away from the cat.

Once you've figured out the dog's threshold, grab a clicker and some really delicious, pea-sized treats. If you don't have a clicker, a verbal marker (a word like "yes" or "good") will work just fine. Put ten treats in your hand and keep the bag close by for later.

When you see the dog looking at the cat, click the clicker or use your verbal marker and give her a treat. The first few times, you might have to put the treat right in front of her nose, but fairly soon she should start looking expectantly at you as soon as she hears the marker. That's because the marker (either a clicker or a word like "yes") always means a treat is coming. Use up the ten treats, clicking as soon as she looks at the cat.

The 11th time, before using marker, wait and see if she will look at the cat and then look right back at you. If she does that, either click or use the verbal marker when she looks at you and then give her a treat. If that doesn't happen, go back a step. Mark her 10 more times for looking at the cat and then try again. Once she is reliably looking at the cat and then looking back at you, you can slowly start moving closer and closer to the cat. If the dog becomes fixated on the cat when you move closer, you've gone past the threshold and need to move back.

As you train, her threshold decreases, which means that the two of you will be able to move closer and closer to the cat. Continue practicing LAT with your dog until she can be right next to the cat without an issue. How quickly your dog's threshold decreases will depend on you (how much you practice and the types of treats you use), your dog (since every dog learns at a different pace) and your cat's comfort level.

### **Introducing kittens and puppies**

If you are introducing a kitten to a dog, keep in mind that kittens may not have any fear of dogs, so you must watch the dog carefully. Because kittens are small and want to run and play, dogs with a strong prey drive may be very excited by a kitten's movements.

Even if your dog is OK with your adult cats, it is important to watch her closely when she's with a kitten. If your dog is young and high-energy, she could hurt or kill the kitten simply by trying to play. So, for safety's sake, keep kittens and dogs apart any time you are not watching them.

Introducing adult cats to puppies can sometimes be easy, since a well-socialized adult cat might be fine with a puppy acting like a puppy. However, if your rambunctious puppy is chasing your shy cat, it is up to you to intervene. Until the puppy is old enough to have more self-control and has had some training, you will want to manage their interactions. You don't want your puppy to learn that chasing the cat is a fun game. Baby gates can be used to keep the animals safely and comfortably apart. To help you keep an eye on your puppy, you can also put her on a leash. That way, if she begins to chase the cat, you will be able to easily direct her away from that behavior.

Animals with good past experience often adjust well and quickly to a new pet in the house. But if introductions don't go well, seek help from a professional dog trainer or behavior consultant. Don't ever use punishment: It will not help, and it could make matters much worse.

## **Dog Bites Child: How to Prevent This Scenario**

*By Sherry Woodard, Best Friends animal behavior consultant*

Children can have the most amazing relationships with dogs if both are taught how to properly interact and respect each other. Proper training and management of both children and dogs can prevent tragedies from ever happening.

When a child is bitten, both the child and the dog pay a high price. Even if the child is not physically damaged, he or she is still emotionally affected. The dog may end up homeless (and a poor adoption prospect) in a shelter or be destroyed as a future safety precaution. What does my child need to know to prevent dog bites?

Teach your children that they should never tease or throw things at a dog. Teach them to be especially gentle and calm around dogs that they don't know.

Teach your children the proper ways to pet a dog and tell them not to pet strange dogs without asking permission. Tugging on a dog's ears or tail can be painful, and the dog might feel the need to bite. It is also important to teach your children not to hug dogs, especially dogs you don't know. That type of "confinement" can be scary to a dog and it brings the child's face close to the dog's face, which can make the dog uncomfortable. Tell your children not to run, jump or scream around an unfamiliar dog, since you are unaware of what actions may cause fear or predatory behavior in that animal.

Remind your children not to stare at a dog when interacting with the animal. Children are often the same size as dogs and may stare into a dog's eyes without meaning to or without understanding that the dog may feel threatened.

Tell your children not to wake up a sleeping dog. The dog may be startled and react defensively.



Tell your children not to climb on any dog, even the family dog. It may be perfectly safe with your own dog, but children may try this with another dog and get bitten. Tell your children not to take things out of a dog's mouth and to leave an eating dog alone. Even though your own dog may not guard toys or food, another dog may. Therefore, it is safer to teach a child to leave all dogs alone during mealtime or while they're eating treats. In addition, when around a strange dog, your child should not take away the dog's toys.

### **What does my dog need to know?**

Socialize your puppy or dog to children. Watch your puppy or dog as she plays with children; stop the play if the child or the dog gets too rough. First, handle all of his body parts. If your dog objects to any part of his body being handled, go to an area of his body that he likes to have touched. As you talk soothingly to him, begin touching him there and then move over to the area that he does not like. Praise him if he does not react and do this over and over until the dog is fine with touch everywhere. Use treats in addition to praise if necessary.

### **What do I need to know?**

Have your whole family go to training classes with the dog. Everyone in your family should have some understanding of acceptable dog behavior.

Don't stare into a dog's eyes, since this can be threatening to him. Watch your dog carefully around other people's children, since he or she does not know those children, and you can't be certain of how your dog will react.

Get your dog checked out by a vet if your dog's behavior suddenly changes (i.e., she becomes more irritable). Sudden negative behavior change may mean your dog is in pain and needs medical attention.

Finally, if you have a dog that is not okay around children, it is your responsibility to protect your dog from her tendencies. Never allow her to be in a situation where she might bite a child. If you teach both children and dogs how to properly interact, they will enjoy a wonderful, safe, fun relationship.

# Things to Do with Your Dog

*By Sherry Woodard, Best Friends animal behavior consultant*

If you want a well-trained, well-mannered, well-socialized dog, interact multiple times every day with your dog, with the goal of building a foundation of trust and a healthy relationship.

All dogs benefit from learning and practicing skills daily. Keep all interaction fun; if you are stressed on a particular day and will not play nicely with your dog, skip spending time with your dog that day. Dogs are sensitive to your emotional state and will pick up on your stress.

## **House-training**

I add the words “Go potty” right away. I set each dog up for success by walking him or her outside about every 45 minutes on lead to allow the dog many opportunities to get it right. I supervise the dog inside the house because it’s much easier and faster to help her learn where to go potty before she starts having “accidents” in the house.

## **Name recognition**

Use the dog’s name often when you’re praising and playing with her, and always with a happy tone. Dogs should have only positive associations with their names and nicknames.

## **Recall**

Call the dog to you often; again, always using a happy tone. Add treats sometimes to pleasantly surprise her and keep her coming to you fast. Remember to practice recall frequently, not just when something fun is about to end. People often lose great recall because they only call the dog for negative reasons or use a negative tone. Why would any dog want to come running to you if you seem angry or if the fun at most always ends when she runs to you?

## **The joy of touch**

Teach your dog to enjoy being touched on all body parts. Start with getting your dog to enjoy your touch and work toward the goal of getting him comfortable with being touched by people he doesn’t know. It is important that dogs allow us to touch them because they may need to be handled by various people: strangers, rescuers after an emergency, the vet, the groomer. They may need to be picked up off the ground or floor for grooming or medical reasons. If you can lift the dog’s body up off the floor, practice this to help him relax and realize that nothing bad happens when he is lifted.

Can you trim your dog’s nails? Is he comfortable having his feet touched? Grooming has many benefits for dogs, so teach your dog to enjoy grooming. Make sure that anyone who grooms your dog is kind and gentle to help ensure that you have a dog that is safe for others to handle. You can help him to feel more relaxed by adding positive experiences to his grooming memories.

When I have a new dog in my home, I massage the dog every day, touching his entire body and continuing to touch him until he relaxes. Many dogs are so excited and reactive to our touch that this is a challenge. To help the dog learn to relax and enjoy touch, I do the massage in a quiet room without a lot of human or non-human traffic.

### **Rest and relaxation.**

Dogs don't know how to control their own energy and the result can be destructive, nuisance or rough behaviors. There are dogs that bark incessantly, chew up everything within reach, dogs who mount, pull humans around by the limbs or hair, knock down children, and decapitate Barbie! People must teach their dogs to have an "off" switch. Many dogs are dropped off at shelters because their people became frustrated and felt they could no longer control their dogs.

Every day, you can help your dog by teaching her how to rest and relax in your home and during outings. Going on walks or riding in a vehicle should be relaxing for both human and dog. When I have a new dog in my home, I practice R&R daily by having the dog either tethered to me or crated for a while. I tether new dogs or crate them for travel; I do not allow them to jump around barking while I drive.

They also enjoy walking on lead without pulling. How? Because they are taught to walk without pulling: I simply stop walking until they ease up on pulling. Going for walks is much more enjoyable if the dog isn't yanking you along. Also, any dog will be more welcome in public settings if she has manners. Her energy will be more focused and calmer in if she is not in emotional overdrive while out walking.

### **Retrieve**

The retrieving game is not for every dog; those who enjoy it will let you know. I start with a toy tied on a lunge whip. Drag the toy around excitedly and the dog will probably chase it. If he does, this can be the game for a while. Then I start throwing one toy tied with a thin line a short distance and have another toy in my hand. If the dog goes to the thrown toy, I guide her back with the line and show her that I have another toy.

The two-toy method helps many dogs learn to interact instead of just taking a toy and going off to play with it. The dog also learns to trade the toy in his mouth for the toy you have in your hand, which is more fun because you can keep that toy moving to entice him to continue to play with you. I add words for trading toys; "trade," "drop it" or "give" are common words used.

### **Tug**

I teach dogs to tug. The game of tug, with rules, is a very healthy, educational game. You start and end the game, and if the dog ever puts her teeth on your skin, the game is over. I use an emotional tone to say "Ouch!" if I feel teeth on my skin. This helps dogs learn to play within limits. Self-limiting behavior is normal for dogs: Watch well-socialized adult dogs play with puppies or senior dogs. They sense what is appropriate and play accordingly. Again, you can use two toys to help the dog learn to drop the one she is holding, signaling the end of one game and the start of another.

## **Search**

Keep them thinking! I hide food, treats and favorite toys to encourage my dogs to search daily. When a dog finds these hidden treasures, I reward him with lots of praise.

## **Agility**

Many dogs enjoy agility training and benefit from the experiences that come with doing something physical. In agility training, dogs learn how to really use their bodies — and all four feet. Fearful dogs learn to be more confident, overweight dogs get some great exercise, but just about any dog can benefit from learning to negotiate his way over, under, through and around objects. Agility training can be fun for your dog — and for you, too. Remember to check with your veterinarian before beginning any weight loss or exercise program with your dog.

# **Getting the Behavior You Want**

*By Sherry Woodard, Best Friends animal behavior consultant*

Be proactive by teaching your dog to perform the behavior you want! We can reward any behavior we like and want to see more of, including being calm and gentle. The most effective way to squelch unwanted behavior is to ignore it. Why? Because giving any attention (even negative forms of attention, such as saying “no!”) for unwanted behavior is still seen by the dog as a good thing because he’s getting attention. You can immediately ask for another wanted behavior while ignoring what the dog has offered.

## **Hand-feeding**

Taking treats gently from all human hands is a valuable lesson and, of course, dogs love practicing it. Hand-feeding a dog is a great way to raise the value, in his mind, of interaction with all people. This simple human behavior builds trust in fearful or shy dogs. For all social dogs, we can hand-feed while practicing all known cues.

## **Lure training and capturing**

These are primary ways to train easily and quickly. In lure training, I guide the dog with a treat or toy — the Lure — into a sit, down, stand, or up (jumping or climbing up on something). You can use lure training to teach a dog to use his paws to touch an object. For example, in my house I have a bell on the door to the yard. I show new dogs that the bell ringing causes the human to open the door. I teach dogs to ring the bell to go outside, which is helpful once a new dog has been house-trained.

Use capturing to reward any behavior. You can capture any behavior and cause the dog to repeat it by assigning a word to the behavior and rewarding the dog whenever she does the behavior. Give it a word right away and use the word every time they do the behavior.

### **Teaching “wait”**

You should teach every dog to wait. For example, use “wait” at doors before going in or out, in the car, or when giving a dog a bowl of food, or if you drop something and don’t want the dog to pick up. A good cue to use is a hand signal: palm up, facing out toward the dog. Say “wait” in a firm, but not harsh tone. The dog can be standing, sitting or lying down. If the dog tries to move forward, physically block him with your hand, trying not to touch him but clearly communicating that he needs to pause briefly.

### **Teaching “stay”**

Once a dog has learned to wait, it is easier to teach stay, which is used for longer periods of time than wait, times when you don’t want the dog to move. To start learning to stay, the dog should be in a sit or down position, since standing for long periods can be physically difficult, causing the dog to break position to get more comfortable.

Start very close to the dog and reward often for non-movement. Build up the length of time the dog stays still before you start to move away. When you do start to move during the stay, take baby steps around the dog, not away from him. Many dogs want desperately to be near us, so go slow when teaching stay. If we cause a fear reaction, it is much more difficult for the dog to learn. Just like us, dogs learn best when they are enjoying the learning experience and aren’t stressed, emotional or distracted.

### **Teaching social skills with other animals**

Most of us want to take our dogs out in public. Going places, of course, means that our dogs meet a variety of people and other animals, and they get to practice their social skills. Please protect your dog by not letting her have negative experiences. One way to help dogs learn to have more socially acceptable behavior is to have people meet you with their dog- friendly dogs to allow the dogs to have positive experiences. Some dogs require more management than others, but with our help they can go out safely and enjoy a bigger life than the house and yard offer.

### **Providing medical and dental care**

All dogs need regular medical and dental care. They need a family doctor just like us – one we trust to oversee their general health. Routine visits allow your doctor to see changes through examinations, blood tests and x-rays. Different parts of the country have different parasites, for example; your veterinarian will be able to keep your dog safe in your area. Please report any change in behavior to your family veterinarian. Often, changes in behavior are related to changes in the dogs physical health.

# Housetraining a Dog

*By Sherry Woodard, Best Friends animal behavior consultant*

When you get a new puppy or dog, you'll need to show him or her what is acceptable in your home. Different people may have different rules: Some want to train their dogs to eliminate in litter trays or on paper, while others want all "bathroom" business to occur outdoors. For your dog to know what you want, you have to establish a predictable routine.

## **Potty training your dog or puppy**

For the first couple of weeks, a new dog of any age should be supervised when he has the full (or even partial) run of the house. During those times when you cannot supervise him, it is wise to restrict the movement of a new animal during the house-training phase. You can potty train your dog by using a crate. Or, for limited periods of time, you can confine the dog to a small, easy-to-clean room, like the bathroom, equipped with a child gate.

Your dog should consider this space a safe place, so add the dog's bed, water and things to chew on to create a comfortable den. The dog should be fed in this space as well. To keep this space safe, make sure that nothing that would cause her discomfort happens here and keep children out of this area.

Set up a daily schedule where you walk your dog on lead (or carry her) to the desired elimination spot after meals, after naps, and every couple of hours in between. To reinforce that the trip has a purpose, you should not play with the dog during trips to eliminate. Use a word or phrase (like "do your business") to remind the dog of her duty. As soon as she has produced, praise her lavishly and give her a treat.

## **What do I need to know about potty training a puppy?**

Puppies cannot hold their bladders and bowels for more than a few hours. Even the most intelligent and well-intentioned puppy has to wait until its muscles develop before it can exercise appropriate bladder and bowel control, just like a human infant. If you must be away for more than two or three hours, and you are training the puppy to eliminate outdoors, you will need someone to help by walking the puppy for you.

If you are training a puppy to eliminate on paper or in a litter box, the space the puppy is contained in will need to be large enough for a sleeping area away from an elimination spot (dogs don't like to eliminate where they sleep). Keep in mind that a puppy, if trained to eliminate on paper or a litter box, may have a lifelong surface preference; that is, even as an adult, he may eliminate on paper if it is lying around the house. Having a puppy eliminate in the house will prolong the process of teaching him to eliminate outdoors.

## **How long does house-training take?**

After a week or so of no accidents, you can begin allowing the dog freedom in the house after each successful trip outdoors. Supervision will still be needed, however, as well as praise and an occasional reward. Supervise the dog anytime he is given free run of the house, watching for signs such as circling and sniffing corners.

## **How do I deal with "accidents?"**

If an "accident" happens and you catch the dog in the act, stop him and escort him to the correct spot. Praise him if he stops eliminating when you ask him to. Be sure not to yell when you catch him in the act because this can cause him to discontinue eliminating in front of you, thus prolonging the potty-training process. If you find the results of an accident after it's happened, again, do not punish the dog, since punishment could make him afraid to eliminate in your presence. It's more effective to clean up the mess and put it in the designated elimination spot, so the smell will help your dog recognize that this is where to go.

To clean up accidents, use an enzymatic cleaner. Urine contains pheromones, chemical markers that say essentially, "Go potty here." Only enzymatic cleaners break down the pheromones, which keeps dogs from sniffing out and using the inappropriate potty area. If you're training a puppy, keep in mind that a puppy's muscles are still developing, so he may not be able to control himself when he eliminates in an inappropriate spot. Puppies mature at different rates, and some will take longer to develop bladder and bowel control.

Finally, there's a difference between a dog who "marks" his territory and a dog who isn't house-trained. Early neutering will reduce a dog's inclination to mark surfaces with his scent. But, if a dog who is already potty-trained starts having accidents, check with your veterinarian because there may be a medical cause.

# **Crate Training: The Benefits for You and Your Dog**

*By Sherry Woodard, Best Friends animal behavior consultant*

## **Why should I consider crate training my dog?**

Dogs are hard-wired by their genetic history to be den animals. A den is a small, safe, well-defined space. It is a place in which dogs feel instinctively safe. It is also a place that they instinctively avoid soiling. The combination of these two native traits are what make crate training, done in the right way, a kind and effective component in house-training your new puppy or dog.

A crate can also be a place for your dog to rest or have “down time.” If you have just acquired a dog, a crate can limit access to the entire house until your new dog knows the house rules. A crate can help with house-training by setting up a routine. For example, you can feed the puppy in the crate and, afterwards, carry him or walk him on a lead straight out to an elimination site where you can use a word or phrase to remind the dog what the trip outside is for.

There are other benefits of crate training. At some point in your dog’s life, it may be necessary to use a crate when you are traveling with your pet or when your dog is recuperating from an injury. Such potentially traumatic situations will be much less stressful if your dog is already familiar with and comfortable in a crate. Crates are also useful for keeping destructive dogs out of mischief when you’re not home to keep an eye on them.

## **Where do I purchase a crate and how do I know which one to buy?**

Most pet-supply stores carry dog crates; pet catalogs sell them as well. Considerations when buying your crate: Make sure the crate is big enough so that the dog can stand up, turn around and lay flat on his side in comfort, but small enough that there isn’t enough room for the dog to sleep and eat at one end and eliminate at the other. If you are training a growing puppy, you can buy a larger crate with a divider for adjusting the crate as he grows.

## **How do I introduce the crate?**

You can prevent problems with crate training by setting your dog up for success. Your dog should only associate good things with the crate, so start by putting treats and/or toys in the crate and encouraging him to go in. Some dogs may need to warm up to the crate slowly. If your dog is afraid to go in, place a treat in the crate as far as he is willing to go. After he takes the treat, place another treat a little further back in the crate. Keep going until he is eating treats at the very back, then feed him his next meal in the crate with the door open, so that he can walk in and out at will. Crate training a fearful dog can take days, so be patient and encouraging. If a crate is properly introduced and used, your dog will happily enter and settle down



## **Should the crate be used at night?**

Sure, you can use the crate at night. Put the dog in with a treat and a cue like “kennel” or “kennel up” delivered in a cheery tone of voice. The crate should be situated close to you so that you can hear the dog whine or whimper if he needs to eliminate during the night. (Dogs will usually make some kind of noise rather than make a mess where they sleep.) If you are training a puppy, be prepared for one or two trips outside at night to eliminate. If the puppy goes outside and doesn’t produce, do not allow any extra time for play or long drinks of water when you come back inside. Instead, encourage the pup to return to the crate. He may whine a bit, but if you have given him ample opportunity to eliminate, try to ignore the protest and the puppy should settle down quickly

## **How much time in the crate is okay?**

No dog, young or old, should be living in a crate full-time. Dogs are social animals, so for a dog to have a good quality of life, social isolation should be kept to a minimum. All dogs need daily exercise and some interaction with others. Even four hours in a crate without a break during the day is a long time for many adult dogs. If you must crate your dog when you’re not home, arrange to have someone stop in and let her out for a potty break and to stretch her legs. Except for nighttime, coating a dog for long periods of time is not advised.

Puppies, especially, should not be left in a crate for long periods of time (more than two hours). It is important that puppies not be neglected and forced to break their instinctive aversion to soiling their sleeping area. Unfortunately, this is what happens to many pet- store puppies and it can lead to serious house-training difficulties. Also, since they are still developing, puppies have even more need for social interaction than adult dogs. If they aren’t socialized to the world while they are young, they can develop fears and aberrant behaviors of many kinds.

Most adult dogs can stay in a crate for the entire night without a trip outside. However, young puppies and some old dogs cannot physically hold their bladders and bowels through the night.

## **When should a crate not be used?**

A crate should not be used as a form of punishment. As mentioned earlier, your dog should have only warm, fuzzy feelings about her crate. Even though a dog can come to see her crate as a safe place, it is not the solution for a dog with separation anxiety, since she could injure herself trying to get out.

# Staying Safe around Dogs

Well-socialized and happy dogs can add so much to our lives and to our families. Dogs give us companionship, provide fun and physical exercise, and help us to teach our children about caring for others and about responsibility. Most dogs are the happy family pets that we enjoy being with.

There are situations, however, that can frighten or anger even the nicest of dogs, and their natural defense is to bite. There are also dogs who, due to the circumstances of their lives, may not behave like the typical family dog.

You, your family and your community can take simple steps to reduce the number of dog bites that occur. Here are some ways to keep the families and family pets in your community safe.

## Dog Safety for You

- Learn how to interpret dog body language (read “Dog Body Language,” in this section).
- Always ask permission before petting or touching someone else’s dog.
- Most of the time, we encounter friendly, wiggly dogs in public. But you should be cautious
- if a dog goes still, becomes stiff, and/or is not wagging in a loose and friendly way.
- Don’t corner a dog. All dogs have a sense of personal space, so watch their body language as
- you get closer (or the dog gets closer to you).
- When approached by a strange dog, stand quietly, hands at your sides and avoid eye contact. A dog’s natural instinct is to chase, so if you run, a dog may chase. Keep your eyes on the dog and don’t turn your back.
- Do not approach dogs in cars or on chains or ropes. Dogs can be protective about their territory and may be a bit more mouthy than usual. When dogs are tied up, they know they can’t run away so their only defense will be to fight.
- To avoid startling dogs, don’t approach or touch them while they’re sleeping, fixated on something, or with puppies.
- Never get between dogs who are fighting.
- Leave dogs alone when they are eating, whether the dog is eating from a bowl or chewing a treat (generally a high-value item for dogs). Like people, dogs don’t like it when people get between them and their food.
- Don’t reach over or through fences or barriers to pet or touch a dog.
- Never tease, chase or harass a dog.
- Don’t enter a property containing a dog if you’re not accompanied by the dog’s person. Dogs can be protective of their family and territory and think it’s their job to protect them.

## The Dog-Safe Family

- Children should always be accompanied around dogs, even the family dog.
- Supervising children around dogs not only protects the children from accidents but also protects the dog from harm by children who don't always know that touching animals in a certain way can hurt them.
- Don't leave babies unattended around dogs. Dogs may not realize that babies aren't as strong as adults or even know what a baby is.
- If you're expecting a baby, start early to get your dog used to the changes a baby will make in your dog's and your lives.
- Don't attempt to remove anything from your dog's mouth.
- Teach your children about dog safety early and promote dog-safe practices.
- Do research on the Internet to learn about what kind of dog would be best for you.

## Good Dog Habits

- Socialize your dog and make him a part of your family activities early on. Dogs also need to be socialized beyond your family and home to be comfortable in the world.
- Teach your dog appropriate behavior.
- Take your dog to obedience training.
- Make a game for the whole family of spotting and reinforcing positive behavior in your dog.
- Don't allow children to play rough with your dog. (That doesn't mean you shouldn't play games like tug with your dog. Teaching your dog to play games using healthy rules will help the dog to learn self-control.)
- Avoid hitting your dog or using other forms of punishment.
- Provide lots of exercise for your dog through positive play like fetch and/or frequent walks. Walks or hikes provide great exercise for you and your canine companion. Regular activity not only gets rid of excess energy but reduces frustration levels in your pet. Interactive play increases the bond between you and your pet.
- Spay or neuter your dog. Over a six-year period, 92% of all fatal attacks by dogs were by intact (unaltered) dogs. Spay/neuter also reduces the likelihood of costly medical conditions and reduces the number of unwanted pets who end up in shelters.
- Make sure that your dog has lots of human interaction every day. A happy dog is a good dog.

---

**Endnote:** A significant portion of this Guide and content therein are reproduced from Best Friends ([www.bestfriends.org](http://www.bestfriends.org)). Specific authors are noted where appropriate. Resources utilized from the Best Friends website are available for use and reproduction without prior contact. Much of this content is protected by copyright, trademark, and other intellectual property laws.



The **Rescue** Crew  
SAVE A LIFE TODAY