



NEWSLETTER



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How I love spring! The grass starts turning green and the flowers start showing. Signs of winter begin to fade away. The dogs are exhilarated. All the inviting smells emerge. Sounds of dogs barking, vehicles, and neighborhood noises are easier to hear. Squirrels, bunnies and birds...Oh my! What a wonderland for our dogs to experience. With that said, it will be hard for the younger dogs, and some older ones, to pay attention to their owners. Train with your dog outside on leash. Go to the park and train there. The more you train in different places the better. Remember to proof your dog's skills by adding distraction, duration and distance. I will elaborate on this in the next newsletter.

Update on Alou and Stoli! I sent out a message last month about two dogs that ended up at the shelters. They both came through our classes as pups. I knew them as Alou and Stoli. I am happy to say that they were both adopted from Safe Harbor Humane Society together. I hope that this is finally their forever home.

We are excited to include articles from Dr. Rockwell, veterinarian at Wolf Animal Hospital, and Dr. Lewis, veterinarian at Care Animal Hospital. I send a big Thank You to both of these wonderful veterinarians for taking the time out of their busy schedule to give us information about Heartworm and Spinal Manipulation.

NEW CLASSES are posted on our website. The Nose Work classes are a hit. The dog's just love to get their noses working and the owners love how tired the dogs can be after class. Stop in and watch a class if you want. <http://www.lovingpawslc.com>.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. You are welcome to submit an article for upcoming newsletter to Laura. Topics can be anything about you and your pet. God bless you all.

Laura Yurchak

Humping and Mounting

by Laura Yurchak

Many people believe that mounting is a sign of dominance in a dog. This is not the only explanation for this behavior. The mounting behavior is a normal dog behavior.

- It can be sexual in nature.
- It can be a sign of dominance.
- It can be a reaction to something that excited the dog.
- The dog may not have been socialized correctly and doesn't know that it is inappropriate.

Most mounting is not sexual. If you watch puppies play, mounting is a normal part of puppy play. We see mounting/humping in our playgroups from time to time. These dogs are not soliciting sex, nor are they displaying dominance. Some dogs simply learned this as part of their play pattern as puppies and no one ever told them to stop doing it. For others, it comes about from a heightened excitement (hormonal) level. Dr. Karen Overall states that

when dogs exhibiting this behavior are castrated, mounting decreases by approximately 60%. But the longer the dog practices this behavior, the greater the degree of the learned component over the hormonal component. Meaning that the longer the dog rehearses the behavior, the stronger the habit becomes.

What can you do about it? If the dog hasn't habituated to the behavior, reducing the hormone levels through castration can help. Dogs that have habituated need to be under supervision when the environmental factors are present to trigger the mounting behavior. Stopping the dog as soon as the behavior begins, better yet right before the behavior begins, and redirect the dog to an alternate behavior can help break the habit depending on how strong the habit has become. In other words, stop the dog from

mounting and give them something else to do. Training can be fun and teaches the dog how to respond correctly to cues. It gives them mental and physical stimulation. Stop your dog from mounting and cue them to fetch, find it (nose work), roll over, shake, or watch. This can be a fun way to break the habit. Also, remember that a tired dog is a good dog. I can't stress this enough. Daily exercise can reduce or eliminate many unwanted behaviors. It can be very embarrassing for the owner of the dogs that mount-hump. In your defense, remember that it is a normal dog behavior. If it is excessive and annoying, try the things listed above. Contact me if you have questions or would like to discuss this further.

Resources:

Clinical Behavior Medicine for Small Animals by Dr. Karen Overall
pets.webmd.com/dogs/features/humping-why-do-dogs-do-it

Luxating Patella

By Stephanie Challand

This is a topic I wish I didn't feel the need to write about, but unfortunately I have a little experience with it. Lacey, my 5 year old Chihuahua / Toy Poodle mix had surgery on her left knee back in 2007 and on March 23, 2001 had surgery on the right one as well.

You may wonder, why the time gap between the two? At the time of the first surgery she was showing the classic symptoms including occasional limping when running, holding up of the leg, etc. on the left leg. The surgeon who examined her said that the left knee definitely needed surgery but the right one was only a grade 1 at the time and may or may not need surgery down the road. We opted to do the left one right away and

wait to see if the right one ever needed.

As you can guess from the first paragraph the right one had been getting progressively worse recently. She had only had a few noticeable issues in the past 3 plus years since the first surgery but in early February the episodes began coming more frequently. On one occasion, I was playing fetch with all three of the dogs when she suddenly stopped and held up her back right leg. Knowing instantly why, I picked her up and gently massaged her knee area waiting for it to pop back into place. I did not feel anything move this time so I put her back down and she walked away gingerly to go lay down. Typically, in the past it only took a few seconds and the

knee would move back into place so I knew things were getting worse.

We took her into our vet for an exam. She said the knee was totally out of place and had difficulty moving it back into place. After a few days of thinking and discussing the options with her, we decided to have surgery on Lacey's right knee also. Despite having been through this once before, I was still worried about the decision but after watching Lacey over the next few days before her surgery I know that surgery was the right one. She began limping more often and it looked like sitting and laying down were more difficult than normal and possibly painful for her. It has been three days since her

surgery and she is doing well. She is sleeping in her bed by my feet as I write this. We have a long 12 week road of rest and rehab ahead of us, but I hope that in the long run this will make the rest of her life fun and pain free.

What is a Luxating Patella?
Patella is another name for a knee cap and luxating means to dislocate, so a luxating patella is a knee that dislocates. As painful as it sounds, most dogs do not typically feel any pain associated with this until it gets more severe or if it was the result of some kind of trauma.

What Causes Luxating Patella?

This is primarily a genetic disorder affecting toy breeds including the Chihuahua, Toy Poodle, Boston Terrier, Yorkshire Terrier, Pomeranian, Pekingese and Miniature Pinscher. It can also result from trauma or birth defects.

What are the Symptoms?

The most common symptom of a luxating patella is limping or the dog holding or carrying the leg. This can happen for just a moment or two and the knee will move back into place on its own or it can move out and stay out requiring it to be manually moved back into place. Unfortunately, like in Lacey's case, dog's with a luxating patella generally get worse over time.

What do the Grades Mean?

Grade I - At this stage the patella can be manually luxated but will easily move back into position. The dog may or may not occasionally carry the leg.
Grade II - At this stage the knee may move out of place on its own when the dog is walking or running. It typically goes back into place on its own or can be manually moved back into place. The dog may occasionally carry the leg when this happens.

Grade III - At this stage the patella luxates frequently and must be manually put back into place which typically doesn't last long. The dog may frequently carry the leg or shift their weight to the non-affected limbs. They may have difficulty running, jumping or performing other normal activities.

Grade IV - At this stage the patella is permanently luxated and cannot be manually repositioned. The muscles begin to shorten making it difficult and painful for the dog to fully extend the leg. They transfer the majority of their body weight to their front legs and frequently bunny hop or carry the affected leg.

What Can be Done?

Depending on the dog's age and the grade of luxation, there are several courses of action.

Crating - The vet may recommend crating or otherwise restricting the dog's activities for a couple of weeks to allow the joint to rest and not be strained further.

Diet - Feed a good, quality diet of premium kibble, home-cooked meals or raw food which will improve the dog's overall health.

Weight - Keep your dog lean. Even a few extra pounds, especially on a small dog, can put unneeded stress on the joints.

Exercise - Moderate exercise, especially walking up slight inclines, can help strengthen the muscles around the knee.

Supplements - Glucosamine supplements contain minerals, amino acids, enzymes, and lubricating agents that help build cartilage and cushioning fluid in injured joints and can help heal damaged connective tissue.

Vitamin C is a building block and helps to strengthen ligaments and connective tissue.

Homeopathy & Acupuncture - Acupuncture, Homeopathy and the application of therapeutic grade essential oils have been proven effective in helping cases of luxating patella by strengthening the joints and easing pain.

Medication - The vet may prescribe some sort of NSAID (Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory) like Rimydal for pain or inflammation. These can help with slightly with the inflammation but mostly just mask the symptoms.

Surgery - In severe cases, like Lacey's where the knee cap will not stay in place, surgery can be done to correct the issue. The surgery involves grinding away of some of the bone to deepen the groove for the patellar ligament, realigning the ligament and possibly grinding of the kneecap to allow it to fit properly in the groove. If done before arthritis sets in surgery has excellent prognosis in most cases. There is a slight chance that the surgery will need to be re-done later in life. Surgery is typically recommended in cases that are grade 3 or higher. Surgery can be quite expensive. I can tell you from experience that where we went it cost \$2600 for one knee.



How to Teach Your Dog to Come Like a Cat

By Jennifer Lueck

Don't tell anyone, but I used to be a cat person. I had cats both as a child and as an adult. I've actually had more cats in my life than dogs! And my friends and family all had cats. I've known a lot of cats in my life! Just about all of the cats I've known had recalls that many dog owners would be envious of. Last spring I put my cat knowledge to use with my dogs. At the time, I was having trouble with my dogs fence fighting with my neighbor's dogs. It was a pretty miserable situation. The neighbors let their dogs out for several hours each afternoon and allowed them to chase and bark at my dogs through the 6-foot privacy fence. My dogs, especially Gabe, were totally out of control when their dogs were outside. I'll leave the bulk of that experience for another article, but one interesting thing came out of it: I taught my dogs to come like cats.

Most cats have great recalls because cat owners don't actually expect their cat to come when called. Cats do what pleases them and are disdainful of human commands. Luckily, cats have a strange weakness for Pounces. They know when a Pounces can is shaken and they show up, they will get a treat.

Why? Because the owner is pleasantly surprised every time the cat comes and always gives the cat a treat. Always. The cat is positively reinforced for his behavior every single time he performs it.

With dogs, people expect the dog to come when they are called because dogs should be obedient and eager to please.

They shouldn't need treats for doing what they are told to do.

Praise and satisfaction for obeying should be sufficient, right? (No.) So when an owner calls his dog to come, the dog

has to make a decision. If I go, I might get a treat. But I might not. I might get yelled at or put in a cage. While the dog is weighing his options, the owner is getting impatient. He screams at the dog to come and walks angrily toward the dog.

Now the dog knows he's in for it and will not go to the owner... at least not happily.

If we teach our dogs to come the way we teach cats, they will come much more reliably.

Here's how:

put some delicious treats in a container with a lid. (Use really delicious treats! Something your dog loves!) When your dog is in the house with you, shake the can lightly and give the dog one of the delicious treats.

Repeat several times. You want your dog to associate the shaking of the can with the treats. Try it when your dog is in the other room. If he comes running, give him a treat. Don't say anything when you are doing this; the sound of the can shaking is the cue. Once your dog is coming reliably in the house, try it in the yard.

Remember: every time you shake the can, your dog has to get a delicious treat when he comes. The treat must be delicious so it is more reinforcing than anything else in the environment. A Milkbone is probably not as reinforcing as chasing a bird or digging a hole.

Freeze dried liver and dehydrated chicken probably are.

Once your dog has a reliable recall using this method, you can begin to introduce a verbal cue like "come" or "here," just as long as you haven't already tainted those words. If your dog already thinks "come" means "come in the house now because I'm leaving for work and you have to be crated," don't use it.

If "come" means "run for your

life because it's time to cut your toenails," don't use it. You're better off sticking to the can.

I recommend saving the can method for times when you really need your dog to come to you, whether it be to come in so you can go to work, or if you need him to come in because he's barking at something or for his safety during a storm. Avoid using the can for anything that could lead to a negative association. If you use it to get your dog in the house so you can go to work, make sure there is sufficient time between shaking the can and your departure so your dog doesn't connect the two things.

Obviously, this method won't work when you're out in the field and don't have your can of delicious treats. That will need to be trained the traditional dog way.

Before I taught my dogs to come like cats, they had terrible recalls when they were in the backyard -- especially Casey.

You could call her all day, but if she had something better to do, she wouldn't budge and I would usually have to go outside to get her. Now she is much more reliable, even when she's barking at the neighbor dogs.

Gabe's recall in the yard is nearly perfect, both with the can and a verbal cue. It doesn't matter what's going on outside. If I call him, he comes running and gets a treat to reinforce being wonderful.

Is Your Pet at Risk for Heartworm Disease?

By Lorene Rockwell DVM

Most pet owners are familiar with Heartworm Disease, but I find many do not recognize the seriousness of the illness until it is too late. In the United States approximately 70 of every 5000 dogs that are owned and cared for by people will become infected each year with heartworms. Although this number may not seem very big, it becomes extremely important when it is your pet that is infected.

Heartworm disease is transmitted when an infected mosquito bites your dog and transmits the heartworm larvae. These larvae then migrate through the tissue from the site of infection into the bloodstream and then to the heart. Once in the heart they will lodge themselves in the pulmonary arteries and develop into mature adults. They then begin producing more microfilaria – the process from the time of the mosquito bite (infection) to production of microfilaria by adult

worms is approximately 6 months. If a heartworm pill is administered during the first 30 days of infection it will kill 99-100% of the infective larvae, however if you wait until days 30 – 60 it is possible that the medication will not kill all of the larvae.

Dogs with heartworm disease must undergo treatment which can be extremely expensive (\$1000 - \$2000) and are at risk of developing multiple life threatening diseases such as congestive heart failure, pulmonary hypertension, pulmonary thromboembolus etc. Some of the symptoms of heartworm disease include coughing, decrease ability to exercise and increased respiratory rates. (These symptoms are also present in other diseases as well.)

Today heartworm disease is present in most of the nation and our weather patterns are no

longer predictable (ie sometimes we get 50 degree weather in February) so we can no longer guarantee that our pets are safe unless they are receiving year round heartworm preventatives.

Heartworm disease is completely preventable. If you administer heartworm preventative tablets or topical preparations once a month year round the risk to your pet is reduced dramatically.

No medication is 100% effective so you should have your pet tested for heartworm disease at your local veterinarian once a year.

If you are concerned that your pet may have been exposed to heartworm disease or would like more information please contact your local veterinarian. If you do not have a local veterinarian please contact Lorene Rockwell at Wolf Merrick Animal Hospital for more information.

Many people have at least a passing familiarity with chiropractic care for humans. Many, however, may not be aware that similar care is available for their pets.

What is spinal manipulation?

Spinal manipulation care is a drugless, noninvasive method of health care. Spinal manipulative therapy deals with the nervous system and the spinal column and its overall important role in maintaining the health of the whole body. The spinal cord acts like an innerbody freeway that carries sensory and motor information from the brain to organs, muscles, and joints.

Spinal manipulation helps to maintain optimal nerve supply so that the brain and body can

Spinal Manipulation

By Brooke Lewis DVM

continue to communicate with each other efficiently. When a vertebrae, bone, or joint is slightly malaligned the nerves are adversely affected, this is called a "subluxation". An adjustment is aimed at correcting this malalignment, restoring mobility to the joint and re-establishing nerve function.

What patients may benefit from spinal manipulation therapy?

Patients that may benefit from VSMT include those with neck, back, leg or tail pain, post injury or trauma, muscle spasms, nerve problems, chronic pain, geriatric pain management, lameness not associated with fractures, lick granulomas, decreased or poor performance in athletes and working dogs, or those who want

to maintain healthy joint and spinal health.

Some clinical signs to watch for may include: discomfort when placing collar/harness, sensitivity to touch, tucking tail, change in behavior, lameness, weakness, stiffness in the body/neck, arched back, dragging toes.

Dr. Brooke Lewis has completed her certification for Veterinary Spinal Manipulation Therapy (VSMT) through the Healing Oasis Wellness Center in Sturtevant, WI. She participated in over 226 hours of intensive coursework in small animal and equine anatomy, functional neurology, and spinal adjustment techniques. As of date this remains the only nationally accredited, State Board of Education approved, Veterinary Spinal Manipulative Therapy course of its kind. If you have any questions feel free to call or e-mail me at drlewis@geekpaws.com.

Giardia

By Stephanie Challand

What is Giardia?

Giardia are single-celled organisms that can live in the small intestines of dogs, cats and other mammals. Giardiasis is an infection of Giardia. Giardia can interfere with digestion, prevent the proper absorption of nutrients and damage the delicate lining of the intestine. It is estimated that 5% to 10% of dogs in the United States are affected at any given time.

What are the Signs of Giardiasis?

Typically there are no symptoms but diarrhea, weight loss, inability to maintain a healthy weight especially during growth, vomiting and lack of appetite may occur. The feces of an infected animal may appear abnormal; having a pale color, greasy appearance or an unusually bad odor.

How is Giardia Transmitted?

A dog becomes infected by eating a cyst of the parasite. Once the cyst makes its way into the small intestine, it opens and releases a trophozoite. The trophozoites attach themselves to the wall of the intestine and begin multiplying. There is a lot that is still unknown about this process, but at some point

during this reproduction stage the Giardia form a wall around themselves or encyst. It is the cysts that are passed in the feces of an infected animal and can be transmitted to other animals or possibly humans. There are many strains of Giardia, some that do indeed infect humans. It is still unknown if people can catch it directly from a dog's feces.

How is Giardiasis Diagnosed?

Giardiasis is very difficult to diagnose because Giardia are very tiny and are not passed with every stool. Typically, a stool sample must be tested every day for 3 or 4 days for Giardia to be diagnosed.

How is Giardiasis Treated?

This is a controversial topic as well. Because it is not known whether Giardia found in dogs can directly affect humans, typically vets err on the side of caution and treat any case whether the animal is displaying symptoms or not. If a dog has diarrhea and no other cause can be found, Giardiasis is often suspected and treated. Antiparasitic drugs such as Fenbendazole or Metronidazole are often prescribed. Fenbendazole is used to kill

intestinal worms and helps to control Giardia. Metronidazole can also kill other types of bacteria that cause diarrhea. Neither are 100% effective and have health drawbacks including liver damage. The effect on a developing embryo is unknown so they should never be used in pregnant animals. Quinacrine hydrochloride has been used previously but has been proven less than effective and has a range of harmful side effects including lethargy, vomiting, anorexia, and fever. Despite these treatments it is still not known if they actually eliminate the Giardia or just eliminate the cysts that the tests check for. It is entirely possible that the fecal test come back normal but the dog still be infected with Giardia.

How Can I Prevent Giardia?

The infectious cysts can live months in cool, wet environments including puddles, lawns, kennels, parks, etc. Keeping your dog away from such areas is the only real prevention. Making sure they do not drink from puddles or other standing water is very important. Cleaning with Lysol and diluted bleach are known to kill the parasite.

Attention Hiking Club Members:

Does your dog pull on walks?

Does he bark and lunge at other dogs?

Does he chase after cars, joggers or skateboards?

Starting this April, we are offering "clinics" to work on these issues.

The clinics will take place one hour before our regular hikes so you can practice what you learn during the hike.

Place and time will be determined based on the weather and the issues we are working on.

If you are interested, contact Jennifer/Laura at lphikingclub@gmail.com.

Clinics during the month of April are free and space is limited, so sign up now!

How to Make Super Delicious Dog Treats While You Sleep

By Jennifer Lueck

What you'll need:

- A food dehydrator
- A sharp knife and cutting board
- A Natural Balance Dog Food roll
- A good night's sleep

Instructions:

1. Cut the roll into ¼" – ½" slices (the thinner the slice, the less time it takes to dehydrate)
2. Place the slices in the dehydrator with the top vents open.
3. Turn on the dehydrator and go to bed.
4. When you get up, turn off the dehydrator and let the slices cool.
5. Put the cooled slices in Ziploc bags, but don't seal the bags for at least a day to make sure they are dry.
6. The slices no longer need to be refrigerated or frozen
7. When you're ready for a hike or training, grab a slice or two and break up as needed.

Numbers:

- Natural Balance 4lb roll at Petco: \$11.99
- Natural Balance treats (these are simply the dehydrated food roll!) 6oz for \$6
- A very basic dehydrator can be purchased at Menards on sale for \$29.88 (week of 3/20/11)
- 4lbs of purchased Natural Balance treats would cost \$64
- Dehydrator + 4lb Natural Balance Roll = \$42
- Savings: \$22!



Of course you don't need to dehydrate Natural Balance Dog Food Rolls to use as treats. They are just more convenient when they are dry and shelf stable.

The Good Dog

By Casey Lueck

One day my mom and Grammy had to go to a long appointment, so me and Gabester had to stay home alone. Mom says we go to "daycare" when they're not home but really it's just the basement. We aren't allowed to be upstairs because Gabe is naughty and gets into stuff. We have a nice area in the basement with Mom's old bed, a couch, a play tent and our cages. Mom and Grammy were gone for a long time and Gabe got bored and started looking around for something to do. The toys were boring and I didn't feel like playing with him so he went shopping on the shelf where Grammy keeps some extra food in case of an emergency. You'll never guess what he found! He found a big bag of brown sugar. He had to really stretch to reach it, but he got it and pulled it down. He brought it over to the bed and was just about to rip it open when I noticed what he was doing. I told him not to do it, but he pulled on the bag and sugar went all over. He started gobbling up the sugar and I told him he better stop, but he kept eating and eating. He ate so much he got a tummy ache! The bed was covered with sugar and he couldn't get comfortable on it so he went to lay down on the couch. Then all of a sudden he puked. On the couch! He got up and came by me and puked on the rug. Then he went by the tent and puked on the tent.

Everywhere he went he puked. And then he had to go potty and since he couldn't go outside he went on the floor. Finally he felt a little better so he went in his cage and took a nap. Mom and Grammy came home a little while later and found the mess. They were very mad at Gabester. It took them a long time to clean up all the messes and the couch is ruined! When will Gabester learn?! There's one good thing about having a naughty brother like Gabester: he makes me look like the good dog.