



NOVEMBER 2026



Board Members Info.PVIWC@gmail.com	PRESIDENT'S CORNER
Kathy Lewis, President, Newsletter Editor naturelady58@gmail.com	I am saddened to tell you that Danielle St. Cyr's boy, Finn crossed over the Rainbow Bridge on Sunday, October 11th. He was the goodest boy!
Susan Montgomery, Vice President, Rescue, Web Page pviwcweb@gmail.com	Congratulations to Kathy and JR Connant on their new home in Harper's Ferry!
Christina Buckner, Treasurer pvtreasurer@pviwc.org	DelVal Specialty Show Wins for PVIWC participants:
Susan Wine, Secretary pvssecretary@pviwc.org	Congratulations to Susan Montgomery's Roci who took 2nd in Puppy Sweeps 6-9 months, and Merida was 3rd in conformation 6-9 months.
Carole Silverthorne Breeder Referral carolesilverthorne@comcast.net	Congratulations to Kathy Lewis's Darcy who took 1st in Puppy Sweep 6-9 months and 4th in conformation.
Linda King IWCA Liason	Congratulations to Linda King's Winnie who won the 9-12 class in both Sweeps and regular classes, Laoise who won Oppen Class, and Grits who won Select Dog!
Joe Caballe	Congratulations to Steve and Karen LeVan whose hound took 2nd in Sweeps 9-12 months dog.
Judy Chantelois	Congratulations to Christina Buckner's Fezzik who took 1st in Owner Handled Dog.
Danielle St. Cyr Show Secretary	

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

PRESIDENT'S CORNER continued

Members, Please email me pics of your hounds' wins and brags so we can celebrate their achievements.

Pictures of DelVal Specialty Show Wins for PVIWC participants



Roci



Merida



Darcy



Winnie



Laoise



Grits



Fezzik



Steve & Karen LeVan's hound

Can Dogs Get Hearing Aids? What Owners Need to Know

By [Gemma Johnstone](#), Updated: Sep 15, 2026 **AKC**

For dogs experiencing [hearing loss](#), hearing aids may be an option in some cases. While canine hearing aids aren't widely available and cannot restore hearing to normal levels, they can help certain dogs with mild-to-moderate hearing loss.

Whether a hearing aid is right for your dog depends on the degree of hearing loss, overall health, lifestyle, and willingness to undergo extensive training and adjustment.

The Development of Dog Hearing Aids

Humans have relied on electronic hearing aids for more than a century, but canine hearing aids are a much more recent development. In the late 1980s, [Dr. Patricia Luttgen created the first prototype](#) by attaching a human hearing aid to a dog's collar.

Today, one of the leading centers studying canine hearing technology is [FETCHLAB](#), an animal hearing and bioacoustics laboratory at the University of Cincinnati. Under the direction of executive director [Dr. Peter M. "Skip" Scheifele](#) and his team, the laboratory focuses on canine amplification research.

FETCHLAB is currently the only organization that officially fits hearing aids for dogs. They adapt these devices from human hearing aids, and they typically cost upwards of \$3,000. Because they remain in the testing phase and are complex to manufacture, FETCHLAB can produce only a limited supply.

Despite the challenges, interest from pet owners continues to grow. "The aim is to create hearing aids like some of the off-the-shelf human ones. We can probably get the price down to hundreds of dollars versus thousands," Dr. Scheifele says.



Which Dogs Are Good Candidates?

Not every dog with hearing loss can benefit from a hearing aid. The best candidates are typically otherwise healthy dogs with mild-to-moderate

hearing loss who still retain enough residual hearing to benefit from amplification.

“If a dog has profound hearing loss, then the hearing aid won’t work. No amount of amplification will make the sound loud enough that the ear can hear it,” Dr. Scheifele explains.

According to Dr. Scheifele, his team receives many inquiries involving dogs whose hearing loss has progressed too far for hearing aids to be effective. Hearing loss often develops gradually, making it difficult for owners to recognize the severity until significant damage has occurred.

“Usually, there are criteria for how much residual hearing the dog has to have for the hearing aid to work,” he notes.

Although cochlear implants are commonly used by some people with severe hearing loss, their current design isn’t practical for dogs.

Dr. Scheifele also doesn’t recommend hearing aids for [service dogs](#) experiencing hearing loss. “It becomes too much of a liability if the hearing aid doesn’t work, as it can put the person they work for in jeopardy,” he adds.

How Dogs Are Evaluated and Fitted

Determining whether a dog can benefit from a hearing aid requires specialized testing and evaluations.

The process typically involves:

1. Conducting a [brainstem auditory evoked potential \(BAER\) test](#) and, in some cases, an [otoacoustic emission \(OAE\) test](#) to assess cochlear (inner-ear) function.
2. Reviewing the test results to determine whether the dog is a suitable candidate.
3. Creating custom ear molds for dogs that qualify.
4. Scheduling a follow-up fitting appointment to customize and tune the hearing aids.

This evaluation process helps ensure that only dogs likely to benefit from amplification move forward with fitting.



The Challenges of Using Hearing Aids in Dogs

Dr. Scheifele advises that owners should approach canine hearing aids with realistic expectations. Even when a dog qualifies for a hearing aid, successful adapting to using one can take considerable time and effort.

Some dogs never fully adjust — whether they're hearing new sounds for the first time or hearing sounds again after a period of hearing loss. As a result, [verbal commands](#) may not automatically become effective simply because the dog is now wearing a hearing aid. Teaching your dog to respond to visual commands (rather than verbal ones) might be a more straightforward approach to training.

"The owner needs to know that they will have to spend a lion's share of time training the dog to wear the hearing aid," Dr. Scheifele says.

Because the device is a foreign object in the ear, dogs often need to gradually acclimate to using hearing aids. Patience and [positive reinforcement](#) from a dog's owners are crucial during this time. Working with an [animal behaviorist](#) may help if a dog struggles with the adjustment process.

After turning on the hearing aid, owners must also help their dog learn to process newly amplified sounds. Keeping the environment relatively quiet during the adjustment period can help prevent sensory overload. Clear, consistent communication is also important as dogs learn to distinguish meaningful sounds from background noise.

There are practical concerns as well. Dogs that [shake their heads vigorously](#) can dislodge the wireless device. To reduce the risk of losing the

hearing aid, FETCHLAB attaches the device to the dog's collar using a small jewelry-style chain.

Are Hearing Aids the Right Choice for Every Dog?

Even when a dog qualifies for a hearing aid, it may not be the best solution.

Wearing a hearing aid requires an ongoing adjustment period, and some dogs never become comfortable with the device. In addition to adapting to the physical sensation of a foreign object in their ear, dogs must learn how amplified sounds differ from the natural sounds they were used to hearing before.

Importantly, hearing aids don't restore hearing to normal. Dogs hear an electronically amplified version of sounds and must learn to filter out background noise. This can affect their recognition of previously learned verbal commands.

"This sometimes means the dog needs to be retrained on those verbal commands," Dr. Scheifele adds.

For some owners and dogs, the time, expense, and training requirements may outweigh the potential benefits.



Supporting a Dog With Hearing Loss Without Hearing Aids

Just because your dog has hearing loss doesn't mean that they can't live a happy, enriched, and active life. Many dogs adapt extremely well using [alternative forms of communication](#).

Training methods such as hand signals, gentle touch cues, and vibration-based signals can help maintain strong communication between you and

your dog. Using a [long line](#) during walks can also provide safe freedom while preserving control.

Many deaf dogs continue to [participate successfully in dog sports](#) and other activities they enjoy. Their inability to hear doesn't diminish their ability to learn, engage, or form strong bonds with their families.

It's also important to remember that a dog's sense of smell is their most powerful sense. [Sniff-focused walks](#) and scent-based enrichment games, such as [snuffle mats](#), provide mental stimulation, confidence building, and stress relief for dogs with hearing loss.

Key Takeaways

- Specialized hearing aids are available for some dogs with mild-to-moderate hearing loss, but they do not restore normal hearing and are currently available only through limited programs.
- Dogs with profound hearing loss generally cannot benefit from hearing aids because amplification cannot compensate for severe loss of hearing function.
- Determining whether a dog qualifies for a hearing aid requires specialized hearing evaluations, including tests that measure how well the auditory system is functioning.
- Successful use of hearing aids in dogs often requires extensive training, gradual acclimation, and ongoing management from dedicated owners.
- Many dogs with hearing loss thrive without hearing aids by using hand signals, touch cues, vibration-based communication, and scent-focused enrichment activities.

Senior Dog Nutrition and Supplement Tips

By **AKC** Staff, Updated: Sep 06, 2024

As dogs age, they undergo specific internal and external changes. Some are obvious, such as greying fur, weight gain, or hip or elbow dysplasia. Others may be harder to spot, such as slower metabolism or decreased

immune function. By the time your dog is a senior, one of these key changes is a new set of nutritional requirements.

For example, a healthy senior dog requires higher quality protein levels in his food than a younger adult dog. For various reasons such as dental disease and other medical reasons, seniors may also have less ability to digest and absorb nutrients from food, while at the same time needing less energy from their diet. Fat is calorie dense, so if your dog's energy needs decrease, his need for fat will decline, too. However, not every dog is fat. Portion control and regular controlled activity and exercise are also keys to weight control (as in people).

In other words, once your dog hits the senior years, you might want to take a fresh look at his diet. But how do you know when your dog should be considered a senior? Yuanlong Pan, BVM, Ph.D., a principal research scientist at Purina, points out that although many factors can affect the health and aging process in an individual dog, including breed, genetics, physical activity, and nutrition, "on average, seven years of age is considered as senior."

The goal of proper senior nutrition is to help minimize the effects of aging on your dog. Dr. Pan explains that aging is a "gradual and continuous process and is greatly affected by nutrition." The right food and supplements for senior dogs should be considered an essential building block of healthy aging, with the aim of minimizing the signs of growing older and enhancing your dog's quality of life.

Many of the supplements we consider taking for ourselves as we age can also be beneficial for our older dogs, although it's important to consult with your veterinarian before adding any joint supplements to your dog's diet. For example, glucosamine, chondroitin, and green-lipped mussel may help protect cartilage in the joints. If your dog is already suffering from osteoarthritis, adding a joint supplement with these ingredients to his diet could help him return to normal functioning (or close to it). Joint supplements are often used as an early intervention and throughout the progression of arthritis because they are safe for long-term use in most patients.



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Antioxidants are another potentially important supplement. Scientific studies have shown that, when combined with behavioral enrichment, antioxidants can improve memory and cognitive function in senior dogs. Supplements such as vitamins C and E can be added to your dog's food, or you can consider using fruits and vegetables that are high in antioxidant content as training treats or snacks. Berries, like blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries, are near the top of the list of antioxidant-rich foods, as are apples such as Granny Smith or Red Delicious, and all will add beneficial prebiotic fibers as well. Just be aware that not all foods are safe for your dog, so consult your veterinarian before adding anything you aren't sure about.

Long-chain polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids like eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) are great for older dogs with arthritis or cognition problems. These fatty acids are derived from fish oil, or shellfish, such as green-lipped mussels. The addition of omega-3 to the diet may help reduce inflammation in joints, help with the presence of any limping, and can also promote cell membrane health.

If the thought of adding supplements to your dog's diet is intimidating, you can also choose a high-quality commercial dog food formulated for senior dogs that already contains beneficial ingredients. According to Dr. Pan, "Generally speaking, senior dogs can benefit from products that contain high-quality protein, and optimal levels of vitamins, antioxidants, natural prebiotic fibers, omega-3 fatty acids, and glucosamine."

A recent breakthrough in senior dog nutrition is the use of particular ingredients, like medium chain triglyceride oils (MCT oils), to support cognitive health. Dr. Pan explains that starting at around age seven, a

dog's brain begins to lose its ability to use glucose as its primary energy source. It can adversely affect memory, learning, awareness, and decision-making. MCT oils provide the brain with an alternative energy source, and studies have shown diets containing these ingredients can help improve an older dog's cognitive functioning.

Whether you're adding supplements or switching to an additive-rich senior formula, proper nutrition that is suited to your senior dog's stage of life will help support and positively influence the aging process. Your dog's diet is a critical part of enhancing and maintaining his overall well-being as he enters his senior years.

Preventing Obesity in Senior Dogs

By [Harriet Meyers](#), Updated: Mar 23, 2026 **AKC**

Like the humans who care for them, dogs aren't exempt from struggles with weight gain. They, too, struggle with the health problems that come along with carrying around extra pounds.

"Dogs of all ages can be obese, although the greatest prevalence of obesity occurs in dogs between 5 and 12 years old. This condition may result in serious health problems, decrease longevity, and detract from quality of life," says Dr. Jerry Klein, AKC Chief Veterinarian. "Obesity in dogs is a widespread problem in the U.S. today, yet it is one of the most preventable problems."

Is My Dog Overweight?

The most recent statistics from the [Association for Pet Obesity Prevention](#) estimated that 59% of U.S. dogs were classified as overweight or obese. While the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, there is a definitive difference between being overweight and obese.

Obesity is a medical condition, a nutritional disease caused by an excess of body fat. Dogs are considered to be overweight when they are 15% above their ideal weight, and obese if they are 30% above the ideal weight, according to [Dr. Leilani Alvarez](#), head of the Integrative and Rehabilitative Medicine Department at the Animal Medical Center in New York City.

Veterinarians determine whether a dog is an ideal body weight and size by considering their [body condition](#) or overall physique. “When viewed from above there should be a distinct waistline behind the ribs,” notes Dr. Alvarez. “When they’re viewed from the side, the ribs should be slightly visible, with the abdomen tucked in, no hanging belly.”

Similar to the Body Mass Index charts used to determine where a human falls on the scale, veterinarians use a grading system known as a [Body Condition Score \(BCS\)](#). On a grading scale from 1-to-9, an ideal body weight for dogs falls in the 5/9 or 6/9 range. Dogs with a BCS of 7/9 or higher become more prone to a variety of medical conditions associated with obesity.

Your vet can advise you about the number of calories and nutrients your dog needs, taking into consideration the age and breed of your dog, lifestyle, and activity level. Whether your dog needs to maintain a healthy weight or lose weight, the secret to success is to find a healthy diet and exercise routine that is safe and easy to continue.



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The Effects of Added Weight

According to Dr. Klein, risks such as [osteoarthritis](#), [high blood pressure](#), skin infections, respiratory disorders, renal dysfunction, [diabetes](#), and [heart disease](#) are some of the medical conditions more common to obese dogs.

For senior dogs, the concern is even greater due to other factors, such as a decrease in activity level that comes along with aging. Because it’s harder for older dogs to lose weight, it’s important to keep them fit in their younger years.

While no dog is exempt from the possibility of becoming overweight, some breeds are more prone to weight gain than others. "Obesity is more common in [Basset Hounds](#), [Beagles](#), [Labrador Retrievers](#), [Dachshunds](#), [Cocker Spaniels](#), and several of the small terriers (such as [Cairn](#), [West Highland White](#), and [Scottish Terriers](#)) among others," says Dr. Alvarez.

An article published in the [Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine](#) reported on a study of more than 50,000 dogs consisting of 12 breeds. Researchers found that an overweight body condition was associated with a shorter life span in all breeds studied, but the magnitude of the effect varied—being least for [large-breed dogs](#) at 5 months shorter lifespan and greatest for dogs of the [smallest breeds](#) at greater than 2 years shorter lifespan.

Creating Your Dog's Diet Plan

Weight isn't something dogs can control on their own. They'll most likely keep eating whatever amount of food is in front of them. That's why it's best to follow a structured feeding plan from when your pet is young, then into the adult and senior years.

Although opinions may vary about how many times a day a dog should be fed, Dr. Alvarez says twice a day is best, as more than one meal helps to maintain a more normal metabolism. "How much they should be fed is dependent on their size and level of activity," she says.

Deciding what [type of food](#) to feed your dog can be a source of confusion for owners. But it's all about finding what combination works best for their needs. "Ask your veterinarian, who knows your dog and has experience with different foods, to make recommendations," says Dr. Klein. Your vet can help you consider [calorie requirements](#), healthy ingredients, and portion size.

"Most veterinary nutritionists recommend a consistent diet in order to ensure a balanced meal," says Dr. Alvarez. "The most important nutrient for senior dogs is high-quality protein, due to a higher need for protein levels." It's also important to have consistency from everyone in the household. If the kids are sneaking snacks to your dog from the table, they're not really doing them any favors.

[Treats](#) are an important part of the weight management equation. They should never exceed more than 10% of total daily calories. Use [dog treats](#) that can be broken into small pieces and avoid table scraps, which can be high in calories. Dr. Alvarez suggests feeding your dog healthy treats, such as [carrots](#), [cucumbers](#), [green beans](#), [blueberries](#), [mango](#), [apples](#), and [watermelon](#). Just be sure to educate yourself on what foods are toxic, such as [grapes](#) or raisins.



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Exercising Your Senior Dog

No matter your dog's age, [exercise](#) is another important factor in keeping them healthy and fit. It's also good for a dog's mental state – a tired dog is less likely to get into mischief.

Even older dogs should go out at least twice a day for [mental and physical stimulation](#). "Dogs with heart or respiratory disorders can be taken out for shorter periods of time and during the cooler parts of the day," says Dr. Alvarez. Some senior dogs can benefit from low-impact exercise, such as [swimming](#), in addition to their daily walks.

Remember to see your vet for a complete physical before starting any exercise or diet program. A licensed veterinarian can rule out heart, endocrine, or joint issues. It's important to know how much exercise your dog can safely handle and enjoy on a day-to-day basis.

Spinach Stuffing Balls

Yield is about 100 walnut sized balls

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F

Ingredients:

5 12 oz pkg chopped spinach, cooked and well-drained	6 C Pepperidge Farm Herbed Stuffing, crushed
5 med onions, chopped	12 eggs, beaten
2 ½ C Parmesan cheese	3 t garlic powder
3 t pepper	2 ¼ C butter, melted

Mix all ingredients together. Let stand for 20 minutes. Roll into walnut size balls. Bake for 20 minutes at 350 degrees. These freeze beautifully.

Notes:

If freezing, thaw for 20 minutes before warming.

In a hurry, you can bake this in a 13x9 inch pan and cut into squares.

Which Thanksgiving Foods Can I Give My Dog?

By Mary Kearnl, Updated: Oct 23, 2024 **AKC**

While many of us already know we're going to overeat on Thanksgiving, we still need to apply some restraint when it comes to sharing Thanksgiving foods with our dogs.

It's not just the obvious cautions—like splintering roasted turkey bones or toxic onion-filled stuffing—that are unsafe choices for your dogs. There are other known foods that are toxic to dogs and should be kept off their plates. That said, plenty of fall favorite foods can be tasty and safe options in small portions during holiday festivities.

Safe Thanksgiving Foods to Feed Dogs

Every Thanksgiving Day table is a little bit different, but there are some foods that make an appearance on just about every table, and many of

those tables might have a hopeful dog snoozing underneath, waiting for a stray bite of people food.

Sweet Potatoes

"Sweet potatoes are a great source of dietary fiber, vitamin B6, vitamin C, and beta-carotene," says Dr. Gary Richter, MS, DVM, author of "The Ultimate Pet Health Guide: Breakthrough Nutrition and Integrative Care for Dogs and Cats." "Sweet potato treats can be as simple as a dehydrated sweet potato chew." Plain mashed sweet potatoes are an option you might find at the table. Just remember not to give your pet sweet potatoes loaded up with added ingredients like brown sugar, marshmallows, or maple syrup.



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Potatoes

You may already know your dog loves the occasional french fry. For the holiday meal, opt to share boiled or baked potatoes with your dog. Save the mashed potatoes whipped with butter and cream (and sometimes onions or garlic) for your own plate.

Apples

"Apples are full of vitamins A and C and contain lots of great fiber, making them a healthy Thanksgiving treat for your pet," says Dr. Richter.

"However, if you're sharing an apple with your pooch, be sure to cut around the core, as large amounts of apple seeds can be toxic." Sliced fresh apples are on your dog's menu, or an apple-cinnamon dog cookie, but please keep the slab of apple pie on human plates only.

Turkey Meat (Without Bones or Skin)

If you're wondering if dogs can eat turkey at Thanksgiving, the answer is yes, but with some caveats. Turkey meat is okay to offer up "as long as it has not been prepared with any seasoning," says Dr. Sara Ochoa, DVM, a small animal and exotic veterinarian in Texas. That probably rules out your perfectly roasted holiday bird.

AKC Chief Veterinarian Dr. Klein advises owners to skip out on feeding turkey bones or turkey skin. Skin itself can be fatty, and the outer layer of the turkey's skin was likely slathered in butter or oil before cooking, all of which can add up to triggering a bout of painful and dangerous pancreatitis or other digestive issues for your dog. If you'd like to share turkey with your dog without worrying about preparing a separate, dog-safe portion, you can look for Thanksgiving-themed canned dog food that did the work for you.



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Green Beans

"With ample amounts of plant fiber, manganese, and vitamins C and K, plain green beans are great for dogs," says Dr. Richter. The key here is that the green beans should be prepared and served plain, without added ingredients like butter or salt. Set aside a special portion of plain green beans for your dog if you know they love these veggies.

Peas

Plain peas are a fine addition to a dog's diet in moderation, but creamed peas are a no-go, just like creamy mashed potatoes. Any fatty food or casserole risks triggering pancreatitis or other digestive upsets.

Pumpkin

“Pumpkin itself is a very healthy snack,” explains Dr. Richter. “Pumpkin helps with digestive health and it’s great for a dog’s skin and coat. Also, if feeding canned pumpkin, make sure it’s just pure pumpkin puree and not the pre-spiced or sugary pie mix.” And, same rule as above: keep the slab of pumpkin pie on your plate.



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Avoid These Thanksgiving Foods for Dogs

You may notice this list is longer than the one above filled with healthy options, and with good reason. Thanksgiving coincides with an uptick in emergency vet visits across the U.S. because of the extra, often unsafe “human” food that dogs end up consuming at this time of year.

Prepare for a dog-safe Thanksgiving by taking some precautions to help you avoid something potentially unhealthy, or worse, toxic. Ensure your guests and any small children know to ask you before sharing food with your pets.

These are some of the foods that you shouldn’t share with dogs due to the potential for unsafe or unhealthy ingredients:

- Turkey bones, skin, and gravy
- Stuffing
- Casseroles
- Mashed potatoes
- Creamed peas
- Chocolate, cookies, pies, and sweets (as well as anything “sugar-free” or containing xylitol, which can be fatal for dogs)

- Alcoholic beverages
- Raisins and grapes
- Onions, scallions, and garlic
- Ham
- Yeast dough
- Fatty foods
- Foods containing spices

Once the meal is over, be sure to properly secure any trash so your dog can't get into it. If your dog gets into something that they shouldn't eat, seek help right away. In the event of an emergency, contact the Pet Poison Helpline or call your local emergency vet.

Is Swimming Therapeutic for Senior Dogs?

By Kristina Lotz, Updated: Feb 18, 2026 **AKC**

Doctors and physical therapists often recommend swimming as a low-impact exercise for people recovering from injuries or as a way for older individuals to stay active. Swimming is said to be easy on our joints, while building up endurance and muscle strength. In fact, you work almost every muscle in your body when you swim, making it a wonderful workout. But, does swimming provide similar benefits for dogs? According to Dr. Stephanie Liff, a practicing veterinarian and owner of Pure Paws Veterinary Care in Brooklyn, N.Y., the answer is yes.

"Just like for people, swimming is a low-impact form of exercise that can be very useful to pets," says Dr. Liff. "It can help with healing and rehabilitation post-orthopedic or neurological surgery, or can be used for weight loss in pets that have arthritis or other limitations that make exercise difficult."

Which Dogs Can Benefit the Most From Swimming?

Almost any dog can benefit from the exercise swimming provides, but Dr. Liff says it's especially useful for senior canines or younger pets with disabilities.

It's important to note that if your dog is healing from an injury or illness, you should definitely check with your vet to make sure it's safe for them to swim. "There is an appropriate time postoperatively to start swimming, which is after all wounds and incisions have healed, and the sutures or staples are removed," Dr. Liff explains. And in some cases, swimming might not be the best option. "Many pets with a dermatologic disease should avoid public water sources, or in some cases, should not be exposed to swimming due to open sores, etc.," she adds. "Also, dogs with ear infections should not swim while being treated."



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How Much Time Should Dogs Spend Swimming?

For dogs that get the go-ahead to swim, make sure they don't overdo it. Some canine companions don't know when to stop. Dr. Liff says it's important to start slowly and watch your dog for signs of overexertion. "Just like with any exercise, it is important to consult your veterinarian before starting a new program," she advises. "Also, since it is exercise and can lead to muscle exertion, you can see soreness after swimming, so monitor your pet and adjust the duration of the exercise as needed."

Where Is the Best Place for a Dog to Swim?

Depending on where you live, you may have several choices when it comes to where your dog swims: creeks, lakes, the ocean, a dog swim center, or

even your own backyard pool. All of these vary in depth, strength, temperature, and, of course, water quality. There's always a chance with public bodies of water that your dog could pick up an infection, such as giardia (an intestinal infection that spreads through contaminated food or water). If your dog has a compromised immune system, it might be best to avoid letting them swim in public bodies of water. "In terms of therapy, the location does not matter, but, of course, safety is maximized by a controlled environment, which the river or ocean may not provide, depending on other factors," Dr. Liff explains.



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How Can You Make Sure Your Dog Stays Safe While Swimming?

If your dog goes swimming in a pool, make sure there's an easy way for them to get out, such as stairs, to prevent possible drowning. If there's a risk that your pup could venture into deeper water, like in an ocean or lake, have them wear a dog life jacket.

Keep in mind that not all dogs are natural swimmers, and some really don't like water. Remember to introduce your canine companion to swimming slowly and safely to avoid accidents. Dr. Liff cautions that no dog should swim without a human closely observing them.

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How to Reinforce Dog Training at Home Between Classes

By Sassafras Patterdale, CPDT-KA, CTDI, Updated: Aug 14, 2026 **AKC**

Homework isn't just for kids. As with anything we learn, there needs to be practice, practice, and more practice to nail down a skill. The same is true for our dogs. While weekly classes are valuable for learning new behaviors and techniques, consistent practice between sessions is what helps dogs and handlers develop confidence, reliability, and lasting success. By incorporating short training sessions into daily life, you can reinforce what you've learned and make the most of every class.

Why Weekly Classes Aren't Enough

Trainers can almost always tell when a dog-and-handler team attends class once a week but doesn't practice between sessions. But homework isn't about impressing your trainer. It's about setting your dog up for success.

Most trainers assign skills to work on before the next class. If your trainer doesn't give specific homework, take notes during class and identify the exercises you and your dog find challenging. Those are ideal skills to focus on throughout the week.

Think of class as an opportunity to learn new skills with your trainer's guidance. They can demonstrate how to teach a behavior, troubleshoot problems, and help your dog understand what's expected. But the learning process doesn't stop when class ends. Practicing at home is what helps turn new behaviors into reliable skills.

By working on exercises between classes, you'll return better prepared to build on what you've already learned instead of starting from scratch every week.



madcorona/Getty Images Plus

Training Helps Handlers Learn, Too

There's a saying among dog trainers that when a dog makes a mistake, it's usually the handler's fault. While that's an exaggeration, handler errors frequently play a role. Timing, body position, posture, or unclear cues can all affect a dog's performance.

Dogs pay close attention to us. They watch our movement, body language, and consistency. Practicing homework between classes helps improve your handling skills as much as your dog's training skills.

The more you work together, the more comfortable and confident you'll become. That confidence usually means stronger communication and better results for your dog.

Create a Training Routine That Fits Your Life

Most trainers understand that people have busy schedules, so homework assignments are generally designed to be manageable.

Whether you're attending puppy kindergarten or an advanced competition class, creating a regular training routine will help you stay consistent. Look for ways to fold practice into things you're already doing. Even 10 minutes a day can make a meaningful difference.

One of the easiest strategies is pairing training with existing routines. Walks provide opportunities to practice focus, recalls, loose-leash walking, and engagement. Mealtime can also become a training opportunity. If your dog eats kibble, you may be able to use part of their meal as a lower-value training reward.



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Consistency Matters More Than Duration

How consistently you train is often more important than how long you train.

Short, frequent sessions tend to be more effective than occasional marathon training sessions. Regular practice helps both you and your dog retain skills and feel ready to build on what you learned in class.

Keep training sessions brief, engaging, and rewarding. Ending on a high note keeps your dog eager for the next session.

You Can Practice Almost Anywhere

Your trainer wants to help you succeed, so don't hesitate to ask questions if you're unsure how to complete an assignment at home. They can often suggest ways to modify exercises to fit your space, equipment, or living situation.

No matter what skills you're working on, there are usually ways to practice at home. Even if a sport typically requires specialized equipment or large training areas, you can still build many foundational skills in a small space.

For obedience and AKC Rally, handlers can work on focus, engagement, position changes, and specific exercises without needing much room. Even for a sport like agility, it's often possible to practice handling skills with minimal equipment or simply by walking through patterns in a living room.

Limited space doesn't have to limit progress. Consistent practice can help you and your dog improve no matter where you live.

Key Takeaways

- Weekly training classes introduce new skills, but practice between classes is what helps dogs master them.
- Training homework benefits handlers as well as dogs by improving timing, communication, and consistency.
- Short daily sessions are generally more effective than occasional long training sessions.
- Incorporating training into walks, meals, and existing routines makes practice easier to maintain.
- Most dog sports and training exercises can be adapted for small homes, apartments, or limited spaces.

Ways to Make Everyday Life Less Stressful for Your Dog

By Anna Burke, Updated: Sep 15, 2026 **AKC**

At first glance, dogs seem to have it made. Their days include frequent naps, nature walks, and staying blissfully ignorant about the financial burdens of existence. But despite their carefree reputation, dogs can experience stress. A few small adjustments to daily habits can make a real difference in how they feel.

Dogs thrive on consistency, clear communication, and a sense of predictability. Understanding which behaviors can cause stress and learning how to adjust them can help your dog feel more secure and confident.

Keep Your Dog's Routine Consistent

One of the best things you can do for your dog is sticking to a consistent routine. Dogs appreciate schedules and rules. They like knowing when things happen and what's expected of them.

Their internal clocks help them anticipate when it's time to wake up, eat, go for a walk, and settle down for the evening. Sudden or frequent changes to those routines can be unsettling. Establishing a regular schedule and sticking to it whenever possible helps create a sense of stability.

Consistency also matters when it comes to household expectations. Setting clear rules and having everyone in the household follow them helps your dog understand what's expected and can reduce behavior problems.

For example, a dog that's allowed to pull on the leash during some walks will have difficulty understanding why they're supposed to walk on a loose leash by your side the rest of the time.



Use Clear, Consistent Commands

Dogs don't understand human language the way we do. They learn to associate specific words with specific actions. When owners use multiple commands for the same behavior, it can create confusion and stress.

While phrases such as "drop it" and "give that here" may sound interchangeable to us, they can mean very different things to a dog. Choosing simple commands and using them consistently makes training easier and more effective.

It's also worth avoiding using the same word for different behaviors. For instance, telling a dog to "get down" when they jump on furniture may be confusing, since "down" is also commonly used to mean lying down.

Soften Your Gaze Instead of Staring

It's hard not to stare lovingly at your dog. However, too much eye contact can make some dogs uncomfortable. Learning to soften your gaze is a simple way to help put your dog at ease.

In canine body language, staring directly at another dog is often a sign of aggression. For dogs that are fearful, reactive, or already struggling with behavioral issues, direct staring may increase stress and, in some cases, trigger defensive behavior.

Instead of staring, try turning your body slightly to the side and softening your gaze. This approach can help a dog feel more at ease and may encourage them to seek interaction on their own terms.

Redirect Natural Behaviors Instead of Punishing Them

Dogs sometimes do things that frustrate their owners, like rolling in something smelly or stealing food off the counter. While these actions can be annoying, they're often rooted in normal canine instincts.

A better approach than yelling or punishment is to manage the environment and reduce temptation whenever possible. For example, keeping tempting food out of reach can help prevent counter surfing. If your dog begins engaging in an undesirable behavior, redirect them to a more appropriate activity right away, such as chewing on a toy or playing a game.



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Build Positive Associations, Not Just Verbal Reassurance

Telling your dog everything will be okay might seem like the right thing to do in a stressful situation. But while well-intentioned, dogs often associate words and phrases with the situations in which they hear them.

If your dog repeatedly hears “it’s okay” during a thunderstorm or a veterinary visit, they may begin to associate the phrase with something frightening rather than reassuring.

Instead of relying on verbal reassurance alone, help your dog create positive associations with stressful situations. Offering treats, engaging in a favorite game, or using behavior modification techniques can help reduce fear over time. For persistent anxiety or phobias, working with a qualified behaviorist may be beneficial.

Some fears, particularly those involving noises, people, or unfamiliar environments, can be linked to a lack of socialization. Exposing puppies to a wide range of positive experiences can help them develop confidence as adults.

Learn to Recognize Your Dog’s Stress Signals

Every dog is an individual, and what causes stress for one dog may not affect another. Learning to read canine body language can help you identify situations that make your dog uncomfortable.

Common signs of stress include:

- Avoiding eye contact
- Lip licking
- Yawning when not tired
- Pacing
- Changes in posture and behavior

The better you understand your dog's signals, the easier it will be to make adjustments that help them feel safe and secure.

Key Takeaways

- Consistent daily routines help dogs feel more secure and can reduce stress caused by unexpected changes in their environment.
- Dogs learn best when owners use clear, consistent commands and household rules, which helps reduce confusion and frustration.
- Direct staring can make some dogs uncomfortable because prolonged eye contact is often interpreted as a social challenge in canine communication.
- Redirecting dogs toward appropriate behaviors is often more effective than punishment because it addresses natural instincts without increasing stress.
- Recognizing early signs of stress, such as lip licking, pacing, yawning when not tired, and avoiding eye contact, can help owners intervene before anxiety escalates.

From Wolfhound Poetry

BY **Philip Santilhano**



May...

May the turkey be well cooked
may the counter be low
may stuffing be overlooked
and the cook be too slow
may the butter in rivers
run into the mash
may the gravy be bounteous
and pour with a splash

May the bacon and sausage
fall onto the floor
may the cream for the pudding
all spill as you pour
may the beans turn out soggy
and land in our bowl
may you never discover
where went the ham roll

Wallace

(Dad's note: A blast from the past to celebrate Thanksgiving in the US of A, from the late, great Wallace, who was a true connoisseur of the food fall principle. Wishing all who celebrate Thanksgiving a safe and wonderful day, with love from us all. Nd the same for those who don't celebrate the US Thanksgiving, may your cups also overflow with blessings.)



2026 Meeting and Events

January 11	Regular Meeting
February 8	Regular Meeting
March 2026	<u>St. Patrick's Day Parades</u>
• March 7	Alexandria, VA
• March 8	Annapolis, MD
• March 14	Manassas, VA
• March 14	Gaithersburg, MD
• March 15	Baltimore, MD
• March 21	Harrisburg, PA
March 8 & 9	<i>Irish Wolfhound Assoc of the Carolinas Specialty Durham Kennel Club, 7318 Guess Road, Durham NC</i>
March 14	Westminster Celtic Canter
March TBD	<i>Ellicott City Historic Downtown</i>
March 29 & 30	<i>Specialty Harford County Equestrian Center, Bel Air, MD (Meeting Following Judging)</i>
March 29	<i>Irish Wolfhound Association of Lake Erie Specialty New York State Fairgrounds</i>
April 17 & 18	Dills Celtic Festival, Dills Tavern, 237 Baltimore St, Dillsburg, PA
May 2 & 3	Faerie Festival Marshy Point Rocky Point Park in Baltimore County, MD. 2200 Rocky Point Rd, Essex
May 17	Show Wrap Up Meeting
May 18-21	<i>IWCA National Specialty Purina Farms St Louis, MO</i>
May 29 & 30	Annapolis Irish Festival, Anne Arundel County Fairgrounds, 1450 Crownsville, MD
June 13 & 14	Carroll County Celtic Festival, Carroll County Ag Center, Westminster, MD
June 21	Regular Meeting
June 20	Penn Mar Irish Festival, Shrewsbury, PA
June 27 & 28	<i>Celtic Fling (with a concert on Friday night) PA Renn Faire grounds</i>
August 9	Regular Meeting
September-13	Fun Day
September 19 & 20	<i>PA Renn Faire Shamrocks and Shenanigans Weekend</i>
October 4 & 5	<i>Irish Wolfhound Assoc of the Delaware Valley Specialty</i>
October 18	Regular Meeting
November 13, 14 & 15	Maryland Irish Festival, Timonium, MD
November 22	Regular Meeting
December 13	Holiday Party WE NEED A VOLUNTEER TO HOST or RESERVE A PLACE
December 12	<i>Druid Hill Winter Solstice 5Miler , Baltimore, MD</i>
December 28	<i>Military Bowl Parade, Annapolis, MD</i>

Dates, Time, or location to be determined and subject to change on some events.
Need Volunteers to Host meetings.