

The Rover Report

from Raising Rover



✦ Highlights ✦



LIVING WITH DOGS

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The 4 Pillars of Successful Dog-People Greetings

1. No pulling to say hi. The goal is a polite, composed greeting, so it won't do to rush in like a sled dog crossing the finish line at Iditarod. Insist on a loose-leash approach. If your dog strains at the leash, change direction for a few steps and then try approaching the person again. Give it three tries, then, if there's still rampant leash-pulling, abandon this attempt and try again with someone else later or another day.

2. Four on the floor. Insist that your dog says hello with all four paws firmly planted on the ground. If he has been learning obedience, this is the ideal time to ask for a sit—it's always better to proactively ask for a behavior that is incompatible with the unwanted behavior (Fido can't sit and jump up at the same time) and then reward that, rather than wait and see what happens.

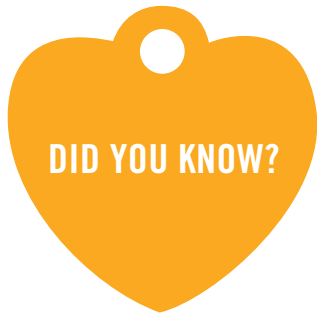
3. If you jump, you lose. Any jumping should result in your dog being walked away. He needs to learn that the only way to get attention is to keep his paws on the ground or sit, whichever you ask him for. Watch your dog closely and try to catch the jump before it happens. If you see his paws start to leave the ground, tell him, "ah ah." If he aborts his jump, allow him to continue the greeting. If he fails to heed your warning, too bad, he loses the chance to say hi.

4. Don't force it. The same principle applies here as for dog-dog greetings. Some dogs are social butterflies; others are wallflowers. Let your dog choose for himself who he is comfortable being. Don't force him to be petted by unfamiliar people, however well-meaning.



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"There's no psychiatrist
in the world like
a puppy licking your face"
- Bern Williams



These Big Brands Going To The Dogs

Hair salon staple **Paul Mitchell** has a high-end shampoo and grooming product line called John Paul Pet. We hear the Oatmeal Conditioning Rinse is terrific.

Harley Davidson has a line of pet accessories for rock-chic pooches. It includes toys, collars, beds, and, of course, bandannas and goggles.

Predictably, the main ingredient in **Omaha Steaks'** premium dog treats is Omaha steak. But for that canine twist, they have added peanut butter and cheddar cheese.

Old Navy has a line of pet costumes for dogs that like to party around Halloween and Christmas. If yours is a preppy pooch, they also carry polo shirts.



A WORLD OF DOGS

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A Genius For Survival

Is one-of-a-kind diversity a contradiction in terms? No, that's just dogs for you. *Canis familiaris* is the only species on the planet that contains the extreme variety of the Great Dane and the Chihuahua. The Dachshund and the Rottweiler. The Yorkshire terrier and the Bernese Mountain Dog. There are, give or take a few, four hundred breeds within this one species.

We dog lovers like to think we know why this has happened. It's the dog-human thing. The special bond, the partnership that has had people and pooches sharing campfires for 12,000 years. (Possibly much longer: A recent study by evolutionary biologist Robert Wayne suggests that dogs split from wolves as a distinct subgroup as long ago as 135,000 years.) Because of this connection, we have been breeding dogs to meet our work and leisure needs for several millennia. Collies and Kelpies to herd our sheep, Huskies to pull our sleds, Maltese and Pomeranians as companions.



It's true that the human factor is part of the reason dogs are so diverse today. Another part is natural selection. For example, dogs tend to grow larger in northern climes to cope with the cold. But that still leaves unanswered the question of how it's possible. Why do dogs have plastic DNA, the kind that allows humans to breed for good temperament, longer noses, or skin folds that capture smell molecules? And how is it possible to make these changes so quickly? In just a few generations, breeders have created dogs that are wildly divergent in type and ability.

Nobody has the answer yet. Some scientists favor the idea of an accident of evolution: Elephants have trunks, dogs have malleable DNA. Another theory is that it's a survival skill, developed in the course of the 100,000 or so years dogs may have been in contact with humans. Look at the evidence. There are an estimated 400 million dogs in the world today. Compare this with the estimated 200,000 wolves left in the wild and dogs, as a subspecies, do begin to look like they have a genius for survival.

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DOGS IN ACTION

Search & Rescue (SAR)

Given that dogs have up to 300 million scent receptors (compared to our 5 million), keen night vision, and super-sensitive hearing, it can come as a surprise to nobody that dogs excel at search & rescue work. According to the National Association for Search & Rescue, experts estimate that a single dog-and-handler team can be as effective in locating missing persons as 20 to 30 people. SAR dogs, long an indispensable part of the law enforcement and emergency services teams that investigate crime scenes, have in recent years become a fixture at disaster sites. We see them with their nose in the rubble, looking for survivors after earthquakes, floods, explosions, tsunamis, mudslides, train or plane wrecks, even avalanches.



What makes a great search & rescue dog? Any breed will do, though requirements like a first-rate nose, strong prey or play drive, stamina, and high trainability place retrievers, shepherds, and collies at the top of the selection pile. Important character traits are friendliness, an even disposition, intelligence, courage, and finally that certain something which, in a human, might be called grit. In SAR work, twelve-hour shifts in cumbersome terrain surrounded by death and devastation aren't unusual.

Think volunteer SAR work might be for you? Visit the American Rescue Dog Association at ardainc.org



HEALTHY DOG

Canine Hydrotherapy

We humans have been "taking the waters" for our health for thousands of years, and lately, dogs have been getting their paws wet for the same reason. Canine hydrotherapy (also called aqua or swim therapy) is essentially warm-water swimming and/or massage for curative purposes—and it's very effective. Many veterinarians recommend hydrotherapy for athletic conditioning, pre- and post-op care, reducing inflammation around an injury, and relieving arthritis and other chronic conditions. It's also ideal for exercising older or overweight dogs because water supports the body and takes the weight off sore joints.

Canine hydrotherapy facilities are popping up all over the country, so if your dog might benefit from this healing activity, consult your veterinarian, then just Google the term. The best part? Some facilities offer leisure swim time for dogs and owners together. Who needs to swim with dolphins when you can get in a heated pool and play ball with your pooch?

DOG IN THE SPOTLIGHT

French Bulldog

Talk about being too cute for your own good. With bat ears, miniature wrestler's bodies, smush-nosed faces, and a language of yodels and chirps all their own, French Bulldogs charm the socks off almost anybody, including people for whom they're not the right dog. Sturdy as they may look, Frenchies were bred exclusively to be companions. Lap dogs. Leash candy. Accepters of admiration and belly rubs. Generally active dogs, few Frenchies can undertake athletic feats—and their breathing systems mean hot, humid weather is a health hazard. Cool as all giddyup, Frenchies star in everything from movies (*Bringing Down The House*, *Secondhand Lions*) to anime TV series (*Fortune Dogs*). Historic Frenchie fanciers include King Edward VII, Grand Duchess Tatiana of Russia, and painter Toulouse-Lautrec.

For a Frenchie of your own, find a rescue organization near you at frenchbulldogrescue.org



OUR SERVICES

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Puppy Proofing Your Home

- ✓ **Your house.** Hide electrical cords. Hunt for and hide small objects your puppy can chew or choke on. Get guardrails for stairs, low windows, and balconies. Invest in mats or runners for slippery hallways. Place poisonous plants in high spots—or give them to dogless friends.
- ✓ **Your kitchen and bathroom.** Put safety latches on any cabinet with cleaning supplies or poison. Keep plastic bags out of your puppy's reach, and secure your garbage can.
- ✓ **Your yard.** Make sure your yard is escape-proof. Put a fence around your pool—or keep your puppy away from it. Make sure chemicals, fertilizers, and sharp garden tools are off-limits.
- ✓ **Always supervise.** That's indoors *and* out. If you can't supervise, put your puppy in a confinement/safe area with a toy.

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bring out the best in your dog



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