



# Weimaraner Rescue Of Texas



RESCUE | REHABILITATE | RE-HOME



Photo by Susanne McLeod

## ADOPTION DAY PACKET

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**WEIMARANER RESCUE OF TEXAS, INC.** is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3), non-profit charitable organization.

## **HISTORY OF WRT**

Since 1989, our small group of volunteers has saved over 2,700 Weimaraners from suffering and death. We exist solely on donations and fundraising efforts. Every penny of our proceeds pays for veterinary care, food, boarding, and essential expenses. WRT began as the Rescue Committee of the Lone Star Weimaraner Club, Inc. (formerly North Texas Weimaraner Club).

In 1997, WRT incorporated and was granted 501(c)(3) status by the IRS, enabling tax deductible donations to our rescue fund.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The rescue, rehabilitation, and placement of Weimaraners from animal shelters, found stray, abandoned, neglected and abused. We educate the public on responsible pet ownership, and promote spay/neuter. We are dedicated to end the tragedy of pet over-population by opposing puppy mills, pet stores selling live animals, and irresponsible over-breeding of companion animals.

**WE SINCERELY THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING OUR GROUP AND ADOPTING FROM US!**



## Happy Adoption Day

Congratulations on adopting your new family member! It is always exciting to bring a new dog home, and there are a lot of things that you can do to ensure that you set up your new dog for success.

Look through your adoption packet. The folder that came with your dog has some very useful information. The Dog Profile, Care Instructions, and veterinary records in the packet, along with this document, will help you get to know your new dog and get them integrated into your home.

Some important things to think about during the first few weeks that your new dog is in your home:

Every time a dog changes environment, they are put under stress. This stress can cause an increase in unusual or unexpected behaviors. The best way to assist your dog in settling in quickly is to get them on a schedule and show them what to expect in their new home.

1. **Feeding** – feeding should be done on a schedule, with a set amount at each feeding. If there are multiple dogs in the household, it should always be done separately. The Care Instructions document should include normal feeding times and amounts that the dog was used to in its foster home. Try to transition them gradually to a new schedule if possible. If you are not going to feed the same food as the foster, use a gradual transition to switch the dog to new food. For the first 3 days, feed  $\frac{3}{4}$  of their old food and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their new food, for the next 3 days, feed  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$ . For the last 3 days, feed  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their old food and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of their new food. It is not unusual to see a bit of digestive upset and loose stool during a food transition. If this lasts longer than a couple of weeks, consult your vet.
2. **Environment** – make sure that your home is set up in a way that your new dog has a space of their own, whether that be a crate or a dog bed. Consider getting your new dog an Adaptil collar, a pheromone collar that can reduce their stress level during times of transition. Ensure your house has been dog-proofed, and that you do not encourage opportunities for your new dog to get into things that they should not get into.
3. **Consistency and House Rules** – all members of the household need to agree on house rules and make sure that the dog knows what to expect. This can include things like: where the dog sleeps, whether the dog is allowed on the furniture, whether the dog will be allowed to have people food. This helps provide a unified front with the people in the house, and help to lay a framework of leadership for the new dog.
4. **Schedule** – In addition to a schedule with feeding, ensure that you are keeping your new dog on a good schedule for potty breaks in the beginning. Sometimes marking or a regression in houstraining can occur when a dog goes into a new home. Make sure that you have a designated potty area and that you take them



outside on a schedule in the beginning, even if they are already housetrained. Learn their signals for going outside and listen to them! For marking in a new environment, male dogs may benefit from a belly band to help curb the behavior until they settle in. If using a doggy door, still pay attention to your dog's potty times closely for the first few weeks to ensure that they are regular and consistent in elimination.

5. **Exercise and Mental Stimulation** – there needs to be a solid plan for exercise for your new dog. Planned and scheduled regular daily exercise will be critical, depending on the age and phase of your dog's life. This should not be simply letting dogs roam loose in the yard and exercising themselves. This is regular bonded exercise, in the form of on-leash walks or play. Dog parks are not encouraged until you really get to know your dog and have good control of them. Some dogs are not good candidates for dog parks due to their personality and socialization history, getting to know your dog will help determine if a dog park is a good fit for your dog.
6. **Training** – everyone that adopts a dog from WRT is required to go through some sort of formal training with their new dog. This is recommended within the first 3 months that you have your dog. Training does not have to be formal in the beginning, and will help you establish the right kind of relationship with your dog. Informal training can include things like: making your new dog sit and wait for food bowl; making your new dog sit before you open the door to leave for a walk; and teaching your dog to sit for petting and attention. If you need help teaching these behaviors, or if you see any behaviors that are concerning in the first 2 weeks, please reach out to the WRT Trainer for some suggestions and/or resources to help.

Remember that the first two weeks of your adoption is considered the foster to adopt period. If you have any concerns during this time, please reach out to your Adoption Coordinator for support.

Otherwise, enjoy your new dog! Thank you for saving a life and adopting a dog from the Weimaraner Rescue of Texas!



## Training Services in the DFW Area and Beyond!

**First of all, CONGRATULATIONS!!!** If you are reading this, then you have officially adopted your first Weimaraner from WRT! Or maybe you are fostering one of our dogs looking for their forever home! Thank you for opening your home and heart to one of our very special canines!

One of the absolute best ways that you can help your new fuzzy friend adapt to their new home is through *leadership-based concepts and basic obedience training*.

Training is crucial in establishing the right kind of relationship with your dog, providing mental stimulation, and who doesn't like a well-behaved dog??

**Did you know that the Weimaraner Rescue of Texas has a trainer as a volunteer??** (That's me!!) **And did you know that foster families can get my help for free??** AND you don't have to live in the DFW area – I help lots of people in other areas of Texas as well!

For folks adopting in other Texas cities, I offer free phone consultations, and can assist you in locating a trainer in your area if you need hands-on professional help. Sometimes a quick phone call and some email resources is all you need, but if you need more, I can put you in contact with a trainer close to you that can help!

**ALSO, if you adopt a dog from the rescue, you are automatically eligible for a reduced-cost session with me for \$35.00.** This includes email and phone follow up.

**After that initial session, training rates are as follows:**

**Private in-home (or location) training sessions (approximately 1 hour): \$75.00**

**Package of 4 private in-home (or location) training sessions: \$285.00**

**Group Training Classes (traveling – 6-week classes): \$150/series**

**\*\*Offered 1 – 2 times/year – dates announced via email**



**Julie Roller, WRT Trainer**

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## About Julie:

I have been training dogs and horses for 15+ years. I have taught training classes and private sessions in DFW since 2009, and work only on referral (I have a normal day job!). I have experience with different training styles, and have a large amount of experience helping dogs with behavioral challenges. I have helped many folks (and my own dogs) obtain multiple obedience titles and prepare to compete in many competitive canine events. I am very passionate about training and my goal is to help WRT find homes for even some of the most challenging dogs to come into rescue. I volunteer much of my time to this purpose – I believe it is SO important for training to be a part of everyone's lives with their pups. HAPPY TRAINING!!

Another resource to find a trainer in your area is through the AKC (American Kennel Club) and the APDT (Association for Professional Dog Trainers) websites. Many of the volunteers and adopters in the group have used trainers as well, and there are lots of resources to find a trainer that is the right fit for you!!



## **Introducing a Dog into a Home with Existing Dogs**

**Julie Roller, WRT Trainer**

Introducing new dogs and integrating them together in a home can be a wonderful experience. It can also be challenging, as dogs have individual personalities and it can sometimes take some work to get them to mesh well. There are a lot of things that you can do to help increase the chances that everyone will co-exist peacefully.

The introduction of a new dog to your home can often cause stress and sometimes fear. Although your current dog(s) will have already met your new dog, once the dogs are home together and in the same space, new challenges may arise. Keep in mind you are introducing a new dog into an existing “pack order”, and it will be normal for the dogs to take a little while to adjust to having a new dog present. All the dogs need to know where the new dog fits into the pack order.

The first few weeks in your home will be the most crucial for monitoring the relationship between your pets. Remember that both your new dog and your current dog(s) are going through a period of transition and stress, even if it ends up being positive. Please keep this in mind as you settle in at home.

Watching the body language of your pets reveals much about how they feel. Look for these signs that it’s going well:

- Loose, relaxed body movements
- Open mouths
- Wagging tails, low and sweeping motions
- Play bows (where one dog puts his elbows on the ground and his bottom in the air) or other bouncy movements that invite play

Some dogs that feel at ease may also ignore each other after the initial hello, especially if they are not very social in nature. A little bit of barking is okay, as long as it isn’t aggressive in nature, and some mounting can be normal as well – even between female dogs.

Watch for these signs that dogs feel uneasy, or there is trouble brewing:

- Closed mouths
- Tails held high, with a tic-tic-tic motion
- Prolonged body stiffness
- Forward ears
- Staring – especially hard staring
- Growling



You can help dogs avoid conflict and make good connections by doing these two things:

- Give each dog its own food bowl and eating space, water bowl, bed or sleeping area, and plenty of rest.
- Use caution when introducing toys, bones, and other shared items. Some dogs can develop guarding behaviors if they are not used to sharing.
- Engage in walks together and other fun activities. This helps dogs learn to like each other because good things happen when they're together.

During the adjustment period, and initial few weeks, you want to see these behaviors:

- Fewer grumpy moments (if there were any to begin with)
- More frequent play or interaction
- Mutual grooming or cuddling

Note - If the dogs merely tolerate each other or avoid each other, or if there are actual physical squabbles or more serious fights, it may indicate a poor match. Remember, in most cases, the point of getting a second dog is to provide a companion for your current pet. If the dogs cannot bond and form a good relationship, this will cause long term stress and challenges in your home. Be realistic in your expectations, and if you are really unsure what steps to take, contact a qualified trainer that specializes in behavior to help you determine whether or not the dogs can be integrated safely and properly.



## **Dogs and Cats Living Together – Tips for Peaceful Co-existence**

**Julie Roller – WRT Trainer**

### **Things to consider before mixing cats and dogs in the same household:**

1. Breed, size, age, temperament – It is really uncertain how any animal is going to react to another species, but being aware of your dog’s breed characteristics may help determine their reaction with living with another small animal. If you choose a hunting breed, such as a Weimaraner, you need to understand that dogs that historically have had a job hunting small animals have a very strong prey drive or predatory response. This could put your cat in danger if the situation is not managed properly.

There are lots of hunting breeds that live peacefully with cats every day, (I have 3 Weimaraners and 2 cats at home with me!) but it is especially careful to use caution if you don’t know the dog’s history. It can be easier to introduce dogs to cats as puppies, then they learn proper behavior early on. Alternatively, to keep life simple you can choose to adopt a dog who has a known history of living peacefully with other types of animals. Of course that isn’t always an option when you are bringing an adult dog into your home. Good news! Lots of dogs can be trained to tolerate and leave cats alone – we will talk about that later!

Note – If the dog you are looking to adopt has had a history of killing small animals (chickens, rabbits, etc.) or cats – this dog will not be a good choice as they have already established that they have a serious predatory behavior.

2. In most cases we don’t want to let the dogs and cats “figure it out” on their own – There is a common misconception that if we just let the dogs and cats meet naturally, that they will figure things out. This is never a good idea!! Even dogs that have met cats previously and been fine with them, can have a reaction to a new kitty based on the cat’s reaction to them. Sometimes a new cat’s reaction to an approaching dog can be enough to get the dog to become over-interested. Carefully orchestrated introductions are best and very important to the long term success of animals living together in your household peacefully.
3. Plan ahead – We are going to talk about some things that you need to do before bringing a new dog (or cat) home, but it is strongly advised to have a plan. If you need to have baby gates, etc. set up, do it a few days before your new pet comes home so that you know how they fit into the scheme of things. Also plan ahead if this doesn’t work out.



Make sure you know the policy with whatever organization you are obtaining your pet from regarding returning an animal to them. Sometimes this is the only option – and you need to be prepared for the need to make this decision.

### **Good Management is Key**

The first key to setting the stage for a successful relationship between your pets is good management on the part of all the humans living in the household.

Good management requires effective barriers (doors, baby gates), sturdy containment units (crates, pens), restraint (leashes, tethers), and unwavering supervision (your eyeballs and awareness). However, all your management tools are only as good as your ability to ensure their use. A moment's lapse can result in deadly consequences.

If your children (or roommates) aren't good at heeding your warnings to keep doors closed, or if your dog can open doors, you might need to add self-closing springs, child-proof latches and/or padlocks to your list of management tools. You're likely to be more successful in the long run commingling species if you combine a foolproof management plan with an effective program of training and behavior modification.

### **Careful Introductions**

I NEVER let unfamiliar dogs and cats meet face to face during the first few introductions! The best way to start the introduction process is to have your dog safely restrained with a leash and collar (either tethered to something or someone). The cat is brought out in someone's arms, making sure that proper distance is between the dog and cat (I would start with 10 – 15 feet). The key is to make sure everyone stays calm – if the dog or the cat tense up or start displaying tense, scared, or predatory behavior, increase the amount of distance or take the cat away completely.

This step will be practiced a few times a day until neither animal shows any fear or tenseness at that distance. In the meantime, you are going to do some other things to help the animals adjust to living together, we will talk about that later in the article.

### **Training and Behavior Modification**

If your dog is showing more than a healthy interest in your cat at this point, we need to introduce some basic training commands and basic behavior modification. This may seem daunting for some, but basic obedience will assist in your relationship with your dog and maintaining a certain level of respect and leadership in all situations. Certain commands can assist you in managing situations with your animals – and knowing that your dog will respond to you is important.

Behavior modification is just a fancy term for the process of changing your dog's emotional response to various stimuli, in this case – a cat! The goal is to change your dog's association with the cat, and make them understand that good things happen when they remain calm and



controlled in the presence of the kitty. This will be accomplished through counter-conditioning and desensitization – both basic behavior modification techniques.

### **Counter-conditioning and Desensitization (As described by Pat Miller CPDT – Whole Dog Journal)**

Counter-conditioning and desensitization (CC&D) is an effective behavior modification tool that can be applied successfully in an almost endless number of behavior challenges.

All living things – at least those with a central nervous system – learn and respond to their environment through two primary pathways: classical (or respondent) conditioning and operant conditioning.

With operant conditioning, the dog operates on the environment. That is, the dog does deliberate behaviors to make good stuff happen and bad stuff go away. For example, your dog chooses to offer a sit because he knows there's a good chance it will result in you paying attention to him and perhaps feeding him a tasty treat.

With classical conditioning, the environment operates on the dog, triggering a response because of a prior association between two stimuli in the dog's experience. Something happens in the dog's world and the dog has an emotional and/or biological response.

A dog's desire to chase something that moves is an innate, hardwired behavior; it doesn't have to be learned. It is certainly stronger in some dogs than others, due to genetic influence. We have intentionally bred some dogs to be more turned on by movement than others; herding dogs, terriers, and sighthounds leap to mind. Still, it's the association between the presence of the cat and the dog's experience that cats often run away that make the feline a high-arousal chase object.

We use counter-conditioning to change the association with a stimulus. If we can replace the "cat = rousing game of chase/kill" association with "cat = totally delicious treat from human" association, we have "countered" the prior association with the new one.

Classical and counter-conditioning are both happening all the time. When you praise and treat your dog for sitting, operant conditioning happens. The dog learns that he can sit to get you to reward, so he sits more often. He's also associating the praise with food, and associating training in general with good stuff – having fun with you and eating treats.

However, when your dog is in the throes of a strong emotional response – high arousal, fear, great excitement – operant conditioning goes out the window. This means that when your dog is barking and lunging at your cat, or chasing your ferret madly through the house, he is unable to respond to your cues to come or lie down. It's not that he's deliberately ignoring you; he truly can't think clearly enough to register and act on your cue.



That's why changing the dog's emotional response is a much more effective way to modify his behavior than yelling at him, or asking him to perform an operant behavior. When his emotions are under control, then he can sit when you ask him to, but not before that.

### **How to Start Basic Counter-Conditioning with the Presence of a Cat**

1. Stimulus (cat) appears at sub-threshold distance, which is the distance at which the dog sees the cat and becomes alert but doesn't start barking and lunging. The cat should be quietly restrained in this situation like we talked about above.
2. Owner begins feeding bits of high value treats to the dog if the cat is in view near threshold distance. (I like to use chicken for this as it is very high value for most dogs). It is important when doing basic behavior work, that you use high value treats – not treats that your dog is accustomed to having normally.
3. Cat disappears from view.
4. Owner stops feeding treats.
5. Repeat these four steps until when the cat appears, your dog looks at you with a big "Where's my treat?" look on his face. We call this a "conditioned emotional response" or CER. When you have a consistent CER at your starting distance, you can decrease the distance slightly and repeat steps 1 through

Every time you obtain consistent CERs you can increase the intensity of the stimulus – bring the cat closer, have the cat move a little faster, introduce two cats . . .

### **Other Successful Management and Introduction Strategies:**

1. Set up a safe place for your cats – behind a barrier. This may be an office, spare bedroom, etc., but make it kitty heaven! Put their beds, toys, litter box, food, and anything that they may want in this room. Put a baby gate/barrier in the doorway – I like the ones that are 5 feet tall with a small kitty door in the bottom since the dog will not be able to jump over it. The kitty door needs to remain closed for the first few days, but the cats can live in peace while the dog and cat get used to seeing one another through the gate. Make sure that you go in and spend some time with your cats, and then come out and spend time with your dog. This will assist in starting to get the animals used to each other's scent. If the dog is attempting to knock down the gate, or spends all his time "stalking" the cat through the gate, the room door may need to be partially closed for the first couple of days to allow the cats to feel a sense of security.



2. At night when the dog is safely put up in a bedroom or kennel, let the cat out to explore the rest of the house. Therefore, I recommend having the kitty access door in the baby gate. If you forget and let the dog out of the bedroom, the cat will go to the “safe place”.
3. The dog should not be let out loose together until the dog has been restrained and seen the cat held in someone’s arms and loose on the floor. Some dogs that don’t react to cats being held will react when they run. The goal is to see what the dog’s response will be in most situations with the cat before you feel confident letting them loose together.
4. Even after the dog and cat are loose together – management is key! Teach your dog a good leave it – or have some other method to get them to leave the cat alone (water spray bottle, etc.). The animals may require active management for a while after integrating to being loose together.
5. Remember that we feed into situations heavily!! If you are nervous and tense when introducing the animals – that will feed into the energy of the introduction. Remain calm and relaxed during all work with your dog and cat. This will reduce anxiety on their part and keep everyone more receptive to the learning environment.

If these methods are not working for you – or you run into a situation that you cannot handle, feel free to contact me for additional tips or a referral to a trainer in your area.



## **Dogs and Children Living Together – Proper Management and Training**

**Julie Roller – WRT Trainer**

There are tons of homes out there that are shared by both children and dogs. Almost everyone I knew growing up had a dog in their home, but as a trainer I often get calls about dogs and children not comingling well. Another call I often get is about the new baby being added to a home that did not previously have children. Sadly, I sometimes get the call when things have gone wrong – and a family is making a tough choice regarding whether or not they can keep their dog in the home. Although having a dog in a child's life when they are growing up can be wonderful for teaching responsibility, compassion, and friendship, if the relationship between your dog and your children is not managed properly, it can turn into a very unsafe situation.

The thing that we need to remember is that dogs are not going to automatically accept children in their lives. It is important that we work towards having a well-trained, well-socialized dog and teach them to accept lots of different things. Here is the thing about children – they are loud, clumsy, small, active, and unpredictable. That combination can be completely overwhelming for any dog – even a well-trained one!

Another very important thing to point out is that dogs do not view children the same way that they view adults. They essentially see kids as littermates, and will treat them exactly the way they treat other dogs. This can create challenges in their interactions, because the behaviors that a dog uses with another dog can often be viewed as inappropriate if they were to use them with a human

It is very important to think about some key components to ensure a happy long-term relationship between all members of the household.

### **SUPERVISE**

Supervision means taking control of all interactions between your child and dog to ensure a positive and safe experience for both parties. This is the #1 way to protect both your dog and child.

One very important thing to take into consideration is the way that your child handles your dog (play, grooming, restraint, etc.) Remember that children will generally handle a dog much more unpredictably and roughly than an adult will. NEVER leave a young child and a dog alone together. A dog should not be expected to tolerate inappropriate handling from children (even if unintentional). A child should not be expected to be responsible if a dog reacts inappropriately with aggression in any situation either.

### **EXPOSE AND SOCIALIZE**

Most problems with dogs are predictable and occur as a reaction to inadequate socialization or exposure to children in a variety of situations. These problems can generally be prevented by providing frequent, positive, experiences with kids from an early age (if possible). If you don't have kids of your own – see if you can find some through friends or family. Just as all kids should know how to behave around dogs, ALL dogs should know how to behave around kids. Please note: older dogs that have not been around children at a younger age may have a harder time learning to live with kids. Some dogs do best in a child-



free home, and it is important to properly evaluate a potential dog's temperament to help match them to your family.

A situation that is a bit different is when a new baby is introduced to a household with existing dogs. PLEASE remember that this is a huge change for your dog – not only with accepting a new baby, but also with added stress to the household, changes in schedule, and humans spending more time with the baby and less with the dog. BE PATIENT with your dog, and ensure that you make it a priority to try and keep their schedule and exercise as consistent as possible. This requires a little bit of work, but will help make the transition of a new baby easier.

## Handling Training

Kids love to give their dog a hug, but in dog language, a hug is very rude. Many dogs do not want to tolerate or accept that type of contact and may become stressed and uncomfortable. Desensitize your dog or puppy (and even adult dog) to lots of different types of handling – hugging, handling of ears, tail, feet, grabbing of the collar, etc. Getting the dog used to being touched and handled all over will help in lots of situations – not just in child-dog interactions.

The best way to teach your dog, or “condition” them to handling and items that may be new to their environment (strollers and other baby things) is through desensitization and conditioning practices. This is accomplished through exposing your dog to unfamiliar handling, noises, or items through pairing positive experiences with a food reward. For example, if your dog is afraid to walk next to a stroller – start with putting treats at the base of the stroller while it is not moving. Then put your dog next to the stroller, move it an inch – and reward the dog if they accept the movement. Each time you add a step and the dog handles it well – reward! Soon the dog will think that the stroller = treats, and they will be fine with it!

## Nipping, Chasing, Jumping Up and Mouthing

Do not allow your dog to chase and nip kids or jump up on them. Teach kids to “be a statue” by standing absolutely still, folding their arms, being quiet, and looking away from the dog. If your dog or puppy is just starting this behavior, they learn that the statue game is boring – and they go find something else to do. The most important thing is that the child does not interact with the dog when they are behaving badly – otherwise it becomes a game.

Reward your dog for ignoring fast motion, screams, etc. Use conditioning techniques with food reward to teach your dog to remain calm during noisy or distracting situations with children. Learn how to read stress signals in your dog – this will help you know when your dog needs a break. This would be a good time to use management techniques, such as putting the dog in a crate or quiet safe place with a yummy treat to chew on until things calm down.

## Encourage Safe Play

All games between dogs and kids should have rules – again it starts with supervision.

DO:

- Teach your dog to retrieve and give. Bringing toys back to you is a great way for kids and dogs to spend constructive time together and wear each other out.



- Teach your dog how to give up items in their possession from day one. Take away toys, bones, etc., and reward them with a tasty treat. Pair this with a command for long term success.
- Play hide and seek by letting the kids hide toys (and themselves) and sending the dog to find!
- Teach your dog an “on” and “off” switch if you want to play tug. Stop play every couple of minutes and ask for a “sit” or “down”. Reward a correct response with food or continued play.
- Make certain the children stick to the rules with each interaction and stop play if it becomes inappropriate.
- Quit play immediately if the dog is getting over excited or if teeth touch human skin (even accidentally).
- Make sure kids spend equal time doing “quiet” activities, such as grooming, so that the dog does not only associate your child with high energy “play” activities.

## DON'T

- Allow your dog to bite/wrestle/tug directly on human skin – all play should be directed onto toys
- Allow adults, teenagers, or children to play wrestling games with the dog
- Allow games of chasing that may encourage nipping and biting
- Allow young children to play with any dog unsupervised (even a dog you trust)

It's all about education (both your dog and child)!

A dog is not a babysitter or a toy. If you have children when you get a dog, don't kid yourself – you are really taking on the task of training two species at the same time. Children and dogs need to be taught how to behave appropriately, together and apart - and they need to be taught that there are boundaries in all situations. Remember to teach your child that all dogs are different – and that just because their dog tolerates something – doesn't mean that the dog at the neighbor's house will!

So please – whether you are introducing a dog into a house with children, or introducing a baby or child into a house with a dog – do it the RIGHT WAY!! Please don't set your dog (or child) up for a situation that they don't deserve. It is our job to ensure proper introduction and interactions between dogs and children, and this is not a responsibility to take lightly.

If you are trying these things and still having difficulty – please reach out to a trainer for assistance!



## House Training the Easy Way

Julie Roller, Canine Trainer

One of the biggest complaints I get in puppy obedience classes is that people are having struggles with house training. Puppies (and sometimes even adult dogs) have to be taught not to eliminate in your home! This is one of those things that we understand, but they need a little help from us in determining their boundaries. The thing that you need to remember is that puppies are growing and developing rapidly at less than 6 months of age, they eat more food, burn up more energy and seem to need to eliminate constantly! Puppies have not yet developed bowel and bladder control, so they can't 'hold it' as long as adult dogs.

Puppies need time to develop a "den" instinct to cause them to want to 'hold it' and wait to potty outside. In their litter, puppies just go whenever and wherever they happen to be! Successful house training depends upon your diligent supervision, so you can be there to show your pup where to eliminate.

For some breeds, houstraining can be a 6 – 12-month process. This means that though you may be making tremendous progress house training, there will be "mistakes". Sometimes for reasons you can't figure out! Don't fret about it. Stay focused on the progress you are making. Your confidence in the techniques you are using to house train your puppy will ensure your success.

If you have an older dog that was never properly house trained, or is going through a time of transition (moving into a new home, etc.), you may have to go through these same processes - exactly as if they are puppies. This can be very frustrating, but is the only hope to get them back on track with house training.

### Five Rules for House Training

- Give your dog frequent access to his toilet area – Supervise, Supervise, Supervise!!
- Reward your dog for peeing or pooping in the right place - use a special treat.
- Never punish the dog for houstraining "mistakes" – their accidents are our fault as much as they are theirs!
- Put your dog on a regular and timely feeding schedule – know when they are going to need to go!
- Know when your dog last eliminated – start to recognize patterns and look for signs around that time that they are ready to go outside.



## **How often do dogs have to potty?**

Most puppies must eliminate about every 30-45 minutes except, of course, when sleeping. Their elimination schedule will depend upon when they last ate or drank water; rambunctious physical activity, etc. Adult dogs will typically go much longer between bathroom breaks, but you will see a pattern that corresponds with other parts of their daily schedule.

If your puppy is not sleeping in their crate or pen, and is out in the house, you must follow them around to know what they are doing: chewing a bone, running circles, getting a drink of water, etc. In fact, don't take your eye off them! If you cannot watch them continuously, you must put them back into their pen or crate to prevent potty training "mistakes". You can also get a leash and tether your pup to you, that way they cannot sneak away and have an accident.

For older dogs – you don't need to be as vigilant, but you do need to pay attention! If they get up and start wandering around and sniffing, or go and sit or circle by the door – that is a pretty good indication that they must go. Remember that adult dogs that have not been properly housetrained may revert to the same bad habits as puppies, and may not even think about it before going! You need to watch them like a hawk!!

Obviously, once your dogs have been properly housetrained, you just look for signs or notification that they need to go. The supervision does not have to be as intense.

## **Regular feedings will house train a dog faster**

It's very important to put your puppy or adult dog on a regular and timely feeding schedule; what goes in on a regular schedule will come out on a regular schedule. Every pup is different; some poop immediately after eating; with others it may be 30 minutes to an hour after eating. Unless advised by your vet for some medical reason, **do not free-feed**. That is, do not leave food out all the time. For two reasons: First, your pup's elimination schedule will be random at best. And second, they will not necessarily associate you as the provider of food, and feeding time can be a great opportunity to do some training with your dog. Always leave water out for your dog. Check the water bowl frequently to note how much they are drinking and to make sure the water bowl is full.



## **The best way to potty train a dog**

*Confinement to a small area such as a bathroom or an enclosed exercise pen in combination with confinement to a crate works best.*

This method is the most effective and flexible. Your pup needs to develop his natural "den instinct" and learn where to eliminate - and where not to. To potty train our puppy we must condition a desire in the pup to avoid soiling the "den" ...A.K.A. your house! Confinement and your due diligence in providing access outside to potty will develop this instinct and eventual desire.

Make sure that your adult dog has a crate as well, and/or regular access to the outside via a doggy door, etc.

## **Choose a designated toilet area for house training**

So, where do you want to train your dog to always potty and poop? The canine toilet area needs to be accessible very quickly. Adult dogs can typically “hold it” a little better when they need to go – but for everyone’s sake make the designate area quick and easy to get to.

- If you live in a high-rise apartment, or a street level apartment or home with DIFFICULT outdoor access, use a bathroom or pen in the home for housetraining.
- If, however, you live in a street level apartment or home with EASY outdoor access, use a specific, very close outdoor location.

## **Get the items you need for housetraining and set up the household:**

- A few bottles of Nature's Miracle or similar product to remove urine and fecal stains and odor. Place these in a central or multiple location in your house with paper towels. \*\*Do not use normal household cleaners on dog urine – they will only get rid of the odor, not the urine proteins. The urine proteins are what your dog can smell, and what will cause them to go back and “mark” a spot repeatedly.
- A crate that is only large enough to accommodate your puppy when full grown. In the beginning, you may need to use dividers to “shrink” the size of the crate. See my article on crate training for help with choosing the right crate and making it somewhere that your dog wants to spend their time!
- An exercise pen that your puppy cannot jump out of. Put the exercise pen in a central location where you spend most of your time at home. You may want to put a tarp down first then set the pen on top of it. \*\*Exercise pens do not typically work for adult dogs – only for dogs that are not yet full grown.



- Special housetraining treats (rewards) - something small and special, reserved and used only for a housetraining reward. These treats should be kept close to the designated toilet area.
- For adult dogs you may consider using a belly band for male dogs, or a diaper for female dogs temporarily – especially if they are not housetrained and/or exhibiting marking type behavior.

*The key to house training is preventing "mistakes" and rewarding the dog/puppy for going in your chosen spot.*

### **Learn Your Dog's Body Language!**

Learn your dog's body language signaling that they need to potty. These signs can include: circling, sniffing, looking at the door, pacing, a sudden increase in their activity, anxiousness (whining, etc.).

By paying close attention to your dog, you will be able to proactively stop an accident before it happens!

It may be useful to teach your dog to ring a bell to alert you that they need to go outside. This can be wonderful for many dogs, but understand that you must let them out every time they ring the bell. To start teaching – every time you take your dog outside – ring the bells and say a command (outside, etc.). When they start ringing the bell themselves – PRAISE and let them out. Adult dogs will typically not take advantage of the bells, but with puppies you must still supervise them and reward them for going to their spot. Don't let them teach you to become just a door man!

### **What to do if you catch your dog in the act of a potty training "mistake"...**

If pup or dog is peeing in the wrong place... you may be able to stop him. Move quickly towards him when he begins to pee and pick him up or take him by the collar. Urgency is key here - you want to startle the dog just a little as you move towards them to pick them up, but you DO NOT want to scare them. You are redirecting your dog to the right spot - not disciplining him. Immediately after picking him up, take him to the potty area and patiently wait. Most dogs will finish there. Reward your pup with exuberance!

If the dog is pooping... let them finish. Dogs are not able to shut off a poop like they can shut off a pee. More likely than not, you'll just create a huge mess by trying to interrupt a poop.

As always, never make a big deal about cleaning up after your dog when an accident occurs. ALWAYS take them outside, no matter whether they have finished or not.



## **Houstraining at your bedtime and when you wake up**

Just before you go to bed and turn out the lights, go get your dog, no matter where he may be, asleep or not, and take them to the potty area. Reward and praise as always for eliminating. Put them in the crate next to your bed and retire for the night.

First thing in the morning, take your dog out of the crate and take them to the potty area.

## **Passive House Training When you are NOT Home**

*If you are going to crate your puppy when they are young, ensure that you have someone that can come and let them out to potty, or that you can come home on a lunch break, etc. to do so. DO NOT expect your puppy to hold it for 6+ hours while you are at work, accidents will happen if you take this approach. Once a puppy learns to potty in their crate, it is hard to break them of it.*

Set your dog up for success! Make sure that you have properly exercised your dog, and that you have taken them out JUST before you leave. Giving them something safe in their crate to occupy them may keep them busy and distracted as well.

## **House Training When You ARE Home**

When you are home but can't attend to your puppy or dog, follow the same procedures described above. However, the more time you spend with your puppy, the quicker he will be house trained. Your objective is to take your puppy to his toilet area every time he needs to eliminate. This should be about once every 30-45 minutes; just upon waking; just after eating or drinking; and just after a play session. For adult dogs that are at rest, every 2 – 3 hours should be sufficient.

When your dog does eliminate in his toilet area, praise and reward him profusely and enthusiastically! Don't use any type of reprimand or punishment for mistakes or accidents. Your puppy is too young to understand, and it can set the house training process back drastically.

Don't allow your puppy freedom outside of his room or pen unless you know absolutely for sure that his bladder and bowels are completely empty. When you do let him out, don't let him out of your sight. It is a good idea to have him on leash when he is exploring your home. He can't get into trouble if you are attached to the other end of the leash. Never, ever tie the puppy's leash to something and leave the puppy unattended.

As your puppy becomes more reliable about using his toilet area and his bowel and bladder control develops, he can begin to spend more time outside his room or pen with you in the rest of



your home. Begin by giving him access to one room at a time. Let him eat, sleep and play in this room but only when he can be supervised. When you cannot supervise him, put him back in his room or pen.

### **Active House Training**

The most important thing you can do to make house training happen as quickly as possible is to reward and praise your dog every time he goes in the right place. The more times he is rewarded, the quicker he will learn. Therefore, it's important that you spend as much time as possible with your dog and give him regular and frequent access to his toilet area.

Make sure your dog goes outside, no matter what the weather is, for walks and playtime. This will help them to not develop the habit of refusing to potty outside in the rain. I really only recommend paper training inside the home if you live in a high-rise apartment where you really cannot easily access the outside. Otherwise, your dog should learn to potty outside! This means the owner braves the elements as well – no cheating!

### **The Key to Successful House Training**

Consistency and Patience - Never scold or punish your dog for mistakes and accidents. The older your pup gets, the more he will be able to control his bladder and bowels. Eventually your dog will have enough control that he will be able to "hold it" for longer and longer periods of time. Let your puppy do this on his own time. When training is rushed, problems usually develop. Adult dogs will learn to hold it much more quickly than puppies, but the goal is the same!



## The Basics of Crate Training

Julie Roller, WRT Trainer

The goal of crate training is to give your dog somewhere that they can call their own, as well as somewhere to keep him safe while you are away. If a dog has never been in a crate it can be really scary for them, so there are some exercises that you should do with your dog to ensure that he is comfortable with the crate before you leave him alone for a long time.

### To start crate training, follow these steps:

1. **Choose a crate.** There are multiple types of crates, you can use any kind except for the soft sided crates that are new to the market. The dog will chew their way out of this type of crate. A wire or plastic crate is fine. Make sure that your dog can stand, turn around, and lie down comfortably. It should not be any larger than that. Some dogs prefer one type of crate to the other, so if one doesn't work – try another.
2. **Make the crate comfy.** Put a crate pad or blanket in the crate with your dog. Sometimes covering the crate with a blanket will make it seem more den like and safe to your dog. Do not leave toys or bones that your dog may be able to ingest in the crate. A rubber Kong is about the only thing I recommend (we will talk about that in a little bit!). When you first start crate training, I would recommend putting something in the crate that you don't mind the dog tearing up – maybe don't use their brand-new bed for crate training!
3. **Make sure your dog is safe.** If you put your dog in the crate with a collar, make sure that it is a flat buckle collar and is fit properly. NEVER leave a dog in a crate with a choke chain, gentle leader, prong collar, etc.
4. **Start out slowly.** Set your crate up and toss some treats in the crate. Give your dog a command (crate, go to bed, load up, etc.). When the dog goes in the crate, praise your dog. Do not shut the door yet. If you can help it – do not just put a dog in the crate and “make him deal with it”. This could create HUGE issues for you moving forward!
5. Continue luring the dog into the crate and feeding him treats in the crate and praising for calm, quiet behavior. Once the dog stays relaxed while in the crate, shut the door. Stay near the crate, and continue to treat your dog for quiet, relaxed behavior. Open the crate and let the dog out. Repeat a few times during each training session.
6. Put the dog in his crate and gradually increase the amount of time he is left in the crate, as well as how far away from the crate you are. If your dog starts barking or crying, DO NOT let them out of the crate. Only praise and offer treats for quiet, relaxed behavior. Wait for the dog to calm themselves, this could take a few minutes.
7. Leave for increasingly longer periods of time. Make sure that the crate becomes routine and a good place for your dog to be.



**Here are a few other tips that you can try with your dog. I call a couple of them crate "games", and they seem to work with a lot of dogs.**

1. Feed your dog ALL meals in the crate. You don't have to shut the door right away, but work up to it.
2. "Hide and Seek" - When your dog is not around and looking, get a variety of yummy treats and hide them in his crate (under the blanket, in the folds of a blanket, etc.). Leave the crate door open and let him go in and get them as he sees fit.
3. "Let me in" - Do the same thing as in hide and seek, but leave the door to the crate latched. Your dog will smell the food and will sit at the crate and "ask" to be let in to get the food. Open the door and let him get the treats and praise him.
4. "Hanging Out" - Put the crate in your living area and sit next to it while you are watching TV, etc. with the dog in the crate. As you sit there, and he remains quiet, drop pieces of kibble and treat into the crate occasionally, and quietly praise.
5. Experiment with different things that are safe to leave in the crate with him while you are gone. These could include: Kong with peanut butter and kibble frozen, Kong with canned dog food and treats frozen, Kong filled with chicken broth and frozen, treat puzzle toys (let me know if you want information on these), soft dog food frozen into ice cubes.
6. Buy a DAP (Dog Appeasing Pheromone) plug in unit and place very close to the crate. You can get them at any major pet store, or I can give you information on where to get them online. There are collars that they can wear with DAP as well. Use a calming product, such as Rescue Remedy, etc. to assist them in being comfortable in the crate.
7. Play music or leave the TV on for your dog while you are gone.
8. Put something that has your smell on it in the crate with your dog. A sweatshirt, blanket, pillow case, etc. works fine. Sleep with it a couple of nights and then put it in your dog's crate. It helps calm them while you are away.
9. Continue to shut your dog in the crate for periods of time while you are home and away. Your dog needs to spend time in the crate while you are home, so they don't start associating the crate with you being gone. Don't give him any feedback when you leave or come home. Ignore your dog for the first 5 or 10 minutes before you leave and when you come home. This ensures that you do not fuel any anxiety that your dog may be experiencing. Don't make the crate a big deal!
10. Cover the crate with a blanket to make it more den-like.



Sometimes, you will need to try each of these things separately, or try a combination of these things to see what your dog responds to. Experimenting with the location of the crate is sometimes a way to find someplace where the dog is happy. Typically, I recommend having two crates – one in the sleeping area, and one in the living area.

If you have a dog that wants to try to escape the crate, use zip ties and carabiners to reinforce critical areas on the crate.

If you are experiencing any problems with the training, or if you are experiencing additional issues with your crate training process, please call your trainer as soon as possible. There are other behavioral problems, such as separation anxiety, that can cause your dog to experience stress with their crate.



## Separation Anxiety

### What is Separation Anxiety?

Separation anxiety is one of the most common behavior problems reported by dog owners. Dogs experiencing this problem show distress at being separated from individuals they are attached to, usually family members and other pets. The distress can be expressed by barking and howling, attempts to escape, destructive behavior, house soiling, or signs of fear such as pacing, rapid breathing, whining, or drooling. It most often happens when a dog is left alone at home but can also happen when the dog is left in a vehicle, at a boarding kennel or other location where the individuals familiar to the dog are not present.

### What Causes Separation Anxiety?

Why some dogs develop separation anxiety and others don't isn't known. Dogs are highly social animals and usually form attachments quite easily to other animals and people. Whether dogs with separation anxiety are "overly attached" to their owners, or whether the problem is due more to a lack of coping skills when left alone really isn't known. Many dogs are quite attached to their owners but don't show signs of separation anxiety. The problem is more common in dogs acquired from shelters or who have had multiple homes. There may be something about the breaking of attachments when a dog leaves a home that predisposes him to the problem.

Common initiating events for separation anxiety include a move to a new home, a change in the owner's schedule, family members moving away, the death of another family pet to whom the dog was attached, or returning home after being boarded.

### What are the Symptoms?

The symptoms of separation anxiety described above typically begin within thirty minutes of the owner's departure. Sometimes the dog will begin to show symptoms when the person is preparing to leave. Some dogs can identify activities that predict leaving, such as picking up car keys or putting on a coat, and they begin to get anxious in anticipation of the departure. These dogs may pace, whine, drool, pester for attention, appear anxious or look depressed and hide. Not all dogs show the same symptoms. Some only bark and howl, some only urinate and defecate and some only show destructive behavior. Some may show more than one symptom. Dogs that try to escape from a yard, often just sit on the front porch when they do get out. Sometimes dogs can show symptoms when the family members are home, but the dog can't get to them because she is separated by a closed door or is in a crate. Dogs with separation anxiety often show over-exuberant greeting responses when their owners return. Most dogs greet people with enthusiasm, but the anxious dogs go overboard. Their excitement may last several



minutes. These dogs also tend to “shadow” their owners, following them constantly, not letting them out of sight and leaning against or touching them very frequently. All the behavioral manifestations of separation anxiety can be due to other causes, including noise phobias, “boredom” when left alone, incomplete houstraining, excitement or scent marking. It is important to correctly identify the causes of the particular behaviors before trying to manage or modify them. Not all “home alone” problems are due to separation anxiety. The wrong management or behavior modification techniques will either not be effective or make the problem worse.

## Can Separation Anxiety Problems be Resolved?

Behavior modification for separation anxiety problems is usually quite successful. Success often improves with the addition of medication prescribed by a veterinarian. Sometimes the behavior modification by itself can successfully treat the problem. Medication alone has not been demonstrated to be a successful treatment long-term, although dogs can be sufficiently sedated so that they do not display the symptoms. The behavior modification program is designed to reduce the dog’s anxiety at being left alone and often utilizes procedures called systematic desensitization and counter conditioning. To better understand these techniques, refer to a qualified professional trainer specializing in reward based training.

The idea is to gradually expose the dog to progressively longer separations from people, starting with ones so short that the dog doesn’t show any anxiety at all and then make them longer and longer. It is important that the dog show no anxiety during the process because an anxiety attack will cause setbacks to the treatment. Multiple repetitions of departure cues, without leaving, is sometimes part of the behavior modification plan. The dog must be monitored carefully during these repetitions, and during the separations, (sometimes videotaping is required) for signs of anxiety, and the procedure must be done slowly in small steps. It is also helpful to put the dog in an emotional state that is “counter” to or incompatible with anxiety during the training. Giving the dog a tempting food-filled toy that is available only during the planned absences can help block anxiety. Behavior modification plans must be implemented very carefully if they are to be successful. The most common cause of failure is incorrect implementation of the techniques, by not using small enough increments or subjecting the dog to longer absences before he is sufficiently conditioned to tolerate shorter ones. When the procedures are done incorrectly, they can make the problem worse. Most people will need the help of an experienced certified applied or veterinary behaviorist or other behavior consultant to help resolve the problem.

## Can Separation Anxiety be Prevented?

Because the causes of separation anxiety are so poorly understood, it is difficult to make many specific recommendations that can be expected to reliably prevent the problem. When you first



acquire your dog, whether as a puppy or adult, accustom her to brief, variable and unpredictable separations from you. Try to make all your departures quiet and relaxed. When you return, make your greeting quiet and relaxed as well. Avoid exciting your dog when you come and go. Try to associate separations from you with pleasant things such as leaving your dog with a chew toy stuffed with tasty treats.

## What Not to Do

Dogs don't destroy things, house soil, escape or bark and howl out of spite or for revenge. It does no good to get mad at your dog. If the problem is caused by separation anxiety, the dog is frightened and panicked at being separated from you and that is what is causing the problem behavior. She isn't misbehaving to purposely "get back" at you. Never, ever punish a dog with separation anxiety or any other fear related problem. Punishing a fearful animal is cruel and will not solve the problem. Don't crate or confine a dog with a separation anxiety problem. Close confinement often makes the panic worse and can lead the dog to hurt herself trying to escape. Separation anxiety is not caused by a lack of "dominance" over the dog, or from a lack of obedience training. So called "dominance exercises or teaching your dog basic commands such as sit, down, come and stay will not resolve a separation anxiety problem.

Written by Drs. Suzanne Hetts and Daniel Q. Estep, Animal Behavior Associates, Inc. and Ms. Lori Holmberg, M.A. Drs. Hetts and Estep are Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists and international award-winning speakers and authors living in Denver, Colorado. For over 25 years they have been helping pet parents understand their pet's behavior and solve behavior problems.



## Important Phone Numbers for Pet Owners

- 1. Veterinarian and Closest 24-hour Emergency Clinic** – In times of emergency, you want to ensure that you have these phone numbers programmed into your phone and also posted in a central location in your home.
- 2. National Animal Poison Control Center: 1-888-426-4435** – In a life and death situation when every minute counts for your cat, dog, or other pet, this 24-hour manned emergency number is your pet lifesaver. Consultations are \$65. More information can be found on the website: <https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control>  
In addition, if you have pet insurance for your dog, most pet insurance providers offer a free poison control service as well – check your policy for more information.
- 3. Emergency Disaster Hotline: 1-800-227-4645** – Provided by the American Humane Society, this number is your first point of call in disaster preparedness – what to do and where to go. There is also great information about setting up a disaster preparedness kit and plan for your pets. Visit the website at: <http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/programs/emergency-services/>
- 4. Pet Loss Support Hotline: 1-877-GRIEF-10** – Pet parents can receive help from the ASPCA Pet Loss Support program with issues surrounding euthanasia or loss of a pet. More information can be found at <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/pet-loss>
- 5. Spay/Neuter Helpline: 1-800-248-SPAY** – One way to prevent several unwanted pets from ending up in shelters or destroyed is to spay and neuter them. Thousands of abandoned and unwanted pets are euthanized yearly due to irresponsible breeding and other factors. Although your rescue Weimaraner is already spayed or neutered, you may know someone who is looking to give away a pet because they cannot afford to spay or neuter. This organization provides free or low-cost services to all through over 950 programs and clinics nationwide. Similar services are offered in most metropolitan areas and can be found easily through an internet web search.

## Important Information About Heartworms

**Your dog deserves protection against heartworms – and it's easy to do.**

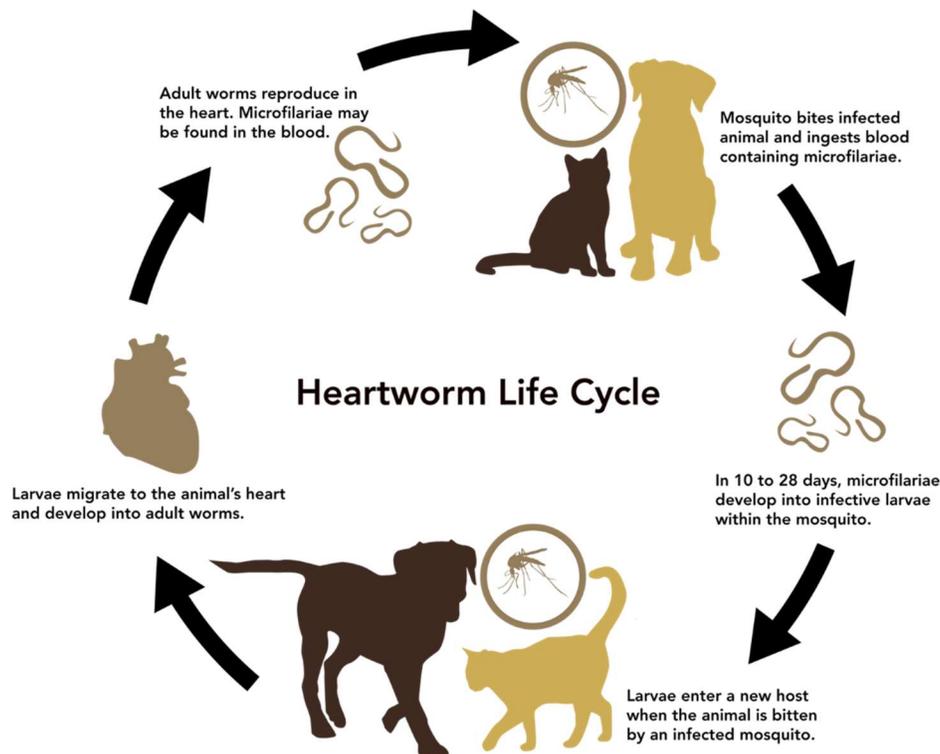
Heartworm disease can affect dogs anywhere. The disease has spread to every corner of the U.S. and hundreds of thousands of cases are reported every year. Heartworm disease can be prevented by administering an effective heartworm preventive year-round. Protecting your dog against heartworms and heartworm disease can be convenient, simple, and affordable.

### How can heartworm disease be prevented?

In an unprotected dog, heartworm larvae, transmitted by a bite from an infected mosquito, mature and migrate to the heart. Year-round treatment is recommended by the American Heartworm Society and the Companion Animal Parasite Council. There are many other options out there for heartworm preventative. Talk to your Veterinarian to determine which preventative is right for your dog.

### How does my dog get heartworms?

Learning about how heartworms are transmitted will help you understand why it is important to protect your dog from becoming infected.





### **Why shouldn't I wait and see if my dog develops heartworm disease? Can't my veterinarian just treat it?**

It's important to understand that heartworm disease has usually reached an advanced stage by the time your dog shows signs of illness, and it is possible that the dog may never show signs of an infection. Treatment is risky, expensive, and may not be effective. The approved treatment involves the use of a product containing arsenic, your dog will be kept inactive during treatment, and you will have to keep your dog inactive for weeks afterward – and despite these measures, treatment may not be successful.

### **No amount of love can detect heartworm disease.**

Heartworms mature and can live unnoticed in infected dogs. An unprotected dog is at risk for infection, even as you love, play with, and care for it.

Signs of heartworm disease in dogs can be subtle and difficult to detect in the early stages. As the disease progresses and damages the heart, lungs, or kidneys, signs begin to appear. The disease can become severe and even fatal

Contact your veterinarian immediately if you notice these signs in your dog:

- Coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Sluggishness
- Less energy for exercise
- Loss of consciousness
- Reduced appetite and weight loss

### **Testing for the presence of heartworms.**

Dogs and puppies should be tested for heartworm infection prior to beginning a heartworm disease prevention program. The American Heartworm Society and Companion Animal Parasite Council highly recommend annual testing for heartworm to ensure that your dog is free of heartworm infection<sup>1</sup>, and it is likely that your veterinarian will test your dog according to established guidelines. Annual testing can help reassure that your dog has the heartworm prevention it needs.

### **Prevention is safer, easier, and far more economical.**

Heartworm disease treatment can be dangerous for your dog and stressful for your family



- The approved treatment for heartworm disease involves use of a product containing arsenic.
- Treatment can be lengthy and costly.
- Treatment typically requires hospitalization of the dog at the veterinary clinic followed by an extended period of inactivity at home.

Eliminating adult heartworms can pose serious risks to dogs because arteries may have been damaged by heartworm-related lesions and obstructed by worms that have been killed to treat the disease.

Complexity and risks associated with eliminating heartworm disease in dogs are influenced by the dog's overall health, the extent of the worm population, and degree of damage that has resulted from the presence of heartworms. More than one round of treatment may be required in some cases.

If your dog has not been tested for the presence of heartworms, your veterinarian can perform the appropriate testing.



## BLOAT AND TORSION

### A DEADLY CONDITION FOR WEIMS

#### A PRIMER FOR EVERY WEIMARANER PARENT TO READ NOW

Bloat is a very serious health risk for dogs, especially for deep-chested dogs, such as Weimaraners. Bloat is deadly and so is Torsion. Bloating of the stomach is caused by swallowed air, an accumulation of fluid, and/or foam inside the stomach. Torsion or twisting of the stomach can and often occurs along with bloat. These single occurrences and combined effects can quickly kill a dog.

**SYMPTOMS:** Typical symptoms often include some (but not necessarily all) of the following. Unfortunately, from the onset of the first symptoms you have very little time (sometimes minutes) to get immediate medical attention for your foster dog or your own dog.

- **Attempts to vomit (usually unsuccessful); may occur every 5 minutes**
- **Doesn't act like usual self**
  - *Perhaps the earliest warning sign and may be the only sign that almost always occurs. Some dogs who bloat ask to go outside in the middle of the night and they attempt to vomit.*
- **Significant anxiety and restlessness**
- **"Hunched up" appearance - This seems to occur frequently**
- **Bloated abdomen that may feel tight (like a drum) - many times this symptom never occurs or is not apparent**
- Pale or off-color gums - *Dark red in early stages; white or blue in later stages*
- Coughing
- Unproductive gagging
- **Heavy salivating or drooling**
- Foamy mucous around the lips, or vomiting foamy mucous
- **Unproductive attempts to defecate**
- Whining
- **Pacing**
- Licking the air
- Seeking a hiding place
- Looking at their side or other evidence of abdominal pain or discomfort
- **May refuse to lie down or even sit down**
- May stand spread-legged
- May curl up in a ball or go into a praying or crouched position
- May attempt to eat small stones and twigs
- Drinking excessively
- **Heavy or rapid panting for no obvious reason**



- Shallow breathing
- Cold mouth membranes
- Apparent weakness; unable to stand or has a spread-legged stance - *Especially in later stage*
- Accelerated heartbeat - *Heart rate increases as bloating progresses*
- Weak pulse
- Collapse

## WHAT TO DO:

***Get your dog to a veterinarian immediately! Bloat can kill in less than an hour, so time is of the essence. On the way to the vet or to the animal ER hospital, call then to alert them you're on your way with a suspected bloat case.***

**BE PREPARED AHEAD OF TIME! Know in advance what you would do if the dog bloats.**

If your regular vet doesn't have 24-hour emergency service, know which nearby animal emergency hospital you would use. Keep both phone numbers in your cell phone's contacts list or handy inside your home.

Nearby Animal Emergency Hospital and Phone #:

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## OTHER RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION:

Video of dog bloating with obvious symptoms:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1WrT2719yo>

[www.justweimaraners.com](http://www.justweimaraners.com) Bloat information is under All Articles in Health, Nutrition & Safety

[www.globalspan.net](http://www.globalspan.net) NOTE: Most of this Bloat information was taken from this website.



## **TOXIC FOODS AND OTHER ITEMS DEADLY TO DOGS**

There's no argument – some foods and objects in nature are TOXIC to dogs. NO onions, grapes, raisins, garlic or chocolate or foods containing any of these ingredients. Also, no alcoholic beverages, avocados, caffeine containing drinks/foods, macadamia nuts, yeast dough (which is most breads), or products sweetened with Xylitol such as artificially sweetened gum. Do not feed your dog fruit with pits, such as peaches and plums, they contain naturally occurring arsenic.

Cooked poultry bones should be off limits, these can splinter and puncture the internal organs or get stuck in your pet's throat. Use caution with smoked bones as well, these can often splinter the same way as other cooked bones, especially if you have an aggressive chewer.

Beef bones, raw or cooked, are fine for recreational chewing in short durations under supervision. For large dogs, beef knuckles and marrow filled leg bone sections work well. Beef bones are messy and can get slimy and stinky in a hurry. Be sure to throw them away after a few hours of your dog's chewing on them. If you choose not to throw them away, wrap them and place them back into the freezer. Please note – many dogs will experience some digestive upset the first time they chew raw bones. If you notice this, limit the amount of time that your dog is allowed to chew.

Raw hide chews usually found packaged at the pet store are okay. Ensure that you purchase rawhide that is made in the USA, and always supervise your dog when chewing. Try to look for AAFCO approved chews as well, these will be the safest and best quality items. Dogs can choke on rawhide if they try and swallow it before it is properly chewed. For some dogs, they will ingest an entire rawhide bone in one sitting, make sure that these dogs are limited in the frequency that they are offered rawhide chews to ensure that they are passing them through their digestive system.

Dogs like to chew things, but those things should be safe toys provided by the owners. Kong toys, Nylabones and similar toys are ideal chew toys. Tree limbs, sticks, pinecones and rocks are NOT. They can perforate the stomach, throat and intestines or become lodged inside. Rocks "collect" in the stomach and must be removed surgically. All of these outside items can cause very serious damage internally and can require expensive vet care and/or surgery. Keep these items of nature picked up from your yard and do a search daily or every few days.

Please be diligent about keeping household cleaning items, laundry products, and auto products such as antifreeze out of reach of dogs as they are highly toxic. It is not recommended to use bait or poison for pests around your home, as dogs can get very sick or die from ingesting rodent bait. In addition, if your dog kills and eats a rodent that has been exposed to poison, it will have the same effect as eating the poison directly.

Many plants, including those in Texas backyards, are toxic if eaten by dogs. Sago palm seeds for example are deadly; if your dog eats even 1 you must get him to the vet or animal emergency



clinic quickly. A simple online search will provide an extensive list of plants that are toxic to dogs.

Always call your vet when you have a question and know where your closest animal emergency clinic is located for when your own vet clinic is closed.