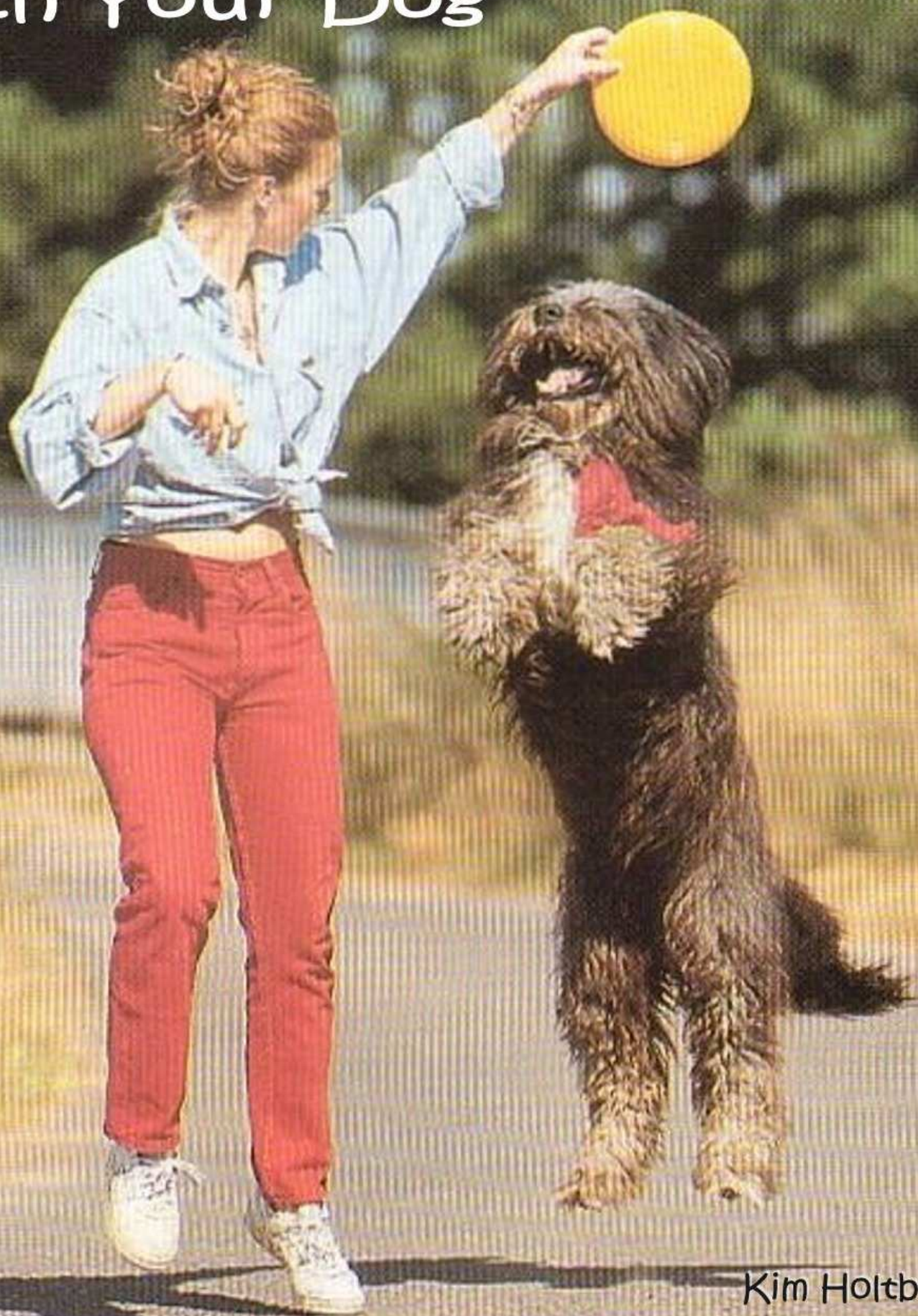


Fun Things To Do With Your Dog



Kim Holtby

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Forward

If you have just purchased your dog then you may be wondering what to do to keep him happy and get rid of that surplus energy. In fact if you keep your dog busy and give him, or her, the opportunity to burn off energy you will not only find him happier but also better behaved to boot!

This collection of activities comes from asking owners and professional dog trainers about what their dogs like to do and there is a lot more to do than just go for a walk in the park.

The key is to get out there and do something, not only will your dog benefit but you will too!

So have fun and most of all...

... Enjoy your dog!

Kim Holtby

15 Minutes Is Plenty Of Time For Play Activities With Your Dog

Perfecting any sport takes practice, and some dog activities take far more practice than others, but long practice sessions are never beneficial. You may wonder if the kids are losing interest when you see them go outside to practice and return in fifteen minutes or less, but they are probably following their instincts.

Fifteen minutes makes an ideal practice session for many dog events, and more would be worse, not better. Good trainers learn to read their dogs (know when they're enjoying the training and when they show the first signs of fatigue). "Don't bore your dog" and "Quit while your dog is still enjoying itself" are training rules that you may frequently hear from instructors. That's because in dog activities too much practice doesn't make perfect. Instead, it makes for a drab performance.

Since every event and every dog necessitates a different amount of training, it's best to set up your own flexible dog-play schedules. Be creative about what you put into practice sessions and note the improvement you see in your dog's actual

performances - not the amount of time he spends on simple repetition.

How To Give Your New Puppy As Much Attention Possible

Life can be busy. Between full time careers and outside obligations during off-work time, we must remember that our little puppy need as much attention as possible when we are at home with them. You should enjoy short play and training sessions hourly. If you cannot pay full attention to your puppy's every single second, play with your pup in his playpen, where a suitable toilet and toys are available.

Or, for periods of no longer than an hour at a time, confine your puppy to his doggy den, or short-term close confinement area, such as a portable dog crate. Every hour, release your puppy and quickly take him to his doggy toilet. Your puppy's short-term confinement area should include a comfortable bed, and plenty of hollow chew toys (stuffed with dog food).

It is much easier to watch your pup if he is settled down in a single spot. Either you may move the crate so that your puppy is in the same room as you or you may want to confine your pup to a different room to start preparing him for times when he will be left at home alone. If you do not like the idea of confining your puppy to a dog crate, you may tie the leash to your belt and have the pup settle down at your feet.

Learn How To Balance Play & Roughhousing With Your Dog

Some people appear to enjoy teasing, manhandling, or roughhousing with puppies. Puppies may find teasing and roughhousing to be positive and enjoyable, or unpleasant and frightening. Good-natured teasing can be a lot of fun for both parties. Properly done, teasing can do a lot to build a puppy's confidence by gradually and progressively desensitizing him to all the weird things people, especially men and children, do. On the other hand, relentless teasing can be frustrating and damaging. Malicious teasing is not teasing; it is abuse.

Confidence-building might involve temporarily withholding toys or treats from the

pup, temporarily hugging or restraining the pup, making strange noises, or temporarily making mildly scary faces or slightly weird body movements, and then praising the pup and offering a food treat. The food reward builds the puppy's confidence by reinforcing his acceptance of your scary faces and weird actions. With each repetition you may act a little scarier and weirder before offering a treat. After time, your puppy will confidently accept any human action or mannerism. If the puppy ever refuses a treat, you have stressed it. So stop being silly for a while until you have handed the pup half a dozen treats in a non-threatening situation.

Puppies have to be trained to enjoy teasing. For example, being relentlessly pursued by a child with outstretched arms can be the scariest thing on the planet for a puppy without prior preparation. However, being pursued around the dining room table by an owner doing monster-walks can be one of the most enjoyable games for a puppy who has been taught to enjoy playing the game. Most dogs love to be chased as long as they have been taught that the game is non-threatening.

Malicious teasing on the hand (taking pleasure in the puppy's displeasure) is just too cruel and silly for words. It is decidedly not funny to cause the puppy discomfort or to make him afraid. You are teaching the pup to distrust people, and it is your fault when, as an adult, the dog reacts defensively. Sadly though, it will be the dog who gets into trouble, not you. Please don't allow this to happen.

There is a simple test to determine whether or not the puppy finds teasing to be enjoyable. Stop the game, back up, and ask the puppy to come and sit. If the puppy comes promptly with a wagging tail and sits with his head held high, he is probably enjoying the game as much as you are. You may continue playing. If the pup approaches with a wiggly body, lowered head and tail, makes excessive licking motions with his tongue, and lies down or rolls over when asked to sit, you have pushed the puppy too far and he no longer trusts you.

2 Activities Your Dog Will Enjoy

If we want our dogs to do things for us, we need to know how to make them feel good. Below are two positive inducements that can win the heart of any dog.

Get A Ball: Preferably, use a tennis ball because it bounces and is easily controlled by the owner. In training a dog with a ball, the more powerful the dog's attraction to it, the faster he can learn how to obey his owner and the more irrelevant

distractions he can exclude from his attention.

Praise Our Companions: Our dogs will work well for us if we can make them feel good by being with us. Praise must come from the heart and be deeply felt. The sound of our voice, the touch and stroke of our hand, should be capable of raising our dog's spirits to a joyous state. When a dog is part of a group that heightens his drive, he becomes stimulated to maintain his good work.

2 Ways Of Keeping Your Puppy Busy

All of the games and skills discussed below are designed to contribute to both the fun and the positive upbringing of your puppy. These energy-producing exercises act as building blocks that make advanced training easier and enhance the bond between owner and puppy.

Grooming Practice: Starting grooming procedures at an early age teaches the puppy acceptance of hands-on treatment over all parts of his body and emphasizes relaxed "stays." Grooming also assures the owner of dominance as nails are cut and teeth are cleaned, as the puppy learns to be quiet and tolerate-these "house-cleaning" techniques.

Hide & Seek: Hide and seek is fun for owners and puppies alike and helps teach your puppy how to come.

1. Put your puppy on a sit-stay or have someone else hold his leash.
2. Hide behind a nearby tree or, if inside, a piece of furniture.
3. Wait five seconds, then call him excitedly.
4. When he "finds" you, praise him with lots of love and a tidbit or ball.
5. Make each hiding place a little harder and a little farther away. Sometimes return to your puppy and end the game at that point so he will not think he always has to leave to get you near him.

2 Games For Puppy-Loving Fun

1. King of the Hill: This game can be as much fun for puppies as it is for people. All you have to do is put a leash on your puppy (and a couple of puppy buddies), take a treat and lead him up the ramp to the platform. Let him sniff the entire platform and get used to it, then lead him down another side. Repeat from all directions, then take the leash off and toss a toy on to the platform and watch him figure out the easiest way to get it! Several puppies playing this is a lot of fun to watch.

2. Playhouse: A playhouse can be used for children and puppies alike. The more inventive you are, the more fun both kids and puppies will have. If you are not handy with a hammer and nails, you can purchase plastic playhouses, or go to a piano shop and get a piano box. The easiest way to familiarize the puppy with the playhouse is to let him follow kids through it, so if you do not have any, borrow some from the neighbors! (This is good socialization for your puppy and the neighbors, and it ensures that they will watch out for your puppy!) You can also hide various toys in the playhouse when puppy is not looking.

3 Agility & Coordination Puppy Games

1. Open Tunnel: Use one barrel or tunnel at first, then add two or three more as the puppy learns to move through them. Have a friend pick your puppy up and gently put him in the tunnel while you reach through the other end and coax him to you with a bit of bait or his ball. He will quickly learn to run through it on his own.

2. Closed Tunnel: Begin as you did with the open tunnel, but hold a sheet up at the end of the tunnel the first couple of times the puppy is sent through. As he reaches you the third or fourth time, let the sheet down. Each time, let the sheet down sooner until he can run through and push the sheet up by himself. Be sure to make sure he is secure each step of the way. Do not let the sheet get tangled around him.

3. The "A-Frame" Game: Put two leashes on the puppy. Get on one side of him and have a friend on the other. Use a piece of food and slowly coax him up and down the A-frame. Most puppies want to go over too fast, so be careful. A person on each side helps ensure that he goes up the middle.

7 Ways to Keep Your Dog Busy

The following is a list of activities that you can engage with your dog. These activities are not only fun, but they also provide a great way to exercise and to preserve your dog's natural instincts and abilities.

Tracking: Tracking is a great way to get your exercise and wear the dog out. It means exactly what it says: The dog follows a track laid down by another person. An article of the owner's is placed at the end of the track and the dog must find that article by following the track. It is often said that a tracking test builds real character, as the terrain is often difficult and the weather is sometimes completely un dependable; since the owner cannot assist the dog in any way, everything seems to be left to God and the dog! Training this exercise is more time-consuming than difficult, and it requires a great deal of patience.

Several different tests are available from different associations, with different degrees of difficulty. Basic tests cover short tracks that have only a few turns and a short lag time between laying and running. More difficult tests include more turns, cross tracks, and several items left on the track to be found, with a longer lag time between laying the track and running it.

Weight Pulling: Weight pulling has long been a favorite sport for the Alaskan Malamute and Samoyed breeds, but in the past few years this competition has spread to many other breeds, including, of all things, the desert-dwelling Basenji. Pulling divisions are divided by weight and experience. Dogs are put in harness and must pull a sledge loaded with varying amounts of weight for varying distances in order to earn their points.

Herding: Herding competition has long been recognized in European countries and has been found in many forms in the United States. Many communities have stock dog fancier clubs or associations. Several breed clubs have initiated herding instinct tests, and the AKC has just initiated a Herding Instinct Test. These beginner levels allow you to assess any possible herding instincts in your dog and allow you to see if that type of competition would be of interest to you.

"Real" herding, which consist of gathering, driving and penning, as performed by the working stock dogs, is an event that will catch your heart. To see these intent animals working stock at great distances all on their own is truly an amazing sight.

Sled Racing: Sled racing can be anything from a friendly competition between two men and their dogs to a competition as strenuous as the thousand-mile Iditarod

Trail Dog Sled Race. Here again, the dog's natural talents are emphasized. While Arctic breeds are most visible, many other breeds (including Poodles and Irish Setters) or mixed breeds can be very competitive.

Lure Coursing: Lure coursing is somewhat akin to Greyhound racing but is held in fields with twisting courses over uneven ground. Lure coursing is designed to test a dog's agility, as well as his speed, endurance and prey instinct. The dogs are taught to chase a lure, which is really a plastic bag, and their enthusiasm for the chase is an unforgettable sight. For more information on this sport, contact the American Sighthound Field Association.

Hunting: Hunting is as natural as walking to many dogs and by using natural talents they can perform both vigorously and happily and give you physical rewards at the same time. Anyone who has worked with his dogs in the field, whether hunting birds or small game, will tell you that there is nothing as thrilling as watching his dog work the field, fetch game or take a point and hold it. There are many types of competitive events available for hunters and information may be obtained from the AKC on field trials and hunting tests for sporting dogs and field trials for hounds, all at varying levels of competition.

Therapy Dogs: Therapy dogs are increasing in number by the day. Hospice services, Nursing and convalescent homes, centers for gifted children and even hospitals are opening their doors to visits by therapy dogs. These dogs can be of any age or breed (some organizations request only registered therapy dogs; others welcome any well-behaved and loving pet) and are only expected to be very stable and accept much petting and loving from the residents they are visiting. These dogs can sometimes elicit responses from the ill or handicapped better than nurses, doctors or even family members. Most dogs instinctively realize when a human is suffering some form of handicap.

Visits with a therapy dog may be just the thing that will bring relief or happiness to an otherwise ill or hard-to-reach person, and your joy at seeing your dog relate to these people is more than worth every minute of your time. To find therapy groups near you, inquire your local Kennel Club or organizations dedicated to the needs of nursing-home residents, convalescents and mentally-challenged persons.

These are just a few ideas for you to think about. There are many other organizations devoted to preserving the natural instincts of their breeds, such as the Newfoundland Club of America, which sponsors water tests. Many breed or group specialty magazines, such as Gun Dog, publish information for fanciers of the

upland bird and waterfowl dog. In addition, many major dog food companies sponsor all sorts of hunting, obedience and conformation events.

How To Make Your Dog's Pen Area A Playful Heaven

If your dog spends any length of time in a play yard, you might be interested in ideas that will help you to make his stay there a pleasure and not an imprisonment. It is amazing how many dog owners have described their dog's "play yard" in terms of a gravel enclosure with nothing, absolutely nothing, inside it, except the dog. Boredom and ennui are one of the worst aspects of modern dog life. Chewing, digging, nuisance barking, poor appetites, and stool eating are often in some way connected with boredom. These problems often occur in dogs that have become bored by such uncreative play yard areas.

Try to avoid barrier frustration by screening the dog's area from busy city street traffic or passersby. If you use cyclone fencing, standard green slats that fit between the chain link are available. Shrubbery can be effectively arranged to block disturbing views that encourage barking and fence running. Within the pen, a ditch or a stone row, or even a row of flowers can often keep the dog away from the fence and in the center of the pen. Gravel is the best all-around footing, but cement and grass may be feasible at times. Cement encourages paw sores and cut pads, so avoid prolonged contact with cement. Grass inevitably wears out, but it is aesthetically pleasing and comfortable for the dog. A grass pen with gravel along the sides of the fencing to be the best. The gravel will prevent the grass from being totally destroyed.

Every day introduce a different item into the pen, especially if you leave your dog alone on a daily basis. Favorite toys should always be included, but rotate others to spice up the routine. Rotate water and food in different locations in the pen. When you prune your trees, throw the limbs into the pen for the dog to play with. A large cardboard box enthralls any dog. Sure, the box gets ripped up, and the tree limbs get shredded, and you have to clean up. But it's worth it in the long run. Fresh fruit and vegetables can be used as vitamin-packed toys. Toss a few into the pen every so often. Bones, if offered, should be large marrow bones. A dog left alone with a small bone all day can reduce it to such size as to risk lodging it in its mouth or throat. Make sure bones are large and solid, but not cooked.

The dog house does not need to be elaborate but it should provide protection from

the elements. In summer, repaint dark-colored houses white to reflect sunlight and heat. The dog should have some options for shade in addition to the house. Trees are best, or a planter of bushes, pruned of their lower branches and with trunks wrapped in tree-tape to prevent the dog from destroying or scratching them.

Finally, do not ignore the possibility of providing your dog with the ultimate diversion and plaything: another dog. Owners with chronic diggers, chewers, barkers, squealers, and house-wreckers have often found that the introduction of a second compatible pet reduces this behavior. You will have to be sure that the new animal gets off to a right start and does not mimic the bad behavior of the first pet. For dogs who must stay long periods in play yards, a companion can change frustration and boredom to pleasure and play.

Create Cheap & Fun Home-Made Toys For Your Dog's Kennel

Rectangular or square, your kennel should be a fun place for the dog. Provide dog-sized toys. Owners of toy breeds might be able to substitute children's toys, but larger breeds need larger toys.

You can construct your own, as we often do, with old broom handles, leather scraps, and bells. Just make sure that all sharp edges are sanded down and that no toy is so small that your dog can swallow it. A simple obstacle course of old tires, a curved board cemented at each end for a nifty bridge, and scratch posts can occupy many dogs for hours.

Dogs love any hanging object, especially if it makes some kind of noise. Suspend toys and leather scraps (ask for them at a leather shop) from strong ropes. Always use single strand ropes for hanging toys, and never arrange a hanging toy so low or in such a way that a hanging accident might occur. Rope toys suspended by springs make the toy snap back when the dog lets go, and the dog can play fetch alone. Hanging toys with bells attached keep pets fascinated, but make sure the noise does not bother neighbors.

A Dog's Favorite Place: The Park

Parks are the most popular spots in the city for owners to take their dogs. It's the one place where owners can let their dogs run loose and play with other dogs. Many dog owners like going to the parks because it gives them a chance to meet and chat with other dog owners. Most dog owners are amused by the fact that they remember the names of the different dogs but not the names of the owners.

Though I have no problem with dogs playing with each other in the parks, I do have a problem with owners who just congregate together and don't play with their dogs. Dog owners often forget that they should be the main focus of their dog, not other dogs. The park is such a great environment to train a dog and owners who do no more than just stand together talking do their dogs a disservice. This also gives a dog a false sense of total freedom - your dog blocks you out while playing with other dogs.

You can alleviate this problem by occasionally whistling for your dog to come to you while standing with the other owners. When he comes to you, praise him and then let him play with the other dogs once again. By doing this, your dog learns that even though he is coming to your call, it doesn't mean you are going to leash him and take him home. You don't want your dog to associate coming to you with killing his good time. That is why owners have a hard time calling their dogs back to them in the park. Dogs know that the only time they are called by their owners is when it's time to leave.

Instead of just standing there with the other owners, move quietly away from them and stand off to the side. When your dog looks for you among the group of owners, he will be alarmed that you are not there. You are preying on his sense of insecurity - he is going to panic as he looks for you. This is good - you want to be your dog's main focus, not other dogs in the park. He will come to you full of excitement at having found you.

Another problem with groups of owners getting together in the park is that you can get some bad advice. When you get your dog, you will quickly discover how many owners act like experts about dogs, and you will get a lot of free advice. You will get all kinds of training and medical opinions - some of it good and some just a lot of old myths.

Puppy owners need to understand the pack mentality of dogs. Any group of dogs

playing in a park form a pack mentality within ten minutes of being together. Now if a puppy runs into the pack, the dynamic is thrown off balance and tension can easily develop. The dogs tower over the puppy to investigate. Some dogs don't like puppies, especially if the puppy is hyper or cocky. There's a good chance such pups can get bit. Pups also tend to get trampled on and can physically get hurt when playing with mature dogs. That is why I don't like owners taking their puppies to parks to play with big dogs. Puppies need to play with puppies in their own peer group. You wouldn't let your five-year-old child play football with thirteen-year-old kids, so why have your pup play with mature dogs?

City parks have some wonderful challenges for training if you use your imagination.

For example, look and find an empty trash bin in the park, tip it over on its side and teach your pup to jump over it. Start a few feet from the trash bin and run toward it while holding the motivator close to his nose so he will follow it. When he approaches the bin, use the hand in collar technique (place your fingers between his neck and collar with your fingers pointing up), lift him forward and say "Hup," as he climbs over the bin. After he has gone over the garbage bin, circle around and make him climb over from the other side and place him in a sit. Do this a few times so he is comfortable with this maneuver. With continued practice, he will eventually make a clean jump over the bin. Smaller or less agile dogs will only be able to climb over it.

If he is shy about going over the bin, then place him on top of it so he will feel comfortable touching the garbage bin with his paws. With your right hand holding the motivator, lead him downward to come off the garbage bin. Repeat this pattern a few times to build his confidence level. After a few repetitions, your pup will feel comfortable climbing over the garbage bin.

Large boulder-like rocks can often be found in many parks. While walking your dog, teach him to jump on the rock. Again, you will need a motivator to get him to jump up there. Put him in a Sit-Stay or Stand-Stay position. This is a good exercise because it gives him a job to do - it keeps him from moving any further during a walk, especially through congested cross paths.

Park benches are also a great training tool. Teach your dog to jump over a bench using the same method as making him jump over a garbage bin. You can also teach him to crawl under a park bench. And you can train him to sit every time you approach a park bench with someone sitting on it. This teaches him not to pull toward strangers in the park.

A park is a good place to practice the hide and seek game with a whistle. Have your

friend hold your puppy back while you run and hide behind a tree or some bushes and whistle for your dog. This exercise will get your puppy to pay more attention to you as he panics and tries to find you. This game is great because you are setting the foundation for him to come to you whenever you whistle. In all of these exercises, you are using the natural environment of the park as an agility course for your dog.

Respect Proper Etiquette When Playing At The Dog Park: Since the dog population has increased in most cities, there are more owners who let their dogs run off leash in the parks. Many non-owners feel they are being crowded out of their favorite areas and, therefore, the police often ticket dog owners for having their dogs off leash. As a concession, many cities have converted small parks into dog parks that are just for dogs, or have fenced off certain areas of public parks - pen areas - where dogs can run free.

When taking your dog to one of these parks, don't let him bolt into the park even if he is familiar with the other dogs. Put him in a sit position for a few seconds at a safe distance away from the other dogs and then tap him gently on the back of the head and say, "Go play!" This sets a pattern for release where he learns when he is allowed to leave your side and play with other dogs.

Personally, I like dog parks because they provide a place for dog owners to take their dogs and not disturb others. But I prefer to see the whole city as a playground for my dogs, rather than letting them be outside in only a penned off area. I don't like to be restricted to a small area. I think a dog needs to be exposed to many different environments in the city to become well trained.

The Beach: Another Great Place To Spend Time With Your Dog

If you are going to introduce your puppy to the beach, go on a day when the waves are calm. Most puppies are frightened by the movement and the sound of waves. The best time to take your puppy is in the early morning when there aren't too many people around. Never let your dog romp on the beach where people are laying and tanning themselves.

The best way to lead a puppy into water is to have him follow you. Try throwing his favorite toy a foot from the shore and see if he will run in to retrieve it. Make it a

game for your puppy. You can also try running a few feet into the water or walking along the shoreline to see if he follows you. If your puppy still won't go in, then carry your puppy in the water about five feet from the shore. Walk back with him as he paddles.

As he gets older and more confident in the water, you can play fetch with him by making him dive off a dock. There is a beauty in watching a dog dive gracefully in the water as he swims out to retrieve a stick or ball. However, never force him in this game if he is not comfortable in the water, or shows little swimming ability.

Just Going Out For A Walk With Your Dog

Having a dog that knows how to Heel demonstrates control and is useful under situations where he needs to stay close to you and pay attention to you. But for many of us, the main reason we take our dogs for a walk is for daily exercise where it does not really matter what he does, so long as he does not pull. Usually the dogs are somewhere ahead of us, checking out who has been there and just sort of following their noses.

For this type of a walk, it makes little sense to have him do a Heel since his main enjoyment is to use his nose and all you want is no pulling. The following is a simple, yet effective way to teach him to remain within the length of your leash without pulling:

Start the walk with "Let's go," and as soon as he gets to the end of the leash and starts to pull, stop and say "Easy." His reaction will be to turn toward you and come back a few steps. Start walking again with "Let's go," and when you begin to feel tension on the leash, stop with "Easy."

You may have to repeat this sequence a few times over the course of several sessions. If you do it consistently, he will quickly learn that pulling causes you to stop, which in turn will stop him from pulling.

Taking Hiking Trips With Your Dog

If you like the outdoors, then some of the best times you can have with your dogs is by wandering around on roads and trails. Curious, full of wonder and excitement, dogs are sometimes the best companions. They're not self-sufficient, however, so you need to keep some things in mind when it comes to hiking, backpacking canine style, and some hazards to watch out for on the trail.

First of all, have your veterinarian check your dog to ensure she's healthy enough for these demanding excursions! Dogs should be conditioned (every day walks will do) before taking them out for a hike.

To me there is no more relaxing activity in the world than hiking in nature. Hiking, however, is a strenuous activity and not without risks, so if you're going to take a hike with your dog, you need to follow a few guidelines:

* The first priority is to determine if your dog is healthy enough to hit the trail. If you're not sure, go to your vet. Ask the vet to check your dog's heart, blood, and respiration. If all is well and your dog is game, take him on a short hike near your home. Does he run out of energy? You need to do some conditioning: Jogging, tennis-ball fetch, and swimming are great ways to get your dog in shape.

* Aside from conditioning her heart, you need to toughen up those toes. But watch those pads! If your dog is out of shape, her pads will wear quickly and might even bleed.

* Before you go out on the trail, make sure your dog's ID tags, rabies inoculation, and license are up-to-date. For extra precaution, you can have your veterinarian embed a microchip in your dog's shoulders that can be used to track them if they're ever lost or stolen.

* Respect all trail restrictions. If an area is blocked off, don't go there. If the trail requires all dogs to be on leash, comply. Even if it doesn't, leash your dog if she won't stay with you. And always have a pooper-scooper of some sort to pick up after your dog if he goes to the bathroom on a trail other people will be using.

When You Arrive At Your Hiking Site: You may get to an area and find a "No Dogs Allowed" sign. Quite a disappointment, but it's there for a reason. Sometimes the reason is that other dog owners didn't follow the rules and ruined it for everybody.

We don't make the rules, but we should follow them.

Most dog-friendly parks will allow dogs that are under voice control to hike off leash. Polish up the Let's Go, Come, and Down commands reviewed in Chapter 2, and never let your dog off leash if you have the slightest doubt that she will obey.

If you have a puppy, introduce her to short trail hikes after she's had all her inoculations. Keep her on a 10-foot leash and call her back to you for a treat every few minutes. Also, introduce the command "Wait" to mean "stop in your tracks."

Biking With Your Dog

Biking is more challenging than running with your dog since there is more of a distance between you and your dog, and with that distance you will have a little less control. Biking can also be more difficult since you need to bike on the sidewalk with your dog and not on the street. Many cities have laws prohibiting riding a bike on the sidewalk.

It's probably easier to just pack your bike and dog in the car and head to a park instead. In the park, you won't have to worry about car traffic. If you go to the park during off-peak hours, you will have less competition for space with other bikers, skaters and runners. I prefer biking with my dogs at night in the park. I place reflectors on their harnesses as a safety measure.

Since you will want to keep your dog close to your side, you can purchase commercial devices that will keep your dog attached to your bike. Such devices can attach to your dog's harness and have enough give for your dog to maneuver around obstacles. The disadvantage to these devices is that you can't see what is happening with your dog, since they attach to the back wheel of your bike.

Biking your dog for extended periods of time on asphalt or concrete is hard on your dog's skeletal system. Never overdo it. Also inspect your dog's pads from time to time for wear and tear. Make sure the weather isn't too severe when biking or running your dog. Stop for plenty of water along the way.

Looking For Something Active To Do With Your Dog? Try Roller Blading Or Biking

Roller blading is a great way to exercise your dog. Roller blading is a little more challenging when practicing the street commands, since you may not be able to stop with the same precision at a curb as you would when walking or jogging. Before trying to roller blade with your dog, make sure he can automatically stop and sit at streets for you.

Use the principles of street identification when roller blading - slow your dog down twenty feet before an intersection and give the heel command to bring him back to your side. Roller blading with your dog also takes a little more skill in leash handling since you are moving at a faster clip.

Your dog may have trouble adjusting to you on skates. The sound of the skates and your movement will be a little different. Take it slow with him and work on familiar sidewalks at first. But just like running, it may be easier to practice with your dog in a park or in an empty parking lot where you don't have to worry about stopping at street corners.

If You Live In The City Then Make Use Of The Alleys, Dog's Love It!

Most city dwellers never think of training their dogs in alleys. Many people think of alleys as being unsanitary as well as unsafe. But alleys are a great place to train a dog because there is little traffic and very few people.

If you are going to use an alley, make sure you find a clean alley in your neighborhood that is free from broken glass and strewn garbage. Also be on the lookout for cars exiting garages. Alleys are a great option if you don't have a backyard or if you only have a limited amount of time to play with your dog and don't have the time to go to the park.

Before entering an alley, the same methods should be used as in crossing streets. The dog should sit at the curb and you should practice street identification techniques. Cars don't always stop at alleys before entering the street.

Alleys are a great place to play games with your dog. You can play a game of fetch, especially if you can get a friend to stand at one end of the alley so your puppy can't take off from you. You can also bounce a ball against a brick garage and have your dog chase the ball. Clean areas around garbage cans and dumpsters also make a great place to play hide and seek with your dog while using your whistle.

I like alleys because there may be times when you don't want to go to the park and compete with other dogs for your puppy's attention. There is nothing wrong with playing with him in an alley before you let him graduate to the dog clubs in your park. You can also invite a couple of friends to have their dogs play with your dog in the alley too.

If your dog happens pick up garbage in the alley, then this is a great place to teach the "Drop it" and "Leave it" commands. Always have motivators on hand to distract him from objects he shouldn't be putting in his mouth.

Exercising your dog in the city will give you a healthier and more confident dog. The city is full of obstacles and environments that act as agility courses. Don't get me wrong, of course parks are a great environment for your dog but why limit yourself to taking your dog only to the park? Give your dog as much mental and physical stimulation as possible. When training your dog in different city environments, use common sense by not putting yourself or your dog in dangerous situations.

Your dog will even see a short errand with you as something fun and exciting. He'll be thinking: "Now where are we going? What kind of fun are we going to have today?" Every walk will be an adventure. All your dog's senses will be in optimal use. And as you train your dog in different city environments, you will feel more confident about taking him almost anywhere with you.

Did You Know That Your Dog Would Love To Be Stretched?

One of the best ways to relax your puppy is stretching her on her back. It is like giving a massage or doing a yoga posture. You can either stretch your puppy in your arms or on the floor.

To stretch her, hold the pup in your arms and cradle her like a baby by holding her on her back. With your arms tucked under her, gently pull her toward you. Let her body wrap around your chest. While you are doing this, apply some pressure with

the palm of your hand at her knees to stretch her legs out even further. This helps stretch her spine. When your puppy feels she can't get away, then she will relax that much more in your arms.

You can also stretch her on the floor by rolling her on her back. Take the palm of one hand and support her front legs forward and with the palm of your other hand, push gently on her knees so her hind legs stretch out. You can do this with a grown dog as well.

Lastly, don't stretch your dog only during stress-related situations. She will then associate stretching as something stressful. And when dogs are more stressed, they are more resistant about lying on their backs.

My Dog's Favorite Games

Below are a collection of favorite games by young readers and their dogs. There are some really great things to do with your dog here and shows how imaginative children are with their dogs:

My dog, Echo, has a toy that you would use for tug a war, but instead I throw it at him, then act like I'm going to take it from him and then he moves really quickly and then I will pretend I'm going to sit down, then reach down quickly and try to get it from him. It is a lot of fun and makes me and Echo get tired real quickly. Annie, age 10 Missouri

My dog and I play a game where you move your feet around and wait until she starts to chase them and then you try to run away and he chases your feet and tries to get them. Lauren, age 10, Australia

I like to play Fetch with my dog. We made up a game where I bounce the ball high and Beau (my dog) catches it. Then we wrestle. We also play hide and go seek with a dog biscuit. Tyler, age 9, Colorado USA

My dog Harley and I play tetherball together. We have a tetherball pole in our backyard. I will hit the ball to him and he jumps up and hits the ball back with his front paws. He just loves it! Julie, age 12, California

My sister and I usually play bobbing for biscuits with our dog, Kirby. We drop some treats into her water bowl and she'll take them out again. Just like when we bob for

apples at Halloween. Kirby also joins us for running through the sprinklers. Ning, age 12, Colorado USA

My dog, Kelsey, and I play "Find The Cookie" with our other dog, Denver. My sister and I will hide a dog biscuit without letting our dogs see where. Then we'll see how fast the dogs can find the treat, and which one finds it first! Bethany, age 13, Missouri USA

Shayna is my 4.5 year old Old English Sheepdog! She weighs 100 pounds and is very energetic. I usually go outside and play soccer with her and I sometimes, when it is yukky outside, I play hide and go seek. My brother holds Shayna with a piece of her favorite food in his hand and then I hide. My brother gives Shayna the treat to calm her down and then she goes to find me. When she finds me, I give her good comments and then I give her a kiss and a piece of food. Then my brother hides and we continue playing. Jessica, age 12, New York USA

I take a sock, put tissue or paper, etc. in it. Tie it up securely and start playing!
Aimee, age 10, Oklahoma USA

I like to play hide and seek with my dog. It isn't much, but it is kind of fun. What I do first (it is better to do this game at night) is throw her favorite toy as hard as I can across the yard (fenced). Then as soon as I do that, I run the opposite direction and hide. It is fun, but you have to find different hiding spots and switch around, otherwise the dog will keep looking where you always hide. Once she couldn't find me and started whining a little, but I called her and she found me.
Kellie, Age 12, Oregon USA

One game I play with my dog, Coco, is 'find the treat'. I rub the scent of the treat on the rug to the place where I'm going to hide it and put Coco in a room so he can not see where I hide it. Then I open the door and ask Coco where it is while he is picking up the scent with his nose and he finds it. Jocelyn, Age 11, Ontario

We play games that teach Astro not to be too aggressive. When I throw a toy, he runs to get it. When he returns, he usually tries to not let me have the toy so I ignore him. Then he gives me the toy and I reward him and try it again. Katie, age 10, California USA

We play 'Come to me'. That means that when I call my doggy, she 'comes to me' and I give her a kissy and a pat. When I say "Come to me!" she understands what that means and she really comes to me. I love my dogs! I have 3 all together. Miss B, age 11, Sydney Australia

Fun Things To Do With Your Dog

I play a fun game that me and my dog, Tia, decided on called Tug~O~Fun. My dog is too stubborn to let me have the ball. When I throw it for her, she comes back with it. I get on my hands and knees and tug-o-war with her and that's why it's called Tug~O~Fun! Sarah, age 11, Perth, Western Australia

Both of us play wrestling with our dogs. Our dogs' names are Doc and Suzy. Also you can get a frisbee and throw it and let your dog catch it and bring it back to you. KS, age 10, Illinois

I play tug-o-war. Ryan, age 11, Illinois USA

I play hide and seek with my dog. I throw his tennis ball really far and then I run to hide somewhere, and when he comes back I call his name once and he comes looking for me. When he finds me we do it again! Danielle, age 11, Connecticut USA

My dog, Cricket, loves to play shake a paw, give me five! then ten! She'll run up and sit in front of me and I'll say "Gimme five!" She'll slap her paw into my hand then I'll say "Shake a paw!" and she'll slap her other paw into my hand. Then after she does that countless times, I'll say "Gimme ten!" and she'll slap both her paws into my hand. Then she'll go tearing off and play with her Panda. Jenny, age 15, British Columbia Canada

This game is very simple and I am sure that most people, (if not all), have played it. I give my dog his toy, and he plays keep-away. I hide behind a chair or something, and he'll slowly walk over to my hiding spot, and then I'll jump out and try to grab his toy. Sara, age 11

We play a lot of games with our dog at once. When our dog, Wiggles, starts running around really fast, she is in her playful mood. We run and then she chases us. When she tags us, we crawl on the ground and start wrestling. When she gets out of hand, we throw her toy lion and she fetches it. After a while, we use the lion to play tug-of-war when she starts to tear it up, so she won't be sad. TIP: DO NOT let your dog win each time! If you do, that will tell your dog that he/she is stronger than you, and he/she will try to take over. Maxie and Alexis, ages 12 & 7, Texas USA

My dog, Muffin, and I play this game. First I crawl on my knees and stamp my hands on the floor. Then, after a while, she will start doing it too. Then, after we do that for a while, I get up and start running around the house while she tries to catch me. NOTE: MY DOG ONLY DOES IT WHEN SHE'S FEELING PLAYFUL. Megan, age 7, Texas USA

Me and my dog, Snoopy, play a neat game. It's called 'Round Them Up'. Here's what

I do: I dress up like a cow, then I hide somewhere in the house. Next I say "Yahoo!". Snoopy will sniff for me and when he's just about to find me, I run down the hall mooing like a cow. Snoopy will snap at my heels trying to put me in my room. Tip: It really only works with sheepdogs. Gina, age 12, New Mexico

I throw a ball or stick for my dog. Her name is Lucy. She's a black Labrador Retriever. I try to teach her how to play hide and seek, but she's really good at tag. I have another dog too. Her name is Molly. Lucy and Molly are sisters. They love it when I throw a ball for them in the water. I think my dogs are the best dogs. Tessa, age 8, British Columbia, Canada

My game is hide-n-seek. I hide his toy somewhere in the yard. When I'm done hiding the toy I'll say, "Go get the toy" and he searches the yard for the toy. When he finds it, I hide it again. (But don't hide it too hard because he won't be able to find it.) Sylvia, age 12, Nova Scotia, Canada

I give the dog his doll. Then I start pulling it softly from his mouth. Then I start pulling it hard and hard. Then he starts pulling too, until he shakes his head. Then I throw it away. Then he will go to bring it. I love this game and he does too. Adil, age 11

I taught my dog to Hug. I put some food in my hand and held it in the air and patted my chest. She jumped for the food and landed on my chest, then I bent my arm that was patting my chest so that she would land on it. And when she did, I would give her a hug. So each time I put my hand in the air and patted my chest, she would give me a hug. Kate, age 12, New Zealand

You Can Contribute Too!

I hope you have enjoyed this collection of fun things to do with your dog.

We update this book at four times a year. If you have an activity which your dog loves to do please let us know and we will try to include it in the next edition.

Just email: kimholthby@birchwood-uk.com

I look forward to hearing from you.

And Finally... A Few Of Your Dog's Favorite Things

Finally, did you know there are many ways you can reward your dog other than giving him his favorite treat. Generally, the more reliably your dog has learned a behavior, the more you can give him rewards in place of foods. For dogs who love certain things more than a treat, rewards can become a more important primary motivator than food. Many dogs will turn up their noses at treats if you offer him a game of catch.

Below are 10 examples of great rewards that you can give to your wonderful pet:

1. Chasing a ball or a Frisbee
2. Playing with other dogs
3. Chewing a chew toy
4. Digging a hole
5. Going outside or coming inside
6. Playing tug-of-war or chase
7. Taking a walk or going for a car ride
8. Swimming
9. Chasing birds in a safe environment
10. Anything else your dog loves to do