



## Friendly Canine News | Q2 2019

### LIVING WITH DOGS

#### PLAY IT SAFE

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

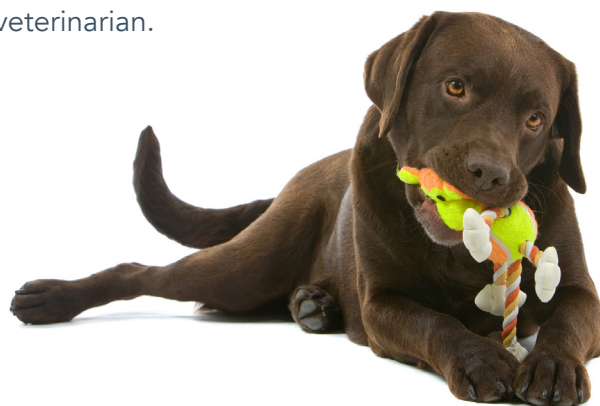
**SUPERVISE FIRST ENCOUNTERS.** Every time your dog plays with or chews on something new, it should happen under your watchful eye. Make sure your dog plays with the toy appropriately, that is, uses it the way it's meant to be used. Gnawing on (rather than swallowing) a chew, for instance, or rolling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

**CHOOSE CHEWS AND TOYS CAREFULLY.** Look for durable, non-toxic materials (some rawhides have been preserved with arsenic, for example). And always buy toys created for dogs, not plastic things from the one-dollar bin at the supermarket. Treat balls should have two openings, not one, to prevent a vacuum effect that can cause your dog's tongue to get stuck.

#### NEVER LEAVE YOUR DOG ALONE WITH...

1. A rawhide or other edible chews. You need to be around to take the chew away before it's small enough for your dog to swallow and potentially choke on.
2. Anything your dog hasn't played with before.
3. Anything with parts small enough to swallow, such as squeakers.

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



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#### DID YOU KNOW

### THESE DOG WORLD RECORDS?

- Australian Shepherd/Border Collie mix Sweet Pea holds the record for completing the fastest 109-yard dash with a can balanced on her head.
- First dog to take the surfing world by storm? Abbie Girl the Australian Kelpie, who holds the Guinness World Record for longest wave surfed by a dog (30 yards).
- Twinkie the Jack Russell Terrier is the world's fastest balloon popper. He popped 100 balloons in 39.08 seconds. Hats off to one very determined and sound-resistant terrier.
- Golden Retriever Augie set the bar for most tennis balls in a dog's mouth at the same time—five!—back in 2003. His record has yet to be beaten.

#### A WORLD OF DOGS

### KNOWING YOUR DOG INSIDE OUT

Many mutt owners have played the guessing game at one time or another. Where did that short, curled-up tail on an otherwise shepherd-like dog come from? Or those gangly legs on a Beagle mix? The wide bully-breed smile on a wirehaired Terrier? Feathering on a Boxer? Well, for a decade now, it has been possible to get the answer. DNA tests to determine canine genealogy are not only widely available—and becoming more accurate. They're not 100% scientifically accurate yet, but that only means you won't be able to prove your dog's ancestry in a court of law.

Early testing services covered anywhere from 39 to 68 breeds, but now today that number has expanded more than 350. And where before a blood sample had to be collected by a veterinarian, all that's required now is a mouth swab—a process you can carry out at home. The swab is placed in a collection bag which is sealed and mailed off, along with a check, to a laboratory. Two to three weeks later, a link to your dog's ancestry report arrives in your inbox. Aside from revealing the origin of physical traits, such a report can offer useful clues about behaviors like digging, barking, and herding. If you discover your dog has hound parentage, for example, engaging in tracking, trailing, or other scent activities might make him more content. Dogs given an outlet for their innate abilities often become calmer and better behaved in general.

For some people, playing guess-what-my-dog-is part of the charm of having a mutt. For others, finding out the answer is well worth the cost of the test. And apparently, quite a few people give canine genealogy tests as a present—something a little different for the dog lover who has everything. If you have a curiosity itch to scratch or fancy a unique gift idea, don't just pick any old company online. Do some careful research first or ask your veterinarian to recommend a reputable testing service.







## DOGS IN ACTION

### CONSERVATION DOGS

Among the many important jobs held by dogs today, conservation work is a small but crucial niche. Conservation dogs are trained to find wildlife and plant samples using modified search & rescue and narcotic techniques. The perfect dog for the job is high energy with a compulsive play drive and toy focus—the more, the better. (Many conservation dogs are shelter rescues, given up by families who couldn't cope with an always-on dog.) This drive is necessary both for the high-level training and for working in the field alongside biologists and wildlife researchers roughly 300 days out of the year.

One primary job function of conservation dogs is finding wildlife scat and hair. To a biologist, such samples are treasure troves of information, revealing—through DNA analyses—a species' presence, population size, reproductive status, and food habits. Other vital jobs include searching out invasive species (such as yellow star thistle, a weed that overruns native plants and can kill horses), and endangered species (e.g. Kincaid's lupine, a near-extinct plant that is also the one place where the rare Fender's blue butterfly lays its eggs). For more about conservation dogs, visit [wd4c.org](http://wd4c.org), the online home of Working Dogs for Conservation.

## HEALTHY DOG

### WHY GROOM?

Even if you make regular trips to the groomer, there are good reasons to also groom your dog at home. A dog with a clean, healthy coat feels better in herself, and brushing and bathing your dog promotes skin health and gives you quality time together. Nothing says, I love you, Daisy, like a good shampoo and a rinse. Plus, you can take the opportunity to check for fleas, ticks, and skin irritations.

If your dog is new to grooming, start slowly and first teach her to love being handled all over. Reward gentle touches of ears, paws, tail, etc. with tasty treats, then progress to brushing and brief periods of holding. Be sure to get the right tools for your dog's coat—brushes and combs come in many versions—and always use a dog blow dryer that delivers only air, not heat. You can find detailed DIY grooming instructions many places online. Try the Pet Care section of the ASPCA's website: [aspca.org](http://aspca.org).





*To re-home a Golden, visit your local shelter or rescue group.*

## DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### GOLDEN RETRIEVER

Few dogs appear on more 'best of' lists than the Golden Retriever. The second-most popular breed in the U.S. ranks fourth in Dr. Stanley Coren's *The Intelligence of Dogs*, boasts the first ever dog to surf with special-needs kids (Ricochet), and holds the world record for most tennis balls in a dog's mouth: five, all at once (see earlier). Goldens are easy to motivate, prone to over-exuberance, usually confident, and highly social. They don't care for extended alone-time and are famous for loving kids of any species: Goldens have made excellent surrogate mothers for everything from kittens to tiger cubs. Originally a gundog bred to retrieve waterfowl, Goldens make ideal sporting and activity dogs. Vigorous daily exercise is a must. The priority cue to teach a Golden is leave it, for when you're within twenty feet of a substance that appears even remotely edible.

## TIPS & TOOLS

### A HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST



#### Unsafe chewables.

Don't let your dog chew on things like leashes, rope, or garden hose, which can cause intestinal obstruction.



#### Chemicals.

Keep all household toxins (bleaches, detergents, disinfectants) well out of reach of your dog—also insecticides, human medications, pool chemicals, paint thinner, and automotive products like antifreeze and radiator fluid. Don't use chemical cleaning liquids where your dog eats and drinks.



#### Toxic plants.

Many popular household plants can be dangerous, even fatal, to your dog if he decides to sample a leaf. Common culprits are azalea, rhododendron, sago palm, lilies, kalanchoe and schefflera.



#### Prevent falls.

Use baby gates and screens to restrict your dog's access to high windows and staircases where falls can occur. Invest in non-skid mats for floor areas where your dog often runs; slipping can cause torn ligaments.

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I am Jean Kolor, owner and trainer of First Friend Canine Consulting. I am a Karen Pryor Academy Certified Training Partner as well as a licensed Family Paws Parent Educator. I offer private in home training where I train your dog for you or coach you in how to train your dog. I offer group training classes for puppies, adolescents and adult dogs. I also work with expecting and new families to help them through the unique challenges presented by relationships between baby and dog and toddler and dog.

**Contact me today for more information on how I can help you reach your goals with your dog in a positive, respectful way.**