

The Rover Report

from Raising Rover



✦ Highlights ✦



LIVING WITH DOGS

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Toys, Wonderful Toys

Dogs are a lot like children. If you don't give them something fun to do, they will make their own fun—and often not in ways you approve of. What's more, dogs that get plenty of mental exercise are happier, calmer, quieter, and less likely to rummage through the trash or attack the couch cushions. All terrific reasons your



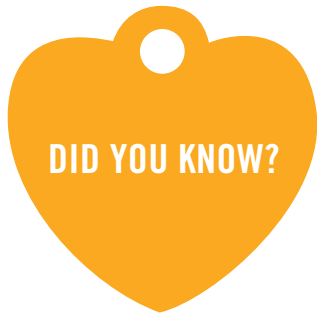
dog should have toys. And not just a toy or two, either. Dogs have distinctly individual toy preferences, depending on the day, time, and situation. Do some detective work and find out what truly tickles your dog.

The best toys have a purpose. They deliver food, present a challenge, squeak, or make themselves interesting in some other way. If you are new to the world of dog toys, here are some classics to begin with: Rope toys, plush toys (with or without squeakers), Hide-A-Bee (Squirrel, Bird), tricky treat balls, soft rubber toys (vinyl), and hard rubber toys like Kongs and nyla bones. Once you have a good selection, develop a toy strategy. Designate a popular toy for use only during alone time, like when you need to leave your dog in her crate, confinement area, or a spare room. Then, rotate the other toys daily to keep the novelty factor high.

Some dogs are dissectors, another word for 'toy destroyers.' Messy as it can be, it's perfectly normal canine behavior—dogs are predators, after all, and need an outlet for those pounce-and-shake urges. If your dog is a dissector, provide legitimate things for her to attack and let her indulge her hobby. Don't worry; she won't graduate to your possessions. Spare your budget by collecting the stuffing and putting it back in the toy—your dog doesn't care if she splits apart the same stuffed alligator seven times. Or use hand-me-down stuffed animals that your children or your friends' children no longer want, or buy in bulk from a goodwill store (just remove choking hazards like eyes and buttons). Many pet supply stores sell bags of squeakers that you can then insert for added entertainment and allure. Remember, dogs get busy. Make it with toys, not trouble.

continued on page 2

“Scratch a dog
and you'll find
a permanent job.”
- Franklin Jones



These Presidential Dogs?

1. **Fala.** Franklin D. Roosevelt's beloved Scottish terrier became an honorary private in the army during World War II by 'contributing' \$1 to the war effort every day.
2. **Charlie.** John F. Kennedy's Welsh terrier is reputed to have helped calm the president during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Petting the dog for a long time in silence apparently cleared JFK's mind enough to make the decisions that defused the situation.
3. **Him & Her.** Lyndon B. Johnson's pampered beagles went nearly everywhere with him. President Johnson sparked the ire of many dog lovers when he held them up by their ears for a photograph on the White House lawn in 1964.
4. **Bo.** Barack Obama's Portuguese water dog is of course the nation's current First Dog. The White House recently released a baseball card in Bo's likeness, which can be downloaded from the Internet in PDF form.



A WORLD OF DOGS

Let's Get Together

Pet social networking is a trend on a major upward curve. As one would expect, a great deal of it takes place online. Many a modern dog has a profile on Dogster or Fuzzster or PetCrash; some even have Twitter accounts and tweet prolifically. But since dogs on the whole get less enjoyment from cyber friendships than do humans, many dog parents are making a point of taking their dog's social networking into the physical world.

So-called Pet Meetups are happening in towns big and small across the country. Having found one another online, dog lovers get together for events with names like Whine & Say Cheese and Beach Blanket Bow Wow. Many bond over a love of a specific breed or size of dog, others over activities like kayaking, surfing, or... bar hopping. Indeed, entire clubs form around finding dog-friendly nightspots in which to share training tips over cocktails.

Another manifestation of this sociable trend is the growing popularity of doggie parties. Who hasn't been to at least one Howl-



oween or Santa Paw party? Well, parties are multiplying and transforming into Easter Doggie Parades and Dog Daze of Summer, even Pupperware Parties, where friends take turns hosting dog social occasions. It's Dog Party 2.0. Also now commonplace is having a fully catered-and-staffed birthday party for one's dog. Such events may feature canine-style buffets and party games—how about a round of Sit/Stay Musical Chairs or Snoopy Says? Some people take the concept of four-legged children further and throw friends who plan to add a puppy to the household a Puppy Shower, gifting the doggie-parents-to-be with puppy essentials like house-training pads and starter crates.

The more integral dogs become in our lives, the more we want opportunities to get together and have fun with them—and a good thing it is, too. We get to meet other dog lovers, and our dogs get to play and socialize and have fun.

(continued from page 1)



DOGS IN ACTION

Mushing

To most, the word ‘mushing’ means dog sledding. Really, the term covers a range of sports where dogs pull things, such as carting, scootering, skijoring, weight pulling, and more. Mushing of any kind is a great way to get outside during the dark winter months—and to keep your dog fit and happy instead of restless and unruly. Why not try:

Dog carting. Traditionally the domain of farm helpers like Saint Bernards and Bernese Mountain dogs (then called drafting), carting with dogs has won widespread favor in the last two decades. From Labradors to Papillons, any healthy dog can have fun pulling a size-appropriate cart. Best for areas—or seasons—without significant snowfall.



Skijoring. Essentially dog-assisted cross-country skiing, perfect for any place with lots of snow and well maintained ski trails. Many large, athletic dogs beyond the sledding breeds enjoy this sport—Giant Schnauzers, German Shorthaired Pointers, and Golden Retrievers have all won championship titles in recent years.

For more information about these and other dog sports, read Kristin Mehus-Roe’s *Canine Sports & Games* or do a Google search for the sport you are interested in. Clubs and organizations exist for most.



HEALTHY DOG

Thunder Phobia

As anyone can attest who has an afflicted pooch at home, thunder phobia is a torment for many dogs. Some pant, shake, pace, whine, or drool, and try to hide in the closet. Others are gripped by uncontrollable panic and try desperate things to get away from the scary storm, including crashing through windows or running headlong into traffic. Not every thunder phobic dog can be cured, but many have been helped by gentle desensitization such as the playing of a CD with thunderstorms at extremely low volume, which is then gradually increased over several months. Another option, if your dog is able to take treats during a storm, is to dish out something extra special with each thunderclap.

Before trying any treatment *always* get expert guidance from your vet or a behaviorist—and start now, well before thunderstorm season. If all else fails, talk to your veterinarian about calming medication.

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Dachshund

Affectionately known as Wiener dogs or sausage dogs, Dachshunds hail from Germany. The name means ‘badger dog,’ denoting the breed’s original purpose of hunting burrow-dwelling animals. Dachshunds are playful, headstrong, clever, impatient, devoted to their owners, and partial to long naps in warm spots. These notoriously feisty dogs either don’t know how small they are or don’t care. H. L. Mencken called a Dachshund, “A half-dog high and a dog-and-a-half long.” Icons of independence rarely seen in obedience trials, Dachshunds excel at Earthdog trials and draw crowds in the thousands for races like the Wiener Nationals and the Dachshund Dash. Dachshunds can be found on almost every page of history books, favored by Queens (Victoria) and Kaisers (Wilhelm), literary greats (EB White) and painters (Andy Warhol), and by modern pop culture (*That 70s Show*).

For a Dachshund to snuggle up with, find a rescue organization near you at <http://www.dachshund-dca.org/rescue.html>



OUR SERVICES

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A Home Safety Checklist

- ✓ **Unsafe chewables.** Don't let your dog chew on things like leashes, rope, or garden hose, which can cause intestinal obstruction.
- ✓ **Chemicals.** Keep all household toxins (bleaches, detergents, disinfectants) well out of reach of your dog—also insecticides, human medications, pool chemicals, paint thinner, and automotive products like antifreeze and radiator fluid. Don't use chemical cleaning liquids where your dog eats and drinks.
- ✓ **Toxic plants.** Many popular household plants can be dangerous, even fatal, to your dog if he decides to sample a leaf. Common culprits are azalea, rhododendron, sago palm, lilies, kalanchoe and schefflera.
- ✓ **Prevent falls.** Use baby gates and screens to restrict your dog's access to high windows and staircases where falls can occur. Invest in non-skidding mats for floor areas where your dog often runs—slipping can cause torn ligaments.

(Compiled from ASPCA & MSPCA Angell)

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bring out the best in your dog



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