



<p align="center">Board Members Info.PVIWC@gmail.com</p>
<p>Kathy Lewis, President naturelady58@gmail.com</p>
<p>Susan Montgomery, Vice President, Rescue, Web Page pviwcweb@gmail.com</p>
<p>Christina Buckner, Treasurer pvtreasurer@pviwc.org pviwcshowsecretary@gmail.com</p>
<p>Susan Wine, Secretary pvsecretary@pviwc.org</p>
<p>Carole Silverthorne Breeder Referral carolesilverthorne@comcast.net</p>
<p>Judy Chantelois</p>
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PRESIDENT’S CORNER

In this newsletter there are pictures from May, June, July and August that I missed including in the September newsletter. Luckily, I am improving with this new computer.

Thank you to everyone who came out and participated in Fun Day this year. We had a lot of fun and a huge amount of food!

Pictures from Fun Day will be in the November edition of the newsletter. There are about 20 of them! Thank you, Danielle!

Coming up:

- Oct. 19 club meeting**
- Nov. 7,8,9 Maryland Irish Festival**
- Nov. 16 club meeting**

Additional information will be sent out via email or snail mail.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact Kathy Lewis.

How to Trim Your Dog's Nails Safely

By Harriet Meyers, Updated: May 23, 2025 **AKC**

Nail trimming is an essential part of dog grooming, and trim nails are one clear sign of your dog's good health and hygiene. Professional groomers will perform the task for squeamish owners, but dog nail trimming is a simple procedure if done correctly.

Since nail trimming can be an anxiety-laden experience for many dogs, start handling your puppy's feet and trimming their nails when they're young, so they become accustomed to the process. Some dogs will sit in your lap or on a table while you clip their nails, while others may need some form of restraint.

Luckily, you can make the process more fun for your dog by letting them lick peanut butter off a silicone wall mat while you handle the nails.

Getting Your Dog Comfortable

In as little as one week, you can have one of those rare dogs who doesn't mind nail trimming one bit. But, if it takes your dog a little longer to get used to it, don't despair. Be patient, keep a gentle and positive attitude, and continue to offer praise and treats. Make sure to use safe, dog-friendly nail clippers or grinders.

It helps if you frequently touch and hold your puppy's paws (gently and cheerfully) right from the first day, so they won't become sensitive to having their feet handled.

Day 1: Let your puppy sniff the nail clipper or grinder. Give a treat and praise.

Day 2: Touch the nail clipper or grinder lightly on each paw. Give a treat and praise.

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Day 3: Touch the nail clipper to each paw and squeeze the clipper so the puppy hears the sound, or turn the grinder on and let the puppy feel the vibration. Don't actually trim a nail. Give a treat and praise.

Day 4: Touch the nail clipper or grinder to your puppy's feet again. Give a treat and praise.

Day 5: Try trimming off just the very tiniest tip from one front paw nail. Only do one nail. Offer lots of happy praise and a treat if your puppy lets you. Even if they let you do more, just do one. Repeat every day until they let you do this and don't seem to mind.

Day 6: Try trimming just the tip off of just two nails.

Day 7: Keep working your way up, trimming additional nails each day, until you've got them all and your puppy doesn't mind. Practice even when you don't need to clip a nail. Even pretending you're clipping and going through the motions helps your dog get used to the whole process.



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Trimming Your Dog's Nails

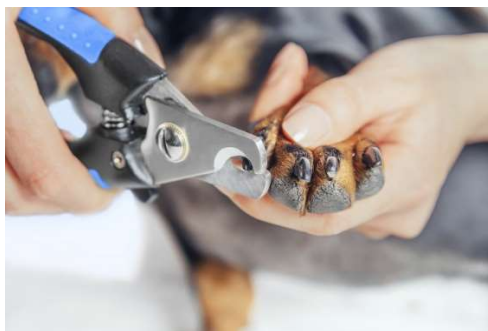
There are several types of dog nail trimmers, including nail scissors, grinder tools specifically designed for dogs, and guillotine types. You can use whatever type you're most comfortable with, or whatever works best

for your dog. It's a good idea to have some styptic powder or other clotting powder on hand to stop bleeding in case you cut a nail too short.

"If you've never clipped a dog's nails before, you may want to have your veterinarian or vet tech give you a lesson on how to do it," suggests Dr. Jerry Klein, Chief Veterinarian for the AKC.

Here are the steps to follow to properly trim your dog's nails:

1. Pick up a paw and firmly, but gently, place your thumb on the pad of a toe and your forefinger on the top of the toe on the skin above the nail. Make sure none of your dog's fur is in the way.
2. Push your thumb slightly up and backward on the pad, while pushing your forefinger forward. This extends the nail.
3. Clip only the tip of the nail, straight across. Include the dewclaws, located on the inner side of the paw.
4. Avoid clipping past the curve of the nail or you risk hitting what is called the quick (the pink area of the nail that contains the blood vessels). A nick there is painful and will bleed. For dogs with dark nails, watch for a chalky white ring.



Remains/Getty Images Plus

How to Grind Your Dog's Nails

If you're using a dog-friendly nail grinder on your dog's nails, it's important to know how to safely use a dog-friendly nail grinder before using the tool on your dog's nails. Here are a few tips to ensure you properly grind down your dog's nails:

- Grind your dog's nails using a safe tool designed for dogs
- Only grind a small part of your dog's nail at a time. Support the dog's toe firmly but gently.
- Grind across the bottom of the nail and then carefully in from the tip of the nail, smoothing rough edges.
- For better control, hold the grinder higher up, towards the top.
- Keep your dog comfortable and take note of any sensitivities
- If your dog has long hair, make sure to keep it back from the grinding tool so it doesn't get caught.

Importance of Maintaining Your Dog's Nails

Regular nail maintenance is more than cosmetic. Unhealthy nails can cause pain, and in rare instances, trigger irreversible damage to the dog.

A dog's nail consists of the living pink quick and the hard outer material called the shell. The quick supplies blood to the nail and runs through the core of it. Nerves in the quick cause bleeding and discomfort when cut. Regular nail trimming will cause the quick to recede from the end. Short quicks are the preferred length for the dog's well-being and easy maintenance.

Long nails can turn a sound paw into a splayed foot and reduce traction, and they can cause deformed feet and injure the tendons over an extended period. As the long nail hits the ground, the pressure puts force on the foot and leg structure. Some dogs wear their nails down and won't need to have them clipped as often.



July Walk



August Meeting



Aulfynn and Sister Wicca competing BoB in May.



Aulfynn Volunteering Gettysburg Battlefield July 3 with PA Monument in the background.



Do Dogs Feel Guilt? The Jury Is Still Out

By Harriet Meyers, Updated: Jun 03, 2024 **AKC**



tirc83/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images

Most of us believe that our dogs experience emotions. We observe them as they display affection toward us, cower fearfully from vacuum cleaners, or alert us to the mail carrier's arrival.

With their expressive faces and demonstrative body language, dogs can communicate a wide range of emotions to their humans. But the jury is still out on whether dogs actually understand when they do something wrong and feel guilty.

What's That Guilty Look For?

You've probably come across your dog after they've done something naughty, like peeing in the house or shredding your favorite pair of socks. Their body language seems to radiate guilt. Many veterinary experts suggest that this is a classic case of anthropomorphism – when we attribute human characteristics or behavior to an animal.

A 2009 study examined "guilty" canine expressions. Dog cognition scientist and author Dr. Alexandra Horowitz coordinated the research. Researchers observed dogs and their owners under several sets of circumstances and discovered that dogs would display "guilty" body language more frequently when their owners scolded them than when the owners remained neutral – regardless of whether the dogs had actually done anything wrong. "A better description of the so-called guilty look is that it is a response to owner cues, rather than that it shows an appreciation of a misdeed," Dr. Horowitz concludes.



tirc83/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images

Guilt or Fear?

When we say a dog looks guilty, we usually mean they display some or all of the following behaviors or signs:

- Tucked tail
- Visible whites of the eyes
- Cowering, hunched posture
- Yawning
- Licking
- Flattened ears
- Avoiding eye contact

These are all expressions of fear and stress in dogs. While these behaviors could also conceivably communicate a feeling, such as guilt, it poses a dilemma for researchers. Do dogs truly understand that they've broken our rules and feel bad about it, or are they simply reacting to our voice and body language by trying to appease us with a submissive posture?

Guilt is a complex concept. It requires an understanding of cause and effect in relation to time, which is difficult to prove. Dogs don't talk about how they feel by using words, so we don't know what they think about while they wait for us to come home and discover a chewed up shoe.



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Learning to Appease

Dr. Mary R. Burch, certified applied animal behaviorist, suggests that when a dog looks guilty for an action such as house soiling or chewing, they've most likely done this before and may have experienced a strong reaction from their owner – scolding, yelling, or the cold shoulder. The dog may anticipate how the owner will react and exhibit body language, such as cowering, to try to appease their owner and ask for forgiveness.

Poking fun at a “guilty” dog in an amusing photo is one thing, but misunderstanding guilt can lead to problems. Animal behaviorists agree that because our dogs are so sensitive to our reactions, punishment after the fact can backfire.

If you come home to find your dog has done their business on the living room rug, scolding, pointing, or focusing your full attention on their mistake communicates your displeasure. Next time you go out, they may eliminate in the basement or in some other hidden space because what they've learned is that it upsets you to see their mess when you come through the door.

It's far better to figure out how to prevent situations that lead to the behavior in the first place – confine your dog to a crate or pen when you're out, hire a dog walker, be sure they've had plenty of exercise before you leave them.



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Do Dogs Know When They Do Something Wrong?

Dogs can learn what we define as appropriate behavior if we take the time to teach them. After months of consistently telling my Lagotto Romagnolo to “leave it” as soon as she got near the lily pond in my backyard, and rewarding her when she did, I can now depend on her to spend time in my fenced yard alone and resist her instinctive urge to swim there.

So if dogs learn what their humans consider right from wrong, and they make the wrong choice, do they feel guilty? Although some experts have used her study to conclude that dogs don’t really experience guilt, Dr. Horowitz advises that we really can’t know for sure.

“My study was decidedly not about whether dogs ‘feel guilt’ or not. I would feel dreadful if people then thought the case was closed on dogs (not) feeling guilt, which is definitely not the case,” she says.

The question of whether dogs — or your dog — experience guilt remains unanswered.

Why Does My Dog Put Their Paw On Me?

By Elaine Waldorf Gewirtz, Updated: Aug 20, 2024 **AKC**

Your dog gazes at you with love and longing. Suddenly, you feel your arm or leg gently caressed by their paw. You may be wondering, why does my dog put their paw on me? Is it a sign of hand-holding canine style? Or,

perhaps they want a treat, a few pats on the head, some attention, or maybe a trip outside for playtime or a potty break.

“When your dog puts a paw on you, it is most often a sign of communication, and it doesn’t always mean the same thing,” says Dr. Mary Burch, Ph.D., a certified applied animal behaviorist and the Director of the AKC Family Dog Program.

What does putting a foot on your foot, hand, leg, or lap mean precisely? Like other ways your dog tries to get a message across, placing a paw on you can signal a few different things. “Dogs use body language to mean, ‘I have a need, such as ‘I need to go outside,’ or ‘I am hungry—it’s time for my dinner,’” Burch says.

Talk to the Paw

Whatever the reason, the connection with your dog is real. Dogs want instant gratification, and waiting until you’re ready to determine the exact meaning doesn’t always sit well with a dog. Although it’s easy to wonder what your dog wants, making coat-to-skin contact is a natural behavior for dogs. “Think about when a human hugs another person,” Burch says. “It can mean, ‘I love you,’ ‘I’m so sorry for your loss,’ or ‘I am so glad to see you again.’”

The canine touch also serves as a way to initiate communication. Think of the times you’ve begun a conversation by saying, “Uh,” or “But,” or raising your hand in a formal group setting. Dogs use a foot to bridge the communication gap. Your dog quickly learns that handing you their paw receives a positive reaction.

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By giving you their paw, oftentimes, they just want a pet. “When I think of my dogs that would put a paw on me, my Border Collie, ‘Laddie,’ comes to

mind,” Burch recalls. “He would prompt me to pet him. And if I stopped, the paw would come down on my arm again.”



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Applied behavior analysts call this “manding.” It means a request or a demand, and Laddie would do both depending on whether or not she responded, according to Burch.

However, there are a variety of requests your dog is asking for that can come from a touch of the paw—aside from you training them to “give you paw.”

They’re Hungry

Owners often respond to a paw by giving their dogs food—treats, leftovers from the table, or feeding their dog a meal. Food means love in any language and if owners don’t know why their dog is pawing them excessively, giving a tasty treat is an easy and quick fix. However, by doing this you may unintentionally cause the undesired behavior of frequent paw taps.

Some dogs could just as quickly bark for their supper rather than put a paw on your lap, but this might not produce the reward of food. Once a dog realizes no good comes from barking, placing a paw on your body might be their next alternative tool to try.

They Need to Go Outside

A puppy who wants to go outside for a potty break or playtime may try engaging you with pawing, barking, wagging a tail, or grabbing a toy and dropping it in your lap. If the paw doesn’t motivate you to move to the

great outdoors, the dog may resort to putting their head on your lap and staring at you directly. Putting a paw on you seems the least intrusive method.

They Want Attention

Some dogs are more independent and may never put their toes on you to offer to pet and to gain your attention. Other dogs are needier and crave your touch, so they'll do it repeatedly. As mentioned before, pawing could just be a request for lots and lots of pets.



Anneke

They're Anxious

A paw on you may also mean that your dog feels worried. The roar of thunder, separation anxiety if they think you're about to leave, or a sudden knock on the door can frighten a dog and send it pawing at you for comfort. Heavy breathing, a low tail, or uneasiness may accompany your dog's paw position. You can ease the concern with verbal reassurance that everything is OK, petting, giving a treasured toy, and mostly understanding that they need some comfort.

They Want to Comfort You

Dogs are highly perceptive creatures, and many can sense when their owners are feeling sad, lonely, or disappointed. If you're feeling any of these emotions, they may try to cheer you up by pawing at your hands or feet to give you extra love.

By understanding why a dog puts a paw on you, you're able to build a bond with your dog or strengthen the one you have, so don't push it away always.

White Noise Machines for Dogs: Everything You Need to Know

By Colt Dodd, Published: Oct 25, 2024 **AKC**

Life can feel scary through a dog's eyes. Rolling thunder can sound like earth-shattering explosions. Sleeping in a crate for the first time can feel isolating. Couple that with being away from their favorite person, and it's no wonder some dogs are prone to stress. This is where white noise machines for dogs enter the picture. They're amazing tools for reshaping dogs' behavior and helping them navigate distressing situations.

These devices emit a constant stream of audio to drown out loud, sudden sounds, such as fireworks or heavy construction. They can also help dogs sleep through the night by offering a calming sound to redirect their focus. The great thing about these devices is that they're relatively inexpensive. Plus, any dog, even one without apparent anxiety, can benefit from using one.



Richard Unten/Moment Open via Getty Images

White Noise Machines Use Noise to Soothe Anxious Dogs

So, what is white noise? The first sound that comes to mind is that "shhh" sound that used to accompany cable TVs without signal. It's also similar to

the sound emitted by hairdryers, air conditioners, and running water. It's different from "brown noise" and "pink noise" in that instead of audible sound rising and falling, various soundwaves combine and stay at the same frequency.

As we'll explain shortly, there are different types of white noise machines, and some offer more advanced features than others. For example, some no-frills white noise machines are simply speakers with on/off switches. More advanced models turn on when your dog begins barking excessively, even offering variations of white noise at different volumes.

Although white noise machines are a great tool for dog owners, they're not a one-stop solution to stress, separation anxiety, or issues arising from canine dementia. They're best used in combination with positive reinforcement training and other methods used to help dogs manage their triggers. An animal behaviorist could be a helpful resource if your dog's anxiety begins to affect their day-to-day routines.

What Dogs Can Benefit from White Noise Machines?



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Any dog could potentially benefit from using a white noise machine. Yet, these devices are specifically designed to comfort:

- **Senior dogs who struggle with sleeping.** It's an unfortunate fact of life that some older dogs have problems falling and staying asleep. They may be more sensitive to certain sounds or become anxious when the sun sets. White noise machines can block out upsetting

sounds and allow the dog to focus on a singular sound as they fall asleep.

- **Dogs who bark excessively.** Depending on where you live, the sound of dogs barking outside may be unavoidable. A white noise machine can drown out other dogs' barking and prevent your dog from joining the chorus.
- **Puppies.** Many puppies recently separated from their mothers will exhibit signs of stress, whether that's whining in their crate or struggling to fall asleep. The steady "shhh" of a white noise machine may help alleviate their anxiety or offer a welcome distraction.
- **Destructive dogs.** In many cases, a destructive dog is an anxious dog. A white noise machine can redirect a dog's anxiety and soften their response to certain triggers, such as being left alone for prolonged periods.

Experimenting with a white noise machine is a low-risk, high-reward endeavor. Many of these machines are easy to set up, inexpensive, and a game changer for many dog owners.

Different Features of White Noise Machines for Dogs

There is a white noise machine for every price point and purpose. Still, some offer more customizable features than others. For example, some white noise machines are outfitted with timers, offering set-it-and-forget-it convenience. Devices without timers generally run continuously until the battery dies, or they're turned off manually.



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Another feature many owners enjoy is built-in microphones that detect when their dogs start barking or whining. In response, the white noise machine begins emitting sound, immediately working to soothe an anxious dog in its owner's absence. This feature is generally paired with what many products call "memory keeping," which is when the device memorizes the exact sound and volume used previously. That way, owners don't have to fumble with the device's settings every time they use it.

While many white noise machines plug into the wall using USB cables, some devices are battery-powered. This offers another layer of convenience for owners who are constantly on the move with their pets. Using a white noise machine in the car could help a dog grow accustomed to riding in the vehicle, ultimately working to drown out loud engines, car horns, and screeching tires. With consistent use, a dog who once hated riding in the car could learn to love the adventure!

Things to Consider About White Noise Machines

Understanding the pros and cons regarding white noise machines can help you make informed decisions regarding your dog's health and well-being. The pros are fairly straightforward. Over time, you could see a marked improvement in your dog's sleep patterns, temperament, and response to triggers. In the long run, these improvements can build your dog's confidence and enhance their overall quality of life.

Of course, there's no such thing as a perfect product, and there are some downsides to know about. For starters, white noise machines are not the final solution to behavioral issues. They're a great tool while you work to address the underlying cause of your dog's stress and work to mitigate it. With exclusive use, your dog could get used to the white noise machine and no longer get the full benefits.

Another concern is noise level. Louder isn't always better. White noise is generally between 60 and 65 decibels, about the same volume as a shower running. Blasting a white noise machine constantly could damage your dog's hearing, particularly if the machine is left running in small spaces.

You should be able to hold a normal conversation while the white noise machine hums in the background.



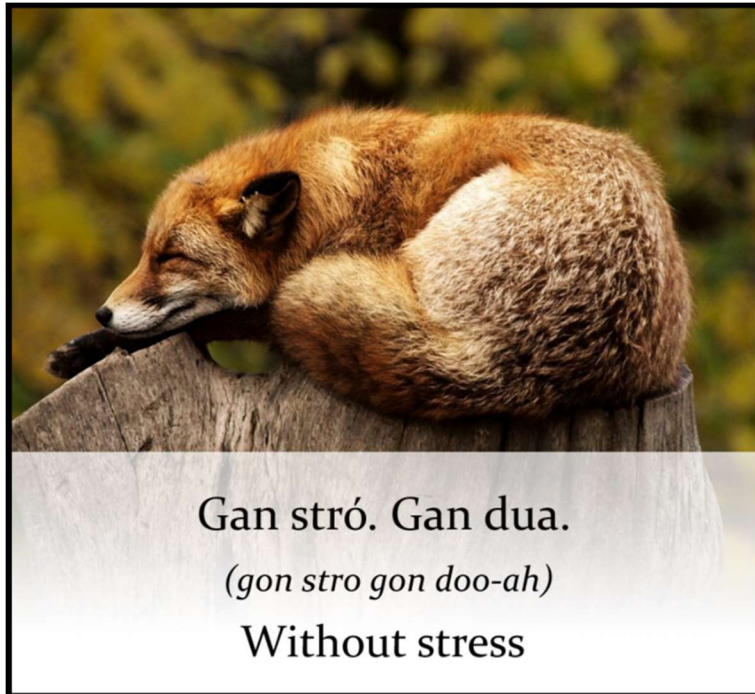
Rob Thorley/Shutterstock

Other Devices Intended to Soothe Dogs

White noise machines are one of many products designed to help dogs power through stressful events. Others include:

- **Calming shirts.** Also known as anxiety vests, these garments resemble shirts and are usually made from a breathable fabric, like polyester. They apply a firm yet gentle pressure over your dog's chest, shoulders, and back. It's the same concept as swaddling a crying baby to soothe them.
- **Specially-formulated calming treats.** Some calming treats aim to mellow out high-energy dogs with ingredients like melatonin or chamomile flower by making them sleepy. Others work to address the symptoms associated with stress. For example, calming treats with ginger root can soothe anxious dogs' tummies.
- **Collars that release pheromones.** To a dog, there's nothing more soothing than their mother's scent, even after they've passed puppyhood. Calming collars are infused with certain odors that remind a dog of its mother, working to pacify them.

White noise machines are just one options of working to reshape your dog's behavior and help them thrive. Not everything will work for every day, so the best thing you can do is talk to your vet and try the product, and observing your dog's reactions. No matter the cause of your dog's stress or anxiety, there are many tools and resources that can help them.



Gan stró. Gan dua.

(gon stro gon doo-ah)

Without stress

What Do Dogs Dream About?

By Anna Burke. Updated: Jun 13, 2025 **AKC**

What do dogs dream about? Is your snoozing hound merrily tracking the scent of rabbits across a meadow, or is your tuckered-out terrier just twitching in their sleep? Do dogs dream the same way people do? Do our dogs dream about us? Their favorite toys or treats? We have so many questions!

While it's impossible to have all the answers on what dogs might dream about, scientists are digging into the data behind dog sleep cycles and dreaming, which brings us one step closer to understanding our pets.

The Science Behind Dog Dreams

Humans don't have a monopoly on dreams. In fact, scientists believe that most vertebrates, and maybe even the humble fruit fly, can – and do – dream on a regular basis.

Like people, dogs and other animals go through several sleep cycles. There are periods of wakefulness, followed by rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, and non-rapid-eye-movement sleep. REM sleep is the period when the most memorable and vivid dreams happen. It's also believed to be a part of how the body processes memory. Scientists can track sleep cycles in people and other animals, and their associated brain activity, using specialized equipment.

One of the most famous of these dream experiments involved lab rats. Rats in the experiment spent all day running in a maze. Scientists monitored the brain activity of the rats in the maze and compared it to their brain activity during REM sleep. What they discovered was that the same areas of the rats' brains lit up during REM sleep as when they were running the maze, suggesting that the rats were likely to be dreaming of the maze. By comparing the data, the researchers could figure out where exactly in the maze the rats were dreaming about.

This suggested to the researchers that animals tend to dream in the same way that people do. The rats dreamed about what they did during the day, just like you might find yourself dreaming about being at work.

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology concluded that animals have complex dreams. Specifically, they can remember and replay long sequences of events when they're asleep.

The National Sleep Foundation reports that dogs spend about half their day sleeping. For puppies, senior dogs, and larger breeds, time spent sleeping can take up even more of their day.



LSFoto_ro/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images

What Do Dogs Dream About?

Most dogs lead more interesting lives than rats. To figure out what dogs might dream of, researchers performed a test that temporarily disabled the pons.

The pons is the part of the brain stem that is involved in the control of sleep cycles and the regulation of deep sleep. It's also responsible for inhibiting your large muscles from moving during sleep. In other words, you can thank the pons for preventing your partner from flailing around during dreams and waking you up. Without the pons, we might act out everything we were dreaming about — probably with disastrous results.

You may have noticed that puppies and older dogs twitch and move a lot in their sleep. This is because the pons is underdeveloped in puppies and less efficient in older dogs, according to Stanley Coren, a professor emeritus of psychology at the University of British Columbia. The same is true for human infants and older adults.

Researchers figured out that one of the ways to discover what dogs might dream about is to temporarily disable the pons during REM sleep. This allowed them, under carefully controlled conditions, to let the dogs act out their dreams.

The results were pretty much what we've all suspected for years.

"What we've basically found is that dogs dream doggy things ... The dream pattern in dogs seems to be very similar to the dream pattern in humans," according to the researchers.

Does a Dog's Breed Affect Their Dreams?

People vary as to how often they dream and what they dream about. Researchers believe that is true of dogs, as well. Coren reports that small dogs have more frequent dreams than large dogs, but those small dog dreams are shorter in duration. Large dogs, on the other hand, have fewer, but longer dreams.

We can also hazard a guess that what your dog does all day determines his dreams. While we can't yet be sure, the fact that Pointers point and Dobermans display guard behavior implies that breed-specific activities may take place during dreams, too. Your Labrador Retriever, for instance, is perhaps more likely to dream about chasing tennis balls than a Pug is.



JoeChristensen/E+

Do Dogs Have Nightmares?

Not all human dreams are good. We infer that dogs can have nightmares, too. These nightmares are hard to watch. It can be tempting to wake your dog to comfort them, as you would a child. However, there are some risks associated with doggy nightmares that you should share with your family.

If you've ever been woken from a scary dream, you know that it can take a minute to remember where you are and whom you're with. Like some people, dogs can react aggressively toward the person waking them. This can be dangerous, especially for children. The best thing that you can do for a dog you think is having a bad dream is to wait for your dog to wake up and be there to comfort them, following the old saying "let sleeping dogs lie."

What Is My Dog Dreaming About?

There is no way for us to know exactly what makes up the stuff of our dogs' dreams, but we might be able to guess.

Observe your dog during sleep to see what they do. REM sleep typically begins 20 minutes into a nap and lasts for 2 – 3 minutes. This is when you might notice your dog twitching or making sounds. Are there any similarities between your dog's actions during REM sleep and their daily activities?

Sometimes, our dogs give us even more clues. In an interview with a Harvard psychologist, one owner reported that he suspected his dog had recently had a nightmare about bath time. This dog didn't like baths, and when the bath was over, he always ran to the owner and hid between his legs. He did not perform this behavior any other time. Then one day, the owner observed his dog having a dream. When the dog woke up, it bolted and hid between his legs, leading the owner to conclude that the dog had just had a scary dream about his bath.

No matter what our dogs dream about, there is some comfort in believing that they, like us, have dreams and fears that play out in their sleep, making us more alike than different.

PA Renn Faire









How to Read Dog Body Language

By Stephanie Gibeault, MSc, CPDT, Updated: Jun 12, 2025 **AKC**

Dog body language encompasses a range of unique behaviors that convey their emotions and intentions. It can be quite different from how humans communicate with one another.

A lot of canine communication consists of barks, whines, and growls, so it's important to understand what these dog sounds mean. More often, though, dogs rely on nonverbal body language. That can lead to plenty of human-dog misunderstandings. Sometimes, dog body language is simply unfamiliar (after all, people don't have tails). At other times, it's in direct

contrast with what that same signal means to a human, such as when it comes to yawning or looking away. To better communicate with your pet, learn some tips on reading dog body language.

Tail-Wagging

Tail-wagging seems like an obvious body language signal. If a dog's tail is wagging, the dog is happy, right? But, all a wagging tail means is that the dog is emotionally aroused. It could be excitement, but it could be frustration or worse. To interpret the dog's emotions and intentions, look at the speed and direction of the wag, as well as the position of the tail.

Basically, the faster the wag, the more aroused the dog. Think about those long, slow, side-to-side tail sweeps your dog makes when greeting you — the type that wags the dog's whole body. That's a relaxed dog. A faster, twitch-like wag indicates a higher level of arousal, possibly in a negative way. Think of a guard dog on alert.

The direction of the wag may hold clues as well. A study on tail-wagging showed that dogs tend to wag their tails more to the right when they're feeling positive about something, such as interacting with their owner. Tails wagged more to the left when dogs faced something negative. Then, there's the helicopter tail wag (where the dog's tail spins in a circle). Without question, that's a happy wag. You'll usually see it when a dog is greeting a beloved person.

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Finally, the position of the dog's tail relative to the ground holds important clues about their emotional state. Essentially, the higher the tail, the more assertive the dog. Dogs with their tails pointing down to the ground or even tucked between their legs are feeling fear and stress. Dogs with their tails held up like a flag are feeling confident, perhaps even aggressive.

Relaxed dogs hold their tails in a neutral position, but neutral depends on the breed. Some breeds, such as the Chow Chow, have tails that naturally curl over their backs, whereas some other breeds, like the Italian Greyhound, have a very low neutral tail position. If you become familiar with your dog's neutral tail position, you will more quickly recognize when their emotions have shifted.

Raised Hackles

When a dog's hackles are raised, it means the hair along their back is standing up. Technically called piloerection, the fur can fluff up across the shoulders, down the back, or all the way to the tail. This is a definite sign that the dog is aroused, but not necessarily in a negative way. The dog might be upset or stressed, but could also be excited or intensely interested in something. It's often an involuntary reaction, like goosebumps in people.



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Posture

A dog's weight distribution can reveal a lot about their mood and intentions. Consider a cowering dog hunched low to the ground. That's a sign of fear or stress. The dog may be trying to get away from something, and the posture makes the dog appear smaller. In other words, it says, "I mean no harm."

The extreme of this posture is a dog that rolls onto their back, exposing their belly. This may look like a dog soliciting a belly rub, and in a relaxed

dog, it often is. But it can actually be a sign of considerable stress and anxiety. The dog may even urinate a little as a sign of appeasement.

The opposite posture is a dog with their weight shifted forward. This dog is trying to get closer to something. This might simply indicate the dog's interest. However, it could also indicate offensive intentions, particularly when paired with other aggressive body language cues like a twitching tail held high. In this case, the dog is trying to appear larger.

An easy-to-read aspect of dog body language is the play bow. This is when dogs place their chest on the ground with their rump in the air. As the name implies, it's used to initiate play with other dogs and even with people.

A less easily understood signal is the paw raise. In pointing breeds like the English Setter, the paw raise is part of pointing behavior, where the dog indicates nearby prey. But outside of this context, a raised paw often indicates that a dog is uncertain about a situation or perhaps feels a bit insecure.

Facial Expressions

Dogs have similar facial features as people, but they don't use them in the same way. Consider yawning. People yawn when they're tired or bored, but dogs yawn when they're stressed. According to Turid Rugaas, author of "On Talking Terms With Dogs: Calming Signals," dogs use yawning to calm themselves in tense situations and to calm others, including their owners. She suggests yawning at your dog to provide comfort during stressful moments, such as a vet visit. But don't be surprised if your dog yawns back. Just as yawning is contagious in people, dogs can "catch" yawns, too.

Lip-licking is another bit of dog body language that people often misinterpret. Just like people, dogs will lick their lips after a delicious meal, but they will also do it when they feel anxious. Sometimes the tongue flick

is so quick it's tricky to notice. Your dog isn't signaling a desire to lick your face. Rather, it's a sign of discomfort with a given situation.

The most confusing facial expression is smiling. Yes, some dogs smile, and if you're not familiar with the expression, it can look terrifying. Usually, when dogs bare their teeth, it serves as a warning, as if they're saying, "Look at my weapons." It's hard to mistake the aggressive intention of a snarl, especially when it's paired with a menacing growl. The corners of the dog's lips form the shape of a C, and the front teeth are fully displayed.

Smiling dogs also display their front teeth, but the meaning is the complete opposite. Also known as a submissive grin, this expression is often found on a happy dog with a loose and wiggly posture. The dog's overall attitude says, "Hello, I come in peace."



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Eyes

You can learn a lot about your dog's internal state by looking at their eyes. First, a dog's eyes can be soft or hard. Soft eyes have relaxed lids and can sometimes look like the dog is squinting. They indicate the dog is calm or happy. The opposite is hard eyes, where the eyes seem to go cold. These indicate a negative state of mind, and you'll know them when you see them. The dog may be guarding a toy or feeling aggressive. A hard stare, where the dog looks intently at something, especially for a long time, usually signals a threat.

Eye contact is an important signal for dogs. Just as the hard stare can be a precursor to aggression, looking away is meant to calm a situation. When dogs feel stressed, they will pointedly look away and avoid eye contact. People often interpret this as their dog ignoring them or being stubborn, but the dog is expressing discomfort.

The whites of the eyes are another key indicator. Known as “whale eye,” when a dog shows the whites of the eyes, it’s a signal that they are feeling anxious or stressed in a situation. You might see them when you make your dog uncomfortable, like when you pat your dog on the head, or when they’re afraid someone will steal a bone or toy.

Deciphering Dog Body Language

No dog body language signals act alone. They are all part of a package. So, when you read a dog’s communication, look at every signal the dog is using from the tail height to the eye shape.

Your dog is “talking” to you all the time. If you learn what your dog is saying, you will develop a deeper bond of trust and respect. Plus, your newfound understanding of your dog’s emotional state can help you predict their behavior and prevent problems before they arise.



Canine Communication: Deciphering Different Dog Sounds

By Jennifer Nelson, Updated: Jun 23, 2023 **AKC**



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“Wouldn’t it be great if our dogs could talk?” says Amanda Nascimento, head of Integrative Veterinary Medicine and Research at NHV Natural Pet. “If you listen closely, they can.”

Dogs don’t just bark to communicate. There are lots of different dog sounds our pups use to express how they feel, and some breeds vocalize differently. Sometimes, owners double as detectives in attempts to decipher the different sounds dogs make. Are they barking because they’re happy or are they alerting you to danger? And are they whining because they want you to play or is it because they don’t feel well?

It’s not as complicated as you might think. Some dogs vocalize more than others, and many can express several interesting sounds. Common ones we all know include barking, growling, whining, or crying. Determining when dog sounds are communicating pleasure, pain, excitement, or anger is something owners can work to accomplish.

Barking

We’ve all known a dog who loves to bark. Some bark more than others. Some have deep, rumbling barks, while others have yappy, high-pitched barks. Your dog may bark when they hear a noise or see something outside the window. They may also bark when the doorbell rings, someone

comes home, or even to get your attention to indicate that they want to eat, play, or come in from outside.

As most dogs bark to communicate, this is likely among the common dog sounds your pup makes. "Many dogs have different barks that their people learn to differentiate over time," says Nascimento.

Deciphering Barking

Once you're used to your dog's distinctive bark, it's easier to understand what they mean. But clues like pitch, body language, and tail behavior can help. High-pitched barks may be welcoming, while deep barks may be your dog issuing an alert. A bark accompanied by a wagging tail often spells joy, while a crouched, angry bark with hackles up can indicate your dog is feeling fear or aggression.



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Whining

Whining or crying is another way dogs, especially puppies, express their needs. A dog might whine for you to take them outside, feed them, or play fetch. The high-pitched cry is often your dog's way of expressing what they want or letting you know they're unhappy. Dogs may whine when they're scared (for example, during a thunderstorm), or if they have separation anxiety and are left alone.

Dogs may also whine when in pain. Think of a dog who steps on a burr and whines when they put their foot down. "Ow, that hurts," the cry says.

Conversely, some dogs can whine in excitement, such as when they are greeting you after a long day.

Deciphering Whining

Look for clues that can help you decipher what your dog's whine might mean. Is it dinnertime or do they need to go outside? Are they in pain or just unhappy being left alone?

Their body language, like crouching with their head or ears down, could mean pain. Some dogs whine in anticipation while you prepare their food or a treat. When you hear a whine, ask yourself, "What is my dog wishing for right now?" Look to body language to help figure it out.

Howling

Some breeds enjoy a good howl, while others don't often make these deep-throated dog sounds. The behavior is likely an evolutionary holdover from wolves. Howling is a way wolves communicate with their pack (for example, by guiding another wolf back to safety). Dogs are just trying to communicate, too.



dageldog/Getty Images Plus via Getty Images

Just like how your dog pees on or marks every branch they pass to let others know they were there, howling may be a way to claim territory. The howl can communicate things to other dogs, such as "I am here" or "This yard is mine."

Dogs can also howl to get attention. Or your dog might be triggered to howl by hearing other dogs in the neighborhood, a siren going by, or even music.

Deciphering Howling

Look at what your dog is doing when they howl. Is it a greeting? Have they found something? Or are they just announcing that they are rulers of their domain? Some dogs may have pent-up energy they need to release — the same way a good scream can be cathartic for humans.

Purring

Think cats have the leg up on purring? Not so fast. Dogs sometimes purr, too. This throaty, “brrr” sound is often called a “rumble” by trainers and usually signals happiness. These dog sounds are usually a cross between a low rumble, a loud purr, and a grumbly growl.

Deciphering Purring

The best clue to distinguish what the purr means is to see when your dog does it. For most, it’s either an excited or happy noise, like when they’re about to go for a car ride. For others, it’s a noise that spells their total and utter contentment, such as when they’re lying next to you being petted.

Growling

Most of us instinctively know some of what the unpleasant sound of a dog growling indicates. Your dog can be afraid, angry, aggressive, possessive, or in pain and is warning you or someone else of their mood. Again, they’re communicating to you that something has them riled up. Some dogs also “play growl” — a lower, softer, rumbling growl that indicates they’re engaged with you or another dog in play.

Deciphering Growling

Growling can be one of the more concerning dog sounds. Since it can quickly escalate to snapping or biting, handling a growl takes finesse and may require the help of an experienced trainer.

Your dog gives off body language clues in their ears, tail, stance, and tone during a growl that can help you figure out whether the threat is serious or playful. In a study where humans listened to various types of growls, researchers found people are actually quite good at discerning when a growl is serious versus when it's playful.

Singing

Some vocal dogs try to sing along by howling to music or sounds on television. If a noise has the right pitch, like an operatic aria, your singing dog may belt out a chorus. Many owners with singers find it an endless amusement. But if you need to curb the behavior — for instance, if it bothers the neighbors — training can help.



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One way trainers accomplish this is by exposing the dog to soft music that doesn't trigger singing. But if you want to encourage singing, dogs can be taught to croon on command, rewarded with treats for singing, or played their favorite trigger music to engage in song.

Deciphering Singing

We may never know why dogs sing, but experts think it's an instinctual reaction left over from their wild canine cousins, the wolves. Dogs aren't in pain or hearing something in a frequency that hurts their ears — most who engage in singing enjoy it, and so do their owners.

Many dogs learn that these noises get them certain results and continue to use them to talk to their owners. Dogs learn from repetition and use the noises that work best to get the results they want.

Nascimento describes how French Bulldogs can make sounds that resemble a scream. "In this way, they are teaching their humans to 'speak dog' to be able to communicate their wants and needs better."

Hounds Out and About



Hello Fellow PVIWC Club Members and Supporters,

I hope this message finds you and your hounds doing well. Our 2025 Irish Wolfhound Specialty Dog Show was a success! For those of you that supported your Club, THANK YOU! For those of you that may not know what a Specialty Dog Show is all about, I encourage you to join us for two days to see and watch a dog show only for Irish Wolfhounds.

As a valued member of the Potomac Valley Irish Wolfhound Club, you and your family have opportunities to join the Club in the events throughout the year as well as help at the dog show. Plan to join us March 29-30, 2026. PLEASE READ: The Club could use you! We are an independent specialty show. Most of the same people have carried the specialty for years, and age and health are taking their toll. No Skills Required: If you

can read, write, have a great speaking voice, or if you are the quiet type, the Club can use you. If you want to sell raffle tickets, the Club can use you. We need you as a Club member.

Do you already know your schedule for March 2026, and know you can't make it? That is okay, you can still help by financially Sponsoring ribbons, trophies, prizes, or make a General Show Fund Donation for 2026. How? Easy, simply make a check out payable to PVIWC Treasurer (memo note "General Show Funds", or ribbons, etc,) and send to: PVIWC Treasurer, 1348 Sycamore Ave, Annapolis, MD 21403. You may also pay via PayPal using the email pviwctreasury@gmail.com. Please add a note breaking down the amounts of the payment – dues, trophies, ribbons, General Show Fund, rescue, etc. If you have questions about your Club Membership dues or if you think you have already paid, please send an inquiry to: pviwctreasury@gmail.com or to the Club's Secretary, Susan Wine at sulowine@aol.com

Remember, PVIWC welcomes volunteers for the following positions:

Set up (Friday or Saturday requirement) / Catalog sales / Armbands / Stewards / Grounds / Breakdown (needed Monday afternoon)

and Judges Hospitality (responsible for judges' transportation, taking them out to dinner, escorting them to the ring, and so on)

SAVE the DATE:

PVIWC 2026 Specialty Show

Sunday and Monday, March 29-30, 2026

Interested in volunteering? Please contact Tammy at elkhorniws@gmail.com

 **VOLUNTEER CALL-OUT!** 

OBEDIENCE & RALLY TRIALS



Sunday, March 29, 2026

- ✓ VOLUNTEER FOR 3 HOURS
- ✓ LIGHT STEWARDING DUTIES
- ✓ MEAL MAY BE PROVIDED
- ✓ MUST ARRIVE 30 MINUTES BEFORE JUDGING

We need RELIABLE VOLUNTEERS to help support our 2026 Obedience and Rally Trials.

Note: Volunteers may not be entered in Obedience or Rally on this date due to stewarding responsibilities.

TASKS INCLUDE:

- Issuing armbands to competitors
- Checking ring equipment, judges' bag, and catalog
- Supporting ring flow & accident cleanup
- Reporting issues to Show Chair or Secretary
- Escorting the judge to lunch

Your help keeps the event running smoothly – we couldn't do it without you!

SIGN UP OR LEARN MORE:

elkhorniws@gmail.com

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE!



PVIWC List of Meeting & Events 2025

March 30 & 31	<i>Specialty Harford County Equestrian Center, Bel Air, MD (Meeting Following Judging), Harford County Equestrian Ctr, 608 N Tollgate Rd, Bel Air, MD 21014</i>
April 6	'Paint Your Pet' Fundraiser, Checkerspot Brewery, Baltimore, 3PM
April 11 & 12	Dills Celtic Festival, Dills Tavern, 237 N Baltimore St, Dillsburg, PA 17019
April 19& 20	<i>Irish Wolfhound Assoc of the Carolinas Specialty</i>
April 26	Southern MD Celtic Festival, Jefferson Patterson Park, 10515 Mackall Rd, St Leonard, MD 20685
May 2 & 3	Annapolis Irish Festival, Anne Arundel County Fairgrounds, 1450 Generals Hwy, Crownsville, MD
May 3 & 4	Faerie Festival Marshy Point Rocky Point Park, 2200 Rocky Point Rd, Essex, MD 21221
May 18	Show Wrap Up Meeting
May 25 - 29	<i>IWCA National Specialty Cache County Fairgrounds, Logan, UT</i>
June 14 & 15	Carroll County Celtic Festival, Carroll County Ag Center, 706 Agriculture Ctr Dr, Westminster, MD 21157
June 8	Regular Meeting – Brian Boru Irish Rest. 489 Ritchie Hwy #103, Severna Park, MD
June 21	Penn Mar Irish Festival, Pheasant Run Greenhouse 10241 Brillheart Rd, Glen Rock, PA 17327
June 27 - 29	Celtic Fling <i>(with a concert on Friday night)</i> Mt Hope Winery, 2775 Lebanon Rd, Manheim, PA 17545
August 10	Regular Meeting
August	Oakenmist Ren Faire Howard County Fairgrounds
August 30 & 31	Virginia Scottish Games, 5089 Old Tavern Rd, The Plains, VA 20198
September 21	Fun Day
September 20-21	PA Renn Faire Shamrocks and Shenanigans Weekend, Mt Hope Winery, 2775 Lebanon Rd, Manheim, PA 17545
October 5 & 6	<i>Irish Wolfhound Assoc of the Delaware Valley Specialty</i>
October 19	Regular Meeting
November 7 - 9	Maryland Irish Festival, 2200 York Rd, Timonium, MD 21093
November 16	Regular Meeting
December 14	Holiday Party Montgomery's, 800 River Rd, Sykesville, MD 21784
December ~16	Druid Hill Winter Solstice 5Miler, 1 Safari Place, Baltimore, MD 21217
December	Military Bowl Parade, Annapolis, MD

Dates, Time, or location to be determined and subject to change on some events.

Need Volunteers to Host

