

Arizona Dog Sports

TRAINING NEWS



✦ *Highlights* ✦

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LIVING WITH DOGS

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Go To Your Mat

Teaching your dog to go lie down on his mat or bed on cue gives you a wonderfully versatile tool in your doggie management box. Say you want to work at your desk and not have him underfoot. Or you are cooking and would prefer not to trip over a hopeful canine tracking your every move around the kitchen. Maybe guests are visiting for dinner and they aren't the belly-scratching kind. There's no shortage of scenarios where it might be handy to have your dog politely lying on his mat. Here's how to train it:



Step 1. With a treat in your hand, tell your dog, "Go to your mat" in a cheerful tone of voice and point to his mat.

Step 2. Pause a second or two (one-one thousand, two-one thousand), then lure your dog onto his mat by putting the treat up to his nose and slowly moving it over the mat. If you move your hand too quickly or too far away from his mouth he may give up and lose interest.

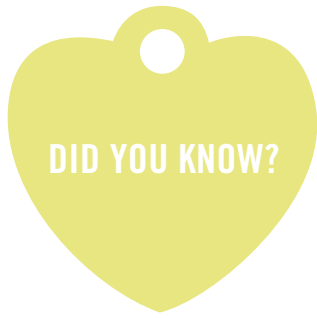
Step 3. As soon as your dog has four paws on the mat, treat.

Step 4. Tell your dog, "Down." Give the hand signal or lure it if your dog needs help. When he lies down, treat him. Continue to treat to keep your dog on the mat. After a few seconds, tell your dog, "Okay," and allow him to get up.

Repeat steps 1-4, gradually increasing the amount of time you ask him to stay on the mat. As your dog gets better and better, space out the treats he gets for staying on his mat. Eventually he will stay for no treats at all, but to keep the behavior strong, thank him occasionally for a job well done.

Practice when you can pay attention. For example when you are answering easy emails, not when concentrating on a report due tomorrow. Or when preparing a sandwich, not trying a gourmet recipe for the first time. And TV commercials are a better practice time than engrossing movies.

"Why does watching a dog be a dog fill one with happiness?"
- Jonathan Safran Foer



DID YOU KNOW?

Canine Metabolic Data

Heart rate. Around 180 beats per minute for puppies and toy breeds; 60–160 beats per minute for most adult dogs (larger dogs: slower heart rate).

Pulse rate at rest. 60–120 beats per minute for most dogs. By comparison, most humans have pulse rates around 65–80 beats per minute.

Normal temperature. Ranges from 100.5–102.5°F. Normal range for humans is 97.5–99.5°F.

Respiration rate. 16–30 breaths (in and out) per minute during rest or relaxed activity. People breathe in and out 15–20 times per minute under the same conditions. Dogs regulate temperature by panting, speeding up their breathing as much as 10 times the usual rate.

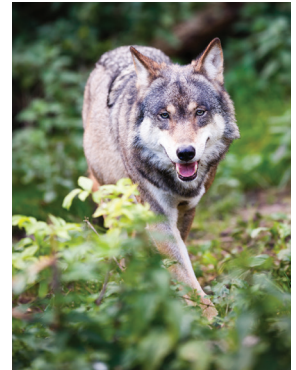


A WORLD OF DOGS

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How Wolves And Dogs Differ

Genetically speaking, dogs and wolves are almost the same: more than 99% of their DNA is identical. How big a difference can that one percent really make? Well, consider this: Humans share up to 98.9% (depending on which model of comparison is used) of genetic material with chimpanzees. Fabulous as chimps are, it's safe to say they live very different lives from us. Add to this at least 15,000 years of domestication (recent studies suggest a far longer period) and genetic adaptation for living with humans, and the result is that *canis lupus familiaris*—both physiologically and behaviorally—is very different from its big, grey ancestor.



For a start, even the most wolf-like of dog breeds are smaller, weaker, and have less powerful jaws and necks than wolves. Why? They don't need to be able to bring down moose by themselves; dogs are on Team Human and we have tools, big brains, and opposable thumbs. Behaviorally, we have bred dogs over millennia to retain a juvenile lack of aggression into adulthood. With that comes openness to new social relationships, allowing dogs to meet and bond with new people throughout their lives, an adaptability to changing circumstances that no wolf can match. Dogs take guidance from us in several ways, too. For example, they understand directional cues (pointing), something no other animal can do. They are sensitive to social cues and generally wait for humans to signal what is expected of them; wolves follow their own agenda, even if hand-raised in human homes. Dogs pay close attention to us and are adept at reading human emotions through facial expressions. Wolves don't give a hoot about our moods.

The takeaway is to not project wolf-like assumptions onto dogs. When we do, we too easily mislabel behavior and see conflict where there is none. Yes, dogs are pack animals. But dogs are no more wolves than we are chimps. Feral dog groups provide a more accurate picture of dog social behavior: they are opportunists whose lives revolve around getting close to humans for food and safety. In other words, dogs rely on and care deeply about their relationship with us. Not only can we teach them to live with us peacefully and happily; they spend their lives hoping we will.

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DOGS IN ACTION

Avalanche Dogs

The mention of a rescue dog in a mountain pass might conjure up a St. Bernard, plowing through snow drifts carrying blankets and hot toddy. In reality, you are much more likely to run into a German Shepherd Dog, Border Collie, Labrador, or Golden Retriever, because these types of dogs—highly active, hard-working nose detectives—are the partners of choice for avalanche search and rescue teams. Trained to locate human scent in snow banks, a fully certified “avy dog” can cover 2.5 acres in thirty minutes, an area it would take people four hours to cover.



To an avalanche victim, that speed can mean the difference between life and death. Barring fatal injury, as many as 90 percent of victims survive if found within the first 15 minutes of burial, a figure that drops to 30 percent after half an hour. Avalanche dogs go through vigorous training, all based on positive-reinforcement methods. The handler determines where it’s most likely someone could be buried, how the wind is blowing, and then releases the dog to search based on a strategy of optimal coverage. When the dog indicates human scent by digging in the snow and wagging her tail, humans with shovels take over. Every year, avy dogs help save lives in the world’s mountainous regions and ski resorts. Are you a skier? Then carry dog treats!



HEALTHY DOG

Why Dogs Roll in Grass

Few dogs don’t have this habit to some extent—whether it’s a good shoulder-first roll in fresh grass with all its hidden secrets or a nosedive into a freshly manured field. The behavior is called scent rolling and researchers speculate that it originated as a way to bring information back to the pack. Of course, dogs have had much time and adaptation to make the behavior their own, so it’s likely dogs roll in grass and other interesting materials for a number of reasons. One is to get rid of unwanted smells, for example that doggie shampoo you enjoy but that Fido does not appreciate. Itchy skin can be another cause for frequent and vigorous rolling, so look out for fleas, tick bites, or telltale signs of skin conditions such as scabs, redness, rashes, or bald patches.

Rolling in grass is not dangerous in itself. Just be sure your dog has flea and tick protection, and be mindful of potential hazards like pesticides and herbicides that might be on the grass.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Welsh Corgi

This lovable, compact, resilient, and energetic little pooch has hazy ancestry, but is thought to have arrived in England in the 11th century in the company of Flemish traders. The Pembroke Welsh Corgi evolved into a popular cattle-herding dog; she has the perfect size and temperament to herd large animals with her gentle but insistent heel nipping. Famous for being Queen Elizabeth II of England’s favorite breed, the Corgi is a frequent star of agility trials, canine freestyle dancing, flyball, tracking, and herding events. With patient training and exercise, she excels at anything that requires boldness, playfulness, and stamina. A most vocal companion, the Corgi not only barks but also communicates with a range of other hilarious sounds. All that personality has earned the Corgi a place in fantasy and folklore, from old Welsh fairy legends to modern storybooks like Tasha Tudor’s Corgiville Fair and Japanese anime series Cowboy Bebop.

To give a Corgi a home, search online for nearby rescue organizations.



OUR SERVICES

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Puppy Proofing Your Home

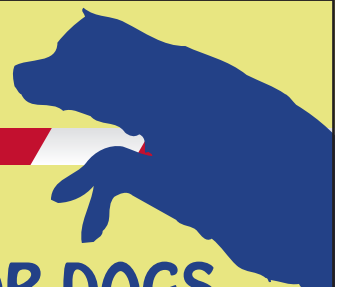
The whole house. Hide electrical cords. Hide small objects your puppy can chew or choke on. Get guardrails for stairs, low windows, and balconies. Invest in mats or runners for slippery hallways. Place poisonous plants in high spots—or give them away.

The kitchen and bathroom. Put safety latches on any cabinet with cleaning supplies or poison. Keep plastic bags out of your puppy's reach, and secure your garbage can.

The yard. Make sure your yard is escape-proof. If you have a pool, put a fence around it. Check your garage and any sheds to make sure chemicals, fertilizers, and sharp garden tools are off-limits.

Always supervise. That's indoors and out. If you can't supervise, put your puppy in a confinement/safe area with a toy. That way, she can't get into trouble.

Arizona Dog Sports



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A GYM FOR DOGS

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