

# Tip Archive

## Tip Archive 2005

### Mays Tip

Slow and Easy is the key when bring your **Rottweiler** puppy home. The dog you've just adopted wants to please you more than anything else in the world but it's only natural that he may be a bit unsure when he first arrives. The first couple of weeks you and your pet are "getting to know one another". He doesn't know why he has come to your home nor what is expected of him. Please be patient with him and anticipate problems before they occur. Gently and consistently, you'll want to show him the ropes. Don't expose him to too many new experiences at once. If you have children and/or other pets please encourage them to let the new dog get adjusted to his surroundings at his own pace. And hard as it is, resist the temptation to have friends and relatives over to meet him right away he needs to know he is really home and that you and he belong to each other

The first night is critical too. Your new puppy will derive comfort from sleeping near a family member. Allowing him to sleep next to you in your bedroom will greatly ease his transition. Please be patient in giving your new **Rottweiler** time to adjust. It may take several days or even weeks before he fully adapts to his new home but that's a small price to pay for a lifetime of loyalty and devotion.

## Junes Tip

### We're Asking you to Give up Punishment Completely!

We're asking you to give up punishment completely ! Just forget all about punishment, aversive punishment, that is. There's another kind of "punishment" that is much more effective - 'Negative punishment' or the withholding of the reward. NEVER, never strike your rottweiler, the consequences can only be disastrous. Handshyness, fearfulness, avoidance of humans, aggression and submissive urination may all result from physical punishment. One of the most important things that your rottweiler must learn is trust for you and also that the human hand is a friend. You're building the foundations of a new relationship with an animal with whom you've chosen to spend many years of your life. You want that relationship to be based upon love and mutual respect.

To that end physical punishment or 'corrections' have no place in a successful relationship between you and your dog. Don't rely on discipline to shape your pet's behavior but instead seek to reinforce desirable behavior. It is essential to reward with food treats and praise. All too often people reprimand their dog for inappropriate behavior {which gives them no information about what you want them to do} and totally ignore reinforcing good behavior. You should actively look for desired behaviors so that you can reward and praise your pet.

## Julys Tip

### Why Crate Train Your Puppy ????

**Crate** training is an excellent way to housebreak your puppy and control it's sometimes destructive puppy behavior, like chewing on electrical cords or your furniture! Crate training assists in housebreaking by using a dog's natural instinct to not soil its den. Some people think crate training is "cruel", when in fact, crate trained dogs enjoy their crate and view it as a **safe quiet place to retreat** when they are tired or want to be left alone. You want the crate to be a happy, safe and peaceful place for your pup. **Select** a crate that is large enough for the puppy to turn around in and comfortably lie down. A crate that is too large will allow a young puppy to eliminate in a corner, while being able to lie down at the opposite end

**Don't** be tempted to buy blankets, pads or bedding for inside the crate, if you have a young puppy. Not only do they usually become expensive chew toys and present a **choking hazard**, but they also interfere with effectively housebreaking your pup. Nothing should be placed in the crate with a pup except a safe chew toy or two such as a nylabone or Kong. **Never** leave your puppy in a crate with its **collar on!** If your pup catches its collar on the crate, it can seriously injure or choke your dog.

**Never** Ever discipline your puppy by placing it in its crate or you pup will associate its crate with punishment. Remember the goal in crate training your puppy is to make its crate a safe and enjoyable place!!!

## Augusts Tip

### When Is A Growl Not A Grumble?

#### Interpreting Your Rottweiler's Vocal

**In** general, a Rottweiler is quite a vocal animal who tends to grumble when being petted, handled and played with. A normal grumbler, without ulterior motives, will grumble low in his chest or throat and no facial movement will accompany the sound. In other words, he is not baring his teeth. If he does, you may have an altogether different problem on your hands.

**Problems** with grumbling that escalate to growling usually begin because the owner is unaware that this grumble behavior exists in the breed. Hence, the first time the young puppy grumbles it is met with what is known as a reinforcing behavior from the owner. In other words, the owner backs off from the puppy, retreats and/or stops what he is doing with the puppy. The puppy has now learned an easy way to get the owner to back off. The next time the event takes place the puppy may growl or snarl and possibly attempt to bite. If he grumbles or growls, wait it out. Do not look at the dog. You might put a slight smile on your face as you wait. If there is even one second of quiet from the puppy, quickly praise and reward with a treat so you can win that battle. Otherwise, you will never win the war.

**Grumbling** can be looked at as a particularly endearing habit of many Rottweilers as long as it is correctly and calmly handled. Many times the grumbling will stop when the reactions to it are controlled. Often the grumbling stops as the dog gets older. Others grumble until the day they die. Make it your business to be able to understand and handle your dog's vocal tendencies and you will avoid big problems down the road.

# Septembers Tip

## Protection Instinct

Many families have purchased Rottweilers for this trait only to discover later that it brings with it a considerable moral and legal responsibility. Problems can arise quickly and seemingly (to a novice) “out of the blue”. Do not permit strangers unknown to your dog to come into your home or yard unannounced because the dog does not know the difference between a burglar and a friend or relative. Commonly, Rottweilers will not allow even someone they know into their yard or home when you are not at home. The key is proper introduction between your Rottweiler and any new comers in your home.

Your Rottweiler must be carefully schooled through socialization and training to accept your friends into your home. Do not allow roughhousing or playing tug-of-war. People expected to be in contact with the dog while the owners are absent should be thoroughly familiar to the dog long before the owner’s departure. Although they usually do not bite without provocation, being cornered by a Rottweiler (their born instinct) is a very unnerving experience for meter readers, gardeners, or neighbors coming into the yard when the owner is absent. Always lock gates to keep people and your dog safe. “Beware of Dog” signs are a good additive to alert anyone attempting to come on to your property without your consent.

Rottweilers are a sensitive, intelligent, and loyal animals and usually wants to please their owners. Occasionally it can be quite stubborn though, (even trying to test their own masters in their early “Teen years”) and requires more attention. It is imperative that obedience and discipline be consistent, fair, and firm without being overly rough. Ownership is not for the timid or very busy person who cannot, or is not, inclined towards careful supervision and enforcement of the rules for his or her pet.

# Octobers Tip

## Protection Instinct

### RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP KEYS TO PREVENTING DOG ATTACKS

There are a number of things dog owners should do to keep their dog from biting someone. Starting when the dog is brought home as a puppy, it should have kind treatment, consistent obedience training and plenty of exercise. These actions should result in a well-adjusted pet. Owners should spend plenty of time with their pets. Dogs left alone in the backyard or chained to a post are more likely to become problems for their owners and others and follow these DO'S and DON'TS of a responsible dog owner.

DO - get obedience training for your dog. Your dog should be willing to please you and consistently respond correctly to commands.

DO - learn how to bring out the best in your dog using positive reinforcement training methods.

DO - learn to read your dog's body language.

DO - construct outdoor kennels sturdy enough to keep your dog in and other dogs/animals out.

DO - seek professional advice from your veterinarian if you have concerns about your dog's behavior.

DO - get a rabies vaccination for your dog as recommended by your veterinarian.

DO - be aware that your dog's demeanor may change with illness or pain and exercise caution when approaching.

DO - determine laws regarding dangerous dogs in your city or county. Specific behaviors that warrant the label of "dangerous" may vary.

DO - prevent dog-to-dog aggression by watching for behavior that precedes aggression such as staring at each other.

DO - if a dog approaches you, stand still with hands at side and feet together, or lay on the ground with knees tucked to chest with a fist over each ear. Remain very still and quiet.

**DON'T**- use physical punishment for inappropriate behavior

**DON'T**- rough-house or play tug of war games.

**DON'T**- allow your dog to run off leash without supervision.

**DON'T**- allow your puppy to "chew" on your hands or arms.

**DON'T**- attempt to pet a dog that is a) behind a fence; b) tied with a rope or chain; c) in a parked car.

**DON'T**- try to intervene when two dogs are fighting.

**DON'T**- approach stray dogs.

**DON'T**- stare at a dog (do avoid eye contact).

# Novembers Tip

## Why Breed Or Buy An OFA Certified Rottweiler

Speaking as a fellow breeder, I take every precaution possible to prevent **CHD** (Canine Hip Dysplasia), and elbow/shoulder problems in my dogs. As well as breeding only unaffected dogs and buying pups only from unaffected parents, I also line my whelping box with indoor/outdoor carpeting and flannel sheets rather than newspaper for better traction, I try not to house dogs on cement any more than is absolutely necessary, I carry puppies up and down stairs for as long as my back can handle it, there are no fat dogs (especially puppies!), dogs are not allowed to jump into the back of the truck (for example) until after 24 months of age, and no forced exercise is done (i.e. bicycling) until they are certified. I prelim all my dogs at approximately one year of age, if they are not CHD free at that age, I would spay/neuter and place them in a suitable home depending on the severity of the disease. I radiograph the dog's elbows at 24 months of age and send the radiograph to the OFA for evaluation at the same time as the hips are done.

The OFA suggests that we, as responsible breeders should only breed dogs with normal hips to dogs with normal hips. Prospective breeders and buyers should check OFA numbers with the registry and ask to see the OFA certificate. If an OFA number cannot be verified assume the dog to be dysplastic until proven otherwise! Preliminary evaluations can be done as early as 4-5 months of age with 85-90% accuracy. Please remind your vet that when taking the X-Ray anesthesia is recommended, and for bitches the OFA recommends radiographing 3-4 weeks before or after a heat period to prevent any false positives due to hormonal effects of the estrus cycle. The OFA further states that there are no environmental factors which cause CHD there is no evidence that vitamin C is beneficial in reducing or preventing CHD, high caloric intake resulting in rapid growth and increased weight gain may exacerbate dysplastic hips, but will not create hip dysplasia, running, jumping, slick floors, etc. will not cause hip dysplasia, and that previous injuries to the legs or hip structure can be recognized on the X-Rays and are taken into account when evaluating hip status.



The OFA is the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals, Inc. and is responsible for maintaining the hip and elbow registries, among others, for dogs in North America. At the OFA a panel of three board-certified veterinary radiologists will read your dog's pelvic radiograph and give the dog a rating of Excellent, Good or Fair hip structure, all of which are permissible to breed. They will also examine your dog's elbows via standardized X-Ray procedures, and rate him "Clear" of elbow dysplasia. As many of you are probably aware, the Ontario Veterinary College radiologists will also read hip and elbow X-Rays and will grade them "Clear", but these ratings are not standardized along OFA guidelines, as the OVC will grade hips at 18 months of age (versus 24 months for OFA), and they do not have the grading system(s) of the OFA.

The OFA elbow registry is for dogs 24 months of age or greater, and is a standardized evaluation of the elbow joint for ununited anconeal process, fragmented coronoid process, osteochondrosis, or any combination thereof which would constitute elbow dysplasia. Over 70 breeds have been evaluated for elbow dysplasia by the OFA, and positive results have been found in 20 breeds. Rottweilers are currently ranked fifth on the affected breeds list. As of December 31, 1991, 402 Rottweilers have been evaluated, with 38.8% showing signs of elbow dysplasia. Again, these results are biased toward normal, pushing our breed's actual affected percentage up close to the 50% range!! Certainly something to ponder...whether breeding or buying!

I, personally, cannot afford the loss of respect in the dog community, the emotional and mental anguish I would suffer by producing dogs with defects that I could have prevented (or at the very least took every precaution available to attempt to prevent), and I cannot afford to replace puppies or refund purchase prices because my dogs are not healthy. PLEASE PEOPLE, MAKE USE OF THESE REGISTRIES PRIOR TO BUYING OR BREEDING, FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE BREED (after all, isn't that what we are all striving toward??).

# Tip Archive 2006

## January's Tip

### Is a Rottweiler the Right Dog for you??

If you want a Dog Who ....

Is large, stocky, muscular, and powerful  
Is calm, steady-tempered, confident, and courageous  
Is versatile -- when well-trained, can learn and do almost anything  
Makes a fine watchdog and guardian

**A Rottweiler may be right for you.**

If you Dont want to deal with...

An extremely careful search to avoid all the bad-tempered Rottweilers  
A bulky dog who takes up a lot of space in your house and car  
A heavy dog who wants to sit on your feet, lie on your lap, and lean his weight against your leg  
Rowdiness and exuberant jumping, especially when young  
Destructiveness when bored or not exercised enough  
Providing enough socialization so their protectiveness doesn't become aggression  
Aggression toward other animals -- chasing instincts  
Strong-willed mind of his own, requiring a confident owner who can take charge  
Gassiness (flatulence)  
Shedding  
Legal liabilities (public perception, future breed bans, insurance problems increased chance of lawsuits)  
A multitude of serious health problems and a short lifespan

**A Rottweiler may not be right for you.**

## February's Tip

### If I were considering a Rottweiler...

My major concerns would be:

**Unstable temperaments.** Rottweilers are a dime a dozen, and most of them are bred and offered for sale by people who don't have the slightest idea of how to breed good-tempered dogs. Obedience instructors and behavioral consultants see LOTS of Rottweilers who are dangerously sharp, aggressive, or fearful.

1. **Providing the proper balance of exercise.** Young Rottweilers need enough exercise to keep them lean and healthy, but not so much that their soft growing bones, joints, and ligaments become over-stressed and damaged. Adult Rottweilers need more exercise to keep them in shape, but not in hot or humid weather for fear of overheating.

Since you have to minimize their exercise, young Rottweilers can be very rambunctious. They will romp with uncoordinated gawkiness all over your house. You need to substitute extra quantities of companionship and supervision. Otherwise, left alone, young Rottweilers become bored and destructive -- and their powerful jaws can literally destroy your living room

If you simply want a pet for your family, and don't have the time or inclination to take them swimming, or to get involved in advanced obedience, or agility (obstacle course), cart or sled, or a similar canine activity, I do not recommend this breed.

2. **Providing enough socialization.** Most Rottweilers have protective instincts toward strangers. They need extensive exposure to friendly people so they learn to recognize the normal behaviors of "good guys." Then they can recognize the difference when someone acts abnormally. Without careful socialization, they may be suspicious of everyone, which could lead to biting. Some Rottweilers go in the opposite direction -- without enough socialization, they become fearful of strangers, which can lead to defensive biting.

If you have small children, I do not recommend a Rottweiler. Young Rottweilers (up to about three years old) can be bulls in a china shop. When they romp and jump, they do so with great vigor, and things can go flying, including people. In addition, Rottweilers may try to protect their own

children from other children, which could lead to tragedy if kids are simply roughhousing and your Rottweiler decides to stop it. With such a massive dog, I wouldn't take the risk

3. **Animal aggression.** Many Rottweilers will not tolerate another dog of the same sex, and some won't tolerate the opposite sex either. Some Rottweilers have strong instincts to chase and seize cats and other fleeing creatures. If anything goes wrong in the breeding, socializing, training, handling, or management of this breed, it is capable of seriously injuring or killing other animals.

4. **The strong temperament.** Rottweilers are not Golden Retrievers. The best Rottweilers are versatile working dogs, capable of learning a great deal, but they are not pushovers to raise and train. Some Rottweilers are willful, obstinate, and dominant (they want to be the boss) and will make you prove that you can make them do things. You must show them, through absolute consistency, that you mean what you say.

5. **Shedding.** Rottweilers shed more than you might think. Their short, coarse hairs come off on your hands when you pet them, and stick tenaciously to your carpeting, upholstery, and clothing

6. **Slobbering.** Some Rottweilers, especially large males with loose jowls, tend to slobber or drool, especially after eating and drinking

7. **Gassiness (flatulence)** that can send you running for cover. Fortunately, Rottweilers who are fed a natural diet of real meat and other fresh foods have much less trouble with gassiness.

8. **Serious health problems.** The Rottweiler is one of the riskiest of all breeds in the health department. Their lifespan has become short -- an alarming number of Rottweilers are crippled by bone and joint diseases and/or succumb to cancer or heart disease in middle age

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10. **Legal liabilities.** Rottweilers may be targeted for "banning" in certain areas, or refusal of homeowner insurance policies. Your friends and neighbors may be uncomfortable around this breed. In this day and age, the legal liabilities of owning any breed that looks intimidating and has a history as a guard dog should be seriously considered. People are quicker to sue if such a dog does anything even remotely questionable

Frankly, most Rottweilers are "too much dog" for the average household. Very few people really have the knowledge or skills necessary to manage this breed or to provide the activities that keep him satisfied.

## Marchs Tip

### Which Dog Food is Best?

First of all, keep in mind that there is no one food that is best for every dog. There is no single food that will give every dog the brightest eyes, the shiniest coat, the most energy, and the best digestion. Dogs are individuals just like people, which means that you could feed a brand of very well-formulated food to a group of dogs and find that most of them do great on it, some not as well, and it may actually cause some gastrointestinal upset in a few dogs. Luckily, there are many well-formulated dog foods to choose from today, and it is fine to try several to determine which one works best for your dog.

Look at the ingredients - High-quality ingredients are essential for a healthy food. Some economy brands of dog food are made from inexpensive ingredients that are not easily digested, and therefore, do not provide the best nutrition. While they may technically meet the legal specifications for percentages of protein, fat, carbohydrates, etc., these foods have lower energy values and lower-grade proteins. Because of this, many health-building nutrients may pass right through your dog's system without being absorbed. It also means that you have to feed larger amounts of that lower quality food to provide your pet with the same nutrition as a smaller amount of premium food. When you compare the cost of these foods on a per-serving basis, and realize how quickly you go through a bag, economy foods may actually cost more in the long run.

I recommend staying away from foods that have “by products” of any kind and “ground corn, wheat, etc.” I believe that no matter which food you choose, you will need a supplement. No food, since it is processed at over 120 degrees, can contain all the vitamins, minerals, enzymes that are needed for a well-nourished dog.

When you are looking for a healthy food for your dog, reviewing the list of ingredients on the back of the bag is a good place to start. By law, pet food labels must list their ingredients by weight. Look for meat, fish, egg, or some type of meat meal or fish meal as the first or second ingredient. Meat, fish, and eggs all have a high biological value, which means they have a high percentage of protein in the form of digestible, usable amino acids.

The next thing to look at is the Guaranteed Analysis on the back of the bag. It is a chart that lists the percentages of various ingredients contained in that food. However, the numbers given in the Guaranteed Analysis do not take into account the amount of moisture in that food. All pet foods have different levels of moisture; canned foods can have up to 80%, and dry foods can have as little as 6%. To determine the actual amount of an ingredient in a food, or to compare between brands or between wet and dry foods, the numbers need to be converted to what is called Dry Matter (DM) basis.

When you have done some comparison and picked out a well-formulated food, make sure you allow ample time for your dog to make the transition from his current food to the new one. Normal bacteria in the intestine help your dog digest food. A sudden change in food can lead to changes in the number and type of these bacteria, making it harder for food to be digested, and resulting in intestinal upset. To avoid problems, switch to a new food slowly, over the course of at least 7-10 days. Start by mixing 25% new and 75% old food, and feed that for at least 3 days. If all goes well, go to 50% of each type of food for 3 days, then 75% new and 25% old for 3 days. By now, your pet should be ready to eat only the new food. If problems occur, consult your veterinarian for advice.

After you have done all you can to make sure a food is nutritionally sound, take a look at your dog after he has been on the new food for at least a month. Bright eyes, a shiny coat, good body condition (not too thin or overweight), and good energy will let you know you are doing a good job with your pet's nutrition. So be sure and read the label to see what ingredient is listed first (most weight), what it is comprised of (meat, fish, eggs, etc.), stay away from “by products” and grains if possible as they provide little or no usable amino acids for your dogs nutritional needs. There are some very affordable, nutritional products available on the market, just be sure and read the label.

## Aprils Tip

### Help Maximize Your Rottweiler's Life Span!!!

The average life span of Rottweilers is 9-12 years here is some advice to give your Rottie the best and longest life possible. A good preventative health protocol involves nutrition, exercise, behavior training, parasite control, neutering and annual vaccination-health check ups. This combination of good preventative health protocol can help maximize the potential life span and quality of your pets life. The benefits become even more pronounced as your pet ages and enters the senior years of life.

Nutrition is a difficult subject please refer to **March's** tip in our archived below for Nutrition advice. Behavior training and exercise are vital to the overall health of your dog. The number one cause of death in dogs is euthanasia. A good training program begins when the puppy is 8- 12 weeks old and continues into senior years. No dog is too old to start a training program. Training will increase and cement the bond of friendship between owner and dog. Obedience trained dogs tend to stay in the household for the duration of their life. Disobedient dogs that are allowed to become a nuisance all too often become euthanasia candidates. Training should involve teaching the command "down" in order to help establish and maintain your dominant position within your dogs pack.

Exercise should start early and be a routine habit for your dog. It is an excellent idea to accustom your dog to a daily regime of exercise and play. Regular moderate exercise over a lifespan is best. Episodic bursts of energy in unconditioned dogs frequently will result in musculoskeletal strains or worse. Routine exercise also is an excellent way to control weight.

Obedience classes teach the owner how to teach the dog and discipline every one to an important routine.

Your dog's first visit to the veterinarian often occurs at eight weeks of age. This is when maternal antibody protection passed by the bitch to the puppy is beginning to decrease below a protective level. The first visit usually includes a physical examination, parasite control and the initial vaccinations against the important infectious diseases. This is also the best opportunity to get many



important questions answered by your veterinary care providers. The benefits of neutering your pet are significant. Neutered dogs will be much less likely to roam. Territorial description decreases in size for male dogs and reduces tendencies

toward aggression. Non cycling females dramatically decrease their roaming tendencies. Less contact with other dogs mean less contact with disease, parasites and less chance of being hit by a car. When male dogs are castrated they will not develop any benign enlargement of the prostate gland. Neither do they contract prostatic infections or prostatic cancer. Females spayed before their first heat cycle dramatically decrease their chance for developing breast cancer;

a very significant disease in dogs. Spaying after the third heat cycle has no effect. By spaying your dog you also eliminate the chance of pyometra, a life threatening uterine infection. Contrary to public opinion females are not better pets just because they have whelped and neutering does not cause obesity nor laziness. However, if your dog becomes less active you do need to cut the food back to accommodate for the decrease in burned calories. Finally, we all know about the need to decrease the population of unwanted kittens and puppies.

A good preventative health program will increase your dog's chances of a healthier and longer life. As an owner, your veterinary expenses will be minimized because many of the visits to a veterinary clinic are related to preventable problems.

# Mays Tip

## Easy Ways to Test for Temperament

First, observe the puppy before interacting with it. Note how she interacts with other puppies. If she hides in a corner when other dogs are playing and fighting then she will probably not adapt easily to loud, busy environments. Frequent barking or biting with other puppies imply that she is a social dog that is usually not shy in a new or loud atmosphere. If she barks or bites and then loses interest means that she is a balance of the two extremes.

Next take her away from other puppies to test for her temperament:

**1. Hold her down on her backside with one hand for 30 seconds and observe how she struggles against restraint.**

If she struggles to get free then she is likely to be aggressive or responsive to you. If she resists at first then gives up then she is likely to be independent. If she licks your hands or doesn't struggle then she is likely to be nervous or shy.

**2. Walk away from her and observe how she reacts.**

If she doesn't follow you then she is likely to be independent. If she follows you with tail up quickly then she is likely to be aggressive. If she follows you with tail up hesitantly then she is likely to be responsive. If she follows you with tail down then she is nervous or shy.

**3. Place her in the center of the room and call for her to come to you to observe how social she is**

If she comes to you readily with tail up and pounces at you she is likely to be aggressive. If she comes to you readily with tail up she is likely to be responsive. If she comes to you with tail down and doesn't jump is likely to be nervous. If she doesn't come to you she is likely to be independent

### What Does it All Mean?

- Responsive: Adaptable, easily trainable, bonds well with humans and other animals. These dogs are great for first time dog owners.
- Nervous: Shy and unpredictable. Not recommended around small children.
- Aggressive: Dominant, unpredictable and hard to train. Not recommended around children or other animals.
- Independent: Stubborn and harder to train.

# Junes Tip

## Puppy Training Tips for the First Week

### Part 1

(Part 2 will be featured in July)

Bringing home a puppy and introducing her to your home is very exciting for everyone. The only one who may be anxious about the situation will be the puppy. If you handle your puppy properly when she arrives, she will quickly relax and want to settle into her new home.

Prior to bringing your new puppy into your home, you should puppy proof it. Take a look at your home from the puppy's viewpoint. Does that potted plant sitting in front of the glass door look tempting? You may want to consider moving it to a higher place. What about your favorite collection of teddy bears, or magazines you have in a basket by the sofa? They will most certainly raise the curiosity of your new puppy. As you move these things out of your puppy's reach, remember it is only for a short time. Once your new puppy has learned her place in the family, you can put your things back where they go. Your life should **never** be dictated by your puppy. However, by removing these curiosity objects from the start, it will allow you to work with your puppy on the basic training she will need to learn.

It is important to understand that as much as you want your new puppy to be a part of your family; your puppy is still an animal. She will take her cues from her environment. If she is allowed to have free run of the home and access to everything, you are teaching her that she is in charge. Dogs have instincts. The main instinct of dogs is to live in a pack. Your new puppy will assume her new family is her pack. If she picks up the clues that she is her own boss and she can do what she wants, whenever she wants, she is being taught she is the leader of her pack. It is much easier on everyone, including the dog, if she learns from the moment she enters the home that she is not the leader and dictator of the family.

One mistake people make is letting their puppy sleep in a utility room, or kitchen. Dogs are from the wolf family, and really prefer to have a den all their own. Some people assume placing a dog in a crate is cruel. On the contrary, if crates are introduced properly, they will be much loved by the puppy. When planning for a new puppy, do not go out and buy the biggest crate you can find for your puppy thinking she will grow into it. This is the worst mistake owner's make. A crate should be large enough for your pet to stand up and turn around in. Puppies usually learn from their mothers to not soil in their bed area. If the crate is too large, your puppy may designate a portion of her crate for sleeping, and the other half for soiling. You should also never place your puppy's food and water in her crate.

When your puppy is first introduced to the crate, do not simply put her inside and lock the door. This will greatly disturb her. (You should place the crate in a room in your home where the family gathers. You should not expect the puppy to walk through the entire house to the back guest bedroom to nap. By having the crate in close proximity to the family, the puppy will feel as if she is still hanging out with her pack, even if she is inside her crate sleeping.) Place the crate where it will stay, and simply open the door. You can place a towel in the bottom, and a chew toy inside if you want. Some puppies are very curious. They will simply walk inside. Others may be a little shy with the crate. Give your puppy time to warm up to the crate. Once she does enter the crate, praise her. You may want to give her crate a name. When she enters the crate, you can repeat the crates name, and give her a treat.

(Part 2 will be featured in July)

# Julys Tip

## Puppy Training Tips for the First Week

### Part 2

(Part 1 was featured in June)

After your puppy has warmed up to her crate and has entered and exited it a few times, you can close the door. She may whine and paw at the door. She may even start yelping and barking. This is okay. Do not let her out. After about ten minutes, you can open the door and pick her up. Walk her directly to the area designated for pottyng. You should never let your puppy out of her crate and allow her to follow you through the house to go outside. Most puppies will simply squat and go where they please. Once you are outside, set her down. You would then encourage her to potty. Choose a couple of words such as, "Go potty," or "Do your business." She will not have a clue as to what you are saying, at first. But, after repeated attempts and with being given a puppy treat and praise, she will learn what those words mean. Most puppies will need to go out at least every hour during the first few days to familiarize them with their potty area. This is a chance for you to catch them doing their business where they need to. Lavish them with praise.

The first few nights may make you wonder why you even brought the puppy home. The repeated yelping and whining coming from the crate can seriously upset many adults who need their sleep. You should look at your new puppy as the baby in the family. Puppies less than four months of age may need to go out once during the night. When she does, pick up your pup and take her to her designated spot. After she has relieved herself, place her promptly back into the crate. You should never play with your puppy during the night time hours. This will only encourage her to keep the yelping up. After a few days, your puppy will adjust to the night time patterns of her "pack" and everyone will get more rest. Most dogs are able to make it through the entire night without a potty break around 18 weeks. Some individuals may think it is harsh to scold a puppy. These individuals may be the same people who have a dog running wild in their home within a year. Dogs which aren't disciplined can wreck havoc on a home. You may return to find a shredded couch, chewed up shoes, and

garbage strewn all over the place. If there are other pets in the home, you should also consider their feelings. They will most likely be intimidated by such a tyrant, and fights could commence while you are away. Remember don't let your puppy do at 4 pounds what you don't want them doing at 104 pounds.

If you catch your puppy chewing on something she shouldn't, a firm "no" is usually enough to stop her antics. As with other forms of training, this may take a few days for her to learn. This is why you were advised to move precious things away. We firmly grab the puppy by the back of the neck and give a gentle shake just like her mother would do in order to discipline her own puppies. It also teaches the dog you are the alpha in the family, and not her. If she were truly in a dog pack, her alpha would nip her soundly. So, don't feel as if you are mistreating her. In fact, most puppies seem to feel more secure when they know their place.

The most important thing you can do with your puppy besides introducing a crate immediately, instilling a potty routine, and teaching her what "no" means, is to build the relationship with your new puppy. Get on the floor and play with her. The bond will grow between you and she will love you. This will make your puppy want to please you and be obedient as well. This goes a long way when you start teaching her other basic commands such as "stay" and "come."

(Part 1 was featured in June)

## Augusts Tip

# What are the Best Methods for House Training a Puppy

What are the best methods for house training a puppy? Your new puppy is home and you have started the house training process. This is just as much a part of training as the "Come" and "Stay" commands. However, mistakes that occur with house training can cause more problems between you and your pet than those encountered with any other form of training. Be patient and stay calm and try some of these helpful hints.

### The Rules

**House Training Rule Number One:** This is The Most Important Rule – If you don't catch your puppy doing it - then don't punish him for it!

**House Training Rule Number Two:** Praise your puppy when things go right. Don't let this be a situation where your only action is saying "No" when they are caught in the midst of using the wrong area. If they do it right – let them know !

**Crate Training Method:** House training involves the use of a crate or cage. The often-stated reasoning is that the animal is placed in a cage that is just large enough to be a bed. Dogs do not like to soil their beds because they would be forced to lay in the mess. It works, and while in these confines, most pups will control their bladder and bowels for a longer time than we would expect.

Young puppies, at 8 or 9 weeks of age can often last for 7 or 8 hours, however, we would never recommend leaving them unattended in a crate for that long in most circumstances.

During housebreaking, whenever the puppy is inside the home but cannot be watched, he is placed in the crate. This might be while you are cooking, reading to the children, or even away from the home. The last thing you do before you put the puppy in the crate is take him outside to his favorite spot. The first thing you do when you take the animal out of the crate is another trip outside. No food or water goes in the crate, just a chew toy to occupy his time. Overnight is definitely crate time. As your faith in the puppy grows, leave him out for longer and longer periods of time.

Most people do not recognize an important advantage of crate training. It does more than just stop the animal from messing in the house. It also teaches the

puppy something very important. The puppy learns that when the urge to urinate or defecate occurs, he can hold it. Just because the pup feels like he needs to relieve himself, the pup learns that he does not have to. This is thought to be the main reason why puppies that have gone through crate training have fewer mistakes later on.

Make sure you buy the right size cage. You want one that has the floor space that provides just enough for the puppy to lie down. But cages are useful throughout a dog's life and it would be nice if you did not have to keep buying more as he grows. That is not necessary. Simply purchase a cage that will be big enough for him as an adult, but choose a model that comes with or has a divider panel as an accessory. With these, you can adjust the position of the panel so that the space inside the cage available to the pet can grow as he does. Using too large of a crate can often cause long term problems. The puppy will go to one corner of the cage and urinate or defecate. After a while, he will then run through it tracking it all over the cage. If this is allowed to continue, the instincts about not soiling his bed or lying in the mess will be forgotten and the puppy will soon be doing it every day when placed in the crate. Now a house training method has turned into a behavioral problem as the puppy's newly-formed hygienic habits becomes his way of life.

Specific verbal communications will also help the two of you understand what is desired. It is an excellent idea to always use a word when it is time to head to the bathroom. We like "Outside?" Remember that whenever you use a verbal command or signal, it is important that everybody in the family always uses the same word in the same way. Think of the word "Outside" in this situation not only as a question you are asking the pup, but also as an indication that you want to go there. Some dogs may get into the habit of going to the door when they want to go outside. This is great when it happens but it is not as common as some believe. We have found that it is better to use verbal commands to initiate this sort of activity rather than waiting for the puppy to learn this behavior on his own. It seems like your consistent use of a word or phrase like "Outside" will cause the puppy to come to you rather than the door when he needs to go outside. The pup quickly sees you as part of the overall activity of getting to where he needs to go. We believe this is much better.

Once outside, we try to encourage the pup to get on with the act in question. We use the phrase "Go Potty." As soon as they eliminate, it is very important to praise them with a "Good Dog" and then come back inside immediately. Again, make this trip that started outside with a specific word "Outside" be for a purpose. If we are taking the pup out to play with a ball or go for a walk we



will not use this word even if we know they will eliminate while we are outside.

(more helpful hints in September's Tips)

# Septembers Tip

## What are the Best Methods for House Training a Puppy

### Part 2

#### When an 'accident' happens

One of the key issues in housebreaking is to follow Rule Number One (refer to July's Tip): If you do not catch your puppy doing it, then do not punish him for it! We do not care what someone else may tell you or what you read, if you find a mess that was left when you were not there, clean it up and forget it.

Discipline will not help because unless you catch the puppy in the act, he will have no idea what the scolding is for. Your puppy has urinated and defecated hundreds of times before he met you. Mom or the breeder always cleaned it up. Nobody made a fuss before and the pup will not put the punishment, regardless of its form, together with something he has done without incident numerous times before. Especially if he did it more than 30 seconds ago! Puppies are just like our children. Unless something was really fun (and a repetitious act like going to the bathroom is not), they are not thinking about what they did in the past. They are thinking about what they can do NOW. Remember dogs live in the NOW, not passed or present. At this point in his life a puppy's memory is very, very poor.

Anyway, let us face it. It was your fault, not the pup's. If you had been watching, you would have noticed the puppy suddenly walking or running around in circles with his nose down smelling for the perfect spot to go to the bathroom. It is just as consistent as the taxi cab driver behind you honking immediately when the light changes. The puppy will show the same behavior every time. It may vary a little from pup to pup but they always show their own "pre-potty pattern" before the act.

The same should be said as to your first reaction when you actually catch them in the act of urinating or defecating. It is your fault, you were not watching for or paying attention to the signals. Do not get mad. Quickly, but calmly pick them up and without raising your voice sternly say "No." Carry them outside or to their papers. It will help to hold their hind quarters in the palm of your hand

while you are carrying them as this will often help them to stop urinating or defecating any more.

They are going to be excited when you get them outside, but stay there with them a while and if they finish the job, reward them with simple praise like "Good Dog."

In the disciplining of dogs, just like in physics, every action has a reaction and for training purposes these may not be beneficial! If you overreact and severely scold or scare the heck out of a puppy for making what is in your mind a mistake, your training is probably going backwards. With house training this is especially difficult for them to understand as they are carrying out a natural body function. Carried one step farther is the idea of rubbing a puppy's nose into a mistake he made, whether you caught him or not. In the limits of a puppy's intelligence, please explain to us the difference of rubbing his nose in his mess he left in your kitchen an hour ago versus the one the neighbor's dog left in the park two weeks ago. If the dog were smart enough to figure all of this out, the only logical choice would be to permanently quit going to the bathroom. Punishment rarely speeds up house training. Often, it makes the dog nervous or afraid every time it needs to go to the bathroom

If you work or have a hectic schedule and want house training to go quickly, regardless of what method you use, remember, spend as much time as possible with your puppy. We suggest for your health and the puppy's training it would do better for both if you stayed home for a week or so. Under your watchful eye, and by always being there at the time when you are needed then in less than seven days a ten-week-old puppy should be trained. We are not saying there will never be an accident, but they will be few and far between.

### **Feeding and house training**

The feeding schedule you use can help or hinder housebreaking. You will soon notice that puppies will need to go outside soon after they wake and also within 30 to 40 minutes after eating. Be consistent when you feed the animal so you can predict when they need to relieve themselves. Plan your trips outside around these patterns.

All of this may seem simple, and it really is. The keys are that it will take time and you must be consistent. And, of course, you must never lose your temper or even get excited.

### **Spontaneous or submissive urination**

Puppies may spontaneously urinate when excited. This may be when they first see you, at meeting a new dog, or when they are scared. It is often referred to as submissive or excitement urination. Do not discipline the puppy for this, as it

is something they cannot control. Simply ignore it and clean up the mess. If you do not overreact, they will usually outgrow this between 4 and 7 months of age.

# Octobers Tip

## Obedience Training Your New Puppy:

### How and Why

Obedience training is one of the best things you can do for you and your new puppy. Obedience training doesn't solve all behavior problems, but it is the foundation for solving just about any problem. Training opens up a line of communication between you and your dog. Effective communication is necessary to instruct your dog about what you want her to do. You can teach her anything from 'stay' (don't bolt out the door) to 'sit', (don't jump up on the visitors) to 'off' (don't chew the furniture).

Dogs are social animals and without proper training, they will behave like animals. They will soil your house, destroy your belongings, bark excessively, dig holes in your yard, fight other dogs, and even bite you. Nearly all behavior problems are perfectly normal canine activities that occur at the wrong time or place or are directed at the wrong thing. The key to preventing or treating behavior problems is learning to teach the dog to redirect his natural behavior to outlets that are acceptable in the domestic setting.

Obedience training is also an easy way to establish the social hierarchy. When your dog obeys a simple request of 'come here, sit,' she is showing compliance and respect for you. You can also teach your dog her subordinate role by teaching her to show submission to you in a paw raise (shake hands), roll over or hand lick (give a kiss). Most dogs love performing these tricks (obedience commands) for you which also pleasantly acknowledge that you are in charge. Obedience training should be fun and rewarding for you and your dog. It can enrich your relationship and make living together more enjoyable. A well-trained dog is more confident and can more safely be allowed a greater amount of freedom than an untrained one.

Whatever the age of your dog, the right time to begin training is right now! The most important time in your dog's life is right now. Your dog's behavior is constantly changing.

Enroll in a local dog obedience training class to learn the basics. Then most teaching and training can and should be done in your home. It is best to begin training in an area that is familiar to your dog and with the least amount of

distractions as possible. When you feel both you and your dog are skilled at several obedience commands, then take these commands to different areas. Introducing distractions may seem like starting all over again, but it's worth the effort. If you want your dog to be obedient in your car, guess where you have to practice?

Keep the obedience training sessions short and sweet. It is dull and boring to schedule tedious and lengthy training sessions. Instead, integrate training into your daily routine. Make obedience training interesting and meaningful to your dog. If Puppy insists on following you from room to room while you are getting ready for the day, then insist he have something to do too.

Be sure that obedience training infiltrates your dog's favorite activities and that your dog's favorite activities infiltrates training. Your dog's favorite activities should become training, so that training becomes the dog's favorite activity. Some dogs feel they are constantly bombarded with, 'NO, Stop that, get off, Bad dog!' They tend to get used to it and so reprimands become meaningless and are ignored. If most of our interaction with the dog is praise for good behavior, then reprimands will take on much more meaning. Whenever you find the need to reprimand your dog, immediately show him what you want him to do, and then reward him for getting it right. If you catch him chewing the furniture, tell him, 'Off!' Then immediately direct him to his own toys, enthusiastically entice him to chew on them and praise him for doing so. If done correctly, your voice alone is sufficient for reprimand. A correct reprimand is short, sharp and immediate. Don't continue to nag the dog and never reprimand him unless you catch him in the act. Never hit, kick, slap or spank your dog. This type of inappropriate punishment always creates more problems and usually makes existing problems worse. Not only will you have a barking, chewing dog, but one that is leery, hand-shy, fearful or aggressive. Good Luck and let us know your puppy success stories!!!

# Novembers Tip

## How to Identify a Good Dog Breeder!

Keeps her dogs in the home and as part of the family--not outside in kennel runs.

Has dogs who appear happy and healthy, are excited to meet new people, and don't shy away from visitors.

Shows you where the dogs spend most of their time--an area that is clean and well maintained

Encourages you to spend time with the puppy's parents--at a minimum, the pup's mother--when you visit.

Breeds only one or two types of dogs, and is knowledgeable about what is called "breed standards" (the desired characteristics of the breed in areas such as size, proportion, coat, color and temperament).

Has a strong relationship with a local veterinarian and shows you the records of veterinary visits for the puppies. Explains the puppies' medical history and what vaccinations your new puppy will need

Is well versed in the potential genetic problems inherent in the breed--there are specific genetic concerns for every breed--and explains to you what those concerns are. The breeder should have had the puppy's parents tested (and should have the results from the parents' parents) to ensure they are free of those defects, and she should be able to provide you with the documentation for all testing she has done through organizations such as the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). Gives you guidance on caring and training for your puppy and is available for your assistance after you take your puppy home.

Would be happy to provide references of other families who have purchased puppies from her.

Feeds high quality "premium" brand food.

Doesn't always have puppies available but rather will keep a list of interested people for the next available litter.

Good breeders will work with local, state, and national clubs that specialize in their specific breeds and live by their clubs "code of ethics". Encourages

multiple visits and wants your entire family to meet the puppy before you take your puppy home.

Provides you with a written contract and health guarantee and allows plenty of time for you to read it thoroughly. The breeder should not require that you use a specific veterinarian.

Will ask you more questions than you ask them, such as why you want a dog, will you be attending training classes, where the dog will spend most of its time and with who. Interviews and gets to know your life style and ambitions for your new dog.

Will ask you to provide a veterinary reference if you already have pets or, if you don't have other pets, she should ask which practices you are considering for your new puppy.

Will have you sign a contract that requires you to spay or neuter the dog unless you will be actively involved in showing him or her (which applies to show-quality dogs only).

Will state in the contract that you will return the dog to the breeder should you be unable to keep the dog at any point in the dog's life.



# Decembers Tip

## Helpful Tips In Picking Out a New Puppy

(By special request )

Picking the right puppy for your family is a very important task. It is not something that should be left up to the children, either. Adults should thoroughly research each breed that is being considered to narrow down the choices of suitable puppies. Things that should be taken into account include the breed's temperament, maintenance and grooming needs, and the family's environment and lifestyle.

Some breeders rely heavily on various puppy temperament testing methods. Some, like ourselves rely heavily on observing and interacting with the puppies to determine their individual personality traits, there are too many factors that can influence how a puppy reacts in a single testing session. Is he tired? Did he just eat? Is he just having an off day? In order to be accurate, the puppy temperament testing, in our opinion, should be repeated several times.

Whichever method your breeder uses, you should trust their judgment in evaluating the puppies. But bear in mind that what you see in a 5 to 8 week old puppy is just an indicator and is not an absolute. The experiences the puppy has once he goes to your home will also determine what the adult grows up to be.

1. When you arrive at the home or business where puppies are being sold, you should take note of the kennel's cleanliness. If the kennel is unkempt, smelly and dirty, you can safely assume that the mother dog may not be in the best health.
2. Thoroughly look over the mother dog. However, keep in mind that most mother dogs may appear thin. This is common, especially during the weaning process. If the mother dog is malnourished, you will know it. If she is, you should not purchase a puppy from her litter. If the mother dog is overly aggressive toward you, you may also want to reconsider a puppy from her litter.
3. When looking at the puppies, you should observe them before you pick them up. How the puppies play and act will tell you a lot about them. You should

easily be able to pick out the dominate puppies in the litter, as well as ones that may be too rough or who are very shy. This is important information for you. If you want a dog that is going to be a guard dog, the shy dog cowering in the corner may not be the best choice. However, if you want a dog that is good with children, you should not choose the alpha male, or the shy dog. Alpha males may not take kindly to their territory being invaded. Shy dogs may startle around very small, excited children and snip at them. You should look for a middle of the line puppy.

4. If you are interested in a dog that is barking at you, try to figure out why he or she is barking. Is it because he or she is scared, or is the pup trying to be friendly? Fearful dogs will bark and could possibly grow up to be aggressive. You should be able to tell if the dog is saying "Hello" or "Stay away from me, I don't like you."
5. Take each puppy you are interested in away from their litter mates. How does he or she react? Is he or she cowering, jumpy, or nervous? Perhaps he or she is happy, confident and ready to investigate your shoe strings? When you walk away from the puppy and call him or her, what kind of reaction do you get? If the puppy is interested in you, he or she will come to you. If the puppy is not interested in you, or is very independent, he or she will ignore you. All of these reactions are a clue and an inside peek into the dog's personality.
6. Next, hold each puppy you are interested in like an infant. If the dog resists lying on his or her back, it may be very stubborn. If the puppy is afraid and wide-eyed, he or she may need extra coaxing and love. The puppy that tries to right itself, but then relaxes and continues this pattern is considered a middle-of-the-road pup. He or she is probably going to be very easy to work with.

If you follow these tips, you should easily be able to pick out a puppy that will work for your family. Remember; do not let the children pick out the new puppy. Many times their choice is based purely on how "cute" the puppy looks and we know all puppies look cute!!

# Tip Archive 2007

## January Tip

### Your New Years Resolution to your Rottweiler Should be

### RESPONSIBILITY !!!

The Rottweiler does best with an experienced owner who is extremely involved in the dog's life on a daily basis. The Rottweiler owner should be an extremely responsible person committed to the care, training and exercise of their dog while realizing the ownership of this breed brings with it many moral and ethical responsibilities. Such an owner should be knowledgeable about this breed type and its needs. The Rottweiler's future lies in the hands of current and future Rottweiler owners. If the current trends of over breeding and poor ownership practices continue, the future of this magnificent breed is dim. A Rottweiler should never be allowed to roam "free." Rottweilers should be securely contained at all times (on a leash, in a fenced yard, in a secure kennel, inside the home, etc.). The Rottweiler does best in a household where he or she will be included in everyday activities and be regarded as a member of the family. This breed should be spayed/neutered for several reasons: for the protection of the breed in general and for the safeguarding of the individual dog's health. Our Dog Rescue clubs are notified of over 500 unwanted Rottweilers each year and that number is rising. Most of the 500+ unwanted Rottweilers are put to sleep. Un-neutered males can become male dog aggressive, hard to manage and are predisposed to some cancers, particularly testicular cancer. Un-spayed females can become moody/difficult and are predisposed to uterine problems and cancers. One of the main keys to successful Rottweiler ownership is ongoing positive obedience training and socialization. For the competent, dedicated owner, a Rottweiler can be the best of dog companions.

The Rottweiler is not for the faint-hearted owner. A confident, experienced, assertive owner is needed to lead the way for the confident Rottweiler breed. Because of the lack of available rental housing to certain breeds considered to be high risk, Rottweiler owners need to consider the possibility of any future moves that might put their dog's life at risk. Homeowners with fenced yards are ideal for this breed.

### Remember the Pros & Cons of owning Rottweilers

**Pros:** Very intelligent, easy to train, loyal, handsome, clownish, a true companion.

**Cons:** The Rottweiler can be stubborn and strong-willed. He requires ongoing training for life or a job that requires brain work (i.e. tracking, obedience competition, helping you outside or on-the-job, etc.). Regular exposure to various environments and experiences helps to keep the breed well-socialized. Typically, the Rottweiler is not an aggressive breed. Rottweilers should exhibit a reserved to friendly personality with strangers. Your Rottweiler should never be aggressive (unless protecting your life or his own life and this is rare). A Rottweiler who shows aggression should be evaluated by a professional trainer and behaviorist immediately

## February Tip

### ROTTWEILERS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

The Rottweiler is a robust, powerful and loyal breed with pronounced protective instincts. He is an outstanding companion and guard but ownership of a Rottweiler carries much greater than average legal and moral responsibilities, due to traits possessed by this breed, their size and strength. The Rottweiler is not a breed that fits into every home.

**SMALL CHILDREN IN THE HOME:** The adaptability of the Rottweiler to small children varies with the individual animal. Many are very tolerant and loving towards toddlers; others resent the sometimes rough treatment an unknowing child can inflict. One serious problem is the size of the dog. Families have been forced to give up much beloved pets because the dog inadvertently caused injuries to small children in the family by bumping into them or knocking them down or into furniture. This bumping is a natural behavior in the Rottweiler, a legacy from the days when the breed was used to herd cattle in Europe. They will "bump" and "herd" children, adults, and other pets. This can be a problem if your home contains young children or elderly family members. Some breeders recommend waiting until the children are at least school age before introducing a Rottweiler into the home. The amount of space in your home, the age of your children, and the amount of time the dog will be in contact with the children should be part of your decision

Contrary to popular belief, Rottweilers and children can coexist. In fact, Rottweilers can be an excellent companion to young children. However, Rottweilers are large dogs that at times have high energy levels so one must be careful to avoid accidental injury. First of all never, ever, ever leave a small child unattended with a big dog of any breed. I think it's safe to say that most incidents when children are injured by a large dog happen while there are no adults present.

Obedience train your dog. An obedience trained dog is a happier and mentally healthier dog. It is also a more well behaved dog. Having kids around a dog who knows and obeys commands like sit, stay, down, leave it, etc. is much less stressful as well. Most dogs love kids, and they tend to be a bit too overpowering for children in their desire to show them affection. It's this affection that can sometimes catch kids off guard and scare them. Putting an

overzealous dog in a down/stay can give you the opportunity to show kids (and parents) how well behaved the dogs are. Teach your dog to respect children. Dogs should learn at an early age how to behave around children. They need to know that children are to be treated with the same respect that you are. That means no jumping, no mouthing, etc. Once they are firmly grounded in the basics of obedience, have your children make them sit, down, stay, etc. and reward them with a nice treat for compliance. This will help them learn that they are to obey your children just like they are supposed to obey you.

Teach your children to respect your dog. This means no pulling, poking, or prodding. Often times children who are not raised to properly respect dogs, get bitten because they poked an eye, pulled on an infected ear, or stepped on a more delicate part of the dog. Most kids are not intentionally abusive, but they need to know what not to do when around a dog. Be sure they know not to hit or kick your dogs. We encourage you not to play tug-of-war games, this is a dominance game, therefore you are creating dominance issues. Fetching games, with a "Leave it" command is a fun way for children to show leadership over your dog.

Children, dogs, and food do not mix . Even if your dog is not food aggressive, why push the envelope? How many of us like other people wallering in our plate when it's dinner time? Not many. So why do we expect dogs to allow children to play in their food? If you have a dog that is food aggressive that is certainly an issue that needs to be addressed, but try to avoid situations that might bring out this quality in an otherwise loving, well adjusted pet. It's also a good idea to pick up any toys that the dog might enjoy playing with before allowing a child into the dog's space. Dogs don't like to share, and besides it's unsanitary for a 4 year old to play with the dog's rope bone.

## March Tip

# Common Foods That Are Harmful Or Even Fatal to Dogs

Many common foods are actually harmful or even fatal to dogs. Some of these (listed below) will surprise you. Others are things you would never give your dog purposefully, but now you will be more careful to not let them be in your dog's reach. And some just need to be limited to small amounts. Avocados (fruit, pit, and plant) are toxic to dogs. Avocados contain a toxic component called persin, which can damage heart, lung and other tissue in many animals. They are high in fat and can trigger stomach upset, vomiting and even pancreatitis. Symptoms of toxicity include difficulty breathing, abdominal enlargement, abnormal fluid accumulations in the chest, abdomen and sac around the heart. The amount that needs to be ingested to cause signs is unknown. The effects on dogs and cats are not completely understood. GI signs are commonly seen and should be treated symptomatically. In addition, the animal should be monitored closely for other clinical signs related to the cardiovascular system. (This information comes from veterinarians, the American Veterinary Medicine Association, and the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center.) Onions destroy red blood cells and can cause anemia, weakness, and breathing difficulty. Even small amounts can cause cumulative damage over time. This includes onions or chives - raw, powdered, dehydrated, or cooked. Large amounts of garlic cause the same problems as onions. Garlic contains only a small amount of the problematic substance that is in onions. Just as with people, moderation is the key. Grapes and raisins can cause kidney failure in dogs. As little as a single serving of raisins can kill him. If the dog doesn't eat enough at one time to be fatal, he can be severely damaged by eating just a few grapes or raisins regularly. Tomatoes (plant and fruit) contain tomatine, an alkaloid related to solanine. As the fruit ripens, the tomatine is metabolized. Therefore, ripe tomatoes are less likely to be problematic for animals. Clinical signs of poisoning include lethargy, drooling, difficulty breathing, colic, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation, widely-dilated pupils, paralysis, cardiac effects, central nervous system signs (e.g., ataxia, muscle weakness, tremors, seizures), resulting from cholinesterase inhibition, coma and death. (This information comes from veterinarians, and the ASPCA Animal

Poison Control Center.) (All parts of the plant except the tomato itself are poisonous to humans, although some people are sensitive to the ripe fruit also.) Tomatoes also contain atropine, which can cause dilated pupils, tremors, and heart arrhythmias. The highest concentration of atropine is found in the leaves and stems of tomato plants, with less in unripe (green) tomatoes, and even less in ripe (red) tomatoes.

Nutmeg can cause tremors, seizures and death. Caffeine (from coffee, coffee grounds, tea, or tea bags) stimulates the central nervous and cardiac systems, and can cause vomiting, restlessness, heart palpitations, and even death within hours. Diet products containing the sweetener Xylitol can cause a sudden drop in blood sugar, resulting in depression, loss of coordination and seizures. Unless treatment is given quickly, the dog could die. Macadamia nuts can cause weakness, muscle tremor and paralysis. These symptoms are usually temporary. Walnuts. When dogs eat the seed hulls, they can get an upset stomach and diarrhea. The real problem is the fungus or mold that attacks walnuts after they get wet (from rain or sprinklers), which produces toxins. If the fungus or mold is ingested by your dogs, they can become very ill and possibly die. Signs that should alert you to walnut poisoning are vomiting, trembling, drooling, lack of coordination, lethargy, loss of appetite, and jaundice indications such as yellowing eyes and gums. Severely affected dogs can produce blood-tinged vomit or stools. Dogs can take several days to exhibit serious signs of illness. Chocolate can cause seizures, coma and death. Baker's chocolate is the most dangerous. The darker the chocolate, the more dangerous it is. But any chocolate, in large enough amounts, can kill a dog. An ounce of chocolate can poison a 30-pound dog, and many dogs will happily consume more than this. The symptoms may not show up for several hours (and so might make you think all is well), with death following within twenty-four hours. A dog can consume milk chocolate and appear to be fine because it is not as concentrated, but it is still dangerous. Apple seeds, cherry pits, peach pits, pear pips, plums pits, and apricot pits contain cyanide, which is poisonous. While a few apple seeds may not cause a problem, the effects can accumulate over time if they are given to dogs regularly. Dogs should not be allowed to chew on a peach pit, cherry pit, apricot pit, or plum pit. Chewing can allow ingestion of cyanide. Chewing could also result in the pit being swallowed, causing continuous exposure to cyanide, or could cause the dog to choke. Too much salt can cause kidney problems. Also, large breeds of dogs that eat salty food may then drink too much water and develop bloat, which is fatal unless emergency treatment is given very quickly. Too much fat or fried foods can



cause pancreatitis. Ham and bacon contain too much fat and too much salt, and can cause pancreatitis. Also, large breeds of dogs that eat salty food may drink too much water and develop a life-threatening condition called bloat. This is where the stomach fills up with gas and within several hours may twist, causing death. Raw liver or too much cooked liver (three servings a week) can lead to vitamin A toxicity. This can cause deformed bones, excessive bone growth on the elbows and spine, weight loss, and anorexia. Check the label of your canned dog food to be sure that it does not contain liver if you are giving your dog liver also. Wild mushrooms can cause abdominal pain, drooling, liver damage, kidney damage, vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, coma, or death. Raw egg whites contain a protein called avidin, which can deplete your dog of biotin, one of the B vitamins. Biotin is essential to your dog's growth and coat health. The lack of it can cause hair loss, weakness, growth retardation, or skeleton deformity. Raw egg yolks contain enough biotin to prevent the deficiency, so this is not a problem with raw whole eggs. Raw egg yolks could contain salmonella, so you should get your eggs from a reliable source or cook the eggs. Grains should not be given in large amounts or make up a large part of a dog's diet, but rice is generally safe in small amounts. Cooked bones can splinter and tear a dog's internal organs. Dogs can't digest most vegetables (carrots, green beans, lettuce, potatoes or yams) whole or in large pieces. Potato peels and green potatoes are dangerous. Dairy products are high in fat, which can cause pancreatitis, gas and diarrhea. A small amount of non-fat, plain yogurt is usually safe. Pennies made from the 1980s to today contain zinc, which can cause kidney failure and damage to red blood cells. A dog that consumes even one penny can become quite sick, or even die, if the penny is not removed.

## Aprils Tip

### Alternatives To Pesticides For Flea Control

The most popular way to treat fleas is simply to use pesticides made of toxic chemicals that kill them. BUT for those of us who are aware of the many documented risks associated with pesticides, the idea of applying or injecting them into our beloved animal companions, or spreading them around our home, is not a welcome thought. There is more than ample evidence that long-term and/or over exposure to pesticides, including some of the ingredients in many commercial flea remedies, can significantly harm the health of humans and animals. So why take the risk when there are natural alternatives available that are just as effective?

**Vacuum often** . Put moth balls in the vacuum bag or throw it out so it does not become a source of fleas.

**Diatomaceous Earth**: it's mode of action for insect and parasite control is strictly mechanical. The microscopically sharp edges contact the insect or parasite, and pierce their protective coating, so they soon dehydrate and die. The larvae are affected in the same way. This makes Diatomaceous Earth an excellent and totally natural control, with no indicating of mechanical or chemical damage to the animal tissue. It can be used as a dust for fleas, lice and other external pests by rubbing into the coat of the animal. Suggested Feeding and Application Rates: 1 T. per day in daily ration for dogs over 55 lbs., 1 tsp. per day in ration for small dogs and puppies, but be sure it is mixed with some water to keep your dog from directly inhaling the powder also rub powder at full strength into the coat for fleas and sprinkle on bedding, we use a salt shaker to spread it more easily.

**Brewers Yeast With Garlic**: How brewers yeast with garlic repel fleas, hasn't been clarified. Perhaps it provides vitamins and immune stimulants that keep the pet exceptionally healthy. We do know that healthy pets attract fewer fleas than unhealthy pets. Perhaps brewers yeast & garlic changes the dog's odor and masks the presence of exhaled carbon dioxide that attracts fleas.

**Flea traps**. At night, place a shallow bowl of soapy water on the floor with a small light above it. The fleas are drawn to the light and jump into the soapy water and drown.

**Avon's Skin So Soft Bath Oil.** 1-1/2 ounces per gallon of water; used as a sponge-on dip (or as a spritz) has been tested and proven to have significant, but not complete, flea-repellent activity for a 6-day period. It should help those dry coats, too.

**Daily flea-combing** does quite a good job in keeping the flea load off the dog and reducing the numbers that will reproduce in the environment. (This is probably the best and easiest way to control fleas on cats).

Take time to really examine your dog's skin and coat. Skin problems rarely improve on their own, and fleas in houses don't just go away. Initiate some form of treatment and prevention quickly. Get as much advice from your vet as possible, as each dog and situation are different.

A final piece of advice, for any health situation: Initiate home treatment as soon as possible, but be sure you know what you are doing. When in doubt, call your veterinarian for advice. Ask yourself what you would do if it was your child, rather than your dog, in a particular situation. If you would call your pediatrician or take your child to the emergency room, then do the same for your dog. A phone call is cheap. You can visit your vet now and pay a little, or you can procrastinate and pay a lot more later.

# Mays Tip

## Choosing a Veterinarian

Thinking about choosing a veterinarian for your new dog? Where do you start? Usually, when picking a veterinarian, we thumb through the phone book until we find one close to home. But just like a doctor, you might not be happy with his "bedside" manner. I've heard people complain that their animal's veterinarian doesn't handle their animal well or they just didn't like his manner. Below are some helpful hints in choosing the best veterinarian for your animal before you actually need them for emergency care.

If you have friends, family or neighbors with animals, ask them for a recommendation. If they do, ask questions about their experiences with the vet. How does the veterinarian handle their animal? Is he gentle? Does he thoroughly explain to the pet owner the health of the animal after being looked over? It's good to choose a veterinarian that is informative about the animal he is checking. A veterinarian not only has to be good with animals, but he has to be people friendly as well. Don't forget your instincts. After meeting the vet, if you don't feel good about him, don't go back. Even if he has a good reputation, don't feel pressured to go back. What is good for one person may not be good for you.

Look up the Veterinary Medical Board and see if there any complaints about him. This way, you can eliminate without having to go any further. You can also check with the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA). These are vet hospitals that have achieved high animal care standards. These vet hospitals fill out a detailed explanation of its equipment and services they offer. Afterwards, a consultant inspects the facility to ensure it meets AAHA's standards. The following areas are checked: medical records, dentistry, anesthesia, dentistry and surgery. Knowing this, may give some dog owners peace of mind before taking their animal for in. There are only around 17 percent of vet hospitals around the US and Canada that are affiliated with the AAHA. You can find them by going through the Healthy pet's Hospital Locator.

Make an appointment to meet the veterinarian as well as the staff. How do they interact with customers as well as each other? While you're there, ask for a tour of the facility. It would be a good idea to not ask for the tour in advance. This

way you can see how the facility is kept without being warned of a visitor. Look for cleanliness especially in the kennel area. If you see unclean kennels or droppings on the floor, it might mean they do not have enough staff to care for the animals. Sanitation is important due to the spread of diseases among animals. Also, ask the vet if it would be ok to sit in during a treatment of an animal. This way you can see how he handles the animal as well as the pet owner. You can also see if he has a genuine care for animals or does he just see it as a job?

Any veterinarian practicing in the United States has to of graduated from an accredited school. Just like any doctor, he must have a license that should be on display. If you don't see one displayed, ask him about it. Check to make sure it is a current license.

Ask about emergency care? Is it even offered? Accidents can happen to your pet, and they don't always happen during the 8-5 Monday thru Friday schedule. Is there 24/7 emergency pet care? Find out if your dog does have to stay overnight, will there be a member of staff staying with him?

If possible, get a good veterinarian that is close to home. You don't want to drive an hour away if you have a restless or hurting dog in the back seat. If you have pet insurance, find out if they accept it? If not, what about credit cards or payment plans? Vet bills, especially emergency bills, can be costly. Remember the vet works for you, interview them as carefully as you would you own children's doctors. Do your homework if you want to get a respected veterinarian that you feel safe going to. Visit several veterinarians before making a decision, and then compare notes. Finally, go with your instinct.

# Junes Tip

## Up dated Medical Research

We at Rottweilers Royal are always striving to provide puppies that will live long and healthy lives with their new owners. It has come to our attention through a medical study that there are “Long-term Health Risks & Benefits Associated with Spay/Neuter in Dogs” at a young age. After much research we have decided to rethink our spay/neuter policy in order to reduce the health risks associated with altering our puppies before they have reach their potential grow pattern. We encourage all who are interested to read the attached medical study by Laura J. Sanborn, M.S. dated May 14, 2007. <http://www.naiaonline.org/pdfs/LongTermHealthEffectsOfSpayNeuterInDogs.pdf>

Our contract has been completely revised (see puppy contract) in order to give our puppies the best possible chance of living a longer healthier live and to reduce the risk of osteosarcoma (bone cancer) which is especially high in Rottweilers and larger breeds. With all the new medical studies regarding our much beloved pets we are always researching and learning new ways of improving our dogs life styles. Thank you and good luck.

Deborah Whitsel  
Rottweilers Royal

## Julys Tip

### Special Concerns about caring for Large- and Giant-Breed Puppies

If puppies are allowed to overeat, they may consume too many calories and too much calcium, grow too rapidly and develop bone growth problems. In breeds that are prone to these diseases, such as many large and giant breeds, overfeeding can lead to an increased frequency of hypertrophic osteodystrophy (HOD), osteochondrosis (OCD) and hip dysphasia.

Clinical signs often seen with bone growth disease include bowing of the front legs. Sometimes, these signs are misdiagnosed as calcium deficiency (also known as rickets). Radiographs are crucial for an accurate diagnosis. Adding more calcium to the diets of dogs with HOD, OCD or hip dysphasia will actually worsen the condition—and may result in permanent damage.

Here are a few helpful hints to avoid bone growth problems in your new Rottweiler Puppy:

**DO NOT** try to grow your pup quickly! Slow but steady growth is best. Rapid growth and/or fat puppies has been shown to aggravate genetically predisposed problems such as Hip dysphasia, Elbow dysphasia, OCD, panostitis, etc. Your dog will reach his genetic height and weight regardless of whether he is pushed to attain it quickly or fed to grow more slowly. The slower grown pup will be the healthier and sounder though. It is important to aim for a slower rate of growth with large and giant breed puppies.

Keep your Rottweiler lean throughout his entire life. Condition, not fat, creates health and vitality. You should be able to easily feel but not see all of the ribs. If you can count the ribs by looking, he's too thin. If you have to poke he is too fat. Carrying too much weight contributes greatly to the development of joint and growth problems in young dogs and causes joint and ligament trouble in adults.

Do not pick the puppy up under the shoulders like a child. Always support his rear. Very young children should not pick the puppy up as they might drop and injure him. Rottweilers are a large boned, fast growing breed whose joints and growth plates can be easily injured through accident, improper handling and improper exercise. Try to not carry the puppy ALL the time as they need the walking exercise and if carried a lot it increases the jumping up on people.

However, Puppies should be carried down stairs and helped out of cars and off the furniture until 6-8 months old to prevent joint and growth plate injuries.

Do not force exercise. Especially in Rottweilers less than 18 months of age. If they are tiring they must stop to rest. Tired muscles become weak and injuries are more likely to occur at that time. Swimming imposes no impact and is not restricted except that tiredness and water intake need to be monitored to prevent cramps and accidental drowning. The puppy should not be asked to pull weights in excess of 5-10 lbs before 14 months of age (and not at all under 7 months) and not in excess of 15-20 lbs before 18 months of age to prevent skeletal stress. He should not carry (in backpacks etc.) more than 2-5% of his body weight or 5 lbs whichever is less, between the ages of 6 to 14 months and should never carry more than 10% of his body weight until beyond 18 months. As an adult he should never carry more than 20% of his weight and that only after training with gradually increasing weight over many weeks' time, and not on a steady basis

Do not let the puppy play on slippery surfaces or with adult dogs as these can cause muscle, joint and growth plate injuries. Try to not allow him to jump up for a treat or a toy; or jump off or over objects that are more than 1' high until beyond 1 year and then only on good footing and with common sense.

Keep your dog's toenails short. Long nails can ruin his feet and can also cause joint and lameness problems. Learn how to do them yourself if possible so that you may trim a little of each week. Walking the puppy on pavement or concrete can sometimes help also as can exercise in places where the pup will want to dig in his feet when running

Do not allow your puppy to remain on hard surfaces, such as concrete, marble, tile floors for long periods of time. If your kennel has a concrete floor, then be sure the puppy has a dog house with lots of cedar chips or soft bedding to lie on. Hard surfaces are extremely hard on their growing bones, so avoid them if at all possible.

Lastly- Take good care of and enjoy your Rottweiler! He will be your faithful companion for the next 8-12 years



# Septembers Tip

## Puppy-proofing Your House

If anything is in reach, your puppy will sniff, chew, and probably play with it. So to protect your puppy in his/her new environment, and to safeguard your belongings, puppy-proof your house. Safeguard your new pal as you would a toddler. Go through each room, your yard, garage and any storage or outdoor buildings to identify and remove hazards.

### Kitchens/Bathrooms.

- Use childproof latches to keep curious muzzles from prying open cabinets.
- Keep medications, cleaners, chemicals, and laundry supplies on high shelves.
- Keep foods out of reach (even if the food isn't harmful, the wrapper could be. And some foods, like chocolate, can be fatal to dogs).
- Keep trash cans covered or inside a latched cabinet.
- Keep toilet lids closed to prevent drowning or drinking harmful cleaning chemicals.

### Living/Family Room.

- Place dangling wires from lamps, VCRs, stereos, TVs, and phones up and out of chewing reach.
- Keep kids' toys put away.
- Move plants out of reach (some houseplants are poisonous to animals).
- Check all those places where your vacuum cleaner doesn't fit, but your puppy does, for dangerous items, like coins and pens.
- Put away all sewing and craft notions, especially needles and thread.
- Make sure all heating/air vents have a cover.
- Fireplaces can be hazardous to your puppy so keep the screen closed.

## Garage.

- Move all chemicals to high shelves or behind secure doors.
- Clean up all antifreeze from the floor and driveway—one lick of most antifreezes can be lethal to any animal.
- Keep all sharp objects and tools out of reach.

## Bedrooms.

- Keep laundry and shoes behind closed doors (drawstrings and buttons can cause major illness if swallowed).
- Keep any medications, lotions, or cosmetics off accessible surfaces (like the bedside table which can be reached by jumping on the bed).
- Move wires out of reach of chewing.

## Other Areas.

- Block off access to all stairs, balconies and decks from which a puppy could fall. If he is younger than one year, don't let your puppy climb stairs or jump off sofas, beds, etc. his joints are still forming and may become injured. Be aware of open doors and windows, particularly lower windows where your dog might push through the screen to go outside. Consider using safety gates, as you would with a toddler in the house. And please look out for paws, and noses, when you shut doors behind you, recline your recliners or scoot chairs.

# Octobers Tip

## House Training Your New Puppy

Bringing home a puppy and introducing her to your home is very exciting for everyone. The only one who may be anxious about the situation will be the puppy. If you handle your puppy properly when she arrives, she will quickly relax and want to settle into her new home.

Prior to bringing your new puppy into your home, you should puppy proof it. Take a look at your home from the puppy's viewpoint. Does that potted plant sitting in front of the glass door look tempting? You may want to consider moving it to a higher place. What about your favorite collection of teddy bears, or magazines you have in a basket by the sofa? They will most certainly raise the curiosity of your new puppy. As you move these things out of your puppy's reach, remember it is only for a short time. Once your new puppy has learned her place in the family, you can put your things back where they go. Your life should **never** be dictated by your puppy. However, by removing these curiosity objects from the start, it will allow you to work with your puppy on the basic training she will need to learn.

It is important to understand that as much as you want your new puppy to be a part of your family; your puppy is still an animal. She will take her cues from her environment. If she is allowed to have free run of the home and access to everything, you are teaching her that she is in charge. Dogs have instincts. The main instinct of dogs is to live in a pack. Your new puppy will assume her new family is her pack. If she picks up the clues that she is her own boss and she can do what she wants, whenever she wants, she is being taught she is the leader of her pack. It is much easier on everyone, including the dog, if she learns from the moment she enters the home that she is not the leader and dictator of the family.

One mistake people make is letting their puppy sleep in a utility room, or kitchen. Dogs are from the wolf family, and really prefer to have a den all their own. Some people assume placing a dog in a crate is cruel. On the contrary, if crates are introduced properly, they will be much loved by the puppy. When planning for a new puppy, do not go out and buy the biggest crate you can find for your puppy thinking she will grow into it. This is the worst mistake owner's make. A crate should be large enough for your pet to stand up and turn around

in. Puppies usually learn from their mothers to not soil in their bed area. If the crate is too large, your puppy may designate a portion of her crate for sleeping, and the other half for soiling. You should also never place your puppy's food and water in her crate.

**W**hen your puppy is first introduced to the crate, do not simply put her inside and lock the door. This will greatly disturb her. (You should place the crate in a room in your home where the family gathers. You should not expect the puppy to walk through the entire house to the back guest bedroom to nap. By having the crate in close proximity to the family, the puppy will feel as if she is still hanging out with her pack, even if she is inside her crate sleeping.) Place the crate where it will stay, and simply open the door. You can place a towel in the bottom, and a chew toy inside if you want. Some puppies are very curious. They will simply walk inside. Others may be a little shyer with the crate. Give your puppy time to warm up to the crate. Once she does enter the crate, praise her. You may want to give her crate a name. When she enters the crate, you can repeat the crates name, and give her a treat.

# Novembers Tip

## Puppies

### Training starts TODAY - not at six months!

If you wait until six months - it will be too late. Start the moment you get home. TONE OF VOICE is everything! Speak in a "honey" tone when your puppy is doing what you want - in a "venom" tone when he isn't! It is essential that the change in tone is "split second". The reprimand must be IMMEDIATE, QUICK and SHARP [like its mother would] - or the puppy doesn't associate your scolding, with what it has done. Remember, do not make allowances for your puppy by letting it do anything you wouldn't want it to do as an adult. ALL puppies will: chew and mouth, pee and poop, dig holes, jump up - that's what puppies do! Your puppy is no different.

#### Discipline

This is essential, but you must show your puppy what you want him to do first, and then when he understands - praise him! Rottweilers want to please their owners, but occasionally can be quite stubborn. A simple "uh, uh" will usually be enough; sometimes a low growl; but if the puppy is more persistent - a shake over the scruff of the neck and a harsh growl into his face. You should NOT need to hit a puppy, ever.

#### "Honey" and "Venom"

Try to anticipate what he is about to do and say "uh, uh" or growl [in "venom" tone] when you know he is about to do something wrong - he'll think you're psychic! I tell children to use a MONSTER voice it should sound like a Mother's growl. Then praise him in a "honey" tone the second he stops. TONE of voice is much more effective than shouting or walloping and it's the best way to achieve the "rapport" which is so necessary for a good partnership. Develop a "positive" environment - praise him when he gets things right or is just being good - DON'T keep nagging him for getting things wrong.

#### Going Mental

When your dog has learned exactly what you want him to do, each time you give him a command, mean it, and make sure he obeys first time; then when he does obey - go "mental" with the praise!!

### Socializing is vital

The first few months in a puppy's life are crucial. A puppy is like a blank piece of paper - what you put there is up to you. The right kind of socializing is extremely important. Before his vaccinations are complete you can take him to the street corner and just hold him in your arms (away from other dogs) and he will love the fuss strangers will want to make - and soon get used to passing traffic.

Once his jabs are complete, take him anywhere you know they like dogs; go to all public places; outside the supermarket or school is a good place and children will learn not to be afraid of him.

### "Mouthing"

Any puppy will chew fingers if you stick them into its mouth! "Mouthing" IS NOT ALLOWED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES and is sometimes misinterpreted as a "bite" by people unfamiliar with the breed. If allowed to continue into adulthood this innocent demand for attention could develop into biting. A harsh growl, or even a scream, should stop this - do not let it develop.

### Temperament

Rottweilers are impressive with a strong but sometimes dominant attitude; also they are extremely intelligent and loving. They love to play games as long as you do not let them get over-excited. As they are robust they need plenty of daily exercise, and obedience training will help to channel their exuberant nature. They can be willful, so members of the family must establish their control over them from an early age, or they may refuse commands. They should be reared with common sense and mutual respect - firmly but fairly.

### Dominance

DON'T misinterpret their dominant attitude towards other dogs with an aggressive attitude towards people - the first is their ingrained character; the second is bad breeding or lack of socializing. They can intimidate and dominate other dogs, as well as people - an aspect of their nature which should be controlled from an early age. They prefer humans to be "pack leader" - but if you aren't, they will be! Some men try to dominate their male Rottweilers by staring into their face - direct eye contact intimidates the dog. He doesn't like it, nor would you. He feels threatened by it - do not do it. Never let a male Rottweiler put his head over your neck or back, as he could be trying to dominate you.

Some Rottweilers become possessive over food. If this occurs, try to feed him by hand, or let him take the food from the bowl with your fingers still inside the bowl. If this has been done since puppy hood, he won't resent it.

### Aggression

AGGRESSION should never be encouraged at any time. Some people actively encourage their guarding nature and THIS IS WRONG! Your Rottweiler will guard instinctively without any provocation from you. DON'T "wind him up". "Rough housing" and challenges of strength is not the way to control the Rottweiler. Eventually there will come a time when he will resent it, and will want to come out `on top` - but you must always remain "pack leader". His ingrained character needs firmness - not force. Be ASSERTIVE not DOMINEERING. Your `will` must be stronger - not your `physique`.

### Exercise

Keep exercise to a minimum to start with - your garden should be enough until jabs are complete. Then little walks, gradually increasing each few days will be enough. PLEASE don't overfeed your puppy - you want a FIT Rottweiler not a FAT one. Don't let him run riot with older dogs, climb stairs or jump from the car. Lift him out or you could cause problems with his joints.

### Socialize! Socialize! Socialize! Daily

Brush your dog as frequently as possible (he will love the attention) and examine ears, eyes, mouth, feet, and touch private parts - this ensures your dog will not resent handling by the vet or anyone else, and is particularly important to maintain "mental" dominance.

### Punishment

You must keep rolled-up newspapers in every room in the house. When the dog does something wrong, you must immediately grab a rolled-up newspaper - violently hit yourself over the head several times with it whilst saying "bad owner, bad owner, bad owner"! When a dog does wrong, it's usually the human's fault (because he has failed in his training) not the dog's! Remember - think like a dog! Advice

We are only a phone call away - do not feel you are being a nuisance. If you have a problem - we will always help if we can.

Please love your Rottweiler to bits!

# Decembers Tip

## Why A Grown Dog? What About Bonding?

So you want to give an older dog a new home instead of going through all those puppy rearing stages. Here are a few tips to make your new DOG feel at home and learn to trust and respect you.....The Pack Leader!!

Many people feel that an older, grown dog is better for them. Older dogs don't require as much attention as a growing puppy does. They are often easier to housetrain, if not already so trained. They are past their chewing stage, and have settled down from the usual adolescent boisterous behavior. Such a dog presents no surprises in its final size and appearance. It may already have the traits they want in a dog.

With an adult dog you have a much better idea of what you're going to end up with. A puppy can have the genetic heritage to be aggressive, a fear-biter etc. and you will not know until the dog is older. It's also very easy to make mistakes raising a puppy. With an older dog, the mistakes have already been made and it's generally not too hard to tell which problems will be easily correctable.

So an older dog's previous history is actually an asset, not a detriment. Quite often when a dog is put into a new situation, they are looking for leadership and will attach to you almost immediately. Even breeds known as "one-person" dogs will accept a new master rather easily. For example, observe the relationship between a blind person and a German Shepherd guide dog. These dogs have been through at least 3 homes before they're matched with their blind people.

An additional benefit to adopting an older dog is the truly wonderful feeling one gets when the dog comes out of its shell and bonds with you. The bond feels special, particularly when it is an older dog that no one wanted. The rescue and subsequent bond with that dog is strong, lasting, and special. Older dogs are often not adopted from shelters because many people want puppies. It is wonderful when one can come in and offer a good life to the older dogs.

### Acclimatizing Your Adult Dog In A New Home

The first thing you should do is take your dog for a walk around your neighborhood (draining some of it's excited energy) always making sure the



dog is next to you or slightly behind you NEVER in front of you or pulling you. Then take it out to the yard where you expect it to eliminate. If possible, get the dog to eliminate there. If not, take it inside and give it some water. Tour your house and go back outside again. It should eliminate this time.

Take care to enter through doors before the dog does. When you feed it, be sure you've already had your food, or eat some tidbit first. You want to tell your dog, without fanfare or histrionics, that you're in charge here. This puts many dogs at ease since they won't have to wonder who the alpha is.

The dog should sleep in the same room with you, but not on the bed. You should use a crate or a sleeping pad/towel, close your bedroom door or put up a baby gate in your doorway, although the crate is best. We strongly suggest you place one article of clothing from every member of the family in the crate with your dog, remember dogs get to know us by our scent and by adding our scent to their sleeping quarters it will help bond the dog much quicker to you and every member of the family.

Try and get into a predictable routine as soon as possible. Dogs prefer a routine, and you will help your new dog settle in more quickly by adhering to some routine. Examples: feeding at the same times, walking at the same time, going to work and returning at the same times.

Start right away with expected behaviors. If you don't want the dog on the furniture, then don't let it on them from day one. Don't fall into the common trap of thinking that the dog is moping and should be given more leeway initially. If you expect good behavior matter-of-factly from the beginning, you'll have less trouble in the long run.

If the dog appears to be moping, leave it be but stay nearby. Don't let it mope too long -- distract it with a walk or a bit of playing.

## Training Your Dog

### Obedience

The old adage that you "can't teach an old dog new tricks" is patently false. Your dog may in fact be easier to teach than a young puppy since the attention span will be better.

You should definitely look up obedience training in your area and enroll yourselves. You will probably both enjoy yourselves quite a bit, and it's a good way to build a strong relationship with your new dog. In addition, it is important to get the dog into obedience not just to teach the dog good manners, but to get the dog socialized for other dog and people. Plus, it will give the dog something to do, which is often very beneficial with older adopted dogs.

## Housetraining

Sometimes dogs have trouble with housetraining when they are first placed. There are a number of reasons: they may never have been properly taught. Many dogs wind up in the shelter because their owners didn't know how to teach dogs correct elimination habits. Perhaps they have spent much of their lives outside or in kennels. Such dogs may not understand that elimination is reserved for outside.

You should train these dogs exactly like you would a puppy, with the big difference that they will catch on much more quickly, being adult and having a full set of bladder muscles. Confine them to a crate or otherwise watch them; take them outside regularly to eliminate. You might try using a phrase such as "Do it" or "Go potty" -- especially if your dog is a retired show dog, it may already understand this. Patience is your best ally -- keep your dog's schedule consistent until you're sure it understands where you expect it to go.

Don't punish a dog for going inside. You will get much better results much more quickly if you anticipate its needs and have it go outside, to your praise, each time. In fact, it is generally your fault if the dog eliminated inside rather than the dog's.

You should note that some aggressive male dogs may mark your entire house in an attempt to claim the house as his territory. You should first get him neutered, and then, since such aggression is likely to be a problem in other areas (such as growling when you approach his food), you should consult a book such as Evans' *People, Pooches, and Problems*.

Some dogs urinate submissively. If it is lying down, even on its back, when it urinates, this is not a housetraining problem. This dog needs work to raise its self-esteem. For now, avoid the problem by toning down your approach to the dog. If it is urinating submissively when you come home, make your arrival much less exciting, don't look at it for a few minutes, then just talk to it.

Finally, scratch it a bit on its chest (petting it on the head is very dominant).

Avoid bending at the waist over your dog. Squat instead.

In the long term, to deal with the problem of a too submissive dog, you will have to teach it confidence and help it build up self esteem. A good way to do this is to some obedience training; though take care to use motivational methods with little or no corrections. Be unstinting in your approval when the dog does something right. Praise goes a long way in effective training.

### Introducing New Things or Overcoming Dislikes

Your new dog may never have been, or actively dislike being, bathed, groomed, nail-clipped. You will have to proceed slowly and with patience.

Take baby steps. Your dog hates being brushed? Start out with a warm wet washcloth and rub in short lick-like strokes until the dog relaxes, then stop. Repeat this and eventually introduce a short bit of brushing, until the dog relaxes (always end on a positive note). Eventually the dog will accept being brushed. You can do the same technique with almost anything else. With clipping nails, first start with the goal of getting the dog to accept your handling of it's paws. Then accustom it to having its toes massaged & handled. Then to having its nails flexed and handled. In the meantime, carry around the clippers so that the dog learns to ignore them. When you actually start to clip the nails, clip off a teeny piece off of one nail and put the clippers away. Later on, do another nail. When the dog accepts this quietly, do two nails, and so on. If you find out that your dog is afraid of something, remove it from its environment, initially. Plan out how you want to deal with it, what steps and increments you want to take. Then slowly work on it. Work on one thing at a time to reduce stress on your dog. By doing it this way, you will build up the dog's self confidence and trust in you.

# Tip Archive 2008

## January Tip

### HOW TO BE YOUR DOG'S ALPHA ALL OF THE TIME

(Part 1 – look for part 2 in February)

Dogs communicate to each other through the use of body commands, not verbal commands. The mother dog will use her body to lead her pups and any vocalization that she gives is usually a low and guttural growl. Many people, when confronted with a dog that is excited, whether it is good excitement (happy that you are home) or bad (trying to bite your neighbor) make the following mistakes:

**#1: Using Multiple Commands:** If your dog has not responded to your initial command, guaranteed he is not going to respond to the next five commands. Your dog has 'tuned you out' and any verbalization you continue to make will be continually ignored. Remember, the pack leader uses body language not verbalization to get what he wants. If your dog is jumping at the door or on someone at the door, don't keep commanding him to sit, physically stop him from jumping with a collar and leash or use your body and block the door. The Alpha dog will stand tall in front of an object, facing a pack member, making direct eye contact and using his body language to tell the pack member to back off. As your dog's Alpha you should stand tall in front of the door or the person, stare and don't allow your dog to approach in that manner. Vocalization is not needed but if you want to say "No" using a low and guttural voice this should also stop your dog. If your dog is still not responding, and he may have the knowledge that he has 'worn you down before'. Place your leash on your collar and correct. Do not praise for obedience or if your dog calms down at this point, that will make him going into that excited behavior again. Also, you don't need to use verbal praise all of the time. Dogs do not cheer when another responds to a body gesture. While some dogs do require verbal praise as

encouragement when training, many dogs become too excited when praised and try to match their owner's voice excitement with either barking or jumping. A simple pat or touch by you as handler is all that is needed most of the time.

**#2: Raising their Voices:** When a pack leader reprimands a pup, it is a low guttural growl, not a high pitched bark. A high pitched sound shows excitement, so if you are yelling at your dog, all that you are really doing is exciting your dog. Now, you can use a high pitched voice for praise but remember we don't want to overexcite your dog. Many dogs become stimulated too easily so if you are trying to instill calmness, do not use your voice for praise but your hands as reinforcement, by way of a simple pat or gentle touch.

**#3: Responding to excitement or frenzy in your dog with #1 or #2 above:** If your dog is excited do not acknowledge it by yelling commands above the barking. Let me translate a typical situation that happens daily as your dog views it: You come home from work and your dog is barking and jumping on you. Your reaction is to tell him ok or praise him or yell a command to sit, loud enough so he can hear it above his barking: Dog translation: bark louder and get more excited. Luckily for me, every day I have the opportunity to watch dogs interact with each other. And I have seen how dogs correct each other and how an Alpha dog reacts with other dogs when this happens. When a young pup is jumping on an Alpha dog, the Alpha dog stands tall sometimes turning his head from the puppy in the opposite direction. His head, ears and tail are raised high, the Alpha dog makes no eye contact and his hair down his back is hackled. If the puppy does not stop acting obnoxiously there is a quick, low guttural growl with a snap, sometimes making contact with his teeth. At this point the puppy usually walks away or hits the ground, rolling over and showing submission. The excitement has ended and each goes about their business. How should you respond to your dog jumping on you? Like an Alpha dog would. Stand tall with your eyes facing the ceiling; turn your back towards him if he is jumping towards your face. Make no eye contact and say nothing; if your dog continues and he will because his previous experience has taught him that you will give in, grab your leash and place it on the dog's neck (slip it over his head like a noose) and correct. Say nothing, when your dog is calmly sitting, simply walk away from him and do not pet or praise. Remember, the Alpha dog will walk away and go about his business. Keep the leash in your hands as you walk away so if he jumps on you as you turn your back to leave him, correct. This correction should be meaningful enough to make your dog lay down in submission.

**Conclusion:** Being the Alpha or the dominant pack leader does not depend on size or strength, the pack leader is the strongest in his own head. The pack leader is calm and confident all of the time and rarely vocalizes; in order to be the pack leader you must imitate how a 'canine' pack leader reacts and interacts with his pack 100% of the time. The pack leader is not influenced by outside stimuli or by feelings or emotions of his pack members. The pack leader treats each pack member the same and does not take into account previous experiences of a new pack member.

## Februarys Tip

# HOW TO BE YOUR DOG'S ALPHA ALL OF THE TIME

(Part 2 )

**The Importance of the Walk:** Living in the suburbs with big yards is one of the worst things that happened to the 'pet dog' in this decade. Exercise is left to a ball throw in the yard, not a walk. I tell all of my beginners at their first lesson to get outside and walk their dog at least 20 minutes per day. The walk is so important on many levels. First, the walk teaches the dog that you are Alpha. When you are walking a puppy, most lag behind, so you are teaching them by your body language that they are not Alpha and that they should be walking behind you. As they get older, they are used to this being their position so this is easily taught by using the command 'heel'. Second, the walk stimulates a dog's mind. The dog is taking in so many scents and sights that not only will the walk physically tire your dog but he will also be mentally tired from thinking about the smells and sights he took in on the walk. Third, the walk is a way to socialize your dog with people and other dogs. You will rarely see a dog trainer with his or her personal dog in a dog park. They may go to the dog park to train their dog but not to run and play with the other dogs. I would never have my dog in a dog park; I don't want my dogs picking up other dogs bad habits. The walk socializes them. The walk teaches the dog that there are other people out there in the universe and that they have to adjust to new people all of the time. The dog has to adjust to and accept the new faces of both people and dogs that they are meeting on this walk. Many dogs are frustrated when on the leash because they can't do what they want to do and see whom they want to see so they become aggressive; this is called leash frustration. If the dog is walked infrequently, everything is exciting and new, and if you do not let him investigate, he becomes frustrated. But a dog that is walked often usually doesn't have this frustration because it is not novel. Dogs that are walked often are not frazzled by new people, new dogs, loud sounds or chaos on the streets.

**Conclusion :** A change in their behavior during a walk is not going to happen overnight. But you will see a change in your dog when you integrate a walk into its daily routine. A yard is the worse thing for a dog. A dog needs walks for

socialization, for mental stimulation and for physical stimulation. Walking your dog regularly often will release the leash frustration that many dogs have. But I caution you not to let your dog drag you and pull you from tree to tree. A walk is supposed to teach him that you are his Alpha so you must set certain limitations during the walk and he must obey them. Your dog can NEVER pull you on a walk but doesn't need to focus on you're the whole time. Let him or her sniff at your discretion, as Alpha you always pick the time and place for sniffing but remember it is a walk for physical exercise also and stopping every two minutes is not physical enough of a walk. If you live in a rural area, drive your dog to the city and walk him. Get him around noises, sites, traffic and people. Socialize him by walking. Don't stop and let him greet everyone, he may not like that, but get him out and about and get him used to ignoring people and other dogs. Don't just bring him to a dog park to run and play, teach him about the world by showing him the world. It is similar to driving your child across country to learn about different states. Leave your yard for parties and quick restroom uses by your dog. Walk him every day and I guarantee that you will see a behavioral change in him that you could not imagine. And, it is better for your health also.



# Marchs Tip

## How To Care for Large Dog Breeds

Large breed dogs generally weigh more than 50 lbs. and include a variety of breeds such as German Shepherds, Rottweilers, Doberman Pinschers, Greyhounds, and Golden Retrievers. Large breed dogs make wonderful pets, but because of their size, there are some special considerations when caring for them.

### 1. A good diet of high quality food specifically made for large breed dogs is essential.

It contains the correct nutritional balance necessary for the large dog metabolism, frequently has additives for joint health, and the larger kibble size promotes proper chewing and satisfaction. When choosing a dog food, keep in mind your dog's age, weight, and activity level. Large breed puppy food should be given to large breed puppies for the first 18 months because of their slow maturation rate and enormous growth. Large dogs reach old age sooner than small dogs, therefore at 5-6 years of age, a large breed dog should be fed a senior type dog food. If you are unsure about which type of food is right for your dog, ask your veterinarian. Be careful not to feed your dog too much. While obesity is harmful for all dogs, it can be even more so in large dogs whose joints are already stressed and may be predisposed to heart disease. Use a measuring cup to accurately determine meal portions and practice moderation when giving your dog treats or table scraps

### 2. See the veterinarian once a year for a check-up and vaccinations.

Certain medical conditions occur more frequently in large breed dogs. These include:

**Hip Dysplasia** - A hereditary condition where the hip joint is unstable, leading to degeneration of the joint itself and causing pain, stiffness, and abnormal gait when walking.

**Osteoarthritis** - The considerable size and weight of large breed dogs stresses joints, leading to osteoarthritis

**Bone Cancer** - Bone cancer is found almost exclusively in large breed dogs. It usually develops first in the leg, causing limping, then spreads to other organs.

**Hypothyroidism** - Hypothyroidism causes hair loss, lethargy, and weight gain.

**Heart disease** - Aortic stenosis and dilated cardiomyopathy are two types of heart diseases that occur more frequently in large breed dogs and result in the heart's inability to adequately pump blood to the rest of the body.

**Bloat** - Bloat occurs in deep-chested large dogs and is caused by the stomach filling with gas and possibly rotating. This is a life-threatening condition that occurs within hours of feeding. It may be prevented by feeding your dog smaller meals throughout the day rather than one large meal and by not exercising your dog within an hour of feeding.

**Be sure your dog gets plenty of exercise to prevent or treat many of the medical problems found in large breed dogs as well as to curb obesity**

Frequent exercise alleviates the boredom, anxiety, and restlessness which can cause destructive behavior in dogs. A discontent large dog can do quite a bit of damage to the house or yard.

**Take your dog to an obedience training class**

For a large dog, good training not only will prevent injury to themselves and others, but will teach good manners for interacting with humans and other dogs. When a small dog jumps up on someone to greet them, it can be cute, but when a 70 pound Golden Retriever does it, someone could get hurt. Most large breed dogs are quite social and crave regular interaction with the family so they wouldn't do well relegated to a doghouse in the backyard.

**Your large breed dog will need some special supplies for his care.**

An elevated dog feeder will make it more comfortable for your large dog to eat as well as reduce gulping of air which could lead to bloat. Be sure your large dog's leash and collar are durable enough to resist breaking when he pulls and the collar is wide enough to prevent cutting into the skin. Since you can't bathe a large dog in the sink, a handheld sprayer for the shower or outdoor hose is convenient for bath time. Buy your large breed dog big, durable balls, toys, and chews that don't pose a choking hazard. For example, balls should be no

smaller than a tennis ball, , perhaps even larger, depending on the size of your dog.

Large breed dogs tend to be loyal, friendly, and highly social animals, and, with the proper care, can be a wonderful addition to your family.

## Aprils Tip

### Why you SHOULDN'T buy a Rottweiler

#### **DON'T BUY A ROTTWEILER IF YOU LACK LEADERSHIP (SELF-ASSERTIVE) PERSONALITY.**

Dogs do not believe in social equality. They live in a social hierarchy led by a pack-leader (Alpha). The alpha dog is generally benevolent, affectionate, and non-bullying towards his subordinates; but there is never any doubt in his mind or in theirs that the alpha is the boss and makes the rules. Whatever the breed, if you do not assume the leadership, the dog will do so sooner or later and with more or less unpleasant consequences for the abdicating owner. Like the untrained dog, the pack-leader dog makes his own rules and enforces them against other members of the household by means of a dominant physical posture and a hard-eyed stare, followed by a snarl, then a knockdown blow or a bite. Breeds differ in tendencies towards social dominance; and individuals within a breed differ considerably.

#### **Rottweilers as a breed tend to be of a socially dominant personality.**

You really cannot afford to let a Rottweiler become your boss. You do not have to have the personality or mannerisms of a Marine boot camp Sergeant, but you do have to have the calm, quiet self-assurance and self-assertion of the successful parent ("Because I'm your mother, that's why.") or successful grade-school teacher. If you think you might have difficulty asserting yourself calmly and confidently to exercise leadership, then choose a breed known for its socially subordinate disposition, such as a Golden Retriever or a Shetland Sheepdog, and be sure to ask the breeder to select one of the more submissive pups in the litter for you. Leadership and training are inextricably intertwined: leadership personality enables you to train your dog, and being trained by you reinforces your dog's perception of you as the alpha. Alpha means YOU must be calm, firm, consistent, and above all FAIR.

## Mays Tip

# Predisposed Breed Conditions Affecting Rottweilers

by Peter Rodgers BVSc MRCVS

[www.thevetclinic.net](http://www.thevetclinic.net)

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Rottweilers are predisposed to a number of conditions, a few of which we will discuss here. The size of Rottweilers leads them to share a number of joint/skeletal problems with other large breeds of dogs such as German Shepherds, Great Danes, Mastiffs etc. These are the most common of the problems we will discuss and include:

1. Hip Dysplasia
  2. Cruciate Ligament Rupture
  3. Osteochondrosis
- Other breed related problems suffered by Rottweilers can include:
4. Deafness
  5. Retinal Dysplasia

### Hip Dysplasia :

Normally the hip is a tight, stable ball and socket joint. In cases of hip dysplasia the socket is often too shallow and the ball too small or mis-shapen. This leads to an unstable joint which in turn can cause painful lameness early in life and progressive arthritis later in life. The causes of hip dysplasia are not yet fully understood, however a number of risk factors are involved.

The condition may be partly inherited. It is wise to choose pups from parents who have had their hips X-rayed under the BVA (British Veterinary Association) Scheme and had scores deemed suitable for breeding. Under this scheme Xrays are taken of the hips by a Veterinary Surgeon and submitted to an independent panel of experts at the BVA who "score" each hip for abnormalities: the lower the score, the better the hips.

Early rapid growth and weight gain, accompanied by excessive exercise. This can be difficult to monitor as it is in the nature of young dogs to want to exercise and it is not possible to determine exactly how much exercise is too much. Common sense is required, do not run your dog to exhaustion every day, and any lameness should be evaluated by a Veterinary Surgeon. Your Vet may wish to Xray your dog's hips to evaluate them, although hip dysplasia may not be fully developed until 12-18 months of age.

Overfeeding-a diet excessively rich in protein with too many calories, vitamins and minerals. A sensible balanced diet is important.

It is difficult to make recommendations which will guarantee hip dysplasia will not occur and it is recommended you consult your Veterinary Surgeon for any further advice should you have any concerns.

The symptoms of Hip Dysplasia vary with age. Under 3 months - there may be no symptoms, though the pup may appear clumsy on its hind legs 3-18 months - there may be no symptoms, or there may be pain in the affected hips leading to lameness in one or both hind legs, stiffness and reluctance to exercise.

18 months - Middle/Old age - In mild cases the symptoms seen earlier in life may settle down and the dog will lead a normal life for a number of years. In more severe cases the symptoms seen earlier in life will continue or worsen.

Middle to Old age - The affected hips are likely to become arthritic and may need medical or surgical treatment.

Treatment of Hip Dysplasia varies according to the dogs age and individual veterinary surgeons. Young dogs tend to be treated with a combination of anti-inflammatory drugs along with a balanced diet and moderate exercise. Most dogs settle down at approx 18 months of age. Otherwise various surgical options are available, some of which are specialist procedures. Older dogs tend to be treated with anti-inflammatory drugs, either intermittently or long term when necessary. More severe cases may be treated surgically.

### Cruciate Ligament Rupture

The anterior cruciate ligament is one of five major ligaments that cross the knee (stifle) joint to keep it stable. This can rupture (tear) partially or completely at any time in a dogs life causing lameness and progressive arthritis. The causes of cruciate ligament rupture vary

Major trauma Dogs can trap their leg while running/jumping.

Minimal Trauma (i) In middle aged-older dogs with degeneration and weakening of the cruciate ligament prior to the trauma.

Minimal Trauma (ii) In younger dogs of certain breeds( including Rottweilers- mainly large, rapidly growing breeds), which suffer early degeneration of the cruciate ligament.

Lameness is the main sign on the affected knee. The lameness may be sudden or gradual in onset. Examination by your Veterinary Surgeon may reveal other signs which support the diagnosis, including pain, swelling and instability in the knee joint. There may be a noticeable "clunk" when the dog is walking in severely unstable joints. Often the dog will need to be sedated or anaesthetised to be relaxed enough for the joint to be examined properly and Xrays may be taken to reveal the degree of arthritis in the joint.

In the majority of cases of anterior cruciate ligament rupture in Rottweilers, the treatment of choice will be surgery to stabilize the joint. Occasionally in less severe cases or older dogs treatment may be with anti-inflammatory drugs and rest plus weight loss if necessary. Regardless of the treatment given, all affected dogs will develop arthritis in the knee joint to some extent afterwards, which may become a problem later in life, although this can be managed in most dogs with anti-inflammatory drugs.

Osteochondrosis (O.C.D) of the elbow and shoulder

Osteochondrosis is a disease of young dogs in which normal cartilage development fails. More commonly in the elbow joint, although other joints can be affected including the shoulder. In the elbow this involves a fragment of the normal surface of the joint breaking away. In the shoulder this produces a defect in the joint surface on the head of the humerus. In both cases this leads to the surface of the joint being uneven and poorly fitting, which will progress to osteoarthritis in the affected joints over time. The causes of OCD are not yet fully understood. Several risk factors are known.

Rapid growth and weight gain  
Inherited characteristics  
The condition is thought to be partially inherited. Dogs affected with OCD ideally should not be used for breeding. The BVA/Kennel Club also run a Xray scheme for OCD of the elbow (also known as elbow dysplasia) similar to the Hip Dysplasia scheme.

Overnutrition Feeding excessive amounts of protein, calories, vitamins and calcium increases the risk. A sensible balanced diet is important.

Most dogs exhibit symptoms initially between 4-8 months of age. The main sign will be lameness in the affected leg and/or stiffness after rest. The affected elbow/shoulder may be painful on manipulation though this is not always the case. Both elbows/shoulders may be affected, even though only one may be lame

Dogs may exhibit the same symptoms when older due to osteoarthritis in the joint secondary to the OCD. Diagnosis of OCD is made by examination of the affected joints, often under sedation/anaesthetic, along with Xrays of the shoulder/elbow joints. OCD in its early stages can be very difficult to see on Xray, even to the eye of an experienced Veterinary Surgeon and sometimes a specialist opinion maybe necessary. Treatment varies with the severity of the condition and the joint involved. Often the symptoms are only mild and will settle down after a while with rest, a balanced diet and anti-inflammatory drugs. Sometimes in more severe cases surgery maybe performed to remove the damaged portion of cartilage. Regardless of which treatment is used, most dogs will go on to develop osteoarthritis in the affected joint later in life which may be a problem, however this is usually manageable with anti-inflammatory drugs.



## Junes Tip

### Rottweiler Puppy Social Skills

Puppies need social skills to become friendly guardians.

#### Socialize, Socialize, Socialize

Socialization is the process of teaching a dog how to cope with and behave well in a human world. Socialization is important for any pet but it's especially critical for large, guardian breeds. They're natural watchdogs. They're suspicious of strangers. This a natural, instinctive quality of this breed group. It doesn't have to be taught. Without socialization, though, they may become so suspicious that they won't let anyone touch them. They might even become aggressive. Most of the stories you hear about "vicious" dogs were inspired by dogs that weren't properly socialized.

Socialization should start as soon as the puppy is born. A responsible breeder lays a foundation for good behavior by handling the puppies every day. As they grow, the breeder allows them to go outside, to play and explore this big new world. The pups are introduced to a dog crate, house-breaking and the veterinarian. The breeder provides as many new experiences as possible to prepare them for the transition to their new homes. The breeder has merely started the socialization process. Now it's up to you to go on from there.

To a puppy, everything in the world is brand new. He's never seen any of this before! Try to remember his perspective as you teach him what's expected of him. Dogs learn from positive and negative experiences. They learn fastest from positive experiences. You'll get best results if you make it easy and rewarding for the puppy to do what you want. It's important to have patience and a good sense of humor!

Throughout his life, your dog will need grooming and medical exams. The first thing every puppy must learn is to allow himself to be handled and touched all over his body. Several times a day, pick up your puppy and put him on his back in your lap or on the floor. Be gentle but firm. He'll probably struggle to get away so rub his tummy and talk to him until he relaxes. Run your hands all over him — down his legs, fiddle with his toes, feel his ears, lift his lips to look

at his teeth, scratch his back. He might nip your fingers in play and wriggle all around while he's getting his "massage". It's important that you make these sessions enjoyable but don't let it turn into a wrestling match or a tug o' war game. Have everyone in your household and your friends handle the puppy like this every day. Gradually increase the length of time the puppy must lie quietly until he'll lie there to be massaged as long as you want.

Introduce a brush and the nail clipper during some of these sessions and make the brushing feel good. As your dog grows up and it's no longer practical to hold him in your lap, encourage him to lie on his side for his massages.

Grooming and nail cutting are much easier on both of you when the dog lies quietly on his side. Your dog will look forward to grooming if you've shown him since puppyhood how pleasurable it can be.

### Building tolerance

The guardian breeds can be reluctant to meet new people and must be taught to tolerate strangers. Many puppies enjoy the people they meet and want attention. Others don't. Some puppies learn to like it but a few never do. It really doesn't matter how your puppy feels about it, though. The most important thing is that he learn to tolerate being handled by strangers because you want him to.

Without this training, visits to the vet, the groomer or boarding kennel will always be difficult or even impossible.

When a visitor wants to pet your puppy, pick him up and put him in the person's arms. Shy or frightened puppies often do better when picked up than if approached on the ground. Both of you should talk to him in a happy, cheerful voice. Have your visitor offer him some of his favorite treats. If the pup's frightened or upset, ignore it. Don't baby him or use a comforting tone like "There, there, puppy, don't be scared, everything's okay" because it backfires! The puppy usually responds by becoming more frightened and acts even worse. Make your puppy feel secure by being confident and enthusiastic. Be gentle but firm.

Many kennel clubs, veterinary clinics and animal shelters offer "puppy kindergarten" classes. Created especially to help with socialization, these inexpensive classes are great opportunities for you and your puppy. They're fun, too! Your puppy especially needs socialization in the world outside your home. As soon as he can be taught to walk on leash and has had his puppy shots, take him everywhere with you. Let him investigate everything. If he's afraid or confused, find a spot for the two of you to sit and watch things go by. Bring along some of his favorite treats and toys. Let him check things out at his own pace and encourage him with a happy, confident voice. For some puppies,

it might only take a few minutes for them to get comfortable in a new environment. For others, you might need to make several of these “watch and relax” stops throughout the course of a walk.

When you take your dog to the vet, be positive but firm. In order to work efficiently, the vet needs your dog’s cooperation. No vet likes to work on a growling dog that’s not under his owner’s control and some will refuse to serve them altogether. Encourage your puppy to stand quietly on the table. Keep gentle control by holding his head.

When your puppy is old enough, four-to-six months of age, start him in obedience class! Even the most well-behaved puppy needs to learn to obey commands. Classes are inexpensive, fun, excellent opportunities for socialization and available in almost every city. Your veterinarian or the AKC can refer you to local training clubs that offer group classes at convenient times and reasonable rates

Socialization with other dogs

Some of the guardian breeds are not “pack oriented.” Most of them are fairly solitary and don’t enjoy the company of other dogs besides those in their own household. They can still learn to be ladies and gentleman when on lead around other dogs, though, and puppy kindergarten and obedience classes are good socialization and training opportunities.

Some dogs are “born socialized” but most of them require some form of socialization throughout their whole lives. Like obedience training, it’s an ongoing process that’s never quite finished. Once your dog’s grown up, continue taking him with you whenever possible. If left at home too long out of sight of the real world, your dog may quickly forget how he’s supposed to act. Give him plenty of socialization refresher courses. Let him meet new people and make new friends. There’ll be plenty of people wanting to admire your beautiful dog and you’ll make plenty of new friends, too!

# Julys Tip

## Summer Pet Safety

Here are just some of the ways animal lovers can keep their pets safe this summer:

### Just Say No.

Summertime is the perfect time for a backyard barbeque or party, but please remember that the food and drink you serve your guests may be poisonous to pets. Keep alcoholic beverages away from pets, as they can cause intoxication, depression, comas, or even death. Similarly, remember that the snacks you serve your friends should not be a treat for your pet; any change of diet, even for one meal, may give your dog or cat severe digestive ailments.

### Pets have it made in the shade.

Pets can get dehydrated quickly, so give your pets plenty of water when it's hot outdoors. Also, make sure your pet has a shady place to get out of the sun, and keep them indoors when it's extremely hot. Never leave your animals alone in a parked vehicle. On a hot day, even with the windows open, a parked automobile can become a furnace in no time, and heatstroke can develop, which is potentially fatal.

### Keep your pet pest-free.

Commonly-used flea and tick products, rodenticides (mouse and rat baits), and lawn and garden insecticides can be harmful to cats and dogs if ingested, so keep them out of reach. While there are flea products that can be used safely on dogs, these same products can be deadly to cats, because of the presence of the chemical permethrin. Be sure to read directions on these products carefully.

### Water safety is pet-friendly.

Do not leave pets unsupervised around a pool—not all dogs are good swimmers. Introduce your pets to water gradually and make sure pets wear flotation devices while on boats. Try not to let your dog drink pool water, which contains chlorine and other chemicals that could cause stomach upset.

### Beware of “High Rise Syndrome.”

During warmer months, there is an increase in injured animals as a result of 'High-Rise Syndrome,' which occurs when pets fall out of windows or doors and are seriously or fatally injured. Pet owners need to know that this is completely preventable if they take simple precautions. Keep all unscreened windows or doors in your home closed and make sure adjustable screens are tightly secured.

### **Be aware of heated situations.**

When taking your dog outdoors or in the company of other animals, always keep a watchful eye on those around you. Summer is a wonderful time to engage in outdoor activities with your pet, but with more people and their dogs enjoying the warmer weather, tempers may flare over territory, so it's equally important to make sure your dog is safe and secure around strangers and other animals.

### **Fireworks aren't very "patriotic".**

Never use fireworks around pets. While exposure to lit fireworks can potentially result in severe burns or trauma to curious pets, even unused fireworks are hazardous. Many types of fireworks contain potentially toxic substances such as potassium nitrate, copper, chlorates, arsenic and other heavy metals. Also, for younger puppies loud noise can do damage to their ear drum which could cause hearing loss.

### **Keep citronella candles, insect coils and oil products out of the reach of pets as well.**

Ingestions can produce stomach irritation and possibly even central nervous system depression, and if inhaled, the oils could potentially cause aspiration pneumonia.

# Augusts Tip

## Rottweiler Puppy Development Stages

In order to understand why your puppy doesn't listen to you at times, you need to understand each stage of development a puppy goes through as it matures. Let's take a look at the different stages, but before we do, keep in mind that these stages are generalizations – each dog will progress at its own pace.

### Stage 1: The Transitional Stage: 2-3 Weeks

The Transitional stage generally lasts from age two to three weeks, and it's during this time that your puppy's eyes will open, and he'll slowly start to respond to light and movement and sounds around him.

He'll become a little more mobile during this period, trying to get his feet underneath him and crawling around in the box (or wherever home is.) He'll start to recognize mom and his littermates, and any objects you might place in the box.

### Stage 2: The Almost Ready To Meet the World Stage: 3-4 Weeks

The Almost ready to meet the world stage lasts from 3 to about 4 weeks, and your puppy undergoes rapid sensory development during this time. Fully alert to his environment, he'll begin to recognize you and other family members. It's best to avoid loud noises or sudden changes during this period – negative events can have a serious impact on his personality and development right now. Puppies learn how to be a dog during this time, so it's essential that they stay with mom and littermates.

### Stage 3: The Overlap Stage: 4-7 Weeks

From 3-4 weeks your puppy begins the most critical social development period of his life – he learns social interaction with his littermates learns how to play and learns bite inhibition.

He'll also learn discipline at this point – Mom will begin weaning the pups around this time, and will start teaching them basic manners, including accepting her as the leader of the pack. They will be introduced to food starting around the 4th week – transition gradually as Mom weans them.

Experts say that the best time in a puppy's life to learn social skills is between 3 and 16 weeks of age – that's the window of opportunity you and your breeder have to make sure your puppy grows up to be a well-adjusted dog.

### Stage 4: The "I'm Afraid of Everything" Stage: 8 Weeks to 3 Months

The “I’m Afraid of Everything” Stage lasts from about 8 weeks to 3 months, and is characterized by rapid learning as well as a “fearful period” that usually pops up at around 8 to 10 weeks. Not all dogs experience this, but most do, and they’ll appear terrified over things that they took in stride before. This is NOT a good time to engage in harsh discipline (not that you ever should anyway!), loud voices or traumatic events.

At this time your puppy’s bladder and bowels are starting to come under much better control, and he’s capable of sleeping through the night. (At last, you can get some rest!)

You can begin teaching simple commands like: come, sit, stay, down, etc.

Leash training can begin. It’s important not to isolate your puppy from human contact at this time, as he’ll continue to learn behaviors and manners that will affect him in later years.

### **Stage 5: The Juvenile Stage: 3 Months to 4 Months**

The Juvenile stage typically lasts from 3 to 4 months of age, and it’s during this time your puppy is most like a toddler. He’ll be a little more independent - he might start ignoring the commands he’s only recently learned – just like a child does when they’re trying to exert their new-found independence. As in “I don’t have to listen to you!” Firm and gentle reinforcement of commands and training is what’s required here.

He might start biting you – play biting or even a real attempt to challenge your authority. A sharp “No!” or “No bite!” command, followed by several minutes of ignoring him, should take care of this problem.

Continue to play with him and handle him on a daily basis, but don’t play games like tug of war or wrestling with him. He may perceive tug of war as a game of dominance – especially if he wins. And wrestling is another game that can rapidly get out of hand. As your puppy’s strength grows, he’s going to want to play-fight to see who’s stronger – even if you win, the message your puppy receives is that it’s ok to fight with you. And that’s not ok! Remember don’t let him do at 10 pounds what you don’t want him to do at 110 pounds!!!

### **Stage 6: The Brat Stage: 4-6 Months**

The Brat Stage starts at about 4 months and runs until about 6 months, and it’s during this time your puppy will demonstrate even more independence and willfulness. You may see a decline in his urge to please you – expect to see more “testing the limits” type of behaviors.

He’ll be going through a teething cycle during this time, and will also be looking for things to chew on to relieve the pain and pressure. Frozen doggie bones or ice cubes can help sooth him during this period.

He may try to assert his new “dominance” over other family members, especially children. Continue his training in obedience classes and basic commands, but make sure to never let him off his leash during this time unless you’re in a confined area.

Many times pups at this age will ignore commands to return or come to their owners, which can be a dangerous, even fatal, breakdown in your dog’s response to you. If you turn him loose in a public place, and he bolts, the chances of injury or even death can result – so don’t take the chance.

He’ll now begin to go through the hormonal changes brought about by his growing sexual maturity, and you may see signs of rebelliousness. (Think adolescent teen-age boy!)

### **Stage 7: The Young Adult Stage: 6-18 Months**

The Young Adulthood stage lasts from 6 months to about 18 months, and is usually a great time in your dog’s life - he’s young, he’s exuberant, he’s full of beans – and yet he’s learning all the things he needs to become a full-fledged adult dog.

Be realistic in your expectations of your dog at this time – just because he’s approaching his full growth and may look like an adult he will not fully mature until 2-3 years of age so we still consider him a puppy, he’s not as seasoned and experienced as you might expect.

Gradually increase the scope of activities for your dog, as well as the training. You can start more advanced training during this period, such as herding or agility training, if that’s something both of you are interested in. Otherwise, extend his activities to include more people and other animals – allow him to interact with non-threatening or non-aggressive dogs. Introduce him to people of different races, young people, people in wheel chairs or walkers, etc. Remember socialize, socialize, socialize!!!!

Congratulations! You’ve raised your puppy through the 7 stages of childhood, err, I mean puppy hood, and now you have a grown-up, adult dog! Almost feels like you’ve raised a kid, doesn’t it?



## Septembers Tip

### WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR NEW ROTTWEILER PUPPY

1) Eight to sixteen week old puppies have very little bowel and bladder control. What this means is that the new baby will most likely have to be taken outside to potty at least once in the night, 2 am seems to be a popular time. (If your pup is not used to being crated then it will likely howl for 20 minutes to 2 hours before falling asleep!) These pups also cannot "hold it" while you are gone all day at work (there are exceptions but we are speaking in general terms here). Ideally a human is home at least part of the day to take the little one out every 2 to 3 hours. If this is not possible then a room should be made puppy proof and a crate with the door off in one corner and newspapers on the floor. Baby pups need to potty after waking up, before being put in the crate, after coming out of the crate, drinking, eating and playing. What usually causes the most problems is the playing because they are distracted and then all of a sudden HAVE to go now! When playing with a baby you must take them out every 30 to 45 minutes to avoid accidents. ANY TIME you take the puppy out to potty You MUST wait for them to go both pee and poop even if it takes 30 minutes for them to find just the right spot. They have to go out even during a thunder storm or in bitter winter wind..

2) Biting. Rottweiler puppies are VERY mouthy! They are very bitey and growly until they learn otherwise. They can act very aggressive with certain toys and things like rawhide and pigs ears should be avoided because they just cause unnecessary problems. They also chase down kids and bite their hands and legs and toes, they grab the cats, they bite the older dogs face, they bite your hands etc... Many pups can learn to inhibit their biting by you hollering OWW! really loud every time they bite. Other pups need to be lightly clipped under the chin with an open hand while you say "no bite". REMEMBER if what you are doing does not seem to be sinking in after 4 or 5 times then stop! It just is not working and you need to try something else. Some of them are good all day and become biting monsters after 7 pm. Some of them become little sharks if they don't get enough exercise or people time. Some just need to be taken out to potty and then calmly put in their crate for a nap. This is a perfectly normal stage for a Rottweiler puppy and if handled properly will be

mastered by 6 months of age. (then they move on to jumping on people and chewing on your furniture!) It is a VERY frustrating and annoying time and this is one of the things that turn perfectly normal people and even some not very Rottweiler knowledgeable trainers totally off of Rottweilers or to label them as aggressive/dominant etc.. which is certainly not the case! This stage requires TONS of persistence and patience.

3) Rottweiler pups are very smart and this gets them into lots of trouble! They are into anything and everything not tied down. Average puppy proofing of your home will not be sufficient! Anything your puppy should not be into should be protected or placed above 3 feet. Remember if anything gets broke or chewed it IS NOT the puppies fault! It is yours because you did not pick it up or protect it enough. Pups should never be left alone in a room, ever! You can not use the phrase "he should have known better" until he is OVER 2 YEARS OLD!!

4) Rottweilers mature VERY slowly! The housebreaking, crate training and chewing may be over with by 12 months old. But the rottweiler is a puppy till it is 2 years of age! They require AT LEAST every other day training sessions from puppy hood on. They also require a lot of exercise. Though Rottweilers under 2 should never be jogged or biked they should get lots of play time every day and walking is fine as long as you know the distance your pup can easily walk without getting exhausted. Over tired pups easily injure their joints and ligaments. If your young rottweiler is being especially wild and naughty then it needs more exercise and training sessions. Boredom and underplaying are the two biggest causes of bad behavior!!

5) Rottweilers also mature very slowly physically. This means that they should be kept lean. If they don't have a visible waist or you cannot easily feel their ribs the dog is way too fat! Rottweilers do not finish filling out width wise till 3 or 5 years old! Overfeeding WILL NOT make them fill out faster but will make them more susceptible to hip dysphasia, shoulder ailments and torn knee ligaments.

### **Just When You Thought It Was Trained.....Comes the "TEENAGE YEARS"**

Teenage and preteen Rottweilers are full of themselves and then some! At about 6 months of age they stop being bitey little fuzz balls and start to really get into trouble! This is the age when they start jumping up on people, getting into the trash and chewing on your furniture. If not trained, played with and exercised enough and if not confined properly when unsupervised they can destroy a home or apt in one day!! Teenage Rottweilers are very

intelligent. So much so that it is sometimes a huge burden for the owner! These pups can and do get bored very easily and bored dogs are destructive dogs. The more intelligent the dog (of any breed) the more easily bored and then destructive they become. So if you want a dog that will just patiently lie around your home or yard until you invite it to do something; then perhaps an older well trained rottweiler or a dog of another breed is for you! Teenage Rottweilers also like to see just how far they can push the rules and still get away with the behavior! If one day they experiment with a tiny growl when they are eating and people back away, then this encourages them to greater extremes. If they shove you out of the way to get out of the car and you say nothing then they will continue to do that! They learn bad things way quicker than the things you want them to learn!! Going to obedience classes or training the dog yourself consistently and often keeps life in order. Rules are not made for your dog to break. Rules must be set and enforced. Physical force is not required as a rule BUT consistency, fairness and firmness are musts! If you are a really laid back, non confrontational or soft natured person then a Rottweiler ESPECIALLY a teenager is NOT the dog for you! Rottweilers mature mentally very slowly! The housebreaking, crate training and chewing may be over with by 12 months old. But the rottweiler is a puppy till it is 2 years of age! They require AT LEAST every other day training sessions. They also require a lot of exercise and mental stimulation. Though Rottweilers under 2 should never be jogged or biked they should get lots of play time every day and walking or swimming is fine as long as you know the distance your teenager can easily walk or amount of swimming he can do without getting exhausted. Over tired pups and teenagers can easily injure their joints and ligaments. If your young rottweiler is being especially wild and naughty then it needs more exercise and training sessions. Boredom and underplaying and lack of mental stimulation are the three biggest causes of bad behavior!

# Octobers Tip

## How to be your Dog's Alpha all of the time

Dogs communicate to each other through the use of body commands, not verbal commands. The mother dog will use her body to lead her pups and any vocalization that she gives is usually a low and guttural growl. Many of my clients, when confronted with a dog that is excited, whether it is good excitement (happy that you are home) or bad (trying to bite your neighbor) make the following mistakes:

### #1: Using Multiple Commands:

If your dog has not responded to your initial command, guaranteed he is not going to respond to the next five commands. Your dog has 'tuned you out' and any verbalization you continue to make will be continually ignored. Remember, the pack leader uses body language not verbalization to get what he wants. If your dog is jumping at the door or on someone at the door, don't keep commanding him to sit, physically stop him from jumping with a collar and leash or use your body and block the door. The Alpha dog will stand tall in front of an object, facing a pack member, making direct eye contact and using his body language to tell the pack member to back off. As your dog's Alpha you should stand tall in front of the door or the person, stare and don't allow your dog to approach in that manner. Vocalization is not needed but if you want to say "No" using a low and guttural voice this should also stop your dog. We recommend for children to use what we call the "Monster Voice". If your dog is still not responding, and he may have the knowledge that he has 'worn you down before'. Place your leash on your collar and correct. Do not praise for obedience or if your dog calms down at this point, that will make him going into that excited behavior again. Also, you don't need to use verbal praise all of the time. Dogs do not cheer when another responds to a body gesture. While some dogs do require verbal praise as encouragement when training, many dogs become too excited when praised and try to match their owner's voice excitement with either barking or jumping. A simple pat or touch by you as handler is all that is needed most of the time.

### #2: Raising their Voices:

When a pack leader reprimands a pup, it is a low guttural growl, not a high pitched bark. A high pitched sound shows excitement, so if you are yelling at your dog, all that you are really doing is exciting your dog. Now, you can use a high pitched voice for praise but remember we don't want to overexcite your dog. Many dogs become stimulated too easily so if you are trying to instill calmness, do not use your voice for praise but your hands as reinforcement, by way of a simple pat or gentle touch.

### **#3: Responding to excitement or frenzy in your dog with #1 or #2 above:**

If your dog is excited do not acknowledge it by yelling commands above the barking. Let me translate a typical situation that happens daily as your dog views it: You come home from work and your dog is barking and jumping on you. Your reaction is to tell him ok or praise him or yell a command to sit, loud enough so he can hear it above his barking: Dog translation: bark louder and get more excited. When a young pup is jumping on an Alpha dog, the Alpha dog stands tall sometimes turning his head from the puppy in the opposite direction. His head, ears and tail are raised high, the Alpha dog makes no eye contact and his hair down his back is hackled. If the puppy does not stop acting obnoxiously there is a quick, low guttural growl with a snap, sometimes making contact with his teeth. At this point the puppy usually walks away or hits the ground, rolling over and showing submission. The excitement has ended and each goes about their business. How should you respond to your dog jumping on you? Like an Alpha dog would. Stand tall with your eyes facing the ceiling; turn your back towards him if he is jumping towards your face. Make no eye contact and say nothing; if your dog continues and he will because his previous experience has taught him that you will give in, grab your leash and place it on the dog's neck (slip it over his head like a noose) and correct. Say nothing, when your dog is calmly sitting, simply walk away from him and do not pet or praise. Remember, the Alpha dog will walk away and go about his business. Keep the leash in your hands as you walk away so if he jumps on you as you turn your back to leave him, correct. This correction should be meaningful enough to make your dog lay down in submission.

### **Conclusion:**

Being the Alpha or the dominant pack leader does not depend on size or strength, the pack leader is the strongest in his own head. The pack leader is calm and confident all of the time and rarely vocalizes; in order to be the pack leader you must imitate how a 'canine' pack leader reacts and interacts with his

pack 100% of the time. The pack leader is not influenced by outside stimuli or by feelings or emotions of his pack members. The pack leader treats each pack member the same and does not take into account previous experiences of a new pack member.

## Novembers Tip

### A Hands - Off Approach to Being a Good Pack Leader

Undesirable behavior can be caused by many things, including undetected illness. No behavior modification program should begin without first taking the dog to a veterinarian for a complete physical examination. While you're there, give your vet a printed copy of this page and ask if it would be an appropriate technique for you to try. The NILIF = NOTHING IN LIFE IS FREE program is an accepted standard in dog training/behavior but it is not, and is not intended to be, a substitute for an in-person, professional evaluation of your dog's behavior. This technique is intended for dogs in good health and of sound mind and stable temperament.

The NILIF program is remarkable because it's effective for such a wide variety of problems. A shy, timid dog becomes more relaxed knowing that he has nothing to worry about; his owner is in charge of all things. A dog that's pushing too hard to become "top dog" learns that the position is not available and that his life is far more enjoyable without the title. It is equally successful with dogs that fall anywhere between those two extremes. The program is not difficult to put into effect and it's not time consuming if the dog already knows a few basic obedience commands. I've never seen this technique fail to bring about a positive change in behavior; however, the change can be more profound in some dogs than others. Most owners use this program in conjunction with other behavior modification techniques such as coping with fear or treatment for aggression. It is a perfectly suitable technique for the dog with no major behavior problems that just needs some fine tuning.

#### **ATTENTION ON DEMAND**

The program begins by eliminating attention on demand. When your dog comes to you and nudges your hand, saying "pet me! pet me!" ignore him. Don't tell him "no", don't push him away. Simply pretend you don't notice him. This has worked for him before, so don't be surprised if he tries harder to get your attention. When he figures out that this no longer works, he'll stop. In a pack situation, the top ranking dogs can demand attention from the lower ranking ones, not the other way around. When you give your dog attention on

demand you're telling him that he has more status in the pack than you do. Timid dogs become stressed by having this power and may become clingy. They're never sure when you'll be in charge so they can't relax. What if something scary happens, like a stranger coming in the house? Who will handle that? The timid dog that is demanding of attention can be on edge a lot of the time because he has more responsibility than he can handle. Some dogs see their ability to demand attention as confirmation that they are the "alpha", then become difficult to handle when told to "sit" or "down" or some other demand is placed on them. It is not their leadership status that stresses them out, it's the lack of consistency. They may or may not actually be alpha material, but having no one in the pack that is clearly the leader is a bigger problem than having the dog assume that role full time. Dogs are happiest when the pack order is stable. Tension is created by a constant fluctuation of pack leadership.

### **EXTINCTION BURSTS**

Your dog already knows that he can demand your attention and he knows what works to get that to happen. As of today, it no longer works, but he doesn't know that yet. We all try harder at something we know works when it stops working. If I gave you a twenty dollar bill every time you clapped your hands together, you'd clap a lot. But, if I suddenly stopped handing you money, even though you were still clapping, you'd clap more and clap louder. You might even get closer to me to make sure I was noticing that you were clapping. You might even shout at me "Hey! I'm clapping like crazy over here, where's the money?". If I didn't respond at all, in any way, you'd stop. It wasn't working anymore. That last try -- that loud, frequent clapping is an extinction burst. If, however, during that extinction burst, I gave you another twenty dollar bill you'd be right back in it. It would take a lot longer to get you to stop clapping because you just learned that if you try hard enough, it will work. When your dog learns that the behaviors that used to get him your attention don't work any more he's going to try harder and he's going to have an extinction burst. If you give him attention during that time you will have to work that much harder to get him turned around again. Telling him "no" or pushing him away is not the kind of attention he's after, but it's still attention. Completely ignoring him will work faster and better.

### **YOU HAVE THE POWER**

As the human and as his owner you have control of all things that are wonderful in his life. This is the backbone of the NILIF program. You control



all of the resources. Playing, attention, food, walks, going in and out of the door, going for a ride in the car, going to the dog park. Anything and everything that your dog wants comes from you. If he's been getting most of these things for free there is no real reason for him to respect your leadership or your ownership of these things. Again, a timid dog is going to be stressed by this situation, a pushy dog is going to be difficult to handle. Both of them would prefer to have you in charge. To implement the NILIF program you simply have to have your dog earn his use of your resources. He's hungry? No problem, he simply has to sit before his bowl is put down. He wants to play fetch? Great! He has to "down" before you throw the ball. Want to go for a walk or a ride? He has to sit to get his lead snapped on and has to sit while the front door is opened. He has to sit and wait while the car door is opened and listen for the word (I use "OK") that means "get into the car". When you return he has to wait for the word that means "get out of the car" even if the door is wide open. Don't be too hard on him. He's already learned that he can make all of these decisions on his own. He has a strong history of being in control of when he gets these resources. Enforce the new rules, but keep in mind that he's only doing what he's been taught to do and he's going to need some time to get the hang of it all. You're going to have to pay attention to things that you probably haven't noticed before. If you feed your dog from your plate do you just toss him a green bean? No more. He has to earn it. You don't have to use standard obedience commands, any kind of action will do. If your dog knows "shake" or "spin around" or "speak" use those commands. Does your dog sleep on your bed? Teach him that he has to wait for you to say "OK" to get on the bed and he has to get down when you say "off". Teach him to go to his bed, or other designated spot, on command. When he goes to his spot and lays down tell him "stay" and then release him with a treat reward. Having a particular spot where he stays is very helpful for when you have guests or otherwise need him out of the way for a while. It also teaches him that free run of the house is a resource that you control. There are probably many things that your dog sees as valuable resources that I haven't mentioned here. The NILIF program should not be a long, drawn out process. All you need to do is enforce a simple command before allowing him access to what he wants. Dinner, for example, should be a two or three second encounter that consists of nothing more than saying "sit", then "good dog!", then putting the bowl down and walking away.

## ATTENTION AND PLAY

Now that your dog is no longer "calling the shots" you will have to make an extra effort to provide him with attention and play time. Call him to you, have him "sit" and then lavish him with as much attention as you want. Have him go get his favorite toy and play as long as you both have the energy. The difference is that now you will be the one initiating the attention and beginning the play time. He's going to depend on you now, a lot more than before, to see that he gets what he needs. What he needs most is quality time with you. This would be a good time to enroll in a group obedience class. If his basic obedience is top notch, see about joining an agility class or fly ball team.

**NILIF DOES \*NOT\* MEAN THAT YOU HAVE TO RESTRICT THE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION YOU GIVE TO YOUR DOG.**

The NILIF concept speaks to who initiates the attention (you!), not the amount of attention. Go ahead and call your dog to you 100 times a day for hugs and kisses!! You can demand his attention; he can no longer demand yours! Within a day or two your dog will see you in a whole new light and will be eager to learn more. Use this time to teach new things, such as 'roll over' or learn the specific names of different toys. If you have a shy dog, you'll see a more relaxed dog. There is no longer any reason to worry about much of anything. He now has complete faith in you as his protector and guide. If you have a pushy dog he'll be glad that the fight for leadership is over and his new role is that of devoted and adored pet.

# Decembers Tip

## Holiday reminders for you and your pet

Try to imagine the holidays from your dog's point of view. Your house is changing on a daily basis. Furniture is moved around. Nothing is where it used to be. There are strange trees and plants that used to be outside that now are inside. There are new sounds and smells. Very little is familiar. All sorts of people are coming to the door, and some are even staying overnight. Here are some tips for a safe holiday season.

**KNOW WHERE YOUR DOG IS AT ALL TIMES.**

**SUPERVISE DOGS AND CHILDREN PLAYING TOGETHER.**

Even if your dog is good with children and has never bitten, the added stress may be just enough for that first bite.

**YOU**

Stay calm. You can get stressed out during the holidays, and your dog picks up on your stress. He looks to you as a leader. If you are calm, he is calm. And also try to spend a little quiet time with him every day – it will help you, too. Review your dog's basic obedience exercises daily. Don't teach him something new, but reviewing what he already knows will reinforce you as a leader and someone he can trust.

Keep your dog's regular daily routine. Feed and walk him at the same times as you usually do. Changing his routine can make him stressful, and he can seek attention by misbehaving. According to your dog, any attention, even if you are screaming at him, is better than no attention.

Play with your dog before your party. If you tire him out, he'll be too tired to get into any mischief when guests arrive. If that is not possible, hire a dog walker or take him to doggie daycare.

Find out the location of the nearest emergency vet in your area NOW. Don't lose precious moments during an emergency.

**FOOD**

Don't use toothpicks. Try not to use toothpicks for hors d'oeuvres because he can eat the toothpicks if they are dropped on the floor and they can get stuck in his throat or puncture internal organs.

Be careful when you're cooking and baking. If you are serving a roast and it is covered in a mesh that is soaked with the juices from the meat, remember that your dog can eat that mesh and it can cause his intestines to twist and he can get

bloat where his stomach swells up like a balloon. If that happens, get him to a vet immediately. Bloat is 100% fatal without veterinary intervention. Don't wait to see if he gets better by morning. By morning he will have died an agonizing death.

So be careful and put all garbage in cans that have dog-proof lids or are behind locked doors. If you bake or cook and leave things out to cool, put them way back on the countertops. If he steals food off countertops, try to deter him by putting double stick tape on the front and top of the counter so that when he puts his feet up, the tape will stick to the hair on his feet. Or you can get clear vinyl carpet runners and place them with the prong sides up along the countertops. These deterrents may not work, so the best solution is not to let him in the kitchen at all.

### **THE ENVIRONMENT**

**The Tree:** Choose the location for your Christmas tree carefully. Aside from the obvious reasons of not putting it near a fireplace and using lighted candles because of the fire danger, don't put the tree in the window that your dog always looks out of because he will still try to look out of that window with the tree there, and it can fall over. To minimize that risk, you may want to tie the tree to a ceiling hook. Decorate the higher limbs and leave the lower ones bare, and make sure all ornaments are fastened tightly to the branches. Change the water for the tree frequently. It can contain pine tar which is poisonous and if your dog drinks it, he can be in real trouble.

Keep all decorations, ornaments, ribbons, yarn, and wrapping paper out of your dog's reach. If you use edible ornaments and decorations such as bread dough, popcorn, and gumdrops not only on your tree but also throughout your house, remember that they still are food to your dog, and the dough and paint you use on them can be toxic. Other ornaments such as angel hair and tinsel are also extremely dangerous if they are eaten, and they can also cause external cuts and scrapes especially to the mouth, eyes, and nose. If you put stockings on your mantle and fill them with food, your dog can still reach them. He'll probably eat the stocking as well as the food. Don't put gifts of food under the tree either for obvious reasons.

**Plants:** Almost all Christmas plants are thought to be poisonous: holly, mistletoe, ivy, Christmas cactus, and poinsettias. Keep them away from your dog. The phone numbers for the National Poison Control Center are 888-426-4435 and 900-680-0000

**Lights:** Unplug lights when you leave the house. Put a taste deterrent such as Bitter Apple or Tabasco sauce on the wires so your dog won't be tempted to

chew them. Also, encase the cords in some sort of a covering or behind heavy furniture.

## VISITORS OR GUESTS

Be especially careful opening your front door when you are greeting guests and also with delivery people so your dog doesn't dash out. Put him on a leash when you open the door. Make sure he is wearing identification tags or is micro chipped so that if he does get out and gets lost, whoever finds him can locate you easily.

This is also important if he is in the back yard during New Year's Eve celebrations. The sound of fireworks may scare him, and he can jump the fence out of fear. Please keep your dog inside to prevent this from happening. Include your dog in the festivities, but be aware of where he is and let him have an escape route to a quiet place if he needs one.

You can tether his leash to a sofa or other heavy piece of furniture and bring his bed in for him to lie on. Give him a toy or a doggie pacifier made out of a Kong, which is a bell-shaped rubber toy. Smear the inside with peanut butter or cream cheese and then pack the inside with a mixture of his favorite kibble and yummy smelly dog treats. You can freeze it before you give it to him so he can spend a long time trying to get all the goodies out of the Kong. But watch him carefully. All the commotion and stress may make him possessive of his toys and he could snap at anyone who comes close to him.

Another solution is to put him in another room with the door closed. If this is the one you choose, then practice leaving him there before your party and if he is barking, don't let him out until he is quiet. Make it as pleasant as possible for him, and don't let it seem as though he is being punished. Put his bed and toys in there and make him a Kong doggie pacifier.

Ask your guests not to feed your dog or let him drink any of their drinks. Tell them that he has been sick and he must be very careful in what he is fed. A small amount of alcohol can put your dog in a coma. A drunken dog is not funny. Do you want to spend your holiday cleaning up after your dog or taking him to the emergency vet? If your guests absolutely must feed him something, give them some dog treats to give your dog.

Ask smokers to be especially careful. Inadvertent gestures with a cigarette in their hand could have disastrous results. Or they may be talking and forget to flick the ashes off their cigarette, and the hot ash may fall on your dog and burn him.

With just a few simple precautions, your family and your animals can have a safe and enjoyable time. Have a wonderful holiday season!

# Decembers Tip

## Dog Food Aggression & How To Prevent It

Dog food aggression is one of those dog behavior problems that is difficult for us humans to fully understand. It just doesn't seem to make sense that your dog would consider you a threat to his/her food resource. I mean you gave him the food in the first place, and if you feed your dog the same kind of foods that I do, it's not all that appealing anyway!

But, what is your dog thinking?

If your dog glares at you, snarls, growls and positions himself between you and the food he is actually saying to you "this is mine, go away, find your own". He is basically telling you that he considers himself as the leader or alpha dog in your household. Dog food aggression (sometimes called canine possession aggression or food guarding) is a dominance issue, it is serious and needs to be addressed immediately. It won't simply just go away. We've all made the mistake of laughing and even encouraging our feisty little dogs when they first display the "cute" signs of dog food aggression. Don't fall into this trap! Food or toy aggression in dogs should never be tolerated as you never know when it can escalate into something more dangerous for you or a family member.

Why Does Your Dog Display Dog Food Aggression?

Canine possession aggression can be triggered by any number of factors but in most cases it can be attributed to one of these common cause. Your dog is desperate for this food, in his mind he doesn't know if or when he will get more food. Therefore he protects or guards his food, just like he would have done in a pack situation in the wild. Your dog may begin to see you as someone who is always taking good stuff away. He comes to view you more as a threat than a provider (you've got to turn this thinking around). Dog food aggression can be part of the general confusion regarding who the leader is in your owner-dog relationship. Often food aggression is not an isolated incident - it's something you must rectify. To discover how to establish yourself as your dog's fair and respected leader I recommend you study and implement these training methods - [dogproblems.com](http://dogproblems.com) membership. It's possible that your dog doesn't even understand that his dog food aggression is an unacceptable behavior. In such cases there is an obvious communication breakdown between human and dog.

General Rules For Correcting Food Aggression In Dogs

Keep in mind that your dog's snarling/barking/growling is actually rewarded and therefore reinforced each time you back off. Your dog believes his behavior has worked and is much more likely to try the same thing again in future. Note: This doesn't necessarily mean you shouldn't back off in this situation - more on this later. If your dog is directing his aggression towards other dogs the best solution is to simply separate them at meal times. Feed them in different rooms or in their crates. Involve all of your family members in this dog food aggression training. You must convey a unified and consistent message to your dog in order to successfully reverse this behavior. Take control of feeding time. You control the time and place of dinner time - own the food! Make your dog earn any food. Just simple tasks like requesting a sit or a down stay before you put the food bowl down are a good start. Make it clear to your young puppies that it's good to have people around when they are eating. If you do this from day one you will almost certainly prevent dog food aggression problems. If you encounter dog food aggression it is a good idea to feed your dog after you and your family eat. This again is a throwback to your dog's pack mentality where the alpha dog or leader of the pack (which is you) eats first - your dog will understand this technique. Don't let your dog "win" the food through his growling, this would reward the very behavior you are trying to eradicate. Don't bully or intimidate your dog though, it's much better to make him actually like having you around at meal time (follow the tips below to achieve this). Never respond to canine possession aggression with aggression of your own. In essence what this does is to lock you and your dog into a battle of wills. Your dog's next move will most likely be to step up his level of aggression in order to counter your action.

### Dog Food Aggression Training Techniques

Firstly, be careful. If you believe your dog poses any real physical threat to you or family members I'd advise getting professional help. Speak to a professional dog trainer or animal behaviorist for more information.

Below is a list of training techniques which could help your dog overcome his dog food aggression. Remember all of these techniques are designed to work towards reconditioning your dog to enjoy having you around anytime.

Mix it up, show your dog who is boss!

Hand feed your dogs. Eventually you should even be able to stick your hands into your dogs bowl while he is eating without any sign of aggression.

Stroke and pet your dog while he is eating and at the same time talk to him in a calming tone. All you are doing at this point is showing your dog that it is a

good thing for you to be around. Stand at a distance your dog is comfortable with, then gradually reduce this distance over time. You can flick a few treats in (or near) the food bowl as you slowly reduce the distance. Put your dogs bowl down with nothing in it, your dog will look back at you as though you are crazy. He'll then literally beg you to come over and fill his bowl.

Feed your dog as normal but hold back a few pieces of his meal. When he is finished licking the bowl, he'll look back up at you, then you can come over and give him the remaining food. Drop a few of your dog's very favorite treats into his bowl each time you walk past it. After a while of doing this your dog will welcome the sight of you approaching the bowl. When your dog is eating, call him over to you, when he gets to you reward him, make it worth his while then let him back to the food bowl. While you are preparing your dogs meal put him in a down-stay or sit position, only release him from your command once you have put his bowl down. By doing this you are controlling meal time and establishing (or re-establishing) your role as your dogs leader. To learn more about how to be a strong and respected leader I recommend a [dogproblems.com](http://dogproblems.com) membership. Work with another family member on this technique. Put your dog in his collar and leash and have him sit with your helper while you prepare the food. When you are ready release your dog and allow him his food. Again you are controlling the situation. Try the "Trade Up Method". What you do is take away the food or toy your dog is guarding, and replace it with something better. You can use an obedience command such as "give" or "leave it" to encourage your dog to release the precious resource he is guarding. You then take this resource (the food or toy) and give the trade up item to your dog. Once your dog has finished with the new item, you can then give back the resource you took away. This technique proves to your dog that he will receive something great for giving something up, it will recondition his thinking. Every time you are with your dog have him in a pinch or prong collar with a leash attached. Whenever he displays any signs of dog food aggression you immediately administer a correction to your dog by snapping on the leash. What this does to your dog is build a negative association to the act of his food guarding antics. Note: I personally don't advocate this method but many experienced dog trainers swear by it.



# Tip Archive 2009

## Januarys Tip

### Socialization Tips and Puppy Training Pointers for New Puppy Owners

Socialization and puppy training are of utmost importance as puppy hood is the most important and critical time in your dog's development. What you do and do not do right now will affect your dog's behavior forever. A properly socialized puppy is well adjusted and makes a good companion. It is neither frightened by nor aggressive towards anyone or anything it would normally meet in day to day living. An un-socialized dog is untrustworthy and an unwanted liability. They often become fear-biters. Often they like to fight with other dogs. They are difficult to train and are generally unpleasant to be around. Unsocialized dogs cannot adapt to new situations and a simple routine visit to the vet is a nightmare not only for the dog itself, but for everyone involved. Don't let this happen to you and your dog. Start socializing your new puppy NOW! The Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine agrees that the socialization period lasts up to about 12 weeks (3 months) of age. However, at 12 weeks, the puppy must continue socialization to refine its social skills. Socialization most easily occurs before the puppy is 3 months old. Any later than that and it becomes an excruciatingly difficult and time-consuming process that very few owners have the time, energy, money or patience to cope with.

#### **Socialization Do's**

Make sure that each of the following events are pleasant and non-threatening. If your puppy's first experience with something is painful and frightening, you will be defeating your purpose. In fact, you will be creating a phobia that will often last a lifetime. It's better to go too slow and assure your puppy is not

frightened or injured than to rush and force your pup to meet new things and people.

Invite friends over to meet your pup. Include men, women, youngsters, oldsters, different ethnic backgrounds, etc.

Invite friendly, healthy, vaccinated dogs, puppies and even cats to your home to meet and play with your new puppy. Take your puppy to the homes of these pets, preferably with dog-friendly cats.

Carry your pup to shopping centers, parks, school playgrounds, etc; places where there are crowds of people and plenty of activity.

Take your puppy for short, frequent rides in the car. Stop the car and let your puppy watch the world go by through the window.

Introduce your puppy to umbrellas, bags, boxes, the vacuum cleaner, etc.

Encourage your puppy to explore and investigate his environment.

Get your puppy accustomed to seeing different and unfamiliar objects by creating your own. Set a chair upside down. Lay the trash can (empty) on its side, set up the ironing board right-side up one day and upside down the next day.

Introduce your puppy to new and various sounds. Loud, obnoxious sounds should be introduced from a distance and gradually brought closer.

Accustom your puppy to being brushed, bathed, inspected, having its nails clipped, teeth and ears cleaned and all the routines of grooming and physical examination.

Introduce your puppy to stairs, his own collar and leash. Introduce anything and everything you want your puppy to be comfortable with and around.

### **Socialization Don'ts**

Do not put your puppy on the ground where unknown animals have access. This is where your puppy can pick up diseases. Wait until your puppy's shots are completed. Do not let your pup socialize with dogs that appear sick or dogs that you don't know, that may not be vaccinated.

Do not reward fearful behavior. In a well meaning attempt to sooth, encourage or calm the puppy when it appears frightened, we often unintentionally reward the behavior. It's normal for the puppy to show some signs of apprehension when confronting anything new and different.

Do not allow the experience to be harmful, painful or excessively frightening. This can cause lifetime phobias in your dog.

Do not force or rush your puppy. Let your puppy take things at his/her own pace. Your job is to provide the opportunity.

Do not do too much at one time. Young puppies need a lot of sleep and tire quickly. It is much more productive to have frequent and very brief exposures than occasional prolonged exposures.

**DO NOT WAIT!!**

Every day that goes by is an opportunity of a lifetime that is lost forever. You can never get these days back. If socialization does not happen now, it never will.

## Februarys Tip

# It's YOUR Hard Earned Money So Why Not Spend It Wisely!!!

With today's poor economy Back Yard Breeders "BYB" are becoming more prominent only adding to the demise of the Rottweilers, not the betterment of the breed.

So, why are back yard breeders a problem? Think about it this way. If you had to feed and shelter your family based on selling that next Rottweiler, to what extent or means would you go to sell it? They just breed dogs for the sake of it. They may have a sweet pet they want to try and reproduce or they think that their dogs are quality because they have papers and/or are registered with some registry. They think maybe they can make a few dollars selling pups, etc. They just put out dogs without real consideration for the future of not only the breed but the puppies produced.

Often, BYBs breed dogs with faults. This perpetuates fault and problems in the breed. They do nothing to prove their dogs are of sound temperament and that they are breeding good representatives of the breed, etc. They just breed. And often, they do not even breed purebreds.

Some BYBs "create" neat sounding things and think they are breeds - like Dalimers. This was seen listed in the Washington Post as a rare, German breed. Well, they are mutts - crosses of Dalmatians and Weimeraners, nothing more than a back yarder trying to make a buck. But many people who show and breed dogs do so from their homes?

How do you know is a breeder is good or not? Through EDUCATION and ASKING questions. These questions will help you out: "Sadly, not all people professing to be reputable and responsible breeders are. A good breeder will all but interrogate you. You should also have the chance to question the breeder. If you are not sure or uneasy with an answer, do not hesitate to ask for an explanation. If at any time you get an uneasy feeling or just are not satisfied, look elsewhere.

A few things to ask about are:

1. What is the asking price of the puppies? Some breeders will ask the same for pet quality and show potential puppies. Compare prices with other breeders of

the same breed and if the price is considerably higher or lower do not hesitate to ask why. Do not hesitate to ask why if there is a big difference in pet and show pups. Unless there is a visible disqualification or the puppy visibly will not be showing potential, the younger the pup the harder it is to determine show quality. A person who really knows the breed can have a good idea what pups have show POTENTIAL and what may not. Much happens while the puppy grows and that eight week show prospect may not be show potential at 9 months! Most ethical breeders will offer a refund between the Show and Pet price should their puppies be disqualified from a show ring. And avoid ANY breeder who charges different for males or females or who charges extra if you want a pedigree or registration. It is not that expensive to register a litter so the potential owners can individually register puppies. (Many kennel clubs like the AKC require all litters to be registered by the breeder. Then papers are sent out that are given to buyers of puppies so the owner can register them in their name).

2. What health tests have been done on BOTH parents of the litter? Any dog should have hips (OFA or PennHip), eyes (CERF) and ideally thyroid prior to breeding. Then is up to you as potential buyer to know what other tests the breed you are looking at should have. Even crossbred puppies are prone to hereditary health issues and parents should be tested prior to breeding for anything common within the two breeds crossed. Though a reputable breeder will NOT cross as the predictability in outcome is less and there are too many negligent litters of crossbred pups from unaltered pets. The breeder should be able to show documentation of all tests and do not hesitate to verify the results. Do not blindly accept their word – some dishonest breeders will lie and say all tests have been done. And if the breeder says there is nothing in the line so testing is not important, avoid this person as well. Some health problems are polygenetic (more than one set of genes involved – not a simple dominant/recessive). Some health problems take years to show fully or may be there but not showing outwardly. For example, some dysplasia dogs never show signs of having it and it is only diagnosed upon testing.

3. What temperament testing and socialization has been done? Granted, young puppies should not leave the property due to a growing immune system; however, the breeder should expose the puppies to as many things as possible like vacuum cleaners, children, house sounds, etc. The older the puppy, the more experiences it should have. Has the breeder temperament tested and what method was used? A good breeder will help match the right personality to you. If you are a quiet family and the breeder pushes a dominant pup on you, leave.

On the other hand, if you like the look of one puppy and the breeder, after interviewing you, decides it is not the right match, respect that.

4. What goals does the breeder have with the breeding program and how does the breeder go about to achieve this? If the breeder breeds just to produce more dogs, for pets only or anything that does not go towards the bettering of the breeder's lines and the breed as a whole, go elsewhere. And if the breeder breeds for working ability first, you could end up with a handful! Look for one who breeds for companionship as well as type and working ability – unless you are looking exclusively for a working dog.

5. What does the breeder feel are the strengths and weaknesses in the breed and the breeder's program? The breeder should be open with you about the program and where they hope to go with it. Avoid the breeder who insists there are no better dogs around than his.

6. Can you see the pedigrees of both sire and dam? Can you see at least the dam on premises? The sire may not be on site but the dam should be. If not, you could be dealing with a broker (one who sells dogs not bred by that person).

7. What type of contract does the breeder have for pet or show puppies (it should include a spay/neuter agreement and health guarantee)? Do not get pressured into becoming contracted to show or breed your dog – even if you do plan to show and possibly get into breeding someday. Everything should be spelled out in the contract. And be wary of a breeder sells you a young puppy that is "definitely show quality." So much happens during growth and development – the younger the puppy; the harder it is to tell show quality. A breeder who really knows the breed can tell if a young pup has POTENTIAL but only time will tell if the puppy is of show quality. Another red flag is the breeder who has no written contract at all. All puppies whether pet or show potential should be sold with a written contract.

8. What does the breeder feed the puppies? You want to try and keep the puppies on the same brand of food. If the breeder uses something you do not, gradually wean the puppy to your preferred brand.

9. What inoculations have been given? Eight-week-old puppies should have had their first set of inoculations, also de-wormed and you should be given documentation of this. If not, go elsewhere. If the puppies have no boosters prior to leaving the dam, look elsewhere.

10. Can you get references of previous puppy buyers? If the breeder will not give them, go elsewhere.

11. Can you have your own vet examine the puppy before you fully commit? You may be asked to put down a deposit but you should have the option of

having your vet examine the puppy with in a couple days after purchase (always a good idea to have this done and the breeder may require it).

12. Are you active in any breed clubs (all breed or ideally breed specialty)? Many clubs have a breeder code of ethics that they want their members to adhere to. Just being AKC registered is not a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. It just means the puppy was from registered parents and the breeder has taken the steps to begin the registration process for the puppies. Even pet stores can sell AKC registered pups if the breeder registers the dogs. The AKC cannot police everyone professing to be a breeder so again, being an educated consumer is very important.

Use your gut instinct and do not get suckered by cute faces or sob stories. Remember, this pup will be yours for the next ten years or much longer depending on breed. You should get the best possible puppy possible from the most responsible source you can find should you go the breeder route. Many of these questions can be adapted to ask at a rescue as well. Do not hesitate to ask what is known about the background of the puppies (or adult dog); what medical care they have had and has the staff noticed anything about their temperaments that could be of concern? Ask about the adoption agreement and have it gone through carefully with you."

A good breeder takes a LIFETIME interest in ALL dogs produced. They want to know how your dog does in its new home, love getting calls and cards from you and are always there to advise you if a problem comes up. If a medical condition crops up, they want to know so if it is potentially hereditary, they can alter the program and try to stop the problem in future generations. A good breeder is a mentor and best friend to all buyers and dogs they produced. Your feedback is the ONLY way good breeders are going to know if their lines are producing the quality of puppies they are striving for. And a good breeder will sell with a spay/neuter contract or alter the puppy or dog before placement!

# Marchs Tip

## Tips on Finding Homeowners' Insurance

(<http://www.akc.org/insurance/tips.cfm>)

Shop around. Ask your dog-owning friends which company they use and if they have had problems. Your dog's national breed club (<http://www.akc.org/clubs/search/index.cfm?action=national&display=on>) may also have suggestions.

Contact the insurance

commissioner ([http://www.akc.org/insurance/stateins\\_links.cfm](http://www.akc.org/insurance/stateins_links.cfm)) in your state.

The phone number can also be found in the state government section of the blue pages of your phone book. The commissioner can provide you with a list of all insurance companies doing business in your state. Work your way down the list to find out who can provide you with coverage that best suits your needs. When you speak to the commissioner, share your frustration over companies' discriminatory practices. Specifically ask him or her to review a cancellation or refusal to renew your policy. Existing law may already prohibit insurance companies from discriminating by breed, particularly if you live in Pennsylvania or Michigan.

Agents within the same company may have different policies. Talk to more than one representative for a particular carrier before giving up.

Show that the dog has completed some type of obedience training program, such as AKC's Canine Good

Citizen (<http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/index.cfm>) program.

Contact your state senator or

representative ([http://www.akc.org/insurance/writing\\_to\\_rep.cfm](http://www.akc.org/insurance/writing_to_rep.cfm)) . Discuss your insurance problems and suggest that he or she introduce legislation prohibiting insurance companies from discriminating against homeowners based on the breed of dog they own. The Government Relations department ([doglaw@akc.org](mailto:doglaw@akc.org)) has materials to assist you in these efforts.

As a last resort, consider buying a separate liability policy or separate rider to your existing policy that is specifically directed towards your dogs.



## Aprils Tip

### DOG PARK SAFETY

With the summer months just around the corner please keep Dog Parks safe for Everyone!! Make your first visit without your dog. Familiarize yourself with the posted rules and how the park works. Observe the posted park rules. Complaints about you or your dog threaten the success of these sites. Remember, dogs must be leashed upon entering and leaving the off-leash area. Please know and follow the rules!

Let your dog off leash as soon as you arrive at the site. Mixing leashed and unleashed dogs can be an explosive situation. Leashed dogs, and their humans, often display body language and behavior that is threatening to the free dogs and may provoke them to be threatening and defensive in return. Keep walking. Walking defuses defensive behaviors and helps keep the off-leash area a neutral territory. This means your dog is more likely to pass by another dog with just a curious sniff rather than a stare-down. Limit the time you spend standing or sitting and chatting. When folks congregate, many dogs may become protective of their people and their space, making scuffles more likely to occur.

Be aware that dogs have different play styles. Educate yourself about dog behavior. Behavior that concerns some dog owners may simply be a rambunctious play style. Always respect other dog owners' wishes if they are not comfortable with how your dog is interacting with theirs. Simply move to another part of the park for awhile. Leash up and leave if your dog is acting in an aggressive manner or having a bad day.

Closely supervise your dog. Do not reach in to break up fighting dogs. Instead, squirt the dogs in the face with your water bottle or distract the dogs by throwing a jacket on them. If it is your own dog, try grabbing its tail.

**PARENTS, KEEP YOUR CHILDREN WITHIN REACH.** Many dogs do not live with kids and have not been socialized to children. Teach children not to run, scream or ride their bikes near the dogs. Train your children always to ask permission from the dog owner before approaching an unfamiliar dog.

Prevent injuries. Under Missouri law, a dog owner is liable for injuries and damage inflicted by their dog. Watch your dog carefully! If your dog injures a person or a dog, give your name and phone number to the injured party. Report to law enforcement authorities any handlers who refuse to take responsibility

for damages/injuries and who are endangering the safety of others. Record their license plate number if possible.

Know your dog. Not all dogs like meeting new dogs. If your dog has not regularly interacted with other dogs, find out how he will react before forcing him to meet lots of unfamiliar dogs. Invite a few mellow dogs over to your friend's big yard to play. Check for obedience schools that offer socialization classes for adult dogs. Be sure to socialize puppies (8-16 weeks of age) at a puppy kindergarten class. Early socialization is one of the most important things you will ever do for your dog!

The first few times you take your dog to a site, choose a time that is not busy. Weekday evenings are peak times. Weekends and holidays tend to be busy all day long. The first visit can be a little stressful for both you and your dog, so keep it short and happy. Gradually work your way to longer visits.

## KIDS IN THE DOG PARK

Dangers - Not all dogs are child-friendly. Never allow your child to approach or pet a strange dog without the owner's presence and approval. Herding dogs may nip at children while attempting to "round them up." A running, squealing or screaming child may become a target for many dogs, because the child resembles an injured animal or prey. Direct eye contact is confrontational to dogs. An interested child wants to stare into a dog's face, but this may provoke a dog unintentionally. Never let your child have toys or food in a dog park. A friendly dog might knock down your child to get at a bright ball or cookie. One adult to supervise several children and the family dog is not sufficient to ensure everyone's safety and control. Be sure you can take care of everyone you bring to a dog park. All dogs have the potential to bite.

Parents: If you do bring your children to a dog park, please teach them how to behave with animals and what to do in an emergency: Never run. Hide your face. Tuck your arms and legs into your body. Curl up in a ball, face down on your hands and knees. Be as still and quiet as possible. Wait for help or until the dog has left. Do not stand.

Health risks: Children are more susceptible to contracting intestinal worms and other infections from touching grass where feces or urine are present. That is one major reason dogs are prohibited from children's playgrounds and school yards. Be sure your children (and you) always wear shoes in a dog park.

Children can pick up fleas, lice, or skin mites from infected dogs. Tennis balls may carry disease and contamination.

## OTHER SAFETY TIPS

Start safe by following these guidelines: Pay attention to your dog and be aware of where he is at and what he is doing at all times. Stay close enough to control or protect your dog in the face of a potential fight. Keep a collar on your dog at all times so you have something to grab, if needed. Leave the Park. Some days it's just a bad mix. Go for a walk or come back later. You and your dog will be better off.

Prevent a Dog Fight before It Happens-Learn the 4P Warning Signs:

**Posture** - A dog's body language can communicate fear, hostility or submission. Learn to read and respond to your own dog's body language, and others.

**Packing** - More than 2 or 3 dogs packed together can lead to trouble. Break it up before it starts by leading your dog to a neutral area at least 30 feet away.

**Possession** - Whether it's you, a ball, or a treat, most dogs will protect what is theirs. Remain aware.

**Provoking** - If your dog is continuously annoying another dog or dogs, or provoking attention, it's time to leave the park.

What to Do If a Fight Occurs:

An injured dog may bite anyone near by. A dog fight can be violent and is upsetting to everyone present.

Keep calm. Even the calmest, most pleasant, well-adjusted person may become upset, angry or belligerent, if they or their dog is injured in a fight. Emotional behavior is automatic; try to remain calm and as objective as possible.

Never reach your hands into the middle of a dog fight. You may get bit, and often by your own dog.

Distract the dogs and divert their attention. A blast of water from a water bottle, a loud whistle, or a pocket air horn may work.

If your dog is not in the fight, make sure he does not join in.

If a fight occurs, control your dog and remove him to a neutral area.

Maintain a cool head. Getting upset and yelling will only add to the frenzy.

When warranted, exchange contact information with the other dog owners. If you can't because you must attend to your dog, designate someone else to get information. Remember, owners are solely liable for injuries or damage caused by their dogs. This includes injury to another dog or person, no matter how it began, who said what, or whatever.

## Junes Tip

### Over Doing Vaccinations

Currently, we recognize that dogs probably are over vaccinated and there is mounting evidence that these vaccinations may play a role in the increasing incidence of auto-immune diseases and even cancers that we see today.

Unfortunately, no one knows the real need for vaccination, but yearly boosters for all infectious diseases is overkill. Clearly, in many cases, the vaccinations are not necessary and giving them may cause problems. The risks of not giving vaccinations (once the healthy young dog has been adequately immunized) is becoming less than the risk of giving them. This is an important issue and more data will be coming based upon the current research and observations by concerned veterinarians. This is what appears to be the prevailing view that dogs should receive their puppy series against the major canine diseases, including parvovirus and bordetella. These vaccinations should be repeated at 1 year of age. After that time, only necessary vaccines should be given. That includes, of course, the legally required rabies vaccinations. On the other hand, it is clear that rabies vaccination is effective for up to 3 years in the dog. As such, it may be necessary to lobby local and state governments to reflect rabies vaccination requirements which fit the scientific evidence. Once puppyhood is over, further parvovirus vaccination is probably unwarranted. The disease in adults is mild and self-limiting. Intranasal vaccination for bordetella may provide life-long immunity. In areas where Lyme's disease or leptospirosis are not prevalent, vaccination for these agents seems unnecessary. On the other hand, vaccination for canine distemper and canine hepatitis virus are probably warranted at some time while the animal ages.

There are currently 3 ways to do this:

- 1) monitor titers and vaccinate when the IgG antibody titer drops below 1:50 (although this may not be any more valid than guessing),
- 2) re-vaccinate when the dog gets 10-12 years old (which in many cases will be adequate), or
- 3) play the odds and vaccinate every 3 years (which is similar to the recommendation for cats by the Board of Feline Practitioners).

No one wants their pet to contract a preventable disease, yet most healthy animals do not need vaccination as often as is currently practiced.

Immunodeficient animals may not respond adequately regardless of the

vaccination schedule. Discuss these options with your veterinarian and make an informed choice about vaccination. Hopefully, your veterinarian will have thought and struggled with these issues and be able to support your decision about your pet's health.

Remember: Just because your dog does not need yearly vaccinations, they should still have a yearly check-up by your veterinarian!

# Augusts Tip

## How to Stop Puppy Aggression

Puppies may seem cute and cuddly on the outside. However, that seemingly innocent puppy biting and chewing can mean serious danger to you, your friends, neighbors and visitors if they aren't dealt with at an early age. When it comes to aggressive puppy behavior, there are laws that state your dog can be put down if it bites someone.

To ensure that DOESN'T happen, you must train and socialize your puppy at an early age. Puppy aggression doesn't just mean puppy biting; it means barking and lunging at people as well. While the behavior may seem cute on the outside, if not properly treated at an early age, it can develop into serious dog aggression and will be much more difficult to fix at an older age. Please keep in mind they are puppies with a clean slate to learn as long as you the owner are FAIR, FIRM and CONSISTANT.

- Early Intervention is Key! The absolute best way to deal with aggressive behavior, is to prevent it in the first place! The good thing about starting with a young puppy rather than an older dog is that puppies are more impressionable and akin to learning proper training. So the first time your pup growls, bites, or chews, immediately "GRRRR" at him and say "NO" in a firm, confident voice, we even show our teeth, like the mother dog would do to discipline her puppies . Make sure you offer an alternative, preferred response to the action so he can be rewarded for performing it. For example, if you say NO when your dog barks, ensure that you give your dog a treat or lots of attention when he stays quiet, otherwise he will never get the proper message.
- If you act quickly and consistently enough, your puppy will halt its aggressive behavior before it even becomes an issue.
- Establish yourself as the leader from the start. Set rules that are humane but consistently enforced. Get your puppy accustomed to your handling of food, toys, and his body. Let him know that toys are a treat, not a privilege, and that food is always served on YOUR schedule, not his. Additionally, cuddle and pet your puppy when he or she is calm, not excited. Do not work your puppy into a fluster and then expect him to not show his teeth or some snarling when you unexpectedly pick him up.
- Do not scare or yell at your puppy. Puppies are easily startled, so if you are going to punish your dog, do so with just a firm rebuke rather than physical

punishment or a loud voice. Reward your dog with treats and praise for calm, subordinate behavior. When your puppy sees that behaving well is a good thing, he will be much less prone to act out aggressively. If you yell while your puppy is barking they think you are joining in the fun.

Beware of puppy teething. Puppies teeth between the ages of three and six months, and at this time they become more playful. Puppy biting and chewing becomes more common because it allows the puppies to soothe their aching gums. While a little playful gnawing isn't aggressive, it CAN lead to aggressive biting if encouraged. Be tolerant of your puppy's biting, but rather than letting him chew your hand or other body parts, give him something cold. A great solution is to put your pup's favorite toy in the fridge overnight, then give it to him to chew on all next day, or try ice cubes as treats for good behavior they are like pop cycles to kids. This will not only keep him from nipping on humans, but also help soothe the teething pain.

- Socialize your dog at an early age. This is absolutely crucial in your dog's development and essential in preventing unwanted aggressive behavior. The more used to other dogs and people your puppy is, the less likely he will develop common aggression problems later in life. Show him respectful behavior towards children, visitors, and other dogs at an early age, and reinforce this behavior. Expose your puppy to as many different types of people and things as possible. Your dog will learn to love people and other dogs, and relish in their company.

**SOCIALIZE – SOCIALIZE – SOCIALIZE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

- Finally, do not encourage your puppy's aggressive behavior with games like wrestling or tug of war. Games that encourage winning bring out the most aggressive behavior in dogs, so avoid these types of games. Instead, encourage light, non-competitive games such as running and playing fetch. A pleasant behavior towards your dog and good socializing will drastically diminish aggression in puppies. Allow your pup to have fun and be young, but be firm, fair and consistent in your training. Your puppy, family, and friends will all thank you!

# Octobers Tip

## What Rottweilers Are Like to Live With

Rottweilers are tough, strong dogs. And they don't always know their own strength. Their self-confidence and intelligence—when properly trained and socialized—can result in a loving, devoted and sometimes laid-back companion.

Extremely energetic, Rottweilers love playing catch in the back yard, tagging along for a morning run or taking a big hike in the woods. They crave attention and companionship from their owners. Without it, they tend to get bored and destructive. A neglected or mistreated Rottweiler can do a terrible number on your favorite shoes.

A happy and properly trained Rottweiler can be a devoted friend to children, not to mention an extremely effective watchdog—often having to do nothing more than stand there to keep trespassers away.

Things You Should Know.

Before you consider a Rottweiler, be prepared for its massive size and challenging temperament. Rottweilers appreciate a confident handler who can show them who's in charge. Some may test your authority, so stay on top of their training and obedience. They respond to commands and are eager to please.

Coming from a long line of herders, Rottweilers also appreciate stimulating tasks and activities. Keep them busy with agility and obedience games. But remember to always keep them on a leash in public, as they can be slightly confrontational with other dogs.

A healthy Rottweiler can live as long as 12 years. Common health issues include hip dysplasia and eye problems. Their coats are easy to care for and don't shed excessively. Grooming care for a Rottweiler is minimal. Rottweilers need to be brushed once or twice a week to keep shedding to a minimum. Their nails should be trimmed every two to three weeks as needed, and their teeth should be brushed daily. Baths for Rottweilers should be kept to no more than two a month to keep their coat from becoming dry.

Veterinary care is vital in keeping a Rottweiler puppy and adult dog healthy. Rottweilers are also prone to cancer as they get older and are especially prone to bone cancer. It is important to have regular check-ups for



the aging dog to catch health problems early. Routine veterinary care for a Rottweiler can help them live a long and healthy life.

Rottweilers are a strong and powerful breed that must be well socialized and trained. Rottweilers should be socialized around other people and animals as early as possible. Getting a puppy or adult Rottweiler into an obedience class will give them the confidence and knowledge to be a better dog and member of society. Rottweilers were bred to work, so they need exercise and mental stimulation. Daily walks are ideal as well as playing a game of fetch.

It is important to care for a Rottweiler's nutritional needs. Rottweilers should be fed the highest quality pet food that their owner can afford. Rottweilers are prone to hip and elbow dysplasia as well as arthritis in old age, so it is important not to over-feed a Rottweiler, which can lead to these problems. Always make sure that a Rottweiler has access to fresh water.

# Novembers Tip

## SO YOU WANT TO BUY A ROTTWEILER!

Your new pup may seem happy and lively when you first get him home, running around and greeting everyone with that little stub wagging a hundred miles an hour. However, most puppies tend to gradually become quieter and more subdued. All puppies are different, and you may only notice one of these behaviors - or all of them...

- 1) A loss of appetite
- 2) He seems 'lazy' or extra sleepy
- 3) Diarrhea (we use PLAIN Yogurt coated on their food to settle their little tummies)
- 4) A lessening of interest in toys/treats/attention
- 5) Apparent 'depression' or sadness
- 6) General anxiety

Your puppy's little body is trying to adjust to many new things, and he may react to this by 'shutting it all out' - simply withdrawing from activity and going to sleep

Like babies, puppies need to sleep a lot anyway, but for the first few days they may seem to be taking one marathon nap! He's feeling scared, and a bit homesick, and it's not surprising that he may not feel much like playing or eating. As the days pass though, and he starts to feel more 'at home' with his new family and surroundings, he will start to 'perk up', his appetite will come back (often with a vengeance!) and he will suddenly be the bright, active little pup you first met. When that starts to happen, you know he's settled in.

How to tell if your new puppy is just homesick.... or really is SICK

Although in most cases, the above symptoms last only a couple of days and are nothing to worry about, it's important to know that the same symptoms CAN SOMETIMES INDICATE TRUE ILLNESS.

There are many serious, contagious canine diseases that cause loss of appetite, diarrhea, lethargy (excessive sleepiness) and so on. One of the difficult things for new puppy owners is knowing when there's nothing to worry about - and when to seek veterinary help

Although it's not possible for me to tell you how to know for sure whether your puppy is homesick or really sick, there are some tips that can help you figure it out.

Your puppy may be suffering from an illness if -

His diarrhea is frequent, and is getting worse. Or if it is watery or contains blood/mucus

He is vomiting repeatedly and is unable to keep food/water down

He seems totally exhausted - too tired to lift his head or care about toys/treats

A puppy that is just homesick may seem sleepy and sad, but can generally be enticed with a game of fetch or a tasty treat. Most times there will be short periods of happy activity during the day, even though he isn't quite 'himself'.

However, if your puppy is truly sick, he will usually be unwilling/unable to run around and play - even for short periods. He will look and act as if he feels terrible.

What to do if you're worried

Young puppies are very vulnerable, and can get sick very fast. It's best not to take any chances with a young puppy. If you are worried or concerned, always err on the side of caution and take him to see your veterinarian.

Whenever you bring a new puppy home, your breeder should insist that you take him to have him checked over by your veterinarian within a day or two anyway (most breeders have a contract requiring you to do so). This way you can be certain that he's current on all his puppy shots, de-worming and other routine care. It also gives you a chance to make sure there are no underlying health issues that you need to be aware of and let your vet get to know your puppy, a great way to start the socialization of your new baby. Remember to take your health records and a stool sample in to be checked even if it was negative when the breeder had them last checked. Young puppies are frequently infected with coccidia and often develop active Coccidia -- even puppies obtained from diligent professional breeders. Infected puppies almost always have received the parasite from their mother's feces. Typically, healthy adult animals shedding the parasite's oocysts in their feces will be asymptomatic because of their developed immune systems. However, undeveloped immune systems make puppies more susceptible. Further, stressors such as new owners, travel, weather changes, and unsanitary conditions are believed to activate infections in susceptible animals.

If you're not certain whether your puppy's behavior means he's just going through the normal 'adjustment period', or whether he's not feeling well, take him to your vet just as soon as you can. That way you can put your mind at rest, and be certain that you are doing the very best you can for your new pupp (before you do please take our Rottweiler Owner quiz)

The Rottweiler is a sensitive, intelligent and loyal animal and usually wants to please its owner. Occasionally, it can be quite stubborn though, and requires more attention and training. It is imperative that discipline is consistent and firm without being overly rough. A harsh word will often suffice, although sharper corrections are sometimes necessary. Ownership isn't for the timid or very busy person who cannot or is not inclined towards careful supervision of his/her pet. The Rottweiler is the current "fad" guard/macho dog of the moment. For four years running, it has been the second most-popular AKC registered breed. Don't be swept up by the hype, or the fact that your neighbor, aunt, sister, or best friend has one. A properly bred, socialized and trained Rottweiler is not inherently vicious. The rapid rise in popularity of the breed has attracted many irresponsible breeders who are only interested in making a profit, and don't care what damage is done to the breed in the process. The Rottweiler is a large, powerful dog and along with ownership comes much responsibility. Rottweilers require extensive socialization from an early age, exposing him to the sights, sounds and people he will encounter as an adult? Because of their size and strength, obedience training for your Rottweiler is **MUST**. Weekly group classes for 6 to 12 months are generally considered a minimum. Rottweilers are "people" dogs. They want to be with their masters. As a working breed, the Rottweiler requires daily exercise, and companionship, a good romp twice a day at least. Left alone or with inadequate exercise for long periods they may become unruly and destructive.

#### Characteristics and Temperament

The Rottweiler is a medium-large, powerful dog. His compact and substantial build denotes great strength, agility and endurance. On average, males will range from 95 to 135 lbs and 24" to 27" at the shoulder. They are more massive throughout with larger frame and heavier bone than bitches. Bitches will range from 80 to 100 lbs and from 22" to 25" at the shoulder. Animals can be found which are taller or shorter than these measurements, however, they are not considered typical by the breed standard. The Rottweiler is **ALWAYS** black, with clearly defined markings on cheeks, muzzle, chest and legs as well as over both eyes that range from tan to deep mahogany. His coat is straight, coarse and of medium length, with an undercoat varying in degree based on climatic conditions. The Rottweiler is a calm and self-confident dog, who has an inherent desire to protect home and family. Personality may range from highly affectionate to extremely aloof. He is not shy nor highly excitable. He is an intelligent and highly trainable dog. He is also very much a companion, often following their family members from room to room in the home. Because of his

size and strength, it is imperative that he receive proper socialization and obedience training from an early age. Nervous, shy, excitable or hyperactive individuals are exhibiting traits which are undesirable in an animal the size and strength of the Rottweiler and should be avoided.

#### **Aggressiveness/Protective Instinct**

These traits vary with the individual dog to some degree, although all have a strong territorial instinct and will defend their master's home, car and property from intruders. Rottweilers have also been known to bully or bluff their owners or other people, a trait that is most disconcerting. This problem is easily prevented through early obedience training and the development of a mutually rewarding working relationship. Many families have purchased a Rottweiler for its protectiveness, only to discover that it brings with it a considerable moral and legal responsibility. Problems arise quickly; the dog may not be able to distinguish between a bear-hug greeting of a family member, or a cherished friend, and the hostile advances of an intruder, particularly if the greetings between parties includes loud shouts, laughter or screams. Dogs must be carefully schooled to accept your friends into your home but physical contact should be approached carefully until the dog realizes that you belong. Strangers must never come into your yard unannounced; the dog doesn't know the difference between your brother and a burglar. Although the Rottweiler does not usually bite without provocation, even being cornered and held by one of these dogs is a very unnerving experience for meter men, delivery persons or neighbors wandering into the yard while the owner is absent. People expected to be in contact with the dog while the owners are absent should be thoroughly familiar with the dog.

Please be honest with yourself and your expectations of your new Rottweiler Puppy ask yourself these questions before you even consider purchasing a Rottweiler. If you can't answer "UNQUESTIONABLE YES" to each and every question please consider a different breed or wait until the timing is better to purchase a Rottweiler.

**AM I WILLING TO GIVE MY ROTTWEILER REGULAR DISCIPLINE AND BASIC OBEDIENCE TRAINING?**

**WILL I SEE TO IT THAT BOTH THE KIDS AND MY ROTTWEILER TREAT EACH OTHER PROPERLY WITH RESPECT?**

**AM I WILLING TO INVEST THE TIME AND MONEY NECESSARY TO RAISE MY ROTTWEILER?**

AM I WILLING TO PROVIDE ENOUGH YARD SPACE/HOUSE AND EXERCISE (NEVER, EVER CHAIN A ROTTWEILER, if this is your intention then DO NOT PURCHASE A ROTTWEILER)?

CAN I PROVIDE A SAFE HAVEN FOR MY ROTTWEILER, NEVER ALLOWING IT TO RUN LOOSE?

CAN I PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY DOG FOOD ALONG WITH GROOMING CARE REGULARLY FOR MY ROTTWEILER?

WILL I PROVIDE PROPER VETERINARY CARE FOR MY DOG?

AM I SURE THAT ALL OF MY FAMILY WILL SHARE IN THIS VENTURE?

CAN THE ENTIRE FAMILY BE “CONSISTANT, FAIR, BUT FIRM” IN THE REARING OF MY ROTTWEILER?

DO I CONSIDER MYSELF “A PACK LEADER” TYPE PERSONAILITY SETTING AND ENFORCING RULES, BOUNDIES, AND LIMITATIONS FOR MY ROTTWEILER?

WILL I LOVE AND RESPECT MY ROTTWEILER LIKE A MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY THROUGH THE GOOD TIMES, THE BAD TIMES, THE HAPPY TIMES AND THE SAD TIMES FOR THE DURATION OF HIS/HER LIFE?

You may think it strange that we seem to be discouraging you. In a way, we are, but only because we want to be sure that Rottweilers only go to people who will love them and care enough to be suitable owners for our breed. Remember they were all our babies before they became someone else’s dog. A pleasant, well mannered, friendly dog - much like a child, will certainly not raise itself. Please take the time to consider carefully if you have the time, the interest, and the resources to devote to a Rottweiler.

# Tip Archive 2010

## Januarys Tip

### YOUR NEW PUPPY – WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU BRING HIM HOME

Puppies often leave their canine family and go to their new homes when they're still babies. A medium to large breed puppy should be at least 8 weeks old, and a tiny/toy breed needs to be 10 - 12 weeks.

At this age your puppy is just a baby, and the stress of leaving his familiar family and surroundings, perhaps coupled with a long car ride, or airplane journey, and topped off with a sea of new faces/experiences and possibly even a change in diet, is a LOT OF STRESS for him to handle.

When you first met your new pup, he was probably feeling safe and secure with his mommy and siblings. He may have been the boldest in the litter then, but once you get him home he's likely to act much more like a anxious and homesick baby - and that's okay, because that's what he is!

It's natural for that confident, happy little pup you first met to be affected by the stress of these big changes in his life. Anxiety, sadness and withdrawal are not surprising, but they can be worrying and upsetting for his new parents.

Remember it's an exciting time for you and your family, but for your newest member it's not the least bit exciting.

What to expect during the first few days

Your new pup may seem happy and lively when you first get him home, running around and greeting everyone with that little stub wagging a hundred miles an hour. However, most puppies tend to gradually become quieter and more subdued. All puppies are different, and you may only notice one of these behaviors - or all of them...

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Your puppy's little body is trying to adjust to many new things, and he may react to this by 'shutting it all out' - simply withdrawing from activity and going to sleep

Like babies, puppies need to sleep a lot anyway, but for the first few days they may seem to be taking one marathon nap! He's feeling scared, and a bit homesick, and it's not surprising that he may not feel much like playing or eating. As the days pass though, and he starts to feel more 'at home' with his new family and surroundings, he will start to 'perk up', his appetite will come back (often with a vengeance!) and he will suddenly be the bright, active little pup you first met. When that starts to happen, you know he's settled in.

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What to do if you're worried



Young puppies are very vulnerable, and can get sick very fast. It's best not to take any chances with a young puppy. If you are worried or concerned, always err on the side of caution and take him to see your veterinarian.

Whenever you bring a new puppy home, your breeder should insist that you take him to have him checked over by your veterinarian within a day or two anyway (most breeders have a contract requiring you to do so). This way you can be certain that he's current on all his puppy shots, de-worming and other routine care. It also gives you a chance to make sure there are no underlying health issues that you need to be aware of and let your vet get to know your puppy, a great way to start the socialization of your new baby. Remember to take your health records and a stool sample in to be checked even if it was negative when the breeder had them last checked. Young puppies are frequently infected with coccidia and often develop active Coccidia -- even puppies obtained from diligent professional breeders. Infected puppies almost always have received the parasite from their mother's feces. Typically, healthy adult animals shedding the parasite's oocysts in their feces will be asymptomatic because of their developed immune systems. However, undeveloped immune systems make puppies more susceptible. Further, stressors such as new owners, travel, weather changes, and unsanitary conditions are believed to activate infections in susceptible animals.

If you're not certain whether your puppy's behavior means he's just going through the normal 'adjustment period', or whether he's not feeling well, take him to your vet just as soon as you can. That way you can put your mind at rest, and be certain that you are doing the very best you can for your new puppy.

## February's Tip

### Congratulations - you're expecting a baby!

Congratulations—you're expecting a baby! Since your family already includes a pet, you'll need to help your first "baby" adjust to the new one you'll soon be bring home.

You can help your pet cope with this big change in much the same way parents help children understand that a new brother or sister will be joining the family.

#### INTRODUCING YOUR ROTTWEILER TO YOUR NEW BABY

For years, your big puppy was your only baby and he received your undivided love and attention. Soon he'll have to share it with another. You're expecting a baby and, naturally, you're concerned about how your dog and child will get along. How will your dog react to this new arrival in his home? Will he be jealous of the baby or, worse, aggressive towards it? Or will he hopefully sense the importance that the infant has in your "pack" and act as a gentle and loyal protector? Here are a few tips to help you help your dog through the difficult transition from "only child" to "older sibling."

#### BEFORE THE BABY IS BORN

Socialize your dog with babies and small children as soon and as often as possible. Invite your brave friends with newborns over to meet your dog. This will help him get accustomed to some of the sights, smells, and activities associated with babies that he'll be experiencing in the months to come.

Let your dog check out the baby's room so that he can get used to the new furniture, toys, clothes, etc.

Buy a baby-sized doll or teddy bear and carry it around in your arms like you would the real thing. Talk to this "baby" and fuss over it so that your dog realizes that the thing you're holding is something important.

Buy a couple of your dog's favorite toys and put them away until you bring the baby home. If your dog gets too excited when he first meets the baby, give him the toys to distract him. Also, by presenting him with these gifts, you'll make the baby's arrival a happy experience for him and help him learn that the baby's presence is a positive thing.

Arrange for someone to care for your dog in your home while you're in the hospital. It's important to keep your pet's schedule as close to normal as possible (same feeding times, same walking schedule, etc.) to avoid unnecessarily stressing him out. If you are not able to have someone come in

make sure he has been brought home first to give him time to relax and get into his normal routine, before the baby's arrival.

### WHEN THE BABY ARRIVES

While you're still in the hospital, have someone bring something of the baby's home for the dog to smell (e.g., a blanket, shirt, or diaper). This way, when you first bring the baby home, it won't be totally unfamiliar to the dog.

When you return from the hospital, your pet may be eager to greet you and receive your attention. Have someone else take the baby into another room while you give your pet a warm, but calm, welcome. Remember remain calm at all times don't work your Rottie up with an excited greeting.

Make sure that you introduce your dog to the baby. Let him lick the baby's face and hands if you like but never paw at it or push it with its nose. This helps establish the baby as a new member of your pack. If you try to exclude your dog from the baby, you may unknowingly teach him that your new arrival is an "intruder." Thinking that he is protecting the established pack members, your dog may attack the infant.

Devote the same amount of time and attention, if not more, to your dog as you did before the baby came. A neglected pet may revert to immature destructive behavior because, in his eyes, negative attention is better than no attention at all.

Include the dog in as many family activities as possible. If you're taking the baby out in its stroller, bring the dog along for the walk. If you have any doubts about your ability to handle both dog and baby at the same time, ask another individual to walk the dog with you.

Above all, never leave your baby unattended with your dog, no matter how well-trained he is or how good of a temperament he has. There is always the danger of suffocation if the dog decided to lie down on or near the baby, and the unpredictable actions of a newborn could easily startle the dog, causing him to bite in self-defense.

Here is a list of suggestions when introducing a new born Child to Your Rottweiler.

- Train your dog to sit in front of you.
- Introduce a piece of the mothers clothing and the new baby's clothing, before the introduction.
- Allow the dog to sniff the new baby gently and calmly.
- NEVER EVER leave the baby unsupervised with the dog..
- Introduce the baby to the Rottweiler (while seated) when the baby is calm and settled; allow the dog to sniff in a calm manner.

- Always remain calm and confident, remember your Rottweiler can read your body language as well.
- Always have the baby in your arms and avoid leaving the baby on the floor or on the couch or chair.
- Make the experience positive for the baby and the dog.
- Watch your dog's reaction and if it is unsuitable, calmly restrain the dog and remove it from the area and seek further advice.

### CHALLENGING THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR ROTTIE

Get out the stroller and push it around the dog, take the stroller with you on your dog walks before the baby arrives. Wind up the baby swing and put your baby-doll dressed in some of the baby's clothing, washed in the same detergent you will use for the baby. Also keep the baby doll next to you on the couch, and carrying it around while you do your normal daily chores. You never know how the dog will react when the baby comes home, probably fine, but getting used to the little things that will be different may make it easier rather than having it all thrown at him all at once.

By following these suggestions, you can help ease your pet's stress, and help him welcome your new baby, along with ensuring that your pet stays where he belongs— with you and your growing family.

## Marchs Tip

### BREEDER'S ADVICE ON PICKING A PUPPY

Before we get started on this section, we are assuming that you will be dealing with a litter of healthy puppies. You should check to make sure that the puppies all appear to be healthy with no unusual discharges from the eyes, nose, or anus. It can happen to even the most responsible of breeders, that a virus can work its way into and then through a litter of puppies. If this happens, a responsible breeder will usually delay sending the puppies home until they have fully recovered.

If you have done your homework correctly in finding a responsible breeder, picking the puppy should be relatively easy. In their interview of you the breeder should have tried to find out something about your life style. Are you very active people? More sedentary? Do you have children and what are their ages and their sexes? All of these things are going to play a factor in which puppy will fit best in your home.

While within a breed you should be able to expect general trends in activity level, dominance and temperament, each puppy is an individual with its own unique style. Within a litter you will find puppies that are more or less dominant with more or less energy. Just as you can't expect all your children to be cookie-cutter replicas of each other, don't expect this from the puppies either.

Some breeders rely heavily on various puppy temperament testing methods. Some, like ourselves rely heavily on observing and interacting with our puppies on a daily bases to determine their individual personality traits. In our experiences, unless you are looking for specific traits in order to train a dog to compete or work in a specific area (like Schutzhund or agility), there are too many factors that can influence how a puppy reacts in a single testing session. Is he tired? Did he just eat? Is he just having an off day? In order to be accurate, the puppy temperament testing, in our opinion, should be repeated several times.

Whichever method your breeder uses, you should trust their judgement in evaluating the puppies. But bear in mind that what you see in a 5 to 8 week old puppy is just an indicator and is not an absolute. The experiences the puppy has once he goes to your home will also determine what the adult grows up to be. We have seen a number of puppies, especially the ones that tended to be quieter and less dominant, simply blossom.

Every breeder works their selection process differently. Some breeders pick the puppies for the new owner, some give the owner full reign. We take a course somewhere in the middle. We make observations about the individual puppy's temperament, activity level, dominance etc.. We may make recommendations against a particular puppy that we don't feel would be a good fit in their home and what they might be facing if they did choose that particular puppy. We do, however, let the new owner have the final decision.

In a well-bred litter from a responsible breeder, don't worry about getting the last-pick puppy. Each and every puppy in their litters will receive all of the necessary care and attention that they need in order to grow up into happy, secure adults. Also, don't be demanding that you get the "pick" of the litter unless you intend to show the dog (and even that's no guarantee.) We have, on more than one occasion, had people that wanted a top pick, only to be sitting there shaking their heads saying "How do I choose?" when they were actually confronted with the choice of 5 or 6 puppies. We have also been in the position of having been left with the last puppy in the litter being one of the ones we would have chosen as a "pick" puppy from a showing perspective.

Everybody has a different method of picking their puppy. We've had people sitting on the floor for hours going over each and every puppy over and over again. Most will usually sit down on the floor with the puppies and begin a weeding out process. Sometimes it's little things like their size, other times from our observations on energy level, sometimes it's just how quickly the puppies will run up to greet them. We have also had puppies quite literally pick out their new families. One of our families wanted the smallest little girl we had in a litter of 10 puppies, well she grew up to be the biggest in the litter even out weighing her own brothers.

What we are trying to say, is that there is no magic way to be sure you get the perfect puppy for your lifestyle. Each method has its advantages and

disadvantages. In the long run, you need to be comfortable with the decision. If you're looking for some hard and fast rules, there are none. We will, however, give you our general guidelines.

If you have small children (less than 5 years old), pick a middle-of-the-road puppy. Putting a dominant puppy with small children that he can easily intimidate is only asking for problems later. A very mellow, soft puppy might not be able to take the abuse even the most well-behaved children can dish out. If your children are older or more active, go for an active puppy but with lower dominant behaviors. (Dominance and activity level are not the same thing). If you have never had a dog before, again go for the middle- of-the-road puppy or a softer puppy if you don't have children. A less dominant personality in the puppy will make it easier for you to take control from the start.

If you have had dogs before and been successful in training them, then you are in the position of being able to pick any puppy.

One last thing we would like to point out here: Once you have done your homework and know that a particular breed is going to fit into your lifestyle, and found a breeder whose dogs you like, to a large degree the choice of more or less dominance and activity level is only going to make the difference between a good fit and a possibly perfect one. So don't be afraid to go for that last puppy even if he may not fit the guidelines. Maybe he is that one little puppy who is just waiting for you to come into his life. Remember no one knows your puppy's personality better than your breeder so ask them for advice if you are stuck on which puppy you would best fit your home.

## April's Tip

### “THE ROYAL” TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR RAISING YOUR NEW PUPPY

1) Be Consistent, Firm and Fair

(Make sure everyone in the family uses the same commands, never ever hit your puppy, remember the puppies Mother was always firm but fair you are now the Alpha dog so behave like one)

2) Don't give a command you aren't willing to follow through with.

(If you give a command and then you aren't willing to get yourself off the couch or off the phone long enough to follow up with that command then DON'T give it in the first place)

3) Keep a spray bottle of Apple Cidar Vinegar and water solution mixed 1 part Vinegar to 3 parts water to use as a correction tool.

(With the spray bottle you can redirect your puppy immediately by reaching out and touching them faster than anything else, this will NOT hurt the puppy, they just don't like the smell nor the taste of the vinegar.)

4) If your puppy starts to have an accident, pick the pup up with your hand cradling under its bottom and hind legs the pup will immediately stop long enough for you to get it outside.

(remember if your puppy has an accident in the house this is YOUR fault not the puppies, learn to recognize the signs, like sniffing the ground and moving in circles, take the puppy out every 1-2 hours and praise them when they do go outside)

5) If the puppy has an accident in the house, clean it up with a paper towel and place that same paper towel under a rock in the area of the yard you want the puppy to use.

(When a dog smells where it has gone before it will return to that same spot, clean up any accidents immediately with White Vinegar and water solution mixed half and half)

6) Crate training works wonders for helping in housebreaking your new puppy.

(Dogs are naturally den creatures, they will consider their crate their bedding area and will not eliminate in their bedding unless they have NO other choice. Keep the bedding area small enough for them to move around in but



not big enough to eliminate in one end and sleep in the other, this goes against Mother Nature – DON'T FIGHT MOTHER NATURE)

7) If possible place the puppy crate in your bedroom.

(They will bond quicker with you if they can smell you, hear you breathe or snore. They will sleep longer and you will be able to hear them the minute they need to go outside avoiding crate accidents. Teach your children that when the puppy is in its crate it is NOT to be disturbed this is the pup's alone time and children should be taught to respect that)

8) When you bring your new puppy home, put something in their crate that smells like you and members of your family.

(We send you home with a litter stuffy toy, place this along with something that smells like you the first few nights and it will make the transition easier and help the puppy bond with you very quickly.)

9) Refrain from giving the puppy water or food after 6:00 pm

(Puppies do not have total control over their bowels until about 3-4 months of age; they will be able to sleep longer at night if you monitor their intake before their bedtime)

10) Don't give any food or treats without having them earn it first.

(Food is considered a reward so make your puppy do something no matter how small to earn their food. We make all our dogs sit and wait with their food in front of them before we give them the OK command for them to eat Oh and by the way, ice cubes make excellent treats it's like pop cycles to kids, also thinly sliced frozen hot dogs make the very best training treat ever)

## Mays Tip

### Nipping & Chewing Tips

Puppies are lovable and a loving addition to any family, but these cute, furry companions will work with all types of natural habits, which may be quite a nuisance for a typical household. Dogs are naturally primitive creatures. Fortunately, they fit easily and can be trained with little effort, allowing us to share our homes with our favorite four-legged friends and instill our standards of order and cleanliness. Teaching your puppy to behave properly is a big responsibility and may seem much harder than it should be. With a little patience and a few simple, proven training methods, you can put an end to most of your puppies bad habits by redirecting his natural instincts to something more appropriate.

#### NIPPING:

Nipping is usual and normal for puppies, especially if you and your puppy playtime gets overly excited. The puppies normal instinct habits are seemingly harmless, but could soon become more dangerous and painful as your puppy grows. Teach your puppy early, never touch your skin with his teeth and he is far less likely to bite later on in life. The best way to train your puppy to stop nipping is to redirect him away from your hands with puppy toys. Your puppy needs a variety of toys that are fun and will fulfill his desire to nip. Soft, plush animals are a good choice, especially those with bright colors, and rubber dog toys invite puppies to bite and chew. A favorite toy of our puppies is a talking ball. Start your puppies training from the very first time you play with him and every time thereafter. Puppies at the age of eight weeks old can be trained with little effort. If your dog starts to bite as you play, always respond with "ouch" and prevent playtime for about 10 seconds. If your puppy continues nipping when you go back to your play, get up and leave the room for a moment. By your leaving your puppy alone each time he bites will help him realize that the nipping measure ended his play session. Soon he will quit the habit, so he can continue to enjoy playing with you. You need to start training your puppy each and every time he bites hard in order to end this habit.

#### CHEWING:

Much like infants, puppy's will start teething at some point in their development during this time they need to chew something because of their

sore, and tender gums. Unfortunately for dog owners, this natural chewing usually destroyed a number of possessions, including shoes, newspapers, and even furniture. You may not be able to prevent your puppy's need to chew but you can help him focus his chewing on more constructive materials. Train your puppy to stop chewing on household items with a variety of chew toys. Make sure that your puppy always has a chew toy available, wherever you are. For best results, confine your puppy to a small part of the house and have a lot of toys nearby. Surrounding your puppy with so little furniture and other tempting items as much as possible will make your efforts much easier. Also, take a favorite toy and place it in your freezer and give your puppy that toy during the teething process. If your puppy chews on something he should not, firmly say "AHAH" and place his favorite chew toy in front of him. Always praise your puppy when he chooses his toy over your belongings.

# Junes Tip

## Healthy Recipes for Your Dog

The pet food industry has been selling consumers a whole lot of toxic foods. For example, did you know that unless you take home your deceased pet and either cremate or bury them yourself, your vet could be selling them to pet food companies? Or that much of the ingredients in dog food is fecal matter, restaurant waste: such as styro-foam trays and diseased animals? Is it any wonder why our beloved animals are starting to develop the same illnesses as humans? Making sure that your dog receives a balance of protein, essential fatty acids, carbohydrates, vegetables, fruits, vitamins and minerals from your home cooking may prove a challenge, but here are 5 recipes you can easily prepare to support your pets health.

### Lamb Stew (Makes 8 cups)

1 pound lamb neck and shoulder pieces

6 cups water

3 carrots diced

1 sweet potato, peeled, diced

2 cups cooked brown rice

Combine the lamb and water in a medium saucepan and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove lamb and cool before removing meat from the bone. Discard the bone and return the lamb to the pot with the remaining ingredients. Return to a simmer and cook until vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes. Cool and mash before serving. Freeze in serving portions and defrost as needed.

### Tuna Fudge

2 6-ounce cans tuna OR 1 14-ounce can salmon (do not drain either)

1 1/2 cup whole wheat or spelt flour

1 tablespoon granulated garlic

2 eggs, lightly beaten 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Pre-heat oven to 350F degrees. Pulse ingredients together in a food processor. Spray a 9x9 pan with oil and add tuna mixture. Bake for 20 minutes, remove and cool. Freezes beautifully and will keep unfrozen in refrigerator for 3-4 days. CAUTION: do not refreeze any leftovers!

### Salmon Brownie Treats

1 10-ounce can salmon, not drained

3 cloves garlic

3 cups spelt, oat or quinoa flour .

Pre-heat oven to 350F degrees. Combine salmon and garlic in a food processor and pulse to combine. Add the flour and continue to pulse until a ball of dough forms. Remove from processor and place between two layers of wax paper then roll out to half an inch thick. Place on a cookie sheet and score into small squares. Bake 10-15 minutes.

### Pumpkin Sardine Dinner (Makes 5 cups)

1 29-ounce can pumpkin (alternate with cooked butternut squash or sweet potato)

1 cup frozen spinach, defrosted

1/3 cup flaxseed meal

2 3.75-ounce cans sardines (water packed, drained)

Combine ingredients in a glass bowl and mix well using either a potato masher or a large fork to ensure breaking down the sardines. Cover and refrigerate between servings.

### Banana Yogurt Smoothie (Makes 1 cup)

1/2 ripe banana, peeled

1/4 cup blueberries

1/2 cup unsweetened yogurt

1 teaspoon honey

1 tablespoon flaxseed meal

Mash together ingredients in a bowl and serve immediately.

Please remember we at Rottweilers Royal have done some extensive research into dog foods and the one we have recommended as your breeder has been carefully selected for the healthy contents, and balance nutrition please read your ingredients and avoid such things as “By-Products” and “Ground Corn” have fun with these and enjoy your summer.

## Julys Tip

### Did You Know, YOU Can Help

### Prevent Hip Dysplasia???

Hip Dysplasia can be the cause of 5 factors:

- A. Genetics
- B. Too much exercise at a young age
- C. The kind and brand of dog food you feed
- D. Overfeeding
- E. An injury

**Genetics:** A history of hip dysplasia in the family will likely result in pups with hip problems. Ask your breeder for copies of all hip and elbow OFA certifications.

**Too Much exercise:** It is EXTREMELY important not to exercise your pup too often during the crucial developing period between 3 to twelve months, too much exercise will stop the pups bones from forming properly and thus cause the dog problems such as arthritis in later life,. This is not to say you should not exercise the pup at all, but you will tend to find pups will give themselves plenty of exercise themselves by playing.

We do not recommend allowing the very young puppies to climb stairs, as this can cause stress on the bone between the wrist and elbow/knee causing the bone to push over the joint. This is generally called overrun and is cause when the dog comes down stairs and puts pressure on those front paws pushing the soft bone up and over.

**The Type and Brand of dog food:** Go with a good quality brand of dog food like Diamond Lamb and Rice Large Breed Puppy Food.

Poor quality brands don't have the right nutrition so your puppy will be lacking needed nutrition and sometimes ingesting chemicals. And with a Rottie choose either a Large Breed Puppy type or Adult type. Do not feed regular puppy food it will cause your puppy to grow way too fast causing the bones to grow way too fast and causing joint problems including hip and elbow dysplasia.

**Overfeeding:** It is important to keep your puppy lean not underweight but lean. Keep extra weight off carrying extra weight again causes immense stress on joints especially growing joints and is an invitation too many other diseases as

well. Rottweilers continue to get heavier until around 4 years old so don't worry if your puppy isn't big by a year old he or she will get there eventually some of our dogs are still getting stockier and some are only 3 years old, they have gotten quite a bit heavier than when they were a year old.

Injury: Injuries if sustained by the hip may eventually turn into hip dysplasia. So again be careful do not allow the puppy in places where he or she may fall and get hurt. If you have a rambunctious adult who is bigger and could accidentally hurt the pup supervise their play time. Never pull on a puppy's back legs always monitor play time with children as they may be too rough with puppy.

## Augusts Tip

### PLEASE HELP STOP PUPPY MILLS

Thanks to recent national media coverage, much has been done to expose the cruel and inhumane conditions at puppy mills. Puppy mills are generally defined as places that breed large numbers of puppies for sale to pet stores and/or over the Internet by breeding puppies for a profit and selling them wholesale to the pet industry. Many puppy mills are characterized by overcrowding, filthy, inadequate shelter, and insufficient food, water, and veterinary care. Most puppy mill owners sell their dogs wholesale to brokers, who in turn, sell them primarily to pet stores. Because profit, not quality dogs, is the ultimate goal of the puppy mill owner, breeding practices are often shoddy, and the breeding dogs are kept under the most inexpensive possible conditions that will keep them alive and producing. When one hears the term “puppy mill” rarely does one think of their neighbor next door raising litters of dogs that are emotionally and/or physically unsound. And yet, the line between irresponsible “backyard breeding” and those who raise dogs as a commodity for profit, as in a puppy mill, is a very fine one.

In contrast, there are hundreds of legitimate and reputable kennels and breeding establishments throughout the country. Whether these breeders are full-time professionals making an entire living from a kennel, or hobby breeders with only 5 or 10 animals, the responsible breeder is as concerned with improving the quality of the breed, (by showing or belonging to a breed club), than they are at making a profit. Customers wishing to buy puppies from these breeders are welcome to inspect the premises and in most cases, to meet the puppies parents.

In between the puppy mill operators and the responsible kennel owners are the so-called "backyard breeders" whose newspaper ads dot Sunday papers each week. These are people who own one or two purebred dogs and produce a litter of puppies once a year or so for extra money or “because I want my dog to have the experience of being a mother before I get her spayed. Like puppy mill puppies, these animals are often haphazardly bred with no regard to their genetic health issues or consequences and their offspring will most often suffer the same ill health and consequences.



A Responsible breeder will give each puppy the socialization that it needs and this requires a great deal of devotion and patience on a daily basis. They are responsible for each puppy that they have bred. (The puppy's new owner will reap these benefits.) Their dogs and their puppies are a breeder's number one concern and will provide advice and support for the life of each puppy they breed. They will also provide a health contract. They will make sure that they have homes for their puppies before the sire and dam are even bred. They will require deposits to encourage commitment and most time you will be placed on a waiting list, (but remember good things come to those who wait). They will require an interview process to all interested parties to ensure they are a suitable match for the dogs they will be placing. They will explain the good points and the not so good about owning the breed. Promise to take in, or help replace, dogs or puppies they have bred, no matter how old they are. Their dogs are "special" to them.

A few tips to help you avoid puppy mills:

1. Go to the breeder's facility if possible - inspect the facility where the dogs are bred and housed. If you see a large number of dogs and puppies, if the animals look sick or injured, or if the animals are housed in disgusting conditions, you should leave immediately and report the location to the local animal control or humane shelter.
2. Avoid pet stores – many pet stores receive their animals from puppy mills. That's because such puppies are cheaper and make a bigger profit. It's also easier than working with legitimate breeders who care about the buyers of their puppies.
3. Ask to see the papers and health certifications – What you really want are dogs registered through either the AKC or UKC. Do the math! Question how many litters each female has had and compare that number with her age. A female dog goes into heat twice a year, but she should not be bred each time nor should be bred prior to two years of age. OFA will not certify a dog until after their two year birthday so a five year old female who has had eight or nine litters is a good indicator of a puppy mill.

In reality, responsible breeding of purebred dogs, when done properly, takes a lot of hard work, time, and money which involve many steps on the part of the breeder. Good breeders always “breed to improve.” In our opinion any breeder who is making their money in dogs, are either over breeding or their dogs are not receiving the proper medical attention and health certifications that they so deserve.

# Septembers Tip

## Teaching Bite Inhibition For Dogs

Have you ever watched how puppies play with each other while they're still with their littermates? They love to bite each other, often on the face. If one puppy bites another puppy too hard, the "victim" will yelp and run away to play with a different pup. In essence, the biter gets a time-out for applying too much pressure with those needle-sharp puppy teeth. If he makes this mistake a few times, then he learns that biting too hard while playing makes his buddies run away from him.

Little by little each puppy learns to bite with less pressure to keep his playmates from putting him into isolation. This is one reason that you should not purchase a puppy before he or she is 8 weeks old. It is during the 6th & 7th weeks when puppies are educating each other about bite inhibition with each other. When a puppy doesn't get that information from his littermates, the pup then comes into the home and play-bites much harder with us leaving our arms bruised and sore.

You might be surprised to find that new puppy owners sometimes get so frustrated when this happens that they begin talking about giving up the puppy. That's not a good thing! Yes, we need to teach puppies to inhibit their bites to prevent them from scarring our hands, arms, ankles, and other body parts. But, there's another critical reason why we need to work on this NOW.

Dogs are animals! They come hard-wired knowing how to bite! Every dog on the face of this planet is capable of biting a human or another dog. If at time in your puppy's life he is ever provoked to use his adult teeth on an individual, we want to make absolutely certain that if he chooses to bite, he will do no damage. Dogs that bite hard and send people or dogs to the emergency room have not learned bite inhibition!

Dogs that bite without leaving any marks on human or canine skin have learned bite inhibition. So, how do we effectively deal with this problem? When puppy arrives you will begin to see this play-biting behavior as he gets comfortable and starts to play with you and your children.

I find that puppies bite with harder pressure when

- (1) they become overly excited about something,
- (2) someone, particularly a child, plays on the floor at their facial level,
- (3) someone roughhouses with them,

(4) they are just plain tired and need a nap.

We can avoid having puppy bite too hard by working to avoid having the behavior occur in the first place. So with the 4 situations I've listed above, try to avoid getting puppy into any of those situations as much as possible. Situation #2 should ALWAYS be avoided. Children should NEVER be at the same facial level as a child to avoid all facial-bite injuries! When your children play with your puppy, they should be sitting on a sofa or chair or standing tall.

Okay, let's get down to business. We need to plan how we're going to use time-outs to teach puppy not to bite hard. Get into the habit of keeping a leash or dragline attached to your dog's harness (yes, puppies should wear a harness, not a collar, for being leash-walked and being tethered) throughout the day. This dragline should NOT be kept on unless your puppy is being watched and supervised. The dragline should be removed anytime he is put into his crate or left alone for any reason! Please do not forget to remove the dragline when necessary. If you have a table-leg or chair leg that is thick and heavy, you can use that as a good tethering area. Sometimes people have a banister at the stairway that is thick enough to use as a tether spot. You can also consider going to Home Depot and getting a thick screw eye to put into the stud of a baseboard. You can then thread your dog's leash through the screw-eye and have it ready at all times if you need to give puppy a time-out. Don't worry, you can always spackle the baseboard when puppy gets older. Take a leash and thread it either around that table/chair leg or through the screw-eye. Thread the snap of the leash through the loop and pull it straight out. Now you've got your tethering area prepared and ready to use. Sit down and play with your puppy while he's tethered.

The following is going to be your protocol as to how to monitor how hard puppy is biting and how to deal with each level of pressure he's using: If puppy mouths you using his teeth, but it doesn't hurt, yelp "ouch!" in a normal tone of voice. Immediately stand up and walk a little bit away from him. Do not talk to him, do not look at him, completely ignore him for about 15-20 seconds. As long as he remains quiet and doesn't bark, whine or carry on, you can return your attention to him after that 15-20-second period. Go back to playing with him. If he repeats his behavior, you then repeat your 20 second time-out. If puppy mouths you, but it DOES hurt, yelp "OUCH!" in a much louder tone of voice. Immediately, walk out of the room and leave puppy completely alone for

30 seconds. Your pup should not be able to see you, hear you or know that you're anywhere nearby. If he remains quiet during that 30 seconds, you can return to him and then begin interacting with him again. If he bites with hard pressure again, repeat the 30-second time-out. Keep in mind that you do not want to bring any emotional content into these exercises.

Please do not use any physical means of punishment to stop your puppy from play-biting. Your purpose in doing time-outs is to teach puppy that when he bites hard, he creates a switch that makes you disappear! Just as his littermates taught him, you will now teach him that when he bites too hard, you will leave him isolated for a short period of time. This stage of training will require a ton of patience on your part, but your puppy will learn from it. Dogs learn by making associations. Dogs are pack animals so they do not want to be alone and isolated. Instruct all the members of your family to follow through with these training exercises.

If the family is together and puppy is with everyone, and then he bites someone too hard, EVERYONE should get up and leave the room while he remains tethered and alone! Support each other when this happens and it will have a greater and more effective impact on your dog. Little by little, you will notice that your puppy is biting with less pressure. That's a good thing! Figure out what that hardest level of pressure is, and begin performing the same routine of leaving him alone when he bites with THAT level of pressure. Essentially, you are now creating levels of reduced pressure that will change again. Each time you get rid of one level of pressure, begin focusing on the next level, which will be softer and softer. Once your dog learns to have a soft mouth, you can now use your 30-second time-out for the very least amount of pressure for which he'd be using his teeth on your skin. The end result of teaching bite inhibition is the puppy learns that teeth on skin is never allowed - EVER! If you have children in the house and they are mature enough to work on this training, make sure they are consistent and doing this only under your supervision!

**NOTE:** If you have a dog that is 6 months or older, you do not now have time to teach your dog to bite without pressure. Because your dog is older and now has his adult teeth, it is imperative that you teach him not to bite at all. He must learn that teeth on skin is NEVER allowed. No matter what pressure your adult dog exerts on your skin with his teeth, you must yelp OUCH and then leave

him alone for 30 seconds. He must learn that anytime he places his teeth on your skin, that behavior makes everyone leave him.

Patience, patience, patience! It will pay off. I promise.

# Octobers Tip

## Helping You Cut Vet Cost

From the foods you sneak under the dinner table, to the things you should check every week, the key to saving hundreds on your vet bill is in your hands. Here are some tips to help you keep your dog in the best of health and lower your vets bills.

1. Don't feed them table scraps. Avoid giving your pets table scraps of any kind and you will save money on vet bills.

Here are some foods not to give your pet and why:

### Bones.

All bones are dangerous for cats and dogs because they can splinter or lodge in the intestinal tract with disastrous results, usually requiring surgery. They can also get stuck in your pet's mouth or throat. This goes for cooked and uncooked bones as well but the cooked are more dangerous.

### Rawhide.

First of all, rawhide is not considered a food item. Thus, it is not covered by any labeling and rawhide can swell up to four times its original size in your dog's stomach and cause life-threatening blockages. Dogs can chew off and swallow large pieces of rawhide which can get stuck in their esophagus, stomach, or intestines. This almost always requires surgical removal

### Cheese and Chips.

Cheese and chips are too high in fat and can lead to a life-threatening inflammation of the pancreas called pancreatitis.

### Chocolate.

Chocolate is very toxic to dogs and cats because it contains ingredients that increase the heart rate; central nervous system and can lead to heart failure, seizure and death. Certain types of chocolate contain higher amounts of these; baking chocolate is the highest with white chocolate being the lowest.

Grapes and raisins.

Grapes and raisins can cause vomiting and diarrhea and can lead to life threatening kidney failure. Symptoms start about 24 hours after ingestions. Plus small dogs can choke on grapes

2. Don't let your pets get fat. Forty percent of all pets are overweight or obese. Overweight dogs develop arthritis three years earlier. The good news is that its 100 percent preventable and lean pets live 15 percent longer.

Here's how to do a fat check:

Look at and feel your pet. Start by seeing if you can pinch an inch. If so, your pet is overweight. Next you should be able to easily feel but not see your pet's backbone and ribs. Move your fingers across your pet's sides or rib cage. If you can't easily feel the ribs your pet is overweight. The fatter they get the thicker the layer of fat will be. Look and feel for love handles in the area of the back, hips, base of tail and abdomen. You need to actually feel your pet because it can be difficult to tell by looking at pets with thick or longhaired coats. Look and feel for a waist. Pets that are fat do not have clearly defined waists. When viewed from above your pet should have an hourglass figure with a waist just before the hips at the end of the rib cage.

What should you do if you think your pet is overweight? Take your pet to the vet before starting a weight-loss program. Decrease your pet's caloric intake by decreasing amount of food and or switching to a low-calorie diet. Increase exercise, which helps burn calories, stimulates mind and body, and makes them feel good.

3. Perform weekly home exams on all pets. Catching diseases early saves you money on vet bills. So be a pet detective and get to know what your pet looks and smells like and their habits and routines. Deviation from their normal routine usually indicates a problem. Take a systematic approach and do it the same way so you don't miss anything. Make sure there is ample lighting and go from head to tail.

Here's what to check:

Eyes.

Look at their eyes to see if they have any redness or discharge. Are the pupils the same size? Are they producing tears - too much or not enough?

Lips.

Look for dryness or infection or tumors

Nose.

A dry nose does not mean a fever. The nose should be smooth without scaling or roughness. No discharge or sneezing or pigment change either.

Ears.

Should be clean and dry. Not a lot of wax or debris. Odor indicates infection, as does redness, crusting, shaking head, pawing at ears or holding ear to the side.

Mouth.

Look for drooling or difficulty chewing or swallowing. Open the mouth and look for tumors. There shouldn't be any odor. Teeth should be white, not green or brown. Gums should be pink, not white.

Lymph nodes.

All dogs, but especially the large breed dogs get a type of cancer called Lymphoma which starts with the lymph nodes becoming enlarged. Feel under your pet's throat like the doctor does to you. You shouldn't feel the lymph nodes. Other lymph nodes are at the shoulder, under the forearm and on the backs of the rear legs.

Skin.

Look closely at your pet's skin by parting the hair and blowing gently. Look for redness, crusting, tumors, fleas, ticks and hair loss. Their coat should not be dull or greasy. Run your hands all over their body and lift up the tail looking for tumors, and check the tummy too.

Hydration check.

Check to see if your pet is drinking enough water by gently pulling up on the skin between the shoulder blades, and then release the skin, which should quickly snap back into position. In dehydrated pets the skin will take longer to release and sometimes stay tented up especially in cats.



Toenails.

Keep nails short. Overgrown nails can lead to lameness, bone or joint problems as well as an expensive trip to the vet when one catches and rips off or gets embedded in the skin.

4. Spay and neuter for health and happiness. Some 4 million to 6 million animals are killed in the U.S. every year because there are not enough homes!

# Tip Archive 2011

## February's Tip

### Choose the Best Dog Bowl

You may think a dog bowl is a dog bowl, but all are not equal. Different dog bowls offer different features, and some are better than others. Here's the lowdown on the main types of dog bowls that are available

Believe it or not, some bowls are not hygienic and can harbor harmful bacteria which are then transmitted to your dog, in a number of different health issues. It is important to choose wisely as accordingly to your dog's size, eating and drinking habits, your personal style and taste, and of course health and safety issues. Here is some important information to help you when choosing the right type of bowl among plastic, ceramic or stainless steel dog bowl. Ceramic can make a good choice if you choose wisely as they are usually heavy enough and are not as easy for the dogs to spill over. Some designer ceramic bowls contain lead and other toxic substances which are harmful to the dogs. Also, you may need to keep a regular check for any cracks or scratches developed on ceramic bowls as it. Stainless steel dog bowls are the best choice due to its durability (and your Breeder's choice). These bowls last for a lifetime and are easy to clean, rust free and non-leaching and they are the only type of food and water bowls we will feed our own Rotties from. Along with picking the right dog bowl comes keeping your dog's dishes clean make it a part of your own dish washing routine.

# Augusts Tip

## So you want to have a Show Dog

There is no AKC vs. UKC; they are separate entities with their share of good and bad things. Whichever arena you decide to show in, there is no right or wrong one. It is a choice that is made.

The American Kennel Club is the registry that most of us know. You see them advertised; you probably got your new puppy from a Breeder who has the parents registered with the AKC. But did you know that the AKC is an off shoot of The United Kennel Club? The UKC is one of the oldest registries in the Nation.

To show in a United Kennel Club (UKC) show your dog must be registered with the UKC, you can register mixed breeds, but we are only going to address talking your purebred dogs for Conformation Showing.

UKC you can Pre-Enter a show much like the AKC, or you can enter the show the day it is held. Unlike the AKC and because you can enter the day of the show, there are no catalogs to tell you who is who, or what dogs you will be competing against. Small drawback, but not all that important. Another thing that you won't find at a UKC show is Professional Handlers. Professional handlers are not allowed to show anything but their own, so most of your competition will come from either those folks who have bought a puppy/dog to show or Breeders.

The point system in UKC is also very different from the AKC. With the UKC you need a total of 100 points with 3 Competition wins for your Championship. That may seem like a lot, but actually it's not.

The Clothes Issue is nonexistent in UKC shows. You will see people showing in jeans and t-shirt to the normal clothing that is worn at AKC shows. The atmosphere is friendly, sometimes chaotic, but always enjoyable. The Breeders are approachable; the Judges will joke with you in the ring and speak to you outside of the ring.

Now, you can show both AKC and UKC and have finished dogs in both. If I were just starting out and wanted to see what showing was all about I would go the UKC route. Why you ask? Because you will find less stress on you and the dog, friendlier people and a ton of information there for the asking. The UKC is a great place to start puppies for the same reason and build a stronger bond with your life time companion.

Here is a perfect example of one of our own Royal Family Members:

Hello, we are the Roukounakis Family. Proud Owners of a 1 year old Alf/Akyra male named "Royal's Zeus vom Rouk Haus" (Zeus) Knowing that we intended to show Zeus, we made sure that he was well socialized with other dogs and people at a very young age. This was accomplished by attending puppy socialization classes as well as Obedience and Conformation training classes. This is very important, whether you decide to show in AKC or UKC, as you are in close proximity to many other dogs of all breeds and sizes at a show. Your dog can be disqualified for any improper behavior or aggression. We started to show Zeus in the UKC at 4 months old. Our son, Niko is our handler. He is only 15 years old and this was his first experience ever handling a dog. He has done an outstanding job and we are very proud of him and Zeus. The UKC has been a great organization for a beginner handler. It does require a lot of time and commitment, but it has been a very rewarding experience for the entire family. At 8 months old, Zeus earned the AKC "Canine Good Citizen" Award. He also achieved his first show title of "Champion" in the UKC. Now at 12 months old, we are working towards his "Grand Championship" title. Zeus has already earned 3 competition wins against other Champions and needs only 2 more wins to earn this title. We continue to attend conformation training classes and are now preparing to show Zeus in the AKC. We have our first AKC show this weekend at Cobo Hall. The quality breeding standards of Rottweilers Royal will provide you with a puppy that has the potential to be a great show dog, as well as a companion. If you decide to show your dog, just remember to do the best you can and enjoy the experience with the whole family.

## Decembers Tip

### **PET OWNERS NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS**

With the arrival of a new year inevitably comes a variety of New Year's "resolutions." We vow to better ourselves through losing weight, quitting smoking, stop procrastinating, and so on. But how may we improve ourselves as pet owners? What New Year's resolutions should dog owners consider? Here are 13 suggestions for your consideration.

1. Vow to provide your dog with the highest quality nutrition possible. This means researching the ingredients in dog food and often, thinking outside the grocery store kibble aisle. Refer to our 2011 December's Helpful Tip to test your dog's food quality, please do not accept advertisements from manufacturers as being conclusive.
2. Make it a point to ensure your dog's health through providing adequate and appropriate exercise.
3. Be realistic about your dog's weight. It's scary how few people recognize weight problems in dogs and equally scary when people think their pet's obesity is funny or a joke. Obesity shortens longevity, both in dogs and people. If you can't feel your dog's ribs easily, he is too fat, if you can see the ribs he is too thin. Ask your vet for guidance in regulating his weight and achieving healthy body condition.
4. Train your dog. Training is not a luxury, it is necessary Not only will appropriate training make living with your dog more enjoyable for you, it will make life more enjoyable for your dog by providing him with the mental stimulation all dogs need and crave. **SOCIALIZE, SOCIALIZE, SOCIALIZE, IS THE KEY TO ANY BREED.**
5. Play with your dog. Play can take many forms - training, tug, fetch, food dispensing toys, nose work games and exercises, off leash adventures in safe environments, etc. They just love being with you.
6. Keep your dog well-groomed and maintained. Mats in the fur, parasitic infestations, rotten teeth, overgrown toenails, embedded collars, yeasty ears, oozing or itchy eyes, hot spots, etc. are all unsightly and worse, uncomfortable for dogs. Routine care and maintenance can significantly improve your dog's quality of life.

7. Make it easy for your dog to succeed. Vow NOT to set him up for failure ONLY success. If your dog loves chewing on shoes, do not allow him unsupervised access to shoes. If your dog eliminates in the house, provide him with plenty of opportunities to eliminate outside by giving him frequent breaks. If your dog bites strange children, don't bring him to your daughter's soccer game.
8. Vow not to get mad at your dog for your management failures. If your dog loves chewing toilet paper and you leave the bathroom door open, it's your fault, not his, that the toilet paper is now strewn throughout your house in 7,986,235 pieces. Simply clean up the mess and next time, close the bathroom door!
9. Be appreciative of how wonderful your dog is. One of the biggest elements of successful training is looking for desirable behaviors and reinforcing them with something your dog likes and appreciates - a treat, a butt scratch, a game of tug, the opportunity to go for a walk. Never miss an opportunity to thank your dog for good behavior.
10. Make time for your dog. This may mean rearranging your schedule. It may mean going out in the cold or rainy weather to give your dog a walk. It may mean skipping Wednesday night book club so that you can enroll in the agility class you wanted to take. It may mean spending less time on Facebook and more time playing, training, and exercising with your dog. Spend just a little more time each day, remember they won't be with us forever.
11. Be a responsible dog owner - keep identification tags on your dog, mail in your microchip forms, renew your dog's annual license, make the annual veterinary appointment, clean up after your dog, respect leash laws, etc.
12. Keep learning and improving as a pet owner. What does your dog love? What stresses him out? How does he communicate his emotions through body language? Understanding your dog will enable you to be a better friend to him, this year and every year.
13. Help a less fortunate dog at least once this year. Remember that not all dogs are as lucky as yours. Not all dogs have regular meals, veterinary care, someone who loves them and will play with them, a home to call their own. There are many ways you can help less fortunate dogs - by making donations (either goods - beds, leashes, collars, food, toys, etc. or cash) to a local shelter or rescue, volunteering at a local shelter or rescue, organize fundraisers, help take pictures of adoptable pets for petfinder listings, apply to become a foster parent, etc.

# Tip Archive 2012

## Februarys Tip

### **Dog Food Aggression & How To Prevent It**

**Dog food aggression** is one of those dog behavior problems that is difficult for us humans to fully understand. It just doesn't seem to make sense that your dog would **consider you a threat** to his/her food resource. I mean you gave him the food in the first place, and if you feed your dog the same kind of foods that I do, it's not all that appealing anyway!

#### *But, what is your dog thinking?*

If your dog glares at you, snarls, growls and positions himself between you and the food he is actually saying to you "**this is mine, go away, find your own**". He is basically telling you that he considers himself as the **leader or alpha dog** in your household. Dog food aggression (sometimes called canine possession aggression or food guarding) is a dominance issue, it is serious and needs to be addressed immediately. **It won't simply just go away.** We've all made the mistake of laughing and even encouraging our feisty little dogs when they first display the "cute" signs of dog food aggression. **Don't fall into this trap!** Food or toy aggression in dogs should never be tolerated as you never know when it can escalate into **something more dangerous for you or a family member.**

#### **Why Does Your Dog Display Dog Food Aggression?**

- **Canine possession aggression** can be triggered by any number of factors but in most cases it can be attributed to one of these common causes:
- Your dog is desperate for this food, **in his mind he doesn't know if or when he will get more food.** Therefore he protects or guards his food, just like he would have done in a **pack situation** in the wild
- Your dog may begin to see you as someone who is always taking good stuff away. He comes to view you **more as a threat than a provider** (you've got to turn this thinking around).

- Dog food aggression can be part of the **general confusion regarding who the leader is in your owner-dog relationship**. Often food aggression is not an isolated incident - it's something you must rectify. To discover how to establish yourself as your dog's fair and respected leader I recommend you study and implement these training methods - [dogproblems.com membership](http://dogproblems.com/membership)

- It's possible that your dog doesn't even understand that his dog food aggression is an unacceptable behavior. In such cases there is an obvious **communication breakdown** between human and dog.

### **General Rules For Correcting Food Aggression In Dogs**

- Keep in mind that your dog's snarling/barking/growling is actually **rewarded and therefore reinforced** each time you back off. Your dog believes his behavior has worked and is much more likely to try the same thing again in future. **Note:** This doesn't necessarily mean you shouldn't back off in this situation - more on this later.
- If your dog is directing his aggression towards other dogs the best solution is to simply separate them at meal times. Feed them in different rooms or in their crates.
- Involve **all of your family members** in this dog food aggression training. You must convey a unified and consistent message to your dog in order to successfully reverse this behavior.
- **Take control of feeding time.** You control the time and place of dinner time - own the food!
- Make your dog **earn any food**. Just simple tasks like requesting a sit or a down stay before you put the food bowl down are a good start.
- Make it clear to your young puppies that it's **good to have people around when they are eating**. If you do this from day one you will almost certainly prevent dog food aggression problems.
- If you encounter dog food aggression it is a good idea to **feed your dog after you and your family eat**. This again is a throwback to your dog's pack mentality where the alpha dog or leader of the pack (which is you) eats first - your dog will understand this technique.
- Don't let your dog "win" the food through his growling, **this would reward the very behavior you are trying to eradicate**. Don't bully or intimidate your dog though, it's much better to make him actually like having you around at meal time (follow the tips below to achieve this).
- Never respond to canine possession aggression with **aggression of your own**. In essence what this does is to lock you and your dog into a battle of



wills. Your dog's next move will most likely be to step up his level of aggression in order to counter your action.

### **Dog Food Aggression Training Techniques**

- Firstly, be careful. If you believe your dog poses any real physical threat to you or family members I'd advise getting professional help. Speak to a **professional dog trainer or animal behaviorist** for more information.
- Below is a list of training techniques which could help your dog overcome his dog food aggression. Remember all of these techniques are designed to work towards **reconditioning your dog** to enjoy having you around anytime.
  - Mix it up, show your dog who is boss!
  - **Hand feed your dogs.** Eventually you should even be able to stick your hands into your dogs bowl while he is eating without any sign of aggression.
  - **Stroke and pet your dog while he is eating** and at the same time talk to him in a calming tone. All you are doing at this point is showing your dog that it is a good thing for you to be around.
  - Stand at a distance **your dog is comfortable with**, then gradually reduce this distance over time. You can flick a few treats in (or near) the food bowl as you slowly reduce the distance.
  - Put your dogs bowl down with **nothing in it**, your dog will look back at you as though you are crazy. He'll then literally beg you to come over and fill his bowl.
  - Feed your dog as normal but **hold back a few pieces of his meal.** When he is finished licking the bowl, he'll look back up at you, then you can come over and give him the remaining food.
  - Drop a few of your dog's **very favorite treats** into his bowl each time you walk past it. After a while of doing this your dog will welcome the sight of you approaching the bowl.
  - When your dog is eating, **call him over to you**, when he gets to you reward him, make it worth his while then let him back to the food bowl.
  - While you are preparing your dogs meal **put him in a down-stay or sit position**, only release him from your command once you have put his bowl down. By doing this you are controlling meal time and establishing (or re-establishing) your role as your dogs leader. To learn more about how to be a strong and respected leader I recommend a [dogproblems.com membership](http://dogproblems.com).
  - Work with another family member on this technique. Put your dog in his **collar and leash** and have him sit with your helper while you prepare the

food. When you are ready release your dog and allow him his food. Again you are **controlling** the situation.

- Try the "**Trade Up Method**". What you do is take away the food or toy your dog is guarding, and replace it with something better. You can use an obedience command such as "give" or "leave it" to encourage your dog to release the precious resource he is guarding. You then take this resource (the food or toy) and **give the trade up item to your dog**. Once your dog has finished with the new item, you can then give back the resource you took away. This technique proves to your dog that he will receive something great for giving something up, it will recondition his thinking.
- Every time you are with your dog have him in a **pinch or prong collar with a leash attached**. Whenever he displays any signs of dog food aggression you **immediately** administer a correction to your dog by snapping on the leash. What this does to your dog is build a negative association to the act of his food guarding antics. Note: I personally don't advocate this method but many experienced dog trainers swear by it.

## Marchs Tip

### **Dog Food Ingredients Test “You Are What You Eat!”**

Use this test to figure out the score of your current dog food.  
Start with a grade of 100 on the ingredients list:

- 1) For every listing of "by-product", subtract 10 points
- 2) For every non-specific animal source ("meat" or "poultry", meat, meal or fat) reference, subtract 10 points
- 3) If the food contains BHA, BHT, Glyceryl Monostearate, Propylene Glycol, Propyl Gallate or ethoxyquin, subtract 10 points. If all of them are in the food, subtract 50 points.
- 4) If it contains ground corn or whole grain corn, subtract 5 points
- 5) If corn is listed in the top 5 ingredients, subtract 4 more points
- 6) For every grain "mill run" or non-specific grain source, subtract 5 points
- 7) If the same grain ingredient is used 2 or more times in the first five ingredients (i.e. "brown rice hulls", ground brown rice", "brewer's rice", "rice flour" are all the same grain), subtract 5 points.

Keep in mind though that brown rice hulls and brewers rice are filler and not the same as brown rice. Brown rice alone is a good thing; see below. Rice flour is white rice.

- 8) If the protein sources are not meat meal and there are less than 2 meats in the top 3 ingredients, subtract 3 points

- 9) If it contains any artificial colorants, subtract 3 points
- 10) If the food contains any animal fat other than fish oil, subtract 2 points
- 11) If lamb is the only animal protein source (unless your dog is allergic to other protein sources), subtract 2 points
- 12) If it contains soy or soybeans, subtract 2 points
- 13) If it contains wheat (unless you know that your dog is not allergic to wheat), subtract 2 points
- 14) If it contains salt, subtract 1 point

#### EXTRA CREDIT:POINT

- 1) If any of the meat sources are organic, add 5 points
- 2) If the food is baked not extruded, add 5 points
- 3) If the food contains probiotics, add 3 points
- 4) If the food contains fruit, add 3 points
- 5) If the food contains vegetables (NOT corn or other grains), add 3 points
- 6) If the animal sources are hormone-free and antibiotic-free, add 2 points
- 7) If the food contains barley, add 2 points
- 8) if the food contains brown rice without the other "rice fillers", add 2 points
- 9) If the food contains flax seed oil (not just the seeds), add 2 points
- 10) If the food contains oats or oatmeal, add 1 point
- 11) If the food contains sunflower seed oil, add 1 point

12) For every different specific animal protein source (other than the first one; do not include any meat "meal" as one protein source, i.e. "chicken" and "chicken meal" would be as 1 source), add 1 point

13) If it contains glucosamine and chondroitin, add 1 point

14) If the vegetables have been tested for pesticides and are pesticide-free, add 1 point

#### GRADE YOUR FOOD:

94-100+ = A

86-93 = B

78-85 = C

70-77 = D

69 = F

## April Tip

### Preparing For a New Puppy

#### General Rules to Follow When Puppy Proofing

The anticipation of bringing a new puppy into your life is an exciting time for the whole family. Before you bring the puppy home there are many crucial tasks which need to be undertaken correctly. At the top of the list is transforming your home into a safe environment for your young puppy to live and grow.

The truth is, if there is trouble to be found you can be sure that your cheeky little puppy will find it!

For the purpose of this article I've taken "puppy proofing your home" to mean the following three things:

Making your property safe for a new puppy. Which means doing everything possible to reduce the risk of illness and injury.

Safeguarding your home and possessions against your little puppy's fangs, paws and mess.

Teaching your puppy some proper household etiquette right from the start (eg. no [jumping on benches](#) or stealing food from the table). This means establishing good behavior habits in your dog from day one and preventing problem behaviors from ever arising.

Get down on the floor and crawl around your home to experience how it will look from your puppy's perspective - go on do it!

Preparing for a new puppy is much the same as getting ready for a young child to come home for the first time. The only difference being that puppies are much more destructive! Your goal when puppy proofing is to set your property up to prevent any "incidents" from ever occurring. Puppy proofing is a serious issue and it pays to take the time to do it well. Vet bills are extremely costly and remember an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Put all dangerous objects and items that can be damaged safely out of your puppy's reach - it's always better to be safe rather than sorry when preparing for your puppy.

When you are away from home or otherwise distracted it is a good idea to confine your young puppy in a safe area, free from danger. You can use a [crate](#), pen area or a small secure room for this purpose. Puppies are not sufficiently equipped to simply have a free run of the house.

Closely supervise your pup when he is loose in the house, we suggest putting a leash on the puppy and loop it through your belt loop (tether him to you) and let your puppy follow you around while you do your everyday chores. This is a great way to monitor your new puppy and in building a strong relationship with him.

Provide some chew toys for your puppy to chew on. Chew toys are important for a few reasons. Firstly they are a good way to keep your puppy occupied; they relieve stress, assist in the [teething process](#) and are a far better alternative than chewing on your expensive sofa! **DO NOT USE RAWHIDE OF ANY KIND**, it is extremely dangerous to your puppy.

Use a bitter taste deterrent spray on all lower walls and furniture legs that could be considered tasty by your dog (don't laugh this

does happen!). Once again this sets up good behavior habits early on which your puppy will carry throughout her life.

If your dog gets into something inappropriate it is your fault - you can't expect your puppy to distinguish between an expensive pair of shoes and an old worthless rag.

## **Preparing For a New Puppy - Indoors**

Put safety latches on all low cupboards and draws. Small puppies are experts at getting their noses into the contents of these storage areas.

Electrical cords, computer cables and phone cords represent a major hazard to young teething puppies. Do your best to put all these cords out of reach. At the very least wrap them in pvc tubing (or similar) and apply a bitter taste deterrent spray.

Clear all benches and tables of breakables and other items which your pup could find interesting. If your puppy grows up believing there is nothing of interest on these benches, she will not bother to jump up on them to investigate - there will be no reason to.

Don't leave food around on tables and benches; clear it away as soon as you have finished with it. If a puppy hits the jackpot by stealing some food off a bench he is very likely to continue to search these areas in the future - his behavior has been reinforced and rewarded with the tasty treat. Make it easy for your dog by taking the temptation away and by not allowing this problem behavior to eventuate. Remember set your puppy up for success never failure.



If you have a balcony or raised patio area ensure that the railing is sufficient for keeping your puppy in. You may need to add a temporary barrier which secures the area.

Be careful with household items you wouldn't normally consider to be dangerous. I'm talking about things such as a rocking chair or a door that bangs shut in the wind. The consequences of such an accident can be devastating - for you and your puppy.

Check that your indoor plants are non toxic - your Veterinarian will be able to provide you with a list of toxic plants to avoid.

Puppies love to play with (which means destroy) the drawstrings that dangle from indoor blinds. If possible tie these strings up well out of reach!

Buy rubbish bins that are impossible for your puppy to get into. If not make sure the bins are locked away in a cupboard. Going through the trash is one behavior you definitely want to discourage your puppy from doing.

Keep ashtrays out of reach and never burn candles in a spot where your puppy could get at them.

If you have any poisons or baits out for rodents or ants make sure they are inaccessible to your little pup. Mothballs should also be placed well out of reach.

Fireplaces are dangerous areas for inquisitive young pups. When the fire is on there are obvious dangers and the stacked wood also presents its own danger.

Keep toilet doors closed, or close your bathroom door, you want to discourage drinking from the toilet and pulling miles of toilet paper off the rack.

## **Preparing For a New Puppy - Outdoors**

Be especially careful with any fertilizers, potting mix and weed killers you are using in your garden. It may mean that you switch over to organic products or a safer alternative.

Garages and sheds are chock full of potential hazards; make sure they are always locked up when your puppy is on the prowl.

Antifreeze is highly toxic and at the same time attractive to your puppy which is a very dangerous combination.

Clean up the yard from all tools, hoses and kids toys. Throw a few of your puppy's toys out there instead.

Check all fences and gates for holes. Gates that close automatically are a good safety measure (especially if you have kids or guests coming in and out).

Provide an area outdoors for your pup to dig and bury bones. A sandbox which is exclusively for your puppy is a great idea, it also builds strong muscles.

Your puppy will want to put everything in their mouth, if you can't keep them from eating rocks, mulch, or other small objects consider placing a soft type muzzle on your puppy whenever they are outside, it's a small price to pay to not have to go in for an emergency bowel obstruction surgery.

Check for any nails, screws or sharp pieces of wire protruding from the fence and other structures.

Swimming pools must be securely fenced off.



May 2012

## "HE/SHE ONLY DOES IT WHEN I'M GONE"

"He's such an ingrate" "He's so spiteful. He only does it when I leave him alone." He's got a great life. Is this the thanks I get?!"

"He's so mad at me for leaving him alone all day. We have such great weekends. He's perfect. Then, on Monday. . . but I have to go to work."

Sound familiar? Ever thought it or said it? And it's not even true. Dogs can't be ingrates; they don't share our value system. As for spite and revenge. . . yes, if this were a person, they might come to a similar conclusion. But we are talking about a dog. The family dog is not capable of premeditated crimes against the family.

Confused by what you're living through? Understandably so. But if you're going to live with a dog, it is important to understand dog behavior. Don't assume that a dog "works" the same way a person does. Dogs come into this world with their own set of genetically pre-programmed behaviors; that's what makes them dogs. When incorporating a dog into the household, it is essential to accept and work within the framework of the dog's comparative "limitations". Projecting human characteristics onto dogs and translating their actions into human terms just doesn't work. Misinterpretation leads to miscommunication; that leads to confusion. You can end up adversaries, not companions. He plots, he plans; he punishes you. You become angry, resentful. You become an emotional hostage. . . "When he was good, he was very, very good, but when he was bad he was horrid!"

Dogs are very social creatures. Left on their own, they will form packs rather than become solitary hunters. These packs are structured; there are leaders and followers. The family dog belongs to a pack, too -- the family. Even if the family consists of one person and a dog, it's a pack. People lead, dogs follow; it's up to human members of the pack to provide structure and guidance for the canine pack members.

When a dog **is** left alone, he may become uncomfortable, stressed-out or confused. Members of dog packs don't usually get left behind; it's not a good sign. When a dog becomes anxious, he doesn't light up a cigarette, begin to knit a scarf or turn up the stereo and put the headphones on to blot out the world! He barks, paces, grooms himself endlessly, chews, gnaws, marks territory and/or digs furiously - in other words, he acts like a dog. These behaviors are not directed toward you.

The dog is not going to gaze lovingly at your photo while you're gone. For a dog, the next best thing to you is **your scent**. If given the run of the house, many a dog will pace back and forth from the door to the window and back to the door again or explore frantically. The more he darts about, the more excited he gets. He finds a heavily scented object; it smells just like you. A sock, a shoe, some underwear, a sofa cushion or bedding; the remote control you hold all night, the book you've been reading, your tennis racquet, your hairbrush. He sniffs, he paws, he rolls around on it; he licks it and takes a nibble. No, it's not you, but it's something. But is it enough? Maybe he'll carry it off, climb on the sofa or bed with it, curl up and relax. But what if he doesn't?

You're still not back; the tension increases. Sustained anxiety produces metabolic waste; the dog has to "go" more frequently. The urine is pale; the stool is soft or runny. These are not housebreaking accidents; the stressed-out dog can't "hold it". The terrier's nibbling escalates into chewing, tearing and/or trashing. The hound's soft whine becomes a soulful howl. The dog that lacks confidence launches a volley of barks at any and every passing sound. Trespassers! The guard dog mix paces back and forth and marks his "territory". Nowhere in this scenario does the dog plot against you. His display is not aimed at you; he is relieving his own tension and fears. It is not spite or revenge. Once again, it's a dog acting like a dog.

Before you can begin to deal with the separation blues, you should be certain that being apart from you is the root of the problem. Owner absent behaviors can be the result of a poorly trained dog, or a dog that is smart enough to figure out that "when the cat's away, the mice will play".

Most dogs that house soil just aren't housebroken yet. Dogs that have accidents, as well as those who destroy, should be confined when left alone or unsupervised. Unneutered male dogs mark territory; so do insecure dogs. Having a puppy neutered at 6 months of age will prevent sexually motivated behaviors from developing. Neutering an adult dog will facilitate retraining.

Many dogs that trash and chew have not received adequate daily exercise. They're stir crazy and bored to tears, not stressed out because you're gone! Sporting (retrievers, spaniels, pointers and setters), hound and herding (shepherds and collies) types are high energy dogs and must receive a minimum of two hours of vigorous exercise daily. A dog that has had a good night's rest cannot be expected to sit around all day and do nothing! Tearing, pulling, pushing, digging, barking and pacing release all the pent-up energy; the dog feels better for it. Periodic escape behavior, trashing and ransacking can also be the doings of an unneutered male that is sexually frustrated by the scent of a bitch in season somewhere in the neighborhood.

True separation anxiety is typically seen in dogs that have been passed around from home to home or rescued from the shelter or street. Dogs that have not been routinely walked and socialized, that were permanently paper trained or relegated to the back yard are candidates for separation anxiety. The dog that follows you everywhere may have a difficult time when you go on vacation or a business trip. The dog that always had someone at home, except now this person has gone back to work or school or died may have a difficult time adjusting to a new routine or a new household. A seemingly well-adjusted dog can exhibit separation problems if you've just moved to a new house, gotten married or switched to the night shift. A shy or timid dog can be sent into a tailspin by a change in routine or an overnight stay at the vet clinic. Family fighting, separation, divorce or weekend custody of a child all affect the dog's day to day existence and contribute to his anxiety.

**WHAT TO DO** If you are bringing home a new dog, don't make the fatal mistake of immediately giving him the run of the place. This is your home; the dog is a newcomer. He should be closely supervised so appropriate behavior can be praised and unacceptable behavior can be corrected at once. Don't let him follow you everywhere all of the time. Think - if he can't let me out of his sight when I'm just a room away, **HOW** will he ever adjust to my being out of the house? If you have arranged your schedule to give yourself more time to help the dog settle in, do just that. Don't become a shut in or arrange for coverage for every minute of the day. Give the dog a realistic sample of what life with you will be like. If you come and go frequently, do just that. If you go to business or school and will be gone for extended periods of time, build the dog up incrementally to the length of time that you will be gone. Start with short, frequent outings (to the corner mailbox and back); gradually lengthen your time away over the coming

days. Staying home all of the time or taking the dog with you everywhere is certainly a way to bond the dog to you, but it also sets the dog up to take the fall when you suddenly disappear for six to ten hours.

Give him a small area that he can call his own. Let him use it as his "base of operations". He should be kept in the "people" part of the house; this does not include banishing the dog to the basement, a storage closet, laundry room or a shed in the yard. The area should be small enough to prevent pacing and dog-proofed so that the dog cannot injure himself and nothing can be accidentally damaged. Don't assume that because he was a caged shelter dog or a stray that he needs freedom. Too much space too soon causes problems. If you do not have such a spot, then get a kennel crate; that's what they're for. Many dogs prefer a cozy low roofed den to a wide-open space when they are feeling confused, frightened or insecure. You can see it in their behavior when they choose to play with a toy or eat a treat under the bed or table, or lay curled up in the corner or against a piece of furniture.

Start by leaving the dog for longer and longer periods of time; then give him more space an ultimately the run of the house. The length of time gone and the amount of space allowed are separate factors. Each time you increase the amount of space, decrease the length of time. Example: If there have been no problems when he's been left alone for 4 hours in a small room with a tension gate across the doorway, then reset the gate so he has access to the room and the hallway; but only for twenty minutes the first time. Work your way back up to the 4-hour mark. When in doubt, don't proceed to the next level.

For the dog who has gone through a change in routine, don't hesitate to limit his movement and increase supervision if behavior problems "suddenly crop up". True, you've moved and he's all confused, but that doesn't mean it's okay for him to bark his brains out, cling to you like glue or claw at the woodwork in the entry hall. Remember that small spaces are better than large ones. Tighten up on all obedience skills; don't forget to give the dog lots of praise for behaving appropriately.

### **CHECKLIST: MINIMIZE THE SEPARATION BLUES**

1. Keep the dog in his designated area when you are unable to supervise him. Be sure that you have thoroughly exercised the dog if you will be leaving for an extended period of time. An exhausted dog doesn't have much energy left to invest in overbarking, extensive grooming, digging or trashing; he'd rather "sack out".
2. Keep the curtains and/or shades drawn. If you don't have adequate window coverage, hang a dark sheet or blanket across the window. A dimly lit environment has a calming effect on most dogs. Additionally, there are no visual stimuli, via the window, to provoke the territorial barker or marker! Curtains can muffle loud street sounds that set off alarm barkers or startle/frighten dogs that lack confidence.
3. Leave a radio or TV on as "white noise". In many households, the TV and radio are on all the time as long as someone is home. Imagine how **LOUD** the silence is when everyone leaves for school or work and the sound system is turned off! Beyond masking outside noises, leaving the radio/TV/stereo on gives the aural appearance of your presence.
4. Supply the dog with an "only-when-I'm-gone" chew toy with your scent imparted on it; rub it between your warm palms or keep in your laundry hamper. This item should be something spectacular -- a flavorful, beefbasted knotted rawhide chewy or a commercially sterilized beef

marrow bone; stuff it deeply with cheese spread or canned dog food, serve frozen or chilled (great for teething puppies, too). Give it to him as you depart; you will remove it immediately upon your return. Not only is this a diversionary tactic, it actually makes being alone "not so bad", as this is the only time the-most-wonderful-thing-in-the-world appears!

5. **NO EMOTIONAL GOODBYES.** No smothering, hugging and kissing or begging and pleading to the dog to "ple-e-ease be a good kid". You do not want to emotionally charge an already loaded situation. Leave matter-of-factly. With the dog already in his confinement area, put on your coat, pick up your keys, etc., give the dog his goodbye chewy and leave with a simple "see ya later".

6. If you come home to destruction in one form or another, do not discipline the dog unless you have walked in and caught him in the act of misbehaving. Discipline after the fact does not teach, it punishes. Bringing the dog over to the scene of the crime, pointing at what used to be a chair, and scolding will certainly let the dog know that something is wrong. But are you complaining because he didn't chew all the legs of the chair off or because you wanted to chew the chair legs?! The dog's response, cowering, with ears back and tail tucked or running off to hide under the bed doesn't mean that he knows what he did two hours ago was wrong -- it means that what is going on right now is very intimidating. Returning home like a witch-on-a-broom does nothing for a dog suffering from separation problems except to create another problem: now he's anxious about your return!

7. If the dog makes little or no progress after a week or so, or if the stress is so great that the dog is panting and heaving, salivating, vomiting, trembling uncontrollably or exhibits extreme escape behavior such as tearing at the door, jumping at/through windows, digging up flooring with bloodied paws, a professional dog behavior counselor or veterinarian who is familiar with the specifics of behavior should be contacted. A very sensitive dog may need a customized training program to help him get used to being left alone. Sometimes pharmaceutical anti-anxiety agents are prescribed by veterinarians to be used in a short-term drug therapy program to help the dog relax.

JUNE 2012

Puppy Mill Or Professional Dog Breeder:

How Do You Tell The Difference?

If You're In The Market For A Puppy: You've probably searched online for breeders and been dazzled by gorgeous, breeder websites and the claims they make about their puppies. Sadly, many of the websites claiming to be breeders are really puppy mills in disguise. Most consumers have no idea how to differentiate between a breeder and a puppy mill or how to validate the breeder's claim that they are not a puppy mill.

People who purchase sick and emotionally damaged puppies from pet shops and online sources file thousands of consumer complaints annually. The majority of these individuals thought that their puppies came from a professional breeder.

Professional Dog Breeders:

Dog breeders are professionals whose business is selecting ideal breeding parents and responsibly breeding puppies. They do not mass produce puppies, as the health and welfare of the breeding parents are never sacrificed for volume. Their business is not driven by profit, but by quality animal care and perpetuating pure, healthy breed lines.

Dog breeders pay careful attention to the temperament and health of their puppies. They provide human contact and socialization, which all puppies need for physical and mental stability. They provide appropriate health care, which is required both for breeding parents and their puppies.

Dog breeders are proud of their puppy's bloodlines and their facilities, and will always invite you to their locations. Puppy buyers should always visit a breeder location, see the litter, meet the parents and see the conditions both pup and breeding parent have lived in. We cannot stress this enough, you must visit the facility yourself to ensure that you're dealing with a real breeder and not a puppy mill in disguise.

These professionals are very selective when selling one of their precious pups and they will go out of their way to validate the potential home and potential parent prior to selling them a puppy.

Look Or Acts Like A Professional Breeder?

Unfortunately, puppy mills have ruined the reputation of the breeding industry as the mills very cleverly disguise themselves as reputable breeders. They create gorgeous websites to trick you into believing that they are professional breeders. Many of them even advertise on their websites that they are not puppy mills! Mill representatives rarely



Speak the truth when you ask questions and most consumers don't know what questions to ask in the first place. This is exactly what the mills prey on. They are very clever and convincing, which makes them as dangerous to people as they are to dogs.

### Consumers Beware ~ Tips On Uncovering The Truth

**It Is Up To The Consumer:** To validate if a breeder is really a breeder or a puppy mill in disguise. Unless you're a professional in the industry, you probably don't have any idea where to begin. Below are some tips to help you tell the difference:

**Where Are You Finding Your Puppy?** Puppy mills use pet stores, the newspaper and the Internet to sell their puppies. We implore you not to buy a puppy from any of these sources. Puppy mills and puppy brokers also pose as individuals with a puppy to sell. You'll see this tactic frequently online and in your local newspaper. Professional breeders who have a web site will insist that you pay their kennel a visit, meet them and their dogs. Remember all puppies are cute but their generic blue print is in the parents.

**AKC DNA Profiling:** The AKC offers a comprehensive set of voluntary and mandatory programs to ensure the integrity of the AKC registry: voluntary DNA Profiling; the Frequently Used Sires requirement; the Fresh-Extended/Frozen Semen requirement; the Multiple-Sired Litter Registration Policy; and the Kennel Inspections/Compliance Audit Program. Professional breeders will be able to supply AKC DNA profile for all males and any imported males or females. They will also have a current kennel license and will be happy to provide it to you SO ask!!!!

**No Excuses For Visiting:** Professional dog breeders want you to see their facilities, their litter and the breeding parents, and will never deny your request to visit. Typical mill maneuvers give you excuses not to visit, or at the last minute, call and request that you meet somewhere else. They will never let you tour their facility or see the breeding parents and often, will only show you the puppies which have been moved out of their breeding environment.

**Contract Not Bill Of Sale:** Professional breeders issue a contract, not a bill of sale. Contracts vary by breeder but typically they all include the following criteria:

**If Anything Happens To The Puppy:** The breeder must be notified and if you are no longer able to care for the pet, it is returned to them.

**Neutering Clause:** Mandating that you spay or neuter the pet if sold as a pet/companion.

**Health Guarantee:** Which lasts for years or for the life of the pet...not days. If you are interviewing breeders, ask them to send you their contract before making any commitments, most breeders will display their contract on their web-sites ask if it is

current. If you are unsure about something stated in the contract now is the time to ask, don't wait until you are picking up your puppy because in the excitement you may forget.

**Typically Microchip Their Puppies:** For permanent identification so that the animal is always linked to them.

**Never State:** That you must use their veterinarian for a health inspection of the pet, unless it falls under the second opinion clause of their contract.

**Moving Puppies:** Professional dog breeders do not like to ship dogs across state lines and will almost never allow their puppies to fly long distances if at all. Responsible breeders want you to come to the pet and drive them home.

**Picking Your Pup:** Puppies pick their people as much as people pick them. Each puppy is an individual with his or her own temperament and preferences. It's crucial that you choose your own puppy to ensure your temperaments match. A professional Breeder should provide you with an analyst of each puppy's personality. Professional Breeders KNOW each of their puppy's individual personalities.

**Where To Start Your Research!**

Reputable breeders are members of professional breeder associations. Check your local listings to see if the breeder you select is there. These organizations can also help you determine if there are complaints against the breeder or if they are being investigated as a puppy mill. You can also check with the local animal rescue operation and Better Business Bureau in the town where the breeder is located.

Professional breeders are an excellent source for obtaining a healthy, well-adjusted puppy. Just be sure that you're really dealing with a breeder as opposed to a puppy mill in disguise. It's up to you, the consumer, to uncover the truth and to choose. Choose wisely, the quality of your life and the life of your puppy depends on it.

## **August 2012**

### **Introducing a new puppy or dog to you resident dog:**

Dogs are social animals and most enjoy the company of other dogs. However, it can be tricky to introduce a new puppy or dog into the family. The resident dog may not be accustomed to having other dogs in his home or he may not appreciate having to share your attention. First impressions are important, so you'll need to do what you can to maximize the chances of success.

If your dog has a history of fighting with other dogs, please consult with a Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist, Veterinary Behaviorist, or Certified Professional Dog Trainer before introducing the new dog.

#### **Preparation**

Before you bring the new puppy or dog home, remove anything your resident dog might guard, such as food bowls, bones, chew toys, toys, and beds. Even if your dog has never exhibited possessive tendencies before, it is best to exercise caution. If your home is cluttered, clean it up. Congested areas are more likely to trigger aggression because the dogs may feel forced upon each other.

#### **The Initial Meeting: Before You Bring the New Dog Home**

Enlist the help of a family member or friend, so there is a person to attend to each dog during this initial meeting. Make your way, separately, to a neutral area, such as a park. An open area in the park is perfect because there are plenty of interesting sights and sounds to distract the dogs and they can move away from each other if they choose. It is best not to introduce the dogs in your house or yard because the resident dog may become territorial.

Bring the dogs together and allow them to greet each other. Do your best to keep slack in the leashes (or let the leashes drop) so the dogs won't feel like they are being held back. Allow them to sniff. A puppy will typically adopt a submissive position, such as lying down or even rolling over to be investigated by the adult dog. A well-socialized adult dog will likely check

out the puppy and then either play with him or ignore him. When two adult dogs meet, they often stand tall and “posture” to each other. They may sniff each other, circle each other, urinate, play, or just decide to ignore each other. Don’t panic if they push each other a bit, growl, or even try standing up on each other’s shoulders. Allow them to do what they do to establish a relationship, with as little intervention from you as possible.

If the dogs try to fight, however, you will need to intervene. If you see signs of serious tension, such as raised hackles, growling, showing teeth, prolonged stares, or snapping, call the dogs away before things escalate. Try not to pull them away by the leash, as the tension on the leash might trigger an attack. If the dogs won’t come away on their own, wave a treat in front of each dog’s nose and then lure them to turn away from each other.

Keep the interactions brief at first. After the dogs greet, go for a walk together. If you have multiple dogs, introduce each dog to the newcomer separately before bringing everyone together as a group.

### **Bringing the New Dog Home**

Walk home from the park with the dogs together and just walk into your home as though nothing has changed. If you have a yard, go there first and let the dogs off leash to hang out while you supervise. When the dogs are ready, bring them into the house. If they got along well at the park and in the yard, let the resident dog off the leash first. Permit the new puppy or dog to explore the room or house on the leash. If the resident dog acts in a friendly manner, let the new pet off the leash.

Always supervise interactions between the dogs until they have been friendly with each other for one to two weeks. They should not be alone together before then. Keep your mealtime, bedtime, walk and play routines the same as before the new dog arrived, so things don’t seem too different for the resident dog.

For the first few weeks, keep an eye on the dogs in situations that might trigger aggression, such as when you come home, when guests come over, going out to the yard, coming in from the yard, preparing to go for a walk, mealtime (theirs and yours), and playtime.

It is very important that you spend time with each dog alone so that the resident dog continues to receive one-on-one attention and the new dog develops a bond with you. If you only hang out with the dogs together, they will become attached primarily to each other, rather than to you. The new dog needs to bond with you.

### **Introducing puppies to adult dogs**

Puppies usually pester adult dogs unmercifully. Before the age of four months, puppies may not recognize subtle body postures from adult dogs signaling that they've had enough. Well-socialized adult dogs with good temperaments may set limits with puppies with a warning growl or snarl. These behaviors are normal and should be allowed.

Adult dogs who aren't well-socialized, or who have a history of fighting with other dogs, may attempt to set limits with more aggressive behaviors, such as biting, which could harm the puppy. For this reason, a puppy shouldn't be left alone with an adult dog until you're confident the puppy isn't in any danger. Be sure to give the adult dog some quiet time away from the puppy, and some extra individual attention as well.

### **WHAT NOT TO DO:**

- Do not hold the puppy in your arms for the adult dog to greet. This may cause the puppy to feel trapped and threatened. Instead, stand with your feet slightly apart so the puppy can take refuge between your feet if he feels overwhelmed. Do not permit the older dog to trample, bowl over, or otherwise intimidate the puppy.
- Do not put the dogs in small spaces together, such as a car, crate or small room, before they are completely comfortable with each other. Each dog should have his or her own food bowl, bed, and toys. Place the food bowls far apart until the dogs are relaxed when eating together. Do not allow one dog to intimidate the other so that one dog abandons his food. Teach each dog to eat from his own bowl and leave the other bowls alone, even after everyone is finished.
- If a fight breaks out, DO NOT let them "fight it out." You may have heard this popular advice, but permitting the dogs to continue a fight can set the

tone for a difficult relationship. Interrupt and separate the dogs if they begin to fight or if one dog beats up on the other dog. It is always better to interrupt fighting so the dogs do not develop a pattern of aggressive behavior.

### **How should fighting dogs be separated?**

Get the dogs apart however you can, while doing your best to not be bitten in the process. It is quite common for owners to be bitten breaking up a fight, often by their own dog. Your first action should be to shriek and yell—this works with many dogs. If the dogs are on leash, pull them apart but be aware that you may inadvertently cause the dogs to injure each other as some tend to clamp down with their jaws to resist the pull. If the dogs are off leash, try getting behind one, grabbing him by the body, and lifting him off the ground. Sometimes, the feeling of being airborne causes the dog to stop fighting. Be very careful because this strategy places you in a vulnerable position! If you can't grab them, try grasping the aggressor by the tail, ear, or testicles. Pinch hard to encourage the dog to turn away from his opponent and toward you, but be ready to jump back if the dog turns to bite you. If one dog is locked onto the other, you may need to pry the dog's jaws open with your hands or with a stick. Another option is to use your fingers to temporarily cut off the dog's breath by placing pressure against his windpipe. Spraying the dogs with a water hose or blasting them with an air horn or Direct Stop citronella spray can also be effective.

### **When to get help**

If the introductions don't go smoothly, contact a professional animal behaviorist immediately. Dogs can be severely injured in fights, and the longer the problem continues, the harder it can be to resolve. Punishment won't work, and could make things worse. Fortunately, most conflicts between dogs in the same family can be resolved with professional guidance. Contact your breeder for recommend behavior experts.



## SEPTEMBER'S 2012 TIPS

### AKC'S CANINE GOOD CITIZEN®

#### Training/Testing: CGC Test Items

Remember when you buy a puppy you want that puppy to be all it can be and by working towards a "Canine Good Citizen" certification your new baby will be a wonderful member of your community and you become the perfect ambassador of your breed.

Before taking the Canine Good Citizen test, owners will sign the **Responsible Dog Owners Pledge** with AKC. AKC believes that responsible dog ownership is a key part of the CGC concept and by signing the pledge; owners agree to take care of their dog's health needs, safety, exercise, training and quality of life. Owners also agree to show responsibility by doing things such as cleaning up after their dogs in public places and never letting dogs infringe on the rights of others.

After signing the Responsible Dog Owners Pledge, owners and their dogs are ready to take the CGC Test. Items on the Canine Good Citizen Test include:

##### **Test 1: Accepting a friendly stranger**

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach it and speak to the handler in a natural, everyday situation. The evaluator walks up to the dog and handler and greets the handler in a friendly manner, ignoring the dog. The evaluator and handler shake hands and exchange pleasantries. The dog must show no sign of resentment or shyness, and must not break position or try to go to the evaluator.

##### **Test 2: Sitting politely for petting**

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to touch it while it is out with its handler. With the dog sitting at the handler's side, to begin the exercise, the evaluator pets the dog on the head and body. The handler may talk to his or her dog throughout the exercise. The dog may stand in place as it is petted. The dog must not show shyness or resentment.

##### **Test 3: Appearance and grooming**

This practical test demonstrates that the dog will welcome being groomed and examined and will permit someone, such as a veterinarian, groomer or friend of the owner, to do so. It also demonstrates the owner's care, concern and sense of responsibility. The evaluator inspects the dog to determine if it is clean and groomed. The dog must appear to be in healthy condition (i.e., proper weight, clean, healthy and alert). The handler should supply the comb or brush commonly used on the dog. The evaluator then softly combs or brushes the dog, and in a natural manner, lightly examines the ears and gently picks up each front foot. It is not necessary for the dog to hold a specific position during the examination, and the handler may talk to the dog, praise it and give encouragement throughout.

##### **Test 4: Out for a walk (walking on a loose lead)**

This test demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. The dog may be on either side of the handler. The dog's position should leave no doubt that the dog is attentive to the handler and is responding to the handler's movements and changes of direction. The dog need not be perfectly aligned with the handler and need not sit when the handler stops. The evaluator may use a pre-plotted course or may direct the handler/dog team by issuing instructions or commands. In either case, there should be a right turn, left turn, and an about turn with at least one stop in between and another at the end. The



handler may talk to the dog along the way, praise the dog, or give commands in a normal tone of voice. The handler may sit the dog at the halts if desired.

#### **Test 5: Walking through a crowd**

This test demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places. The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people (at least three). The dog may show some interest in the strangers but should continue to walk with the handler, without evidence of over-exuberance, shyness or resentment. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise the dog throughout the test. The dog should not jump on people in the crowd or strain on the leash.

#### **Test 6: Sit and down on command and Staying in place**

This test demonstrates that the dog has training, will respond to the handler's commands to sit and down and will remain in the place commanded by the handler (sit or down position, whichever the handler prefers). The dog must do sit AND down on command, then the owner chooses the position for leaving the dog in the stay. Prior to this test, the dog's leash is replaced with a line 20 feet long. The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to get the dog to sit and then down. The evaluator must determine if the dog has responded to the handler's commands. The handler may not force the dog into position but may touch the dog to offer gentle guidance. When instructed by the evaluator, the handler tells the dog to stay and walks forward the length of the line, turns and returns to the dog at a natural pace. The dog must remain in the place in which it was left (it may change position) until the evaluator instructs the handler to release the dog. The dog may be released from the front or the side.

#### **Test 7: Coming when called**

This test demonstrates that the dog will come when called by the handler. The handler will walk 10 feet from the dog, turn to face the dog, and call the dog. The handler may use encouragement to get the dog to come. Handlers may choose to tell dogs to "stay" or "wait" or they may simply walk away, giving no instructions to the dog.

#### **Test 8: Reaction to another dog**

This test demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 20 feet, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries, and continue on for about 10 feet. The dogs should show no more than casual interest in each other. Neither dog should go to the other dog or its handler.

#### **Test 9: Reaction to distraction**

This test demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with common distracting situations. The evaluator will select and present two distractions. Examples of distractions include dropping a chair, rolling a crate dolly past the dog, having a jogger run in front of the dog, or dropping a crutch or cane. The dog may express natural interest and curiosity and/or may appear slightly startled but should not panic, try to run away, show aggressiveness, or bark. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise it throughout the exercise.

#### **Test 10: Supervised separation**

This test demonstrates that a dog can be left with a trusted person, if necessary, and will maintain training and good manners. Evaluators are encouraged to say something like, "Would you like me to watch your dog?" and then take hold of the dog's leash. The owner will go out of sight for three minutes. The dog does not have to stay in position but should not continually bark, whine, or pace unnecessarily, or show

anything stronger than mild agitation or nervousness. Evaluators may talk to the dog but should not engage in excessive talking, petting, or management attempts (e.g., "there, there, it's alright").

### **Equipment**

All tests must be performed on leash. For collars, dogs should wear well-fitting buckle or slip collars made of leather, fabric, or chain. Special training collars such as pinch collars, head halters, and electronic collars are not permitted in the CGC test.

As of November 4, 2010, body harnesses may be used in the CGC test. The evaluator should check to make sure the harness is not of a type that completely restricts the dog's movement such that it could not pull or jump up if it tried.

AKC recognize that special training collars such as head collars and no-jump harnesses may be very useful tools for beginning dog trainers, however, AKC feels that dogs are ready to take the CGC test at the point at which they are transitioned to equipment that allows the evaluator to see that the dog has been trained.

The evaluator supplies a 20-foot lead for the test. The owner/handler should bring the dog's brush or comb to the test.

### **Encouragement**

Owners/handlers may use praise and encouragement throughout the test. The owner may pet the dog between exercises. Food and treats are not permitted during testing, nor is the use of toys, squeaky toys, etc. to get the dog to do something. AKC recognizes that food and toys may provide valuable reinforcement or encouragement during the training process but these items should not be used during the test.

### **Failures – Dismissals**

Any dog that eliminates during testing must be marked failed. The only exception to this rule is that elimination is allowable in test Item 10, but only when test Item 10 is held outdoors.

Any dog that growls, snaps, bites, attacks, or attempts to attack a person or another dog is not a good citizen and will be dismissed from the test.

### **Quiz: Is My Dog Ready For the CGC Test?**

Answer True or False to these statements to find out!

1. My dog is friendly but polite with strangers. T F
2. My dog accepts grooming and handling from myself and others. T F
3. My dog will walk on leash without pulling, stopping when I do, even in crowds and with distractions. T F
4. My dog will Sit, Down and Stay when I ask him to. T F
5. My dog will Come when called, even with distractions. T F
6. My dog is well-mannered in the presence of other dogs. T F

7. My dog can be left with a stranger without getting upset. T F

8. My dog is comfortable around visual and auditory distractions T F

If you answered True to all the statements you and your dog are ready!

### **Finding a Class and an Evaluator**

Another training option is to take a class. There are a number of dog trainers who offer Canine Good Citizen classes which will prepare you and your dog for the test. One of the AKC Approved Evaluators may be able to recommend a trainer. You can go to the AKC website to [find a listing of evaluators](#) in your area. You can also use this list to find an evaluator when your dog is ready to take his test.

**Try and try again.** So your dog made a mistake and didn't pass the test, now what? The CGC test is not a one time deal! Do some extra training for the exercise that your dog didn't pass and try again next time.

## October 2012's Tip

When is a Grumble A Growl?

Interpreting Your Rottweiler's Vocal Tendencies

In training and observing Rottweilers, a common problem I have noticed is with the dog who "grumbles". I have had people call me in hysterics because their precious little five month old Rottweiler is growling at them. They immediately assume he's gone over the edge and is dangling on the precipice of absolute viciousness. Usually I am able to tell them he is only "grumbling". It's like a cat that purrs when happy or content; the "grumble" is the Rottweiler's way of showing affection.

This scenario makes a great case for knowing what you are getting when you buy a Rottweiler! In addition, it would behoove all new puppy owners to attend puppy kindergarten classes in order to learn what's normal and what is not. The sooner you lay the foundation for learning with a puppy; the better off you will be in your relationship with your dog as an adult.

Now, let's go back to the problem at hand. Or is it a problem? In general, a Rottweiler is a quite vocal animal who tends to grumble when being petted, handled and played with. A normal grumbler, without ulterior motives, will grumble low in his chest or throat and no facial movement will accompany the sound. In other words, he is not baring his teeth. If he does, you may have an altogether different problem on your hands.

Problems with grumbling that escalate to growling usually begin because the owner is unaware that this behavior exists in the breed. Hence, the first time the young puppy grumbles it is met with what is known as a reinforcing behavior from the owner. In other words, the

owner backs off from the puppy, retreats and/or stops what he is doing with the puppy.

Let's say this happens during some activity the puppy didn't like much anyway, such as nail clipping or ear cleaning. The puppy has now learned an easy way to get the owner to back off. The next time the event takes place the puppy may growl or snarl and possibly attempt to bite. Many owners may take to smacking the puppy every time he utters a sound. Trust me ... with most Rottweilers violence begets violence. This owner will quickly have a dog that fears being handled in any way and may bite as soon as he gains a little maturity.

Another owner might coo at the dog or stop everything and stroke the dog to calm it. "There there, Poopsie. Mommy won't touch you with the big nail clippers anymore. It's okay." This action will also reinforce the behavior. The puppy immediately learns that grumbling can actually earn him praise and petting and the unpleasant activity stops, too!

So, what is an owner to do? First, make sure you purchase your Rottweiler from a reputable breeder with well tempered stock. The breeder will have a special area for whelping either indoors or outdoors. The area will be clean, safe and quiet. He/She will have handled the puppies briefly every day from birth. Once the puppies reached three weeks of age they will have become accustomed to noises, light grooming sessions, play sessions with humans and submission exercises. They will have been spoken to and cradled and, most importantly ... they will not be removed from the litter until after seven to eight weeks of age.

Secondly, when you bring the puppy to your home, continue the breeder's good work. Handle the puppy in brief sessions every day. Pick up his feet and hold them. Have your veterinarian show you how to clip off the ends of his toenails. Then check them every week for growth and keep up with it. Look in his ears; brush his coat lightly and gently. Talk to him quietly while handling. Keep a few small pieces of treat handy

and randomly reward him while he is being still and quiet for his sessions. Increase the time you spend on the sessions gradually. Don't expect an eight week old puppy to be still for twenty minutes of grooming.

If he grumbles or growls wait it out. Do not look at the dog. You might put a slight smile on your face as you wait. If there is even one second of quiet from the puppy, quickly praise and reward with a treat so you can win that battle. Otherwise, you will never win the war.

In addition to all of the above handling techniques, it is advisable to find a behaviorally-based puppy class in your area. Let me caution you though, a badly taught class at this point in a young dog's life can be worse than not going to class at all!

Here's some advice on what to look for in a puppy kindergarten class: any reference to formal obedience should be avoided! We are learning to cope with puppy behavior, not trying to teach a sixteen week old puppy to heel. Light obedience such as walking on a leash, sit and down commands with no stays, and teaching a solid come-when-called are good components.

The professional involved will stress problem prevention. In addition, does the program include social playtime with the other puppies? Does it limit the number of puppies, have an age cut-off of about twenty weeks, and insist that all shots be current on puppies? Are the facilities clean and treated daily to prevent spread of contagious diseases?

Other topics that belong in a puppy class include housebreaking, bite inhibition, chewing prevention. Safe toy and health discussions, puppy and child relationships, etc.

There should be absolutely no mention of choke collars or corrections. Treats, toys and praise should be in obvious abundance on the premises.

Armed with the tools to interpret normal puppy behavior, you will be better able to cope with your grumbling Rottweiler. You should quickly be able to discern grumbles from growls. Snarling and biting then need never make it into the picture.

Grumbling can be looked at as a particularly endearing habit of many Rottweilers as long as it is correctly and calmly handled. Many times the grumbling will stop when the reactions to it are controlled. Often the grumbling stops as the dog gets older. Others grumble until the day they die. Make it your business to be able to understand and handle your dog's vocal tendencies and you will avoid big problems down the road.

## **November's 2012 Tip**

### **What Are You Saying To Your Dog! (Part I of Talking Doggie Talk)**

Do dogs listen better if you yell at them? How much of what you say does your dog understand? What does your tone of voice tell your dog? Is your voice the only way you talk to your dog? Communicating effectively is an art that deepens every relationship.

#### **Body Language First, Words Second**

A dog's first and most natural language is body language. People have this language, too, though body movements of dogs and body movements of humans can have different meanings. As you and your dog become more and more familiar with each other's body language, your communication will get better and better.

When you are consistent with the body movements you use around your dog, the dog will learn to read your signals. It's important that you be aware of the signals you are giving. Use a mirror, your reflection in a glass window, or even a video camera to check yourself and see what your dog sees. Then you can refine meaningful body language signals to communicate with your dog.

Words become a "second language" to dogs. They won't speak words-or if they do learn some words, won't speak many! But like a human child too young to speak, dogs can pick up a lot of words when people use them consistently. Unlike the human child, your dog is unlikely to develop a sophisticated understanding of grammar. It is also unlikely that dogs "think" in words.

What this means is that your dog might be able to associate a few words with each other to pick up a new meaning, once you've established a clear meaning for each of those words. Let's say that your dog has learned to "fetch" the "ball," to "hold" the ball, and to "go to Sally." With patience you can probably communicate with the dog to string those behaviors together. A dog that has learned to fetch to you could be directed instead to go get the ball and carry it to Sally.

The dog will not understand words for things or actions that are outside the dog's experience, but it can be pretty astonishing what things the dog does pick up from experience. We understand only a fraction of what our dogs know about their world. Their ability to read body language, see in the dark, hear sounds outside the range we can hear and detect scents we can only guess at-all of this means that you and your dog, standing side by side, live in two very different worlds.

In most cases when we think a dog lacks intelligence, the dog simply views the world so differently that we're not managing to communicate. Some dogs manage to bridge the communication gap in spite of dense humans! But the more we can help them, the richer our relationships with dogs become.

Not all dogs have had the same experiences, and not all dogs start with the same physical ways of perceiving the world. Different dogs have different eye structures with different visual abilities. They have different levels of scenting ability. Like



humans, some dogs have disabilities in sight, scent and hearing. Dogs can also have brain damage that limits their ability to learn.

Each dog you live with will be an individual. Don't make the huge mistake of expecting every dog to be able to learn the same things or to learn at the same pace. Two dogs are just as different from each other as two humans-more so if they are of two different breeds. Getting to know THIS dog is the task at hand, and you'll learn new things from each new dog. You'll keep learning throughout the dog's whole life, and so will the dog. That's why old dogs are the best dogs. They know so much.

Humans like to vary their words. Using the same word over and over irritates the human ear. As a result, it takes concentration and practice for a handler to learn to use the same word every time for the dog to understand it. A dog can learn nuances and different words for the same behavior, but people will mix words in ways that the dog simply can't follow.

An exceptional dog may eventually figure out what you want by watching your body language or by being around you long enough to realize that "off," "down," "quit It," "stop jumping on me," "knock it Off," and "hey, your feet are dirty!" all mean the same thing to you. But expecting the dog to unravel all this confusing language and to respond reliably is terribly unfair to the dog. Stick to one consistent word for the behavior, and your dog will learn so much faster.

### **What Does this Word Mean?**

If you've taught your dog to sit, test what this word really means to your dog. How do you normally position your body when you say the word? Try it with your body in a different position. If you're normally standing when you say it, try sitting on the ground and saying "sit" to your dog. Try lying down. Does the dog respond the normal way?

What do you usually do with your eyes, your arms, your hands, your shoulders, and the rest of your body when you say "sit"? Change those body movements and see if your dog still responds to the word. Odds are you'll have a puzzled dog!

To help your dog understand a word in the widest number of circumstances, you'll need to practice-and reward!-in all possible situations. This includes not only your body positions, but also a variety of locations.

All the time you're out with your dog doing this fun training together, the dog is learning about the world in the vital work of socialization. Refining your common language while you're out and about just keeps socialization trips all the more interesting.

Dogs can learn to distinguish between words that sound similar, such as these common cue words for handling a dog: "sit," "stand," "stay," "no" and "go." Two dogs with similar names easily learn to distinguish between their names. It just takes practice and reward. Dogs learn best with practice that is enjoyable to them. Under stress they learn less efficiently. If the stress is too great they will go into a fight-or-flight panic state and not be able to learn at all.

It's difficult for humans to understand that saying a word more loudly or in an angry voice will not help the dog to learn. Most dogs have acute hearing, and like

humans they will actually listen to you more intently when you speak more softly. An angry tone puts stress on the dog that interferes with learning. For many sensitive dogs, an angry tone in your voice is in itself a punishment.

Motivation is essential in teaching. Why should I pay attention to something that doesn't interest me? Dogs are the same way. Reward creates motivation and interest.

The best reward is what this dog wants at this moment, and something you can deliver without interrupting the lesson. Food treats make good rewards because most dogs love to eat and you can give tiny treats during training without the dog leaving position to be rewarded. As your training and relationship with your dog progress, you can add other rewards that have become special to the dog.

So, you present the dog with a consistent picture of body language associated with the word delivered in a consistent voice, motivation for the dog to genuinely want to figure it out, and a pleasant atmosphere that doesn't interfere with learning. Whatever training techniques you use, these are the elements that bring words to life for your dog.

### **The Sound of Your Voice**

Trainers used to believe a command had to be delivered in a loud, authoritative or even harsh tone for a dog to respect it. Now we know a dog will respond reliably to whatever volume, pitch and tone of voice you have consistently reinforced in your work with the dog. Additionally, we know that a harsh tone of voice can actually interfere with learning.

Praise is another aspect of talking to your dog. Praise will have only the meaning to your dog that you have created in your time together. Praising the dog before doing something else the dog likes-giving a treat, petting, playing a game, etc.-teaches the dog to enjoy your praise. If you want to build praise as a tool to use in working with your dog, be sure to combine it with the other rewards in order to create this happy connection.

Verbal encouragement enables you to energize your dog. You use your voice to keep the dog enthusiastically working. Build this ability by cheering your dog on during playtimes. The dog will learn to associate this voice of yours with continuing to do something fun. Avoid using cue words (such as "sit," "come," etc.) in verbal encouragement, because that would tell the dog to stop and do something different for you.

If you normally say your dog's name before a cue word to alert the dog that a cue is coming, don't use the name at the beginning of verbal encouragement. If your dog has a nickname, use the nickname instead. Verbal encouragement is a wonderful tool when you can't get close enough to touch the dog. It holds the dog in the positive, playful frame of mind in which most of us think and work best.

A drawn-out, smooth voice will help your dog understand steady tasks, like "stay" or "down" or "easy." An intimidating voice for these situations can have the exact opposite of the effect you need, making the dog break position or panic. Associate your steady voice with times you and your dog are chilling out together. Slow strokes with your hand that relax the dog will help give meaning to this way of

using your voice. Hearing this voice from you at other times will remind the dog of the quiet times and the slow, calming strokes of your hand.

Just as you check out your body language to see what your dog is seeing, listen carefully to your voice to hear what your dog is hearing. If this doesn't come naturally to you, try carrying a small tape recorder during sessions with your dog to listen to yourself later.

Learn by working with your dog what voice works best for each response. Does this dog listen more to a high pitch or a low pitch in your voice? Does an excited voice get the dog to respond more quickly-or does it cause the dog to get silly and out of control? As you and your dog continue to work together, these factors will keep changing, so continue your observations. The fun of working with a dog comes in fine-tuning the communication and the teamwork.

### **The Payoff**

All of your efforts to communicate clearly with your dog will be repaid many times over. When your dog realizes you really want to communicate, the dog will work hard to communicate with you.

Keep this in mind, and be sure you never penalize your dog for trying. If the dog doesn't give the response you want, remember that trying is a valuable response in itself.

The most negative reaction you ever want to give to a dog who is really trying to work with you is simply to not reward an incorrect response. You certainly don't want to discourage honest effort by reacting harshly. When the dog will keep trying, you can eventually reach just about any goal. Persistent effort is incredibly valuable and well worth nurturing.

If the dog is not making an effort, don't blame the dog. It's the human's responsibility to motivate the dog! Whatever interesting thing is going on in the area, you want to be even more interesting! Good training classes can help you achieve this ability.

Develop your language, through both words and body language, to eliminate any need for a tight leash between you and your dog. This improves communication and eliminates physical damage to both of you from pulling on the leash. A loose leash helps your dog pay attention to your language. A tight leash is actually caused by the human, not by the dog!

Most dogs have keen hearing, but this can change due to disease or old age. The body language signals your dog has learned along with words will keep communication between the two of you going strong. You and your dog can talk to each other every day of your lives together.

Look for Part II "What your dog is saying to you" in our December Tip.

# January 2013

## What Is Your Dog Is Saying To You!

### (Part II of Talking Doggie Talk)

Often times when we hear about a dog biting or fighting, things seem to happen “all of a sudden”. Before we know it, dogs are fighting, lunging or barking. Believe it or not, it’s likely that a dog isn’t biting or fighting “out of nowhere”, but their body language may be so subtle, that if you don’t know what to look for, you could miss valuable warnings.

#### **Relaxed and Happy**

A relaxed and happy dog is delightful to be around. Think of a friendly ole’ golden retriever, if the dog is relaxed their body is doing several things.

- Mouth: open, panting, “smiling”
- Eyes: squinty and almond shaped
- Head: lowering or ears back
- Body: loose, curvy or wiggly
- Tail: wagging low and slow
- Approaching people/dogs: head lowers, tail wagging, turns head away or maintains curviness of body

If you see a dog who is doing the following, this is a dog that is likely social and at ease as a dog becomes more uncomfortable, you can watch the wiggly, curvy body become increasingly stiff and still.

#### **Uncomfortable and Warning You**

On the other end of the spectrum is dog body language that is indicating that a dog is becoming increasingly uncomfortable or stressed. This kind of body language may be fleeting (it lasts a few seconds) and the dog returns to being relaxed, such as when first greeting another dog. If it lasts for several seconds and could be an indication that the dog is about to tip and aggress.

- Mouth: closed
- Eyes: hard and staring or buggy/bulging
- Head: held high and still
- Body: Stiff, not loose or wiggly
- Tail: Plastered or High and stiff
- Approaching people/dogs: Head is high, body is stiff, hard, direct eye contact and the dog marches front facing with little head lowering

If a dog appropriately warns, they will do the following (often in order)

1. Body/Head Stiff
2. Eyes Bugging
3. Growl
4. Nose Wrinkle and show teeth, continue growling
5. Bite (air snapping-puncturing)

If a dog is giving it's low level warning with stiffness, then growling, and the interaction continues, the dog will continue to escalate in warning. If nothing changes and the dog/person continues the interaction, ignoring the threats, the dog will bite or fight.

Dogs that are very tolerant will warn and warn and warn and not do damage. Dogs with a shorter fuse (you know who you are) may be stiff for a second, growl and bite/fight. Stiffness, if nothing else, is the universal warning.

### **What to do when you see Red Flags**

The best thing to do is to manage your dog, so that your dog is not in situations that test him continually. Real life happens, and that's not to say that you can avoid every situation when your dog is stiff or still. However, it's important to note that the old adage "practice makes perfect" describes exactly how dogs get really good at doing what works for them.

### **At the Dog Park**

If a dog is fighting with dogs every trip to the dog park, that dog is rehearsing behavior, and at the first indication of stiffness, call the dog back to you, distract them with a treat, move to another part of the park, but don't expect the dog to NOT do what is predictable and don't expect other dogs to put up with this kind of bully behavior. If you see your dog pinning other dogs and standing stiff on top for several seconds, the other dog tail plastered, eyes bulging- yikes- intervene by luring with a treat, calling off, etc.

If your dog is becoming less and less comfortable and friendly at the park or fighting, stop going to the park, go at off peak times or find a park with more space to do long leash walks. Many dogs that are tolerant, but not interested in playing, will avoid dogs and prefer to hang out with people or play ball this is a huge red flag, it's likely that this dog isn't a "dog's dog".

### **Dogs on the Street**

"When we say he's on leash, with some dogs he's fine and with others he sniffs then attacks." Look at the body language. Is the other dog, soft, social, wiggly, head dipping to say hi? Is your dog wiggly and social or stiff, head high, front marching and tail held high?

When doing an initial meet and greet do they circle and sniff or remain stiff and eyes bulging? Is your leash tight and tense or loose? If loose, does the stress signals dissipate and one may play bow or do they remain stiff? Generally speaking, if they remain stiff or still, keep walking or call your dog away before you push your luck.

### **With People Great and Small**

If they interact with people and they are stiff, still, mouth closed, eyes locked on, inviting petting from a stranger is not appropriate. If you notice the body language shifting from relaxed to avoidant/stiff, no sign of wiggles around children, remove the dog from the situation. If on the street- keep moving, if at home, crate your dog or put the dog in a bedroom with a chewie to keep him occupied. And if you notice this kind of unsettling behavior and you want to work on it, please work with a professional, certified trainer.

In general, think “loose and curvy” for a relaxed dog and “stiff and still” for a dog saying, “I’m stressed and not happy. Help!” Remember, as our dog’s greatest advocates, they rely on us to not put them in situations where they would be in danger, whether that’s in our own homes or in public. Sometimes, we learn the hard way (after a bite or fight). I urge you to start to really see what your dogs are saying, because body language seldom lies.