

# Sherwood Dog Training Club

AKC License Club

## April 2024 Newsletter



The Sherwood Dog Training Club (SDTC) was formed in 2003, with official status as a non-profit corporation established in 2006. We also have Tax Exempt status with the IRS as a 501(c)4. We received our notice that we have become an AKC Licensed Club in August of 2008.

### Sherwood Dog Training Club

**President:** Danielle Silverstein

**Vice President:** Linda Ruedy

**Secretary:** Robin Murphy

**Treasurer:** Jill Faulmann

**Board:** Darlene Brushwein

**Board:** Jan Lewis

**Board:** Helen Hamilton

**Newsletter:** Darlene Brushwein

**Website:**

<https://www.sherwooddtc.org/>



### **We will have Zoom SDTC Meeting April 3rd @ 7:00pm**

**Sherwood Dog Training Club is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85721385749?pwd=LtqpH0aygkbJk15KKYyoDPhahQVxsC.1>

Meeting ID: 857 2138 5749

Passcode: 124417

**The agenda will be posted on the Members page of the club website**

**<https://www.sherwooddtc.org/>**

**April 19, 20, 21 / Obedience Trials / one ring / Cash Arena**

**We are very excited about our upcoming Trial.**

**We will be trying a new software for Trial Secretaries.**

**Please add this email to your safe email list [sherwooddogtc@gmail.com](mailto:sherwooddogtc@gmail.com)**

**Thank you all who will be joining us to trial your dogs.**

## PASS IT ALONG TABLE

At our upcoming April Trial, we will repeat our successful Pass it Along Table.

You have an opportunity to obtain or trade any dog related equipment you no longer need that might be useful for another. You may bring it to the trial for sharing with others.

Since we no longer have space to store raffle items, you may still find treasures you need for training etc.

There will be a container for \$ donations you may wish to make to the club or you may trade items you no longer need for a new to you treasure.

You may bring items all three days so you need to check the table each day for new arrivals.

**IMPORTANT:** WHEN YOU LEAVE THE BUILDING FOR THE LAST TIME, CHECK THE TABLE AND TAKE YOUR LEFT-OVER ITEMS BACK HOME—PLEASE!!

Questions? Call Nancy Crandell. 503-746-6701



**GO AHEAD, EMBRACE YOUR DOGSPORT LIFE!**

SNAP THOUSANDS OF PHOTOS, RECORD EVERY TRAINING SESSION.

REMIND YOUR DOGS HOW AWESOME THEY ARE.

CHAT WITH FELLOW HANDLERS. DO THE THINGS YOU ARE AFRAID OF.

STOP UNDERESTIMATING YOUR POTENTIAL.

**TRAIN WITH PASSION, AND**

MAKE IT THE MOST INSPIRING JOURNEY FOR YOU AND YOUR DOG.



Mark Your Calendars

# EVENTS



**May 31, June 1, 2 Rally Trials, one ring, Cash Arena**  
**October 11, 12,13 Obedience Trials, one ring, Cash Arena**

**SDTC Member Matches currently planned**

**April 7 / Obedience Match 2 rings, Cash Arena**

**This match is now closed. Thank you everyone who signed up!**

**May 19 / Obedience Match 2 rings, Cash Arena**

**September 22 / Obedience Match 2 rings, Cash Arena**

**Please think about how you would like to help at these events**

For a complete Look at all AKC upcoming Events

**Events:** <https://webapps.akc.org/event-search/#/search>

**Cancellations:** <https://www.akc.org/sports/event-cancellations/>

## Upcoming UKC Shows / [www.ukcdogs.com](http://www.ukcdogs.com)

### Washington

**May 3-5, 2024**

United Nose work Tri Cities, Nose work, Richland, WA

**May 18 – 19, 2024**

Puget Sound K9's, Graham, WA / Nose work

**June 7-9, 2024**

Lilac City Dog Training Club, Spokane, WA / Obedience & Rally Obedience

**August 2-4, 2024**

UKC Western Classic, Longview, WA / Obedience & Rally Obedience

**Aug 24-25, 2024**

Lilac City Dog Training Club, Nose work, Spokane, WA

### Oregon

**May 3-5, 2024**

Canine Action Pack Cornelius, OR / Obedience & Rally Obedience

**Nov 15-17, 2024**

Canine Action Pack, Obedience & Rally, Cornelius, OR

### California

**April 6-7, 2024**

NorCal K9 Events, Red Bluff, CA / Obedience & Rally Obedience

**Apr 27-28, 2024**

West Coast Patterdale Club, Nose work, Loomis, CA

**May 18-19, 2024**

West Coast Patterdale Club, Nose work, Carmichael, CA

### Utah

**April 27-28, 2024**

Utah Nose Work Club North Salt Lake City, UT / Nose work

### Wyoming

**May 18-19, 2024**

Rocky Mountain Dog Stars, Sheridan, WY / Nose work

### **Details at [ukcdogs.com](http://ukcdogs.com)**

United Kennel Club (UKC) is an international dog registry celebrating bonds, rewarding ability, and preserving the value of a pedigree. <http://www.ukcdogs.com/>

Mark your calendar for a **NEW Scent Work Event in the Bend, Oregon area the weekend of April 13-14, 2024**. More details available soon.

Scent Work classes in Salem, Newberg, McMinnville now available. Judi James instructor. If your dog is on odor, you can do these as drop-in sessions. Visit Sign up Genius for dates and places available.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0E4EAAAC2CA7FA7-44855160-scent>

Judi James

[rainspring.mdg@gmail.com](mailto:rainspring.mdg@gmail.com)

971 239 5518



# Dog Days Dog Training

Located in the Hazel Dell area of Vancouver, WA  
7206 NE 37th Ave., Unit A, Vancouver, WA 98665

Phone: 360-241-1844 Email: [info1@dogdaysnw.com](mailto:info1@dogdaysnw.com)

For availability, please contact the instructors directly.  
Info available on the website at [dogdaysnw.com](http://dogdaysnw.com)

This class will teach the students to compete successfully in an AKC or ASCA Rally Obedience trial. Dog and handler work as a team to earn titles by performing a series of obedience-derived exercises on a course designed by the judge. Each team is judged on accuracy, precision and enjoyment as they perform the exercises individually.

AKC Rally Info **These Classes have openings**

Recommended that you take the FOUNDATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE class prior to this class.

**Tuition is \$150 for the 6-week session Please make checks out to "Dog Days"..**  
These classes are ongoing, please check with the instructor for availability.

**Tuesdays 11:30 a.m. - Masters/Excellent, instructor Dee Pigman**  
503-807-1212 or [deepigman@comcast.net](mailto:deepigman@comcast.net)

**Thursdays 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. - Masters, instructor Dee Pigman**  
503-807-1212 or [deepigman@comcast.net](mailto:deepigman@comcast.net)

**Thursdays 10:15 - 11:15 a.m. - Excellent, instructor Dee Pigman**  
503-807-1212 or [deepigman@comcast.net](mailto:deepigman@comcast.net)

**Thursdays 11:15 - 12:45 p.m. - Advanced, instructor Dee Pigman**  
503-807-1212 or [deepigman@comcast.net](mailto:deepigman@comcast.net)

**Sundays 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. - Novice/Advanced, instructor Cheree Roberts**  
913-522-7475 or [breaktimepc@gmail.com](mailto:breaktimepc@gmail.com)

**Sundays 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. - Novice/Advanced, instructor Cheree Roberts**  
913-522-7475 or [breaktimepc@gmail.com](mailto:breaktimepc@gmail.com)



### **Sally Wells Classes**

**Contact Sally at [sallyw61@yahoo.com](mailto:sallyw61@yahoo.com) for inquiries.**

**11:30-1pm Tuesday Ring Prep class** at Trainers to the Rescue in Cornelius, Oregon. You taught the dog the skills, this class helps with the in between and the before and after parts of a trial. We may also do some distraction work, but that is not the core of the class. Class has a rolling enrollment (start whenever, need to check with Sally to make sure there is room). For more information **contact Sally Wells** [sallyw61@yahoo.com](mailto:sallyw61@yahoo.com)

### **Nancy Seaman's Private and Classes**

**Contact Nancy to reserve your spot at [searis10@gmail.com](mailto:searis10@gmail.com) or (503) 307-0373**

### **Auntie Sally's Pet Classes**

**Contact Sally Wojahn at [auntiesallydogs@gmail.com](mailto:auntiesallydogs@gmail.com) or (503) 816-3614**

Please contact Auntie Sally directly to register.

Puppy class at 12:30. (Pups 10 to 16 weeks at start).

Beginning class 1:50. (Dogs 17 weeks+)

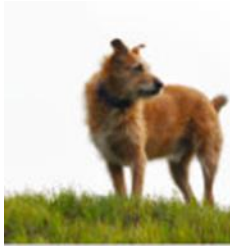
Each session is 6 weeks. Cost is \$180.

### **Open Training**

**Fridays 2-9 pm Current Students \$10 General Public \$20**

**<https://www.trainerstotherescue.net/>**





## Dehydration in Dogs

Knowing how long dogs can go without water isn't as important as recognizing signs of dehydration.

By **Dr. Debra M. Eldredge, DVM** Published: March 4, 2024



Credit: PK-Photos | Getty Images

Although how long dogs can go without water before showing signs of dehydration is 24 hours, it's a good idea to carry water and a bowl if you're going on a long walk.

How long can dogs go without water? A dog will start to show signs of dehydration after 24 hours without water. A dry mouth, dry nose, and excessive panting with thick saliva instead of liquid drool are the signs of dehydration in dogs. These are mild signs of dehydration in dogs, but a huge warning that your dog has gone too long without water and needs immediate access to clean, fresh water.

The maximum time a dog can go without water is 48 to 72 hours, although that's for a healthy adult dog. Dogs with special needs, like puppies, seniors, and sick dogs, cannot go that long.

More serious signs of dehydration in a dog appear quickly. His eyes look sunken. His skin will "tent up" if you pinch a bit (gently) by his shoulders. Normally, that skin should snap back into place. These are warnings that internal problems are starting to reflect the poor hydration—the fact that your dog has gone too long without water. A dog who has gone too long without water may need veterinary attention. The effects of dehydration can harm your dog.

## Dangerous Dehydration Signs in Dogs

Many dogs who have gone too long without water will dry vomit and/or have diarrhea, which increases dehydration in dogs. Poor circulation means the heart must work harder and the brain may not get its full requirement of oxygen and nutrients. Severely dehydrated dogs who have gone too long without water can go into shock and die.

If you suspect your dog is dehydrated, get to the veterinarian. You can offer water and/or an electrolyte solution such as Pedialyte on your way. One study found that dogs were more likely to increase fluid consumption if provided a flavored electrolyte solution, like Pedialyte. Keep your dog cool in the car with the AC on or a fan blowing on him.

## Prevent Dehydration in Dogs

Obviously, your best bet is to prevent dehydration. Make sure your dog has access to fresh, clean water. If you will be away for hours, consider freezing a bowl of water so it will slowly melt. That way, spillage is reduced, and there is renewable, cold, clean water for your dog to drink.

Your dog should have fresh water available all the time. Water is essential for many bodily functions, including making urine to remove toxic metabolic wastes. Water helps your dog to thermoregulate when he is hot by panting. Blood flow, nerve and muscle function, and electrolyte balance are all affected by hydration. No dog should ever go without water long enough to enter a state of dehydration.

How much water should a dog drink in 24 hours?

You can calculate the right amount by following the general guidance that dogs should drink **1 ounce of water per pound of body weight per day**. An ounce of water equals one-eighth of a cup. So, a healthy black lab weighing 60 pounds will need 60 ounces of water daily. <https://www.goodrx.com/Feb 3, 2023>







Clean Run / Facebook / March 19, 2024  
<https://www.cleanrun.com>

# tip of the month

To remind me of all our skills so I can walk to the line with all we are capable of fresh on my mind, I created a video of my dog and me working together with highlights from our agility runs and practices. I included the moments that I felt were our best effort, where we were working together like my ideal vision of a team. I added some fun, inspiring music and loaded the video onto my phone. I watch my highlight video as part of my warm-up routine to help me visualize how well my dog and I can work together, and how it feels to be in sync. 🐾

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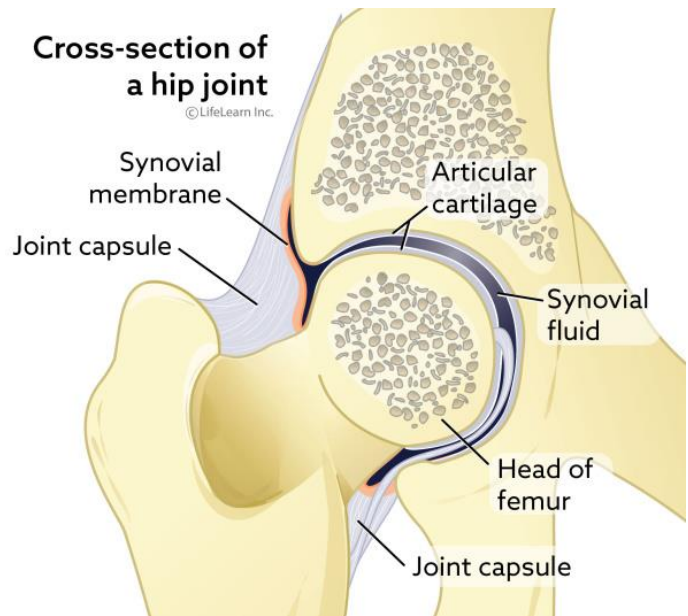
## By Kathy Mocharnuk

## Degenerative Joint Disease in Dogs

By Krista Williams, BSc, DVM; Ernest Ward, DVM

### What is a joint?

A joint connects two or more bones together. Most joints in the body are mobile, allowing the bones to move in relationship to each other. The vast majority of moveable joints are held together by an outer layer of tough fibrous tissue called the **joint capsule**. The thin inner lining of the joint capsule, called the **synovial membrane**, produces joint fluid (synovial fluid) to lubricate the joint. The ends of the bones are covered by a smooth layer of cartilage, called **articular cartilage**. The joint fluid and the articular cartilage reduce friction within the joint, allowing it to move smoothly. The articular cartilage does not contain any blood vessels to supply it with nourishment or oxygen. Instead it receives some of its nutrients from small vessels in the bone that lies beneath it and the rest by absorbing nutrients from the joint fluid.



### What is degenerative joint disease (DJD)?

As our pets age, the tissues lining the joints may deteriorate and degenerate. Degenerative joint disease (DJD) refers to **arthritis** or **osteoarthritis**, which is the result of the gradual deterioration of the articular cartilage within one or more the joints. Arthritis is a general description for any condition that causes inflammation in the joints (see handout "Arthritis in Dogs").

This smooth resilient articular cartilage degenerates, becoming brittle over time. With severe DJD, the degenerated cartilage may actually split away from the bone and become loose within the joint. DJD can occur following a number of joint diseases, including infection, and may develop after bone or joint injury or surgery. Obese dogs are more likely to develop DJD, as a direct result of the mechanical stress that excessive weight puts on the joints.

Although DJD is not usually an inflammatory disease, mild inflammation plays a part in causing clinical signs. When the cartilage cells become damaged, they release substances that result in inflammation, causing pain and further damage to the cartilage. Once DJD begins, it can become a vicious cycle. As the degeneration continues, the joint becomes more unstable; scar tissue and/or bony growths will form within the joint in an attempt to stabilize it, contributing further to the DJD.

**"Obese dogs are more likely to develop DJD, as a direct result of the mechanical stress that excessive weight puts on the joints."**

## **What are the signs of DJD?**

The most obvious sign of DJD in dogs is lameness; however, dogs give us many signs other than limping that indicate they are suffering from arthritic pain including:

- sleeping more
- slower on walks or not wanting to walk as far
- resent being touched or brushed in certain areas
- accidents in the house or walking while urinating or defecating
- taking more time standing up from a lying down position
- difficulty getting into the car
- carrying their heads or tails lower than normal
- reluctance to go up stairs; jumping on the bed; or furniture, or complete avoidance of things
- sitting with their hind legs stretched out (lazy sit)

## **Is there anything I can do to prevent DJD?**

Many dogs with DJD are overweight. If your dog is overweight, it is imperative that he or she loses weight in a controlled manner. Low or restricted calorie diets are helpful in preventing excessive weight gain and for losing weight. There are many weight-reducing diets available that work very well for most dogs. Your veterinarian can help you design an appropriate weight loss program for your pet (see handout "Obesity in Dogs").

## **How is DJD treated?**

Most of the damage caused by DJD is irreversible. The goals of treatment are to improve the quality of life by minimizing pain and discomfort and to delay the progression of disease. The quality of life for a dog with DJD can be improved by modifying the environment so that the dog can get around more readily and by providing pain relief. Fortunately, modern analgesics (anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving medications) can effectively control pain with few side effects. In addition, medications and nutritional supplements are available that can slow the progress of the disease and promote cartilage healing.

You should not give your pet any pain reliever prescribed for human use unless prescribed by your veterinarian. Many over-the-counter medications and human prescriptions can cause serious problems and side effects.

NSAIDS (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) can be used to control inflammation in the joints and provide pain relief. Drugs used include meloxicam (Metacam®), carprofen (brand name Rimadyl®), deracoxib (brand name Deramaxx®), firocoxib (brand name Previcox®), and robenacoxib (brand name Onsior®). Prior to administering any pain medication to your dog, your veterinarian will recommend blood tests to ensure that his liver and kidneys are functioning adequately and that there are no other underlying problems that could be worsened by using these drugs. Your veterinarian will also recommend periodic monitoring of your dog's liver and kidney function once treatment for this condition has been started.

Several other medications are used to treat different aspects of pain caused by DJD.

- **Gabapentin** is an effective drug for relieving pain, especially when given with other pain medications and can often allow decreased doses of other medications. It is used in human medicine to treat neuropathic pain as well as seizures. It can often be used as a single agent for early arthritic pain.
- **Tramadol** is a mild relative of morphine without all the side effects seen with morphine. It works very well on its own or in combination with other drugs to provide pain relief. It rarely can cause constipation or vomiting.
- **Amantadine** is a pain reliever that acts to block the sensation of pain at the nerve pathways. It is not effective as a sole medication but increases the pain-relieving effect of other medications.

If you think your pet's medication is causing any side effects, please discontinue its use and contact your veterinarian.

### **Can the progression of DJD be slowed?**

Ongoing arthritis research has led to the development of drugs and supplements that are effective in controlling the destruction of cartilage in dogs with DJD. They work by:

- improving the blood supply within the joint
- preventing the formation of some of the harmful enzymes that continue the destruction of cartilage within the joint once it has started
- promoting the formation of fibrous tissue to heal damaged areas, and
- promoting cartilage repair.

### **What supplements and other medications can be used to provide pain control in arthritic dogs?**

Your veterinarian may recommend injections of chondroprotectants (brand names Adequan® or Cartrophen®). These medications promote cartilage repair, help slow down cartilage damage, aid in other aspects of joint repair, and stimulate the production of more joint lubricating fluid.

**Nutraceuticals** are nutritional supplements rather than pharmaceuticals (or drugs). Some of the more popular and evaluated supplements and nutraceuticals include glucosamine (a glycosaminoglycan), chondroitin sulfate, and omega-3 fatty acids DHA and EPA. For more information on these supplements, see handouts “Chondroitin”, “Glucosamine” and “Nutraceuticals for Joint Support in Dogs with Osteoarthritis”.

Omega-3 fatty acids are powerful antioxidants that help relieve inflammation in arthritic joints of dogs. More information about omega-3 fatty acids can be found in the handout "Fatty Acid Supplements". Their usage in veterinary medicine is growing in popularity and they are a useful treatment in conjunction with other medications for any patient experiencing DJD or osteoarthritis.

Other studies and numerous anecdotal cases suggest these products are beneficial, and that they are free of side effects. Numerous products that contain these compounds, along with other trace elements and vitamins, and are palatable to dogs are commercially available. Some of these products are available over the counter without a prescription. Since supplements are not highly regulated at this time, some supplements may not contain the labeled amount of ingredients and differences in quality may exist between products made by different manufacturers. Your veterinarian may have preferred brands of these supplements that he or she will recommend.

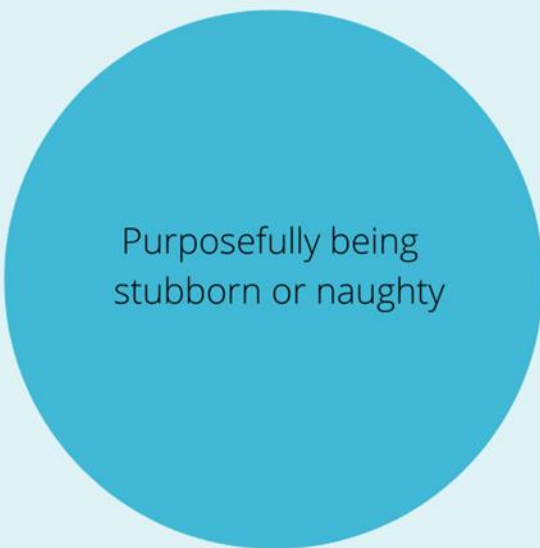
## What other treatments are available for treating DJD in dogs?

Rehabilitation is a rapidly growing area of veterinary medicine similar to human physiotherapy. Certified rehabilitation practitioners offer many different treatments for arthritis including laser therapy, hydrotherapy, ultrasound, and muscle therapy. Acupuncture may also be an effective tool for pain relief.

Stem cell therapy and platelet rich plasma (PRP) injections are also being used to treat arthritic patients in some veterinary clinics and referral hospitals.

## Why is my dog behaving this way?

What people think



Real underlying reasons for behaviour





**Suzanne  
Clothier**  
Relationship Centered Training™



### Communicating the Meaning Behind Our Touch

<https://www.bps.org.uk/research-digest/we-intuitively-understand-meaning-behind-touch-arm>

“It’s common knowledge that we use more than speech to communicate. Our facial signals, hand gestures and tone of voice can communicate everything from anger or surprise to love and joy.

And now a new study in Psychological Science reveals something perhaps even more remarkable: humans also have an intuitive — and quantifiable — language of ‘social touch.’”

This fascinating reprise of the findings needs to be examined in the light of our relationship with animals. This study included video analysis that identified the key features that were associated with the most successful communication of each of the six messages:

- attention
- calming
- gratitude
- happiness
- sadness
- love

How do we communicate these to another human?

The specifics of any communication depends heavily on the quality and nature of the relationship with the other person. Let’s say I need to get the attention of a total stranger ahead of me in line at the grocery checkout to let her know her cherry tomatoes have escaped their packaging and are rolling every which way as she puts other items on the conveyor belt.

I’d be an idiot if I yelled, “Oi! Your tomatoes!” while banging her backside with my shopping cart. It would get the job done, to be sure, and I’d have her attention. But what makes this such an offensive and unnecessarily harsh approach?

A loud voice and a physical assault with a shopping cart would do more than just gain her attention. I would startle her, possibly hurt her, definitely alarm her. While I’d have her attention, her emotional state would not be thoughtful, receptive, interested in what I was trying to tell her. Chances are very good

she'd be scared or angry or defensive or even combative – or all of those! Escaping cherry tomatoes hardly warrant that response.

If my approach was to use a quiet, calm voice, "Excuse me, miss? Your tomatoes are escaping" things might go differently. Including my quiet voice might not even register! In real life, I am so loathe to bother a stranger that I often speak too quietly for fear of offending them. My own concern about the interaction can make me ineffective in communicating, though I practice whenever out in public as situations arise.

I might add a very light, very brief touch on a neutral part of the body, such as the shoulder or arm, pairing it with a smile and (hopefully) the right volume and tone of voice. If possible, I might also step into the person's peripheral vision, thus adding three sensory inputs to my communication: auditory, visual and kinesthetic (touch).

With an unknown other party, I err to the side of ineffective communication that is simply not received. Better that I repeat myself with some adjustments than provide an over-the-top communication which might actually block their ability to process the message.

But that is also contingent upon my own state of mind and emotions. If what is flowing out of the woman's grocery cart is a substance to which I am deathly allergic, my fear might shape my communication to be more abrupt, intense, loud or defensive than is necessary. Of course, I might be wearing my white silk pants and angry thinking what the spillage of grape juice will do to them. *(Please insert laughter here at the thought that I would even own white pants, never mind silk ones!)*

Watching animals interact with each other, whether that's the same species or interspecies, you will see a wide range of communications. Some are effective. And effective does not always mean subtle or gentle; it does mean clear. Just like people, some animals are brilliant communicators, with all of their conversations seemingly perfectly pitched for the moment and the other being's state of mind. Adjustments are so fast that only slowed down video or keen observation will even catch the tiny hitch in the feedback loop as the communicator makes a change to better suit the recipient.

Well measured communications are possible when we have a good read on the other and how they take in what is being communicated, as well as how they might respond. RCT (Relationship Centered Training) puts communication as one of the 3 pillars of our interactions with others. It is often an echo of Cool Hand Luke – "What we have here is a failure to communicate" – that creates conflict between dogs and people. It is a trainers' job to figure out how to open up the lines, create clarity, congruity, consistency.

With the current polarized world of dog trainers where one extreme believes that any use of touch equals an aversive interaction, I would urge all to remember that touch is powerful communication. Our dogs and horses and other animals know this; they seek it and they avoid it, they provide it and they withdraw it, they use to deepen bonds and caretake and soothe and nurture and reassure, and they also use touch to warn, to resolve conflict, to back up threats, to provide consequences.

The quality of our relationships depends – always – on our intent and our abilities to make our intent manifest. Few things are as upsetting as intending to communicate one thing and ending up alarming, scaring, annoying, angering or frustrating another being. It is inevitable, of course, that we will do that. As the Cuban proverb says, "In every head, a world."

So, how would you use touch to communicate with the animals in our lives? What are the overlap and similarities of how we communicate with people? What about other species?

How do you touch a mouse, a cat, a parrot, a turtle, a pig, a horse, a dog, a cow, a chicken, a child, a person, a stranger with the intent to communicate:

- attention
- calming
- gratitude
- happiness
- sadness
- love

And how do you know the message you intended to send was actually received and understood?

**LEARN MORE! Join the webinar**

**TALKS WITH DOGS: How Our Body Language Affects Our Dogs & Training**







My Beagle, Dori, finished her CDX AT the Columbia Basin Dog Obedience Club trial!

This title also earns her the VCD2 title! She qualified 2 out of 3 days with 2-1st placings!

So proud and happy to be on this journey with this little hound!!

**Mystic South's Call Me Awe-Dori-Ble  
VCD2 CDX BN RE AXP AJP OFF BCAT  
CGCA CGCU TKI**





# RANDOM LITTLE TIDBITS (#103 - Part II of III - Open)

Below is the next in a series of Random Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

## *Saving Withdrawals from Your 200 Account* ©



### Today's Random Little Tidbit - Honing In On One's Judging Skills In Open

I think we all can agree on one thing: there is always room for improvement. Improvements may come in the form of a "tweak," overhaul, or a new judge traveling around a new learning curve. Judging AKC Obedience is a prime example in keeping an open mind for learning new ways to hone one's skills. Judging is a skill that requires a great deal of thought and having the mindset there *may always be room for improvement*.

#### To learn a new skill or sharpen a skill already learned:

1. Having and reviewing one's knowledge of the job requirements:
  - a. Always reviewing the AKC Obedience Regulations & Obedience Judging Guidelines pertaining to your skill level.
  - b. Engaging in conversations with other judges, exhibitors, instructors and spectators.
2. Keying in on how to efficiently run an obedience ring:
  - a. Sit at ringside observing a judge's ring time management. How can time and steps be saved? **See Tidbit #44**
  - b. Watching videos of dogs being judged (**focusing in on the judge**) to learn do's and don'ts. Check out **YouTube**
  - c. **Have yourself videoed in the ring judging**, watching for ways to improve your efficiently. **Just do it and have a look!** 😊
  - d. Observing judging positions. Correct use of judge's orders. Ring layouts with minimum but effective movements.

**A sample guide for observing yourself and other judges. Let's review the different Open exercises in regard to judging procedures, judging positions, exercise requirements and items to be aware of while judging.**

Open Exercise	Judging Procedures	Judging Position	Exercise Requirements	Observations
<b>Heel Free &amp; Figure Eight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*In scoring this exercise, judges shall accompany the handler at a discreet distance so that they can observe any signals or commands given by the handler to the dog. The judge must do so without interfering with either dog or handler.</li> <li>*The judge must determine whether the dog should receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score for heeling based on the overall performance of the dog and handler during the <u>entire exercise</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The judge should attempt to be in a position during the course of the exercise so that the dog and the handler may be observed from the rear, front, and side.</li> <li>*When viewing the dog and handler from the side, <u>try to observe from the dog's side without the handler between you and the dog.</u></li> <li>*All teams are to be judged from the same relative position.</li> <li>*Move around on the Figure Eight, don't stand in the same spot.</li> <li>*The wider the angles and distance from the handler (within reason), the better for overall viewing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The principal feature of this exercise is the ability of the dog and handler to work as a team.</li> <li>*Left turn, Right turn, About turn, *Fast, Slow, Halt.</li> <li>*Fast - <u>significant</u> length?</li> <li>*Slow - <u>significant</u> length?</li> <li>*Figure Eight Cones are to be <b>17" to 37" high</b> and no more than <b>15" wide</b> at the base.</li> <li>+Measure <b>8' distance</b> from inside base to inside base.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Performed as the Novice Heel on Leash and Figure Eight, except no leash.</li> <li>*Pattern has a nice flow?</li> <li>*Is the pattern choppy?</li> <li>*Is the pattern fair to all breeds, large &amp; small?</li> <li>*Is the pattern away from the entrance and/or table?</li> <li>*Does timing of the judge's orders allow the team time to react and not being too close to ring enclosures?</li> </ul>
<b>Command Discrimination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*This exercise may be performed in an area of the ring that is at least <b>40 feet</b> in length.</li> <li>*The <b>15-foot</b> distances must be clearly marked.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under <u>continuous observation during the entire exercise.</u></li> <li>*An excellent position for judging this exercise is at an adequate distance to the side and <u>slightly to the rear</u> of the dog.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The principal features of this exercise are the dog's correct response to the handler's first commands and/or signals and that the dog stays until the handler returns to heel position.</li> <li>*On the judge's specific orders, the handler will walk forward <b>15 feet</b>, turn, and face the dog, and then follow the judge's orders for the second position change. This is then repeated for the third position change.</li> <li>*After three position changes, the handler returns around the dog to heel position.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Is the judge in a position to fully watch <u>both the dog and handler at all times?</u></li> <li>*Is the judge in position to observe heel position when the handler returned?</li> <li>*Is the <u>dog</u> away from the table, gating or entrance for the start of the exercise?</li> <li>*Did the judge keep their attention on the handler during the giving of the command and or signal?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Drop on Recall</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The handler will stand with the dog sitting in the heel position in a place designated by the judge.</li> <li>*The handler will walk forward to the other end of the ring, then turn, face the dog, and stand naturally.</li> <li>*The dog must come directly at a brisk trot or gallop. The dog must drop <u>immediately</u> to a complete down position.</li> <li>*The dog must remain down until the handler gives the command or signal to come.</li> <li>*The dog completes the exercise as in the Novice Recall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*To have both dog and handler under constant observation in this exercise, a judge should take a position in line and slightly to the rear of the dog, facing the handler but at an adequate distance to one side.</li> <li>*The front and finish is to be judged from a position in front of the handler.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The principal features of this exercise, in addition to those listed under the Novice Recall, are the <u>dog's prompt response to the handler's command or signal</u> to drop and the dog's remaining in the down position until again called or signaled to come. <u>The dog will be judged on the promptness of its response to the command or signal.</u></li> <li>*The Finish - dog must go smartly to heel position and sit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Is the judge in a position to fully watch <u>both the dog and handler at all times</u>?</li> <li>*Is the <u>dog</u> away from the table or gate for the start the exercise?</li> <li>*Was the judge's order timed well so the dog did not end up near the handler before being dropped?</li> <li>*Was the front and finish judged from a position in front of the handler?</li> <li>*All applicable penalties listed under the <u>Novice Recall</u> shall apply.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Retrieve on Flat</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*A judge should not place a dumbbell that is improperly thrown but should require the handler to throw the dumbbell again.</li> <li>*A judge will not ask the handler's opinion when deciding whether a dumbbell is to be thrown again or not; it is the judge's sole responsibility to make this decision. Once the decision is made, the judge or steward will retrieve the dumbbell.</li> <li>*Under no circumstances should the handler be penalized for a bad throw.</li> <li>*Requiring the handler to re-throw the dumbbell signifies that the exercise is being restarted; therefore, the handler may pet, praise, and reposition the dog without penalty before the exercise is begun again.</li> <li>*The dog completes the exercise as in the Novice Recall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The judge should be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under <u>continuous observation during the entire exercise.</u></li> <li>*The front and finish is to be judged from a position in front of the handler.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog retrieve promptly.</li> <li>*The dumbbell is to be thrown <b>at least 20 feet.</b></li> <li>*The dog must go and return directly, at a brisk trot or gallop and sit straight, centered in front of the handler.</li> <li>*The dog must be close to its handler so that the handler could touch its head without excessive bending, stretching or moving either foot.</li> <li>*The retrieve, including the pickup, must be brisk and without hesitation.</li> <li>*<u>Once the exercise begins,</u> the handler may not adjust their feet or position.</li> <li>*Finish - dog must go smartly to heel position and sit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Is the judge in a position to fully watch <u>both the dog and handler at all times</u>?</li> <li>*Is the <u>dog</u> away from the table or gate for the start of the exercise?</li> <li>*Was the front and finish judged from a position in front of the handler?</li> <li>*The judge will require the dumbbell to be thrown again before the dog is sent <u>if it is thrown less than 20 feet</u>, too far to one side or too close to the ring's edge. Was this done?</li> <li>*Did the handler move their feet during the exercise?</li> <li>*All applicable penalties listed under the <u>Novice Recall</u> shall apply.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Retrieve Over High Jump</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*A judge should not place a dumbbell that is improperly thrown but should require the handler to throw the dumbbell again.</li> <li>*A judge will not ask the handler's opinion when deciding whether a dumbbell is to be thrown again or not; it is the judge's sole responsibility to make this decision. Once the decision is made, the judge or steward will retrieve the dumbbell.</li> <li>*Under no circumstances should the handler be penalized for a bad throw.</li> <li>*Requiring the handler to re-throw the dumbbell signifies that the exercise is being restarted; therefore, the handler may pet, praise, and reposition the dog without penalty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The judge should be positioned so that both the dog and handler are under <u>continuous observation during the entire exercise.</u></li> <li>*During this exercise a judge must stand clear of both the handler and the dog in order to prevent any interference with the dog's performance.</li> <li>*The front and finish is to be judged from a position in front of the handler.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The principal features of this exercise are that the dog go out over the jump, pick up the dumbbell and promptly return with it over the jump.</li> <li>*Dog sitting in heel position, must be <b>at least 8 feet</b> in front of the jump or any reasonable distance <b>beyond 8 feet.</b></li> <li>*It is the judge's responsibility to see that the handler complies.</li> <li>*<u>Once the exercise begins,</u> the handler may not adjust their feet or position.</li> <li>*Dumbbell is proportionate to the size of the dog. It is not to be hollowed out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Were the dog's withers verified vs. the jumps when the team entered the ring?</li> <li>*Is the judge in a position to fully watch <u>both the dog and handler at all times</u>?</li> <li>*Is the <u>dog</u> away from the table or gate for the start of the exercise?</li> <li>*Were the required marks for the <b>8 feet</b> in the ring?</li> <li>*Dumbbell is required to be thrown again <u>if it is thrown</u> too far to one side or too close to the ring's edge.</li> <li>*Did the handler move their feet during the exercise?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Broad Jump</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*In setting up the broad jump, the judge should make every effort to <u>avoid having the dog jump toward the open gate or close to the table</u>, and ensure that adequate room is allowed from all sides of the jump for the take-off, jumping and on the far side for landing and turning. The hurdles are to be positioned so the dog will be turning away from the ring barrier after landing.</li> <li>*This exercise is a Novice Recall, except for the jump and the position of the handler.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The judge must be positioned so that both the dog and the handler are under <u>continuous observation during the entire exercise.</u></li> <li>*The judge must stand clear of the handler and the dog in order to prevent any interference with the dog's performance.</li> <li>*The front and finish is to be judged from a position in front of the handler.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay where left until directed to jump, that the dog clear the jump on a single command or signal, and that the dog return to its handler after it has jumped.</li> <li>*The dog and handler must be <b>at least 8 feet</b> in front of the first edge of the jump. It is the judge's responsibility to see that the handler complies before the exercise begins.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Is the judge in a position to fully watch <u>both the dog and handler at all times</u>?</li> <li>*Is the <u>dog</u> away from the table or gate?</li> <li>*Was the handler <b>about 2 feet</b> from the hurdles side?</li> <li>*Was the front and finish judged from a position in front of the handler?</li> <li>*Was the required mark for the <b>8 feet</b> in the ring?</li> <li>*All applicable penalties listed under the <u>Novice Recall</u> shall apply.</li> </ul>

## Stand Stay Get Your Leash

\*Prior to the start of judging, the judge will instruct the steward where to place the leash after the team enters the ring.

\*The leash will be placed outside the ring near the gate entrance on a chair or similar leash holder.

\*The handler and dog will be positioned at **approximately 15 feet** from and facing the direction of the gate entrance.

\*The handler will take the dog to the place indicated by the judge.

\*A judge is to have both dog and handler under constant view in this exercise.

\*Be in a location to view the handler returning to judge heel position.

\*The judge must be in position to watch the dog and handler throughout the exercise, including exiting the ring.

\* The principal features of this exercise is that the dog stand on the handlers first command and/or signal and stay in position until the handler has returned to heel position.

\*The handler will walk to the place outside the ring gate designated by the judge for the leash.

\*The handler will pick up the leash, re-enter the ring, stop and wait for the judge's order.

\*The handler returns walking around and in back of the dog to heel position. The dog must remain standing until the judge has said "Exercise finished."

\*The judge will tell the handler "Attach your leash to the collar and maintain control of your dog."

\*Is the judge in a position to fully watch both the dog and handler at all times?

\*Is the judge in position to observe heel position when the handler returned?

\*When the exercise was over, did the judge inform the handler to attach the leash to the collar and maintain control when leaving the ring?

\*Did the judge inform the handler they had qualified?

\*Did the judge watch the dog exiting the ring?

## \*\* 10 Miscellaneous Notes of Interest From the Obedience Guidelines to Always Keep In Mind \*\*

1. Judges are expected to be friendly and courteous to all who enter the ring. Without exhibitors, there would be no trials. For every experienced exhibitor there are many newcomers.
2. A judge's comments, other than orders to the handler of a dog, shall be limited to a brief greeting, instructions on positioning the dog, and instructions covering the group exercise.
3. The actual judging procedure may vary from judge to judge, but performance requirements must remain the same.
4. All judges shall wear business attire (weather permitting). It is important for a judge to maintain a proper and professional appearance. The judge is in the ring to do a job, not to be the center of attention because of outlandish dress or bizarre behavior.
5. Spectators form their opinion of the sport through seeing the actions of the judge, the handler and the dog. Care must be taken to avoid any action that might reflect poorly on the sport. Judges should work to maintain spectator appeal in the sport while keeping foremost in mind the welfare and convenience of the exhibitor and the dog.
6. A judge must demonstrate sound judging procedure and ring control, plus a thorough knowledge of the AKC Obedience Regulations and the Obedience Judges' Guidelines. Good procedure is essential. With it, a judge will inspire the confidence of exhibitors and spectators.
7. Impartiality. It is essential that exhibitors have full faith in the impartiality and competence of judges. There is no room for even the suggestion that anything other than the work of the dogs in the ring is involved in your decisions.
8. Positioning is important for two reasons: first, to establish consistency of judging in the minds of exhibitors and spectators and, second, to properly evaluate the dog and handler the entire time they are in the ring. In determining a position for each exercise choose one that allows you to see both dog and handler without having to turn away to see one or the other. Being in the right position to observe a dog's performance is essential. There is no perfect position, but this does not mean that some positions are not better than others.
9. Judges are often singled out for critical observation by exhibitors. Keep in mind that a perfectly innocent action or discussion can be misconstrued. Remember, you don't get in trouble for what you don't say.
10. There will be other "gray areas" that could cause problems. Ask yourself if whatever is happening, however innocent, maintains an outward appearance of propriety. The rule of thumb is to ask yourself, "Would I be getting this treatment if I were not a judge?"

## \*\* Other Observations to Make When Watching Obedience Judging – to Mention a Few \*\*

1. Did the judge check the ring size for the class being judged?
2. Where is the table placed so not to interfere with the teams when in the ring?
3. Where will each exercise be performed? Were they efficient in saving steps and time?
4. When one exercise ends, is the location of the next exercise nearby?
5. Did the judge check the armband #, collar and leash, give a general review of the dog, no sutures or bandages, 6-foot leash for the Group exercise?
6. Is the judge using the "exact" Judge's Orders in quotes in the Regulations?
7. Does the judge watch the team at ALL TIMES when they enter the ring until they leave the ring?
8. Is the judge efficient at the table between dogs - time wasted at the table while the next team is waiting for a long period of time?
9. If there were runoffs, were the four prize winners pulled out (and stayed) so the spectators could clearly see the prize winners?
10. Did the judge speak up to be heard and address the spectators during the prize ceremony?
11. Did the judge have the \*required\* marks in the ring?
12. Were the required ring postings visible and easily understood?
13. Was the heeling pattern posted, demonstrated or told to the first handler?
14. Was #13 ^ also done for the class in case of a runoff?
15. Did it appear the stewards had good instructions and were working efficiently?
16. Were there quick movements by the judge that may have interfered with the team working?
17. Were the various exercises performed away from the ring entrance and/or table?
18. Paying attention to the dogs while lining up outside the ring to come in for the Group exercise, watching for signs of aggression, etc.?
19. Watching all the teams exit the ring, being in control and not pulling on the leash?
20. Turned in the book after the class ended, or having the Obedience Chairman take it to the Show Secretary or Superintendent.

For complete details refer to the AKC Obedience Regulations. <https://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RO2999.pdf>

Blog Address: <https://akcobedriyjjudges.wordpress.com/about/> Sign up to receive updates.

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**T**he April 2004 *Clean Run* carried a feature entitled "This Dog Has a What?" To jog your memory, Kathleen Monje questioned the use of the term "work ethic" to describe dogs that live to be trained, that perform with unbridled enthusiasm, and that embark on the hundredth tedious weave entry exercise as gung-ho as they did the first. Well, I admit both to being someone with more than a "nodding acquaintance with learning theory" and to applying the term work ethic to our canine partners. And while I in no way mean to imply that dogs do or don't have ethics, I do think work ethic is an apt term to describe those dogs that exert that extra "oomph" during training. Moreover, the phenomenon of *learned industriousness* is well established in learning theory literature.

There is no question that some individuals do work harder than others, whether we're speaking of people or animals. One college professor prepares a new curriculum each term; another teaches from the same old notes she developed years before. One colleague stays late and works weekends to finish a project; another packs up the office at 6:00 p.m. each day. One dog runs faster over the dogwalk than another, despite comparable physical capabilities and reinforcement histories. Indeed, J.B. Watson (1930-1970), in his distinguished book, *Behaviorism*, argued that:

"The formation of early work habits in youth, of working longer hours than others, of practicing more intensively than others, is probably the most reasonable explanation we have today not only for success in any line, but even for genius."

## This Dog Has a Work Ethic? You Bet!

By Pamela Reid, Ph.D.  
Photos By Clean Run



Watson, with his immutable faith in nurture, clearly overstated his case. We all know that not every child can be a prodigy, nor can every dog be a "K-9-stein." We are all products of our genetic material.

However, like Watson, no one is claiming that work ethic is a built-in attribute commonly ascribed to Border Collies and other breeds of that ilk. Rather, individual differences in industriousness appear to be directly linked to the animal's history of being rewarded for hard work. Within the confines of our individual genotypes, learning theorists have demonstrated that people can be

imbued with workaholicism. Many readers will be familiar with the claim that schedules of partial reinforcement create animals that exert extra effort. Intermittent reward schedules reliably produce higher rates of response and greater persistence in the face of extinction. When the researcher cuts off further rewards, the animal that had been working for intermittent reinforcement will continue responding far longer than if it had been working for continuous reinforcement. But there's more to the story than just that—learned industriousness refers to a generalized phenomenon.

### Instill a Work Ethic

#### • Reward Intermittently

Animals experienced with intermittent rewards are likely to try harder in many tasks, not just the activity for which they earned occasional reinforcement. In one study, a group of rats was fed for each trip down a runway and another group

was only fed after every 15 trips down a runway. Next, all the rats were taught to press a lever for food on a continuous schedule: each lever press earned a piece of food. When the experimenters eventually disconnected the feeder, the rats that had been rewarded for every 15 trips down the runway persisted in pressing the lever far longer than did the rats rewarded for every trip down the runway. Partially rewarding one activity actually increased extinction performance (how long the rats would continue to press the lever) on an entirely different task.

Animals experienced with intermittent rewards are likely to try harder in many tasks, not just the activity for which they earned occasional reinforcement.



Intermittent reinforcement can increase speed as well. Rats that earlier had been rewarded after 15 lever presses ran faster down an alleyway for food reinforcement than rats that earlier had been rewarded after each lever press. Now I can just hear you saying that these rats ran faster, for longer because they hadn't eaten as much as the continuously reinforced rats; but be assured that the researchers controlled for the animals' satiety as a factor.



People follow suit as well. College students were rewarded for moving a peg back and forth in a board. Some students were rewarded after each move; others were rewarded for 50% of the moves. After a time, rewards were terminated, and the students eventually stopped moving the peg. Next, the students were rewarded continuously for pressing a button. When rewards were terminated for this task, button-pressing continued far longer in the group of students that had been intermittently rewarded for moving the pegs.

#### • Reward Hard Physical Work

Experience shows intermittent reinforcement is not the only means to train learned industriousness. Rewarding physical effort also produces animals that work harder on various tasks. Many of the studies on learned industriousness involve rats pressing levers for food, levers that researchers manipulate to require varying effort to depress. Rats rewarded previously for high-effort lever pressing ran faster for food in a runway, took shorter breaks between successive runs, and persisted in running during extinction trials far longer than rats previously rewarded for low-effort lever pressing. And I promise you that this didn't happen just because the high-effort lever pressing rats developed stronger muscles, enabling them to run faster! Students took part in a similar experiment. They first pressed a pad that required high or low pressure for reward and then, in an entirely different environment, they were given anagrams to solve. The students who had been rewarded for pressing the high-pressure pad solved the anagrams more quickly than the students with the low-pressure task.

I discovered one study that suggests simply feeding your dog with food-puzzle toys, like the Buster Cube® or the Tricky Treat Ball®, may contribute to the development of learned industriousness. Common laboratory cages for rats have a feeder attached to the outside of a wire mesh ceiling or wall, requiring the rat to gnaw at their food pellets through the mesh. This experiment compared rats that had to gnaw at their daily ration of food for 9 or 27 days with rats that received their food pellets on the cage floor (no gnawing required). Rats that had to expend physical effort to gnaw at their food for 27 days ran faster in a subsequent runway experiment than did rats that had easy access to their food or than rats that gnawed for a shorter period of 9 days.

#### • Reward Hard Mental Work

Requiring people to exert significant cognitive effort also contributes to learned industriousness. While I could find no research that varied the difficulty of mental tasks with animals, there is plenty of evidence with people to support this thesis. College students were given problems that differed in complexity: some had to solve difficult anagrams, others had simple anagrams to solve, and still others just had to read lists of words. Another group, called the "yoked" control, experienced the same patterns of success and failure as did the students working on the difficult anagrams but they were selectively rewarded for low effort and not rewarded for high effort. Later, all the students were given *unsolvable* problems. Only the students rewarded previously for high effort showed increased persistence on the impossible tasks. In another study, students who were rewarded for solving difficult cognitive tasks subsequently wrote longer essays of higher quality than did their counterparts, who had been rewarded for solving simple tasks. Working harder after being rewarded for solving tough problems has been demonstrated with high school students, learning-disabled children, and employees.



#### A Good Work Ethic Contributes to Self-Control

Self-control refers to an animal's or a person's ability to forego an easily obtained reward and instead, exert extra effort to achieve a larger, often delayed, reward. Animals (and at least one person, judging from the impoverished state of my savings account) are notoriously poor at rejecting short-term, small rewards in return for long-term, large rewards. But animals that have learned to be industrious are better able to withstand small sacrifices for larger gain. For example, rats given a choice between a compartment that offers a large food reward for high-effort lever presses and a compartment that offers a small food reward for low-effort lever presses invariably choose the latter. If the rats are then taught to run in an alleyway for food reinforcement every fifth time, they are much more likely, when later presented with the same choice, to select the high-effort, large-reward compartment than rats that were reinforced for every run in the alleyway.

Corresponding results were documented when 7- and 8-year-old children were given a choice between a small amount of money for free or a large amount of money for a tedious writing task. Initially, the kids preferred the free money. Next, some children were paid for solving challenging cognitive problems, while others were paid whether they solved the problems or not. When the children were again given the choice between working for money and getting money for free, only the group rewarded for high performance on the cognitive tasks showed an increase in preference for the high-effort, large-reward writing task. Now it's becoming clear to me: By rewarding me with money for each and every feeble attempt to complete my piano homework, my mother unintentionally doomed me to a life of abject poverty; I never learned to save money (or play the piano).

### Caution: Don't Get Carried Away

As usual, applying techniques developed in the laboratory to real-life situations proves to be an art as well as a science.

Pushing your dog to perform on leaner schedules of reinforcement, forcing him to accomplish greater physical feats, and challenging him with increasingly more complex and difficult mental puzzles will not automatically result in a canine prodigy. Imposing too many demands can backfire. Asking for more than the dog chooses to offer leads to "ratio strain," where the dog simply gives up because the effort is not worth the payoff. The good news is that if you back off your demands, the dog should rebound. You can always try pushing the envelope again, bearing in mind that the training process is limited by simple economics: there will eventually be a price that's too high.

Worse, though, is asking a dog to solve mental problems for which he is inadequately prepared. This teaches the dog that he cannot succeed, that he is helpless to control his environment, a phenomenon called "learned helplessness." Related to this state is "experimental neurosis," which can develop when the animal is presented with an impossibly difficult task. In one study, dogs were taught to discriminate between distinct shapes, like circles and squares. Gradually, the discriminations were made more difficult, such as distinguishing a circle from an ellipse. When the dogs succeeded at this task, the shapes were changed until they were identical, presenting the dogs with an *unsolvable* discrimination. The dogs in the study displayed a variety of behaviors indicative of stress, including whining, panting, and pacing, before they finally gave up.

A savvy trainer knows how to build foundation knowledge and avoids discouraging the dog by setting him up for repeated failure. Training situations need to be finessed so that the dog is rewarded for increased effort, not ambushed by failure. Rehabilitating a dog suffering from learned helplessness

or training neurosis is possible, although challenging. In a structured training environment, where contingencies for reward and non-reward are extremely clear-cut, you need to reinforce even the slightest efforts to respond. You even may need to physically prompt the dog to respond at first, but should switch as quickly as possible to rewarding offered behavior. Once dogs learn that responding influences what happens to them, they often come around quite dramatically.

### Can a Slacker be Made Over?

I was unable to find research that specifically compared animals that received learned industriousness training during development with those that received it as adults. It seems intuitive that the earlier an animal assimilates the maxim that "hard work pays off," the more beneficial it would be. Even so, plenty of studies reveal that the benefit accrued from early scholastic programs, like Project Head Start, tend to wash out as the children progress in the educational system. So intuition doesn't always pan out.

**A savvy trainer knows how to build foundation knowledge and avoids discouraging the dog by setting him up for repeated failure. Training situations need to be finessed so that the dog is rewarded for increased effort, not ambushed by failure.**

I did discover one study that showed the effect of industriousness on previously learned behavior. Rats were taught to press a lever on an intermittent schedule of reinforcement until they responded at stable rates. Then the rats were rewarded for running down an alleyway. Some rats received a reward on each run; others were rewarded every fifth run; still others didn't participate in this phase of the study. Next, the rats were returned to the operant boxes to press a lever for food on the same schedule used previously. Only the rats that were rewarded for every fifth run of the alleyway increased their rate of lever pressing, and they did so well beyond their previous rates. Another study that used the same type of training experiences produced rats so determined to press a lever that they did so at high levels, even when the experimenters occasionally shocked them for responding. The continuously rewarded rats gave up quickly after experiencing a few shocks (all the rats were equally hungry). Raising the required number of responses, raising the amount of physical effort required, increasing the difficulty of cognitive problems, or increasing the speed or accuracy with which cognitive problems were completed, all produced, in people, transfer of increased effort to previously learned activities.



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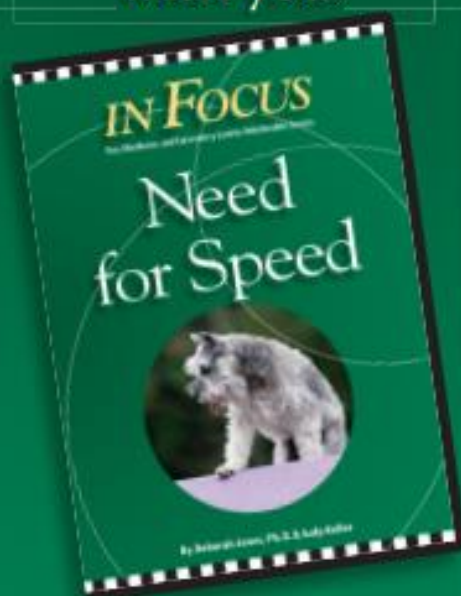
Have a dog that doesn't show  
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as you would like him to?

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performs slowly and tentatively?

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### Try, Try Again

There are many psychological theories explaining the phenomenon of learned industriousness. Amsel (1972) offers the most intuitive explanation: responding in the presence of any disruptive event (non-reward, increased physical effort, escalated mental exertion, and so on) acts to condition "try strategy" when faced with a frustrating situation. Regardless of the underlying learning process, there is no question that rewarding animals selectively for extra effort results in a generalized assiduousness.

So scorn the use of the term "work ethic" if you like or instead adopt the more pretentious but scientifically correct "learned industriousness."

But recognize that there is more to this than Monje suggests: reinforced behavior persists.

The types of challenges mastered and the pattern of rewards doled out can produce dogs with varying degrees of zeal. Continuous

reinforcement for passable performance can lead to a reliable dog that methodically racks up the Q ribbons. But intermittent rewards, doable challenges, and differential reinforcement of extra effort and excellence can produce a tireless, prodigious, and fanatical dog: a dog with an inspiring work ethic. Besides, I happen to enjoy the anthropomorphic vision of a battalion of agility dogs marching toward the training field in their matching suits and ties, with course diagrams and training logs spilling from their briefcases. May we all be blessed with such agility "trainaholics." 🐾



### References

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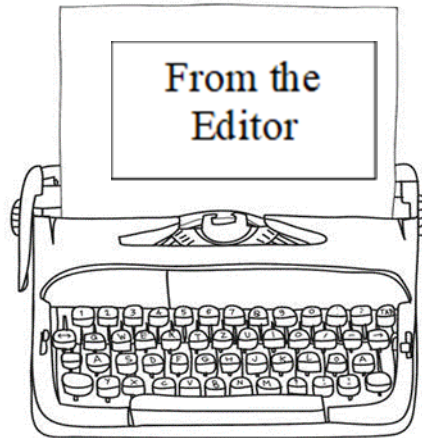
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- Advertising of puppies/litters will not be accepted

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- Have you written an article that the membership could benefit from?
- Know of an upcoming event? Example: Obedience trial, Scent trial, Specialty, Health clinic..... etc.



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