

ALL ABOUT Dogs



Importance of Grooming

Keeping your dog's grooming under control does more than just enhance its appearance. Like people, regular grooming is important for hygiene and can prevent certain diseases. Consider sending your pup on its own spa day at a grooming center or even your regular veterinarian's office.

Ensuring your four-legged friend is properly groomed gives you the opportunity to spot differences in their bodies. Noticing changes allows you to potentially identify unusual conditions before the issue becomes serious.

You might become overwhelmed with certain grooming practices, especially if your pet has a hard time remaining still. Some of these larger jobs are better left to your local grooming professionals, but there are several things you should be doing at home to make sure your pup is happy and healthy.

BATHING

The Animal Humane Society recommends bathing your pooch once every two to four months. Of course, baths also are necessary when your pup gets into a smelly or messy situation. Just be careful about over-bathing, as this can dry out dogs' skin and take away the important oils in their coat.

Remember to use shampoo made for dogs. Human chemicals tend to be too harsh for their skin and coats. Also ensure you will be bathing your pup on a non-slip surface. Wet feet and surfaces could cause injury to both of you. The Humane Society also recommends thoroughly rinsing shampoo from your dog's fur to avoid leaving a dull residue.

DON'T FORGET THE EARS

Ear infections are extremely common for canines. Not only do they create discomfort, you also might notice a terrible smell when an infection or



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other condition is present. Be sure to use a cotton ball or strip of gauze with a suitable ear-cleaning solution. Only enter your dog's ears as far as your finger will easily fit.

Avoid Q-tips as they may enter too far into the canal and cause damage. Being up close and personal gives you

a chance to notice discharge or a foul smell. Be sure to tell your veterinarian if these conditions exist.

HAIRCUTS

Cutting a dog's hair is a time-consuming and sometimes expensive process. A good pair of dog-specific clip-

pers can make the job much easier, but they can be pricey.

You might prefer to enlist the help of an expert for this task. Shorter hair ensures your dog stays cool during warm weather and makes it easier to see if flea and tick medication is working.

Preventing Pests

An infestation of ticks or fleas can put your four-legged friend at serious risk for disease. Do your part as a responsible pet owner by treating your dog preventively with medication.

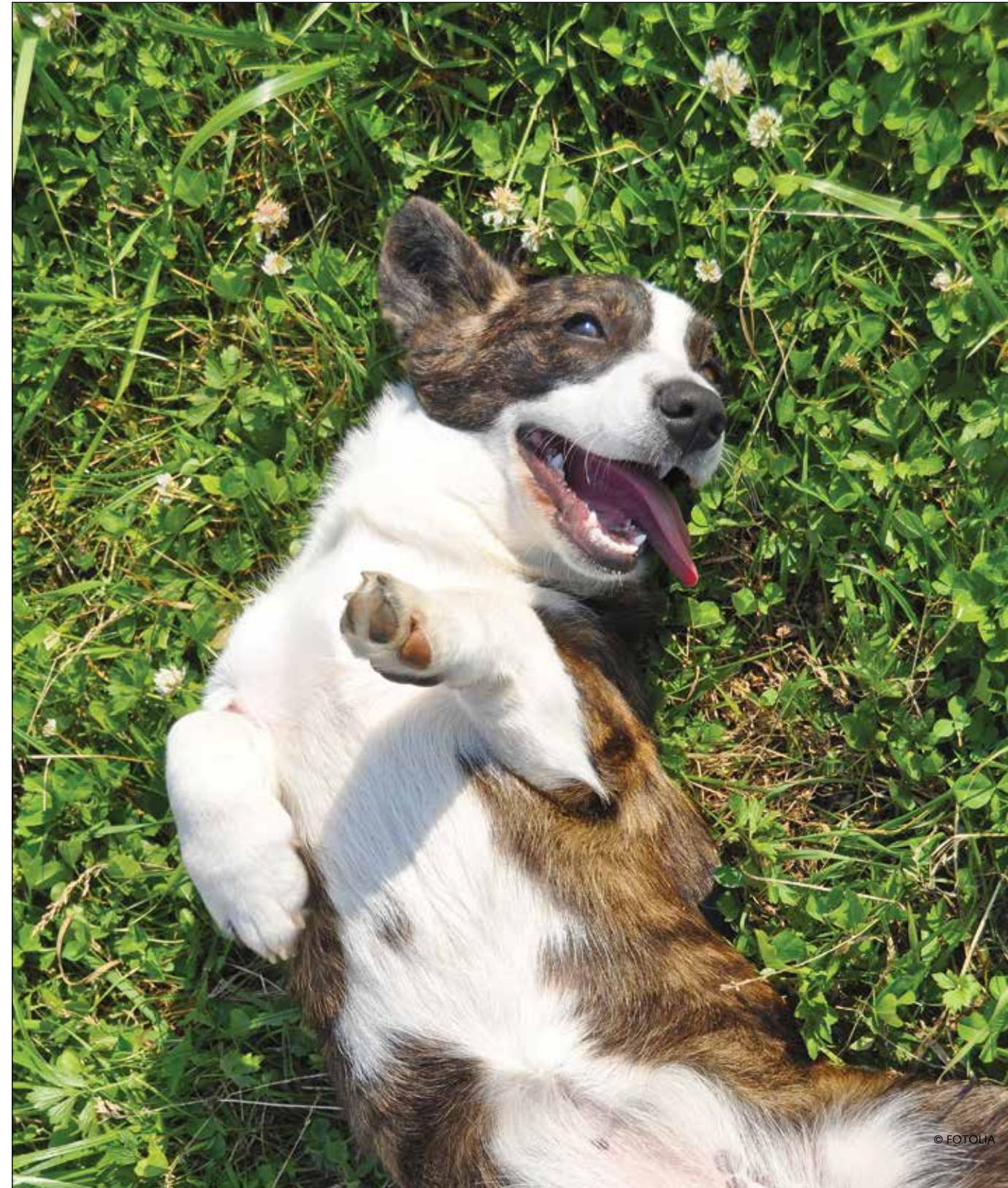
External parasites can do much more damage than creating irritation to a dog's skin and fur. They also are known for carrying dangerous diseases and conditions, including tapeworms, Lyme disease and even paralysis. Today's pet science makes treating and preventing pests an affordable and safe process.

FLEAS

According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, female fleas begin laying eggs within 24 hours of selecting your pet as a host. They can produce up to 50 eggs each day.

Fleas can remain dormant for weeks until they are full-grown adults, ready to wreak havoc on your dog and home. Once an infestation occurs, you'll notice fleas inhabiting your carpets and furniture. The best way to avoid this happening is to treat your dog before the flea season.

Experts say fleas thrive in warm and humid weather.



Dogs that tend to take care of flea bites by biting are at risk of ingesting a parasite carrying tapeworm eggs. These are dangerous intestinal parasites can cause serious weight loss and illness to your dog.

TICKS

If you live near a wooded area, your dog is likely more at risk of having ticks. These sometimes-tiny pests feed on their host's blood. Heavy infestations can even cause anemia in animals. An adult female tick can ingest up to 100 times its weight in blood, according to the ASPCA.

Another pest that is more active during warmer weather, ticks should be removed as soon as they are noticed on your dog. Tick paralysis occurs when a neurotoxin produced by female ticks is released into a bloodstream. Other symptoms caused by ticks include vomiting, high blood pressure, respiratory issues and poor reflexes.

PREVENTION

Dogs at risk for flea and tick exposure should be given suitable medications to prevent becoming victims.

Be sure to explain how often your dog is exposed to wooded areas and other environments where fleas are present in.

Your vet might recommend a pill or topical medication to keep your dog free from dangerous pests.

Ask your veterinarian if your area is prone to flea attacks year round or only during

certain months.

If you ignore a flea problem, your dog could develop

allergies to flea saliva that can lead to severe irritation and skin problems.

Spaying and Neutering

Pet homelessness is an American epidemic that results in millions of healthy dogs and cats being euthanized each year. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals credits the heartbreaking number of lost pets to the lack of sufficient homes available.

By spaying or neutering your dog, you are not only helping reduce future numbers of homeless pets but giving your dog a better chance at a healthy life. Fixing your dog when it is only a puppy lessens the risk for certain cancers and diseases. You also will have a more well-behaved dog.

MEDICAL BENEFITS

In order to enhance your dog's chances at a long and healthy life, spaying or neutering is necessary. While dogs can be neutered as adults, there is a higher risk of complications after surgery.

Typically, you should begin planning to fix your dog when it is between six and nine months old. Here are some great health benefits dogs receive, as reported by the ASPCA.

- Females:** Get the best protection from uterine infections and breast tumors by spaying your female dog before her first heat. Developing breast tumors are cancerous in about 50 percent of dogs who experience them.

- Males:** Neutering your male pup greatly lowers its risk of developing testicular cancers and serious prostate problems.

BEHAVIORAL BENEFITS

While fixing your dog will



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not be an overnight solution to bad behavior, it will greatly lower its testosterone levels. Keep in mind that your dog's actions will still rely on its level of training, personality and family history. However, performing an operation can give you better chances of a well-behaved pup.

Here's how:

- Females:** Dogs generally go into heat once every eight months, and this can occur for their entire life if they're not spayed. This means, you will likely see blood spots on furniture, floors and any other area your dog frequents. You also could be forced to deal

with potentially dangerous dogs from around the neighborhood who smell your female pup.

- Males:** When a male is neutered, he will be less likely to leave home in order to find a mate. A dog who has escaped is at risk for dangerous traffic accidents and

fights with other animals. Some aggression issues are eliminated by neutering as well as the need to "mark their territory."

It is in your best interest to spay or neuter your pet as soon as your vet deems it safe to do so — for the sake of you and your pet.

Risk of Parvovirus

Unless treated, your dog could develop a life-threatening disease known as parvovirus, or “parvo.” While young puppies are most at risk, it can infect older dogs. That’s why preventative measures are crucial. Learn how to keep your best friend safe and free from the risks of this terrifying illness.

HOW THE PARVOVIRUS SPREADS

This incredibly contagious virus spreads through dog-to-dog contact, contaminated feces, or even through humans who have contacted an infected dog. Keep in mind that if your dog does become infected, you should avoid places where other dogs are present. The virus is easily spread from your clothes and shoes, meaning you could put other untreated pups at risk.

A home that has been exposed to the virus demands a thorough cleaning. Be sure to clean hard surfaces with bleach and use a shampooer to clean furniture or carpet. Parvo is resistant to both hot and cold temperatures and humidity. It will survive in most areas without proper decontamination.

SYMPTOMS

The American Veterinary Medical Association states that death from parvovirus typically occurs within 48 to 72 hours following the onset of these clinical symptoms.

- **Lethargy:** a normally energetic dog who seems to have little to no energy;

- **Loss of appetite:** Your pooch may refuse to eat even when its favorite meal is presented; or

- **Vomiting and diarrhea:** These two symptoms can cause dehydration and damage to the intestines that may result in septic shock.

If any of these dangerous symptoms are present, seek assistance from a veterinarian as soon as possible.

TREATMENT

Unfortunately, there is no magic medicine that will instantly kill the parvovirus. However, your veterinarian can support your dog’s system until its immune system is able to fight the infection.

A pup with parvo will be treated with the important fluids lost to dehydra-

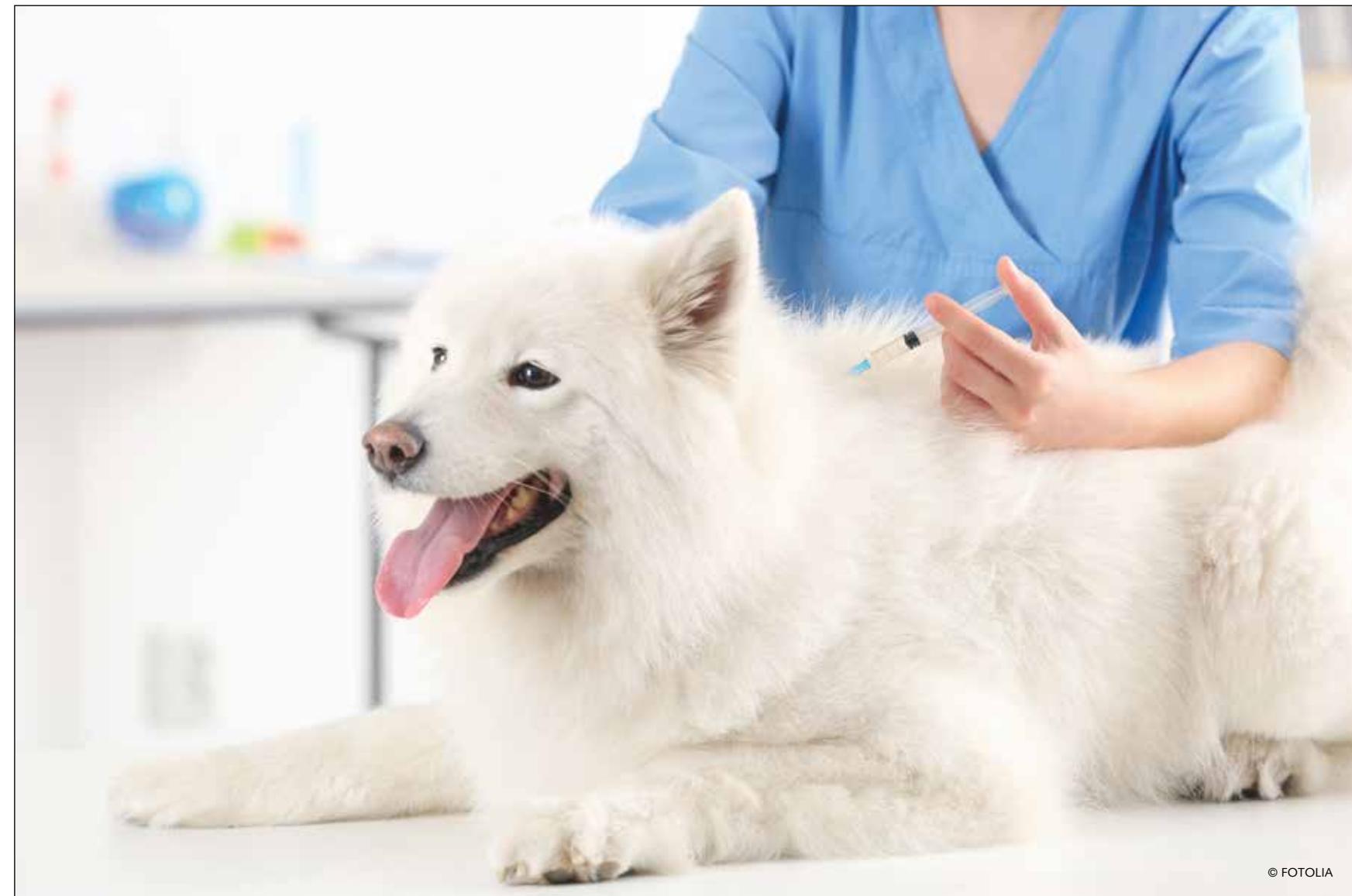
tion, as well as methods to control vomiting and diarrhea. While survival is never guaranteed during a fight with parvo, the AVMA reports success rates near 90 percent when treatment is performed in time.

PREVENTION

The best way to avoid parvo is to

keep your adult dog’s vaccinations up to date and make sure its hygiene is in peak condition.

Puppies are more at risk because the natural immunity found in their mother’s milk may wear off before their own immune systems are strong enough to withstand the virus. Experts recommend vaccinating at just 14 to 16 weeks.



Dangerous Foods

Dogs easily make a cozy space in our hearts by being loyal, loving and non-judgmental best friends. It can sometimes be easy for the lines of friend and responsible pet owner to become blurred, especially when they begin a routine of begging at the dinner table.

A dog's diet should be strict and never include human foods, unless recommended by a veterinarian. Foods that provide humans with great health benefits may wreak havoc on a dog's health. The AARP has reported on some of the common foods that can cause serious illness or even death to your four-legged bestie.

XYLITOL

This is an artificial sweetener found in many common products, such as sugar-free gum, candies and mints. While it may be healthier than conventional sugars for humans, it can spell disaster for your dog.

Dogs can begin experiencing symptoms of xylitol poisoning within only 30 minutes of ingesting it. These symptoms can include lethargy, collapsing and even seizures. Because of the short amount of time these dangerous behaviors occur, immediate veterinary assistance is required if you suspect your dog might have eaten a product containing xylitol.

Some dogs even experience a decrease in blood-glucose levels and liver failure.

GARLIC AND ONIONS

These tasty foods contain a



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compound that causes dogs' red blood cells to break down when they are eaten. Only take a small amount can cause these disastrous effects. If you notice that your dog accidentally ingested either of these, seek medical care. The duration of these symptoms will

depend on how much a dog eats.

CHOCOLATE

You have probably heard that chocolate is dangerous for dogs, but do you know why? It contains caffeine and theobromine which affect the central

nervous system and heart muscles. This can result in stomach aches, seizures and death.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals reports that chocolate is one of the most common reasons for poisoning of dogs in recent years.

GRAPES

Ingesting grapes, raisins or currants can lead to kidney failure in your dog. Experts report that exposure to these fruits may affect each dog differently, but it is best to avoid learning their risk by eliminating their chance of ingesting.

Why Dogs Chew

Chewing is an instinct that stays with dogs from their puppy stage into adulthood.

Chewing should only be considered a problem when it becomes destructive. This happens when a dog turns to chewing to deal with anxiety or frustration.

Before you can begin training against destructive chewing, learn the common reasons dogs tend to chew.

While it is possible to train an older dog to direct its chewing habits toward appropriate items, your best chance to teach them is while they are a young age. Puppies will begin to chew to alleviate pain from their incoming teeth. This is a crucial time to show them what is allowed and what should be avoided.

PUPPY TRAINING

The items your puppy might be tempted to chew include — everything. Be sure to place your valuable items out of harm's reach and have plenty of dog-friendly bones and fun toys available.

Once your puppy inevitably chews on something it's not supposed to, it's important to treat the situation in a humane manner. Think of this as a way to teach rather than discipline harshly.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recommends handling the situation this

way:

- **Chewing deterrents:** Spray a small amount of vet-recommended chewing deterrent onto a piece of tissue or cotton wool.

- **Connecting wrongdoing:** When the puppy chews an inappropriate object, place the soaked cloth directly in your dog's mouth and allow it to taste it until the dog decides to spit it out. Over time your dog will connect chewing inappropriate items with the distasteful flavor.

- **Preparing your home:** Now spray the deterrent on items in your home that cannot be easily removed, such as couches and tables. Your dog will be less likely to attempt chewing items that remind them of the past experiences.

OLDER DOGS AND CHEWING

Puppies are not the only dogs that chew. Even older dogs who received proper training when they were young may still have the urge. Adult dogs might be acting out for reasons far bigger than not knowing better.

Lack of exercise might cause your dog to find something to fight the boredom it is experiencing. Unfortunately, this can mean destructive chewing. Keep your dog active to exercise its body and mind.

Stress and anxiety are other reasons an adult dog might turn to chewing. Avoid putting your dog in high-stress situations, such as forcing it to share rooms with other pets with which it doesn't pair well.



Service Dogs

You might find it hard to believe, but your lovable dog is a subspecies of the dominant gray wolf. This might be even harder to believe every time your pup plops on your lap and begs for a stomach rub.

Without human intervention, dogs would not have been domesticated, nor would they be dependable allies to those who depend on them.

K9 UNITS

Police put a huge amount of faith and trust into their K9 partners. These special dogs are trained to be proficient in tracking narcotics, explosives and even missing or wanted people. Trainers are even able to teach scent discrimination. This is used to match a potential suspect to a weapon that was used in a crime.

The most common breed of police dog in America is the German Shepard. According to the National Police Dog Foundation, dogs are utilized in police forces at ages as young as 12 months, when they become mature enough to concentrate on training. Typically, a healthy dog retires to its handler at the age of 10, where it lives as a family pet.

Unfortunately, most police budgets don't support a K9 unit as they are considered a "specialty unit." This means a police department can operate without this unit. If you feel your community could benefit from the assistance of these highly trained dogs, consider holding a fundraiser.



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Advertise the benefits of a K9 unit in your area on social media and high-traffic areas, such as grocery stores and dog parks.

GUIDE DOGS

These incredible dogs are

typically trained by volunteers for four to six months before being placed in the hands of a professional. They are only then allowed to be paired with their visually impaired handlers.

The experts at Assistance

Dogs International define a guide dog as one who assists the blind by avoiding obstacles and stopping at curbs, steps and traffic. They are required to keep their visually impaired handlers safe even when they are given an unsafe

command.

According to the ADI, the most common breeds of guide dogs are Golden Retrievers and German Shepherds, but other large breeds can make efficient guide dogs.