



Dog Talk Weekly

Where we talk about dogs, share stories, solve problems

Issue 11.2.1 – Feb. 7, 2011

ANNOUNCEMENT: I need your Ideas!

What topics would you like covered in Dog Talk Weekly? You're sure to have some questions or curiosity about something related to choosing, getting, owning, training and caring for your dog.

Let me know the breed you have or any that you're interested in and I'll use them as *Dog of the Week*. If you have a story idea, send it along. Just send the details to me through my contact form: <http://sylviadickens.com/contactform/contactus.php>

Did you miss an issue of Dog Talk Weekly? You can access all issues in the archives here: <http://www.dogtalkweekly.com/archives.htm>

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1. Feature Article: Tips For Getting A New Puppy**
- 2. Personal Story: My Sister's Pekingese**
- 3. Dog of the Week: The Pekingese**
- 4. Regular Sections:**
 - Dog Nutrition
 - Dog Care
 - Dog Games
 - Dog Trivia

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## **Feature Article: Tips For Getting A New Puppy**

It is so exciting to get a new puppy. You fall in love with the idea and then make a breed choice. The whole process is wonderful for you and your family, but what about the puppy? Is he or she going to enjoy it as much as you will?

Frequently, people choose a breed because they think it's attractive and cute with little regard for its needs. You can make it much easier on you and the chosen puppy if you do a little homework first. In a minute, I'll give you a little tip for getting it home in the least stressful manner possible.

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First, do your homework. Just because a dog is the right size and requires as much grooming as you want to do, and perhaps has limited health issues doesn't mean it's the right one for you and your family.

You absolutely must study the breed for other things, like temperament and what its natural characteristics were before it was bred to meet human preferences.

Dogs originated from the wolf and a few other wild species. The breeds you see today didn't always exist. They came to be when breeders began intermixing different breeds to come up with new ones. Considerations included things like making them shorter in the leg, taller, more muscular, more petite, fluffier, better color mixture, and in some cases, to be healthier, although that doesn't seem to be a top priority.

I say that because many of the new breeds suffer because of the inter-mixing to exaggerate certain features. The pug and other push-nosed breeds are a good example. This feature causes breathing problems and in some, it can be fatal if not severely debilitating.

Small dogs often have large hearts that cause problems. This happens because while inter-breeding to produce smaller and smaller dogs, the heart does not shrink.

Short-legged long dogs, like the Dachshund, can suffer from back problems because of their longer bodies and leg joint problems because the dog's short legs cause them to walk unnaturally. This puts more strain on the joints.

Think about the potential problems that your dog could face based on its mixed breeding.

Also consider each breed that went into the dog of your choice. Each will have its own temperament. By knowing them, you can better know what to expect later on. The dog could end up to be timid, dominant, aggressive, child-intolerant, and many other things. Or the puppy might turn out to be much bigger than you anticipated.

Meeting the parents and the dog breeder will help to answer some of these issues. You want to know what the parents are like – what traits they display from any of its breeds. There's a good chance the puppies will have similar personalities and traits as the parents, although it's not a guarantee.

Knowing these facts will give you the tools to know how to treat your puppy as he matures. By dealing with potential problems at a young age, you can prevent them from happening, or developing, later.

For example, if the dog has the potential to become aggressive, teach him that it is not acceptable behavior right from the start. Know the signals and address them. It doesn't take much for a dog to determine that a certain behavior is okay. If he gets away with it once, he'll set that as his norm. The more he gets away with it, the tougher it will be to resolve over time.

Okay. You've done your research. You've discovered the ideal puppy for you. Now you need to get him home. Here's a little tip that can ease the transition significantly.

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Take a stuffed squeaky toy and a blanket to the breeder prior to bringing the puppy home. It's best if you can attach your scent to them. Ask her to expose your chosen puppy to the items on a regular basis. By the time you bring her home, you want her to already recognize your scent and have something familiar to come home to, namely, the toy and the blanket.

Place these items in her new area in your home. She will be comforted by their familiarity.

Make sure the puppy has reached 8 weeks of age before you take her. You want to be sure she has had sufficient time to socialize with her litter. This is vital to how well she mingles with strangers and other dogs as an adult. Her litter will teach her not to bite and that there are consequences if she does.

If she does not learn proper behavior there, she will have other issues that you will then have to resolve.

By 8 weeks, puppies will have begun to develop independence and will wander away from the mother and even from their siblings. This will help prepare her for the day she leaves home, rather than being taken while she is still so dependent on her parents.

## **Personal Story: My Sister's Pekingese**

I don't have any stories to tell of Tyler this week, but I can give you an insight into life with my sister's Pekingese.

Back in 1990, my sister, her husband, her Pekingese and I took a 3-month camping trip around the United States. This was a tent trailer, so you can imagine how tight were our living quarters.

A few years prior, my sister got herself this Pekingese. Although we've had dogs as kids, I don't think she was much of a trainer. The Pekingese obviously proved too much for her. In fact, he made her a little apprehensive which, I'm convinced, caused her to severely minimize the training. In simple terms, she was afraid of him. That's never a good thing. The dog knew that and behaved accordingly.

It soon became apparent that he was the boss of her household. If he parked himself on the sofa, you're just going to have to find yourself another seat. This one's taken. When she tried to move him, he growled and snapped at her.

"Hm," I thought, "she sure has let him take over. She needs to take the upper hand."

During our camping trip, it became all too obvious just how much he had been allowed to get away with this attitude.

Once, he was sitting on my seat inside the camper. I tried to push him over so I could sit down and he snapped at me. There was no point telling him to "move" because he did not understand the command. Either that, or he just didn't care.

Another time, I had prepared my dinner, set it on the table and turned my back to get something from the fridge. When I turned around, he walked not only onto the table, but

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right onto my plate, where he was devouring my meal of spaghetti. My sister shrugged it off like it didn't matter.

I said, " Do you let him do that at home? Climb up on the table and eat off your plate?"

I didn't really think she did, but then, he certainly didn't waste any time taking advantage in the camper. Needless to say, my meal went into the garbage – or, what was left of it.

That's the moment I decided that I would never get a Pekingese. As cute as they are, it's not an attitude I would want to have to deal with. He seemed wholly disinterested in obeying me or her. It was too late. He needed to be trained much sooner. Trying to change him when he was 5 years old would be a challenge, especially considering his character.

Having read more on the breed since, I think it would take an expert to train her dog now that he has been allowed to get away with so much for so long.

I've chosen this dog as this week's Dog of the Week.

## Dog of the Week: The Pekingese



The Pekingese has garnered several alternate personalities. Traditionally, it is described as "generously friendly". What many people do not know is that it also has an unpredictable nature which trigger anger in the dog.

My sister had a Pekingese and I can tell you that he certainly was unpredictable. I never knew when it was safe to reach out and pet him, even when living in close quarters during our lengthy 3-month camping trip.

He "took over" certain areas. If you tried to move him, he would snap at you.

He often walked onto our little table inside the camper van and helped himself to the food. He saw nothing wrong with that and was quick to defend himself.

If you're looking for a lap dog that will gladly protect you, this breed might be for you.

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The Pekingese's history, true or false, involves living with Buddha in China. They were bred specifically in the emperor's palace where they were kept. Stealing one was an automatic death sentence.

My experience with my sister's Pekingese is repeated by veterinarians who can relate similar stories related to the dog's quick reflexes and bite. The dog is highly self-assured and certainly is not ready to take a lower position of rank in the pack.

For this reason, the breed is best chosen by experienced owners. You have to be willing to respect the dog for its royal status. Expect training to be difficult.

The breed isn't very interested in exercise, being much happier as a one-person lap dog. If you have a family, this is not the breed for you.

The health problems associated with this breed include a prolapsed eyeball, hydrocephalus, heart and blood vessel deformities, kidney stones, shortness of breath, and mouth deformities.

It is a small breed, standing up to 10 inches high and weighing 10-13 lbs. It's long, straight and abundant fur requires a lot of grooming. Expect this dog to be around for 14 years.

### **Regular Sections:**

#### **- Dog Training: When to get professional help**

At what point do you seek professional advice to train your dog? It depends on several things.

- How experienced are you at dog training?
- Is your dog difficult to train?
- Are you having a particular problem?
- Does your dog have "issues" that you do not fully understand?
- Is your dog aggressive, showing signs of being a potential threat?

These are just some reasons to seek a professional dog trainer. The type of trainer will depend on the problem you are having. In some cases, you might need a dog behavioral specialist. In other cases, you can probably get the right help from a local trainer.

It's best, however, if the trainer is familiar with your particular breed. What works for one breed won't necessarily work for another. That's why there are several ways to train dogs, so you can pick which one works for you.

If your dog is aggressive and "threatening", your first instinct might be to have it put down. Understand, however, that dogs usually have a reason for their behavior. You can overcome this problem in many cases, but of course there will be times when you cannot. This dog problem is best addressed by a professional trainer who is more experienced in dealing with aggressive dogs.

Don't give up on your dog. Regardless of the behavioral problem, you have a good chance of fixing it with the right dog trainer. If one doesn't do the trick, find another.

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Consider a trainer like a teacher. Some people are great teachers while others are quite bad at it. The same goes for trainers. They are not all the same. Take the time to try several before you give up on your dog.

### **Dog Training Tip: Go Home Command**

Dogs need to know certain commands, like learning to go to a specific place on your command. This can benefit her in many ways. For one thing, you can send her to a location that puts her out of the way of your guests when you entertain. This could be "Bed", "Kitchen", "Out", "Mat".

Here's how it works.

You decide what you will use for this "Go To" place where you can send your dog in an instant with a simple command. It's a good idea to use a mat that you can move from place to place for convenience sake. Otherwise, choose a room or area.

Show your dog the mat. Have her lie down on it. Tell her "Mat" and "stay." Leave her and go into another room.

After a few minutes, call her to you. Let her stay with you a few minutes, and then tell her to go to the "Mat". Walk her there and have her lie on the mat until she gets the message. Eventually, she will know that the word "Mat" is an instruction to go there.

Another term is "Go Home". This is helpful if you are outdoors and you want the dog safely inside the house. If you teach her this during fair weather and good conditions, you can get her to safety quickly when things turn ugly. The version I use in this command is, "In the House". It's come in handy several times when lightning filled the air.

### **- Dog Care: Should You Give Your Dog A Bath?**

Is your dog one that loves the water and getting a bath? Many don't. It can be quite a struggle to bathe a dog that really hates it. In this case, you might have to resort to taking him to a groomer who has the proper facilities for securing him during the process.

What is more fun than a dog that readily hops into your bath with you? There are benefits, too. Unlike trying to bathe your dog in the tub, this method is much better for both of you. Your dog is having fun, because he's with you. You are both wet, so you don't have to worry about your clothing. And it can become another bonding moment for you.

It is recommended that you bathe your dog to get rid of built-up dirt on the skin which can cause skin irritations and sores. It's tempting to bathe your dog every month, especially if he tends to have an odor, but there are things to consider.

Namely, bathing your dog too frequently removes the natural oils from the skin and the fur. This can lead to dry skin, scratching and ultimately, skin sores. This is especially problematic in winter when the dog is exposed to dry indoor air.

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In some cases, the shampoo used can cause a reaction in the dog. Some dogs are allergic to various chemicals in shampoo. He might be okay with one exposure every 3 months or so, but not every month.

Talk to your vet about the frequency that you should shampoo your dog. There could be reasons that your specific breed of dog will benefit more or less from frequent bathings.

Be sure to choose a "friendly" shampoo that is less likely to contain harsh detergents and chemicals. Manufacturers are getting better at creating natural dog shampoos that do not cause problems and, in fact, can benefit your dog's skin and fur.

Read the labels and if problems arise, seek your veterinarian's advice.

### **- Dog Games: The Hoop**

This is best trained after you have taught your dog to jump over a hurdle. The curve of the hoop can be a bit intimidating for a dog that has not yet learned how to jump over an item.

Hold the ring, like a hula hoop, steady and close to the ground. Have your dog walk through it, "Through!". If your dog is hesitant, jump in and out of the hoop yourself to show her that it's okay.

Once your dog is comfortable walking through the hoop, raise it slightly, by about an inch. Say, "Through!" Continue to gradually raise the height of the hoop and repeat the command. When you reach the dog's shoulder height stop. This is high enough. Any higher and your dog will experience strain on her joints and muscles when she jumps through.

If she is hesitant or refuses to do this game, throw a treat through the hoop to the other side. She's likely to go after it without even thinking. She'll soon be jumping through without hesitating. Remember, you want it to be fun for her.

This is just one more challenge you can add to your own dog agility course, along with the Tunnel that was explained in the last issue of Dog Talk Weekly. When she is accomplished in jumping through the hoop, you can introduce her to a more professional item, although it's not necessary.

### **- Dog Trivia**

Your dog can get confused during training, but he will regain his confidence quickly if you take him back to the basic training command, "Sit!". This will be a relief for him, especially if he's struggling to understand and obey new commands. Knowing that he can please you will really boost his morale.

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### **Professional Dog Training Advice – Do You Need It?**

Who **can't** use input from someone who knows all the secrets to developing a cooperative and abiding dog? I know I sure could. In my travels, I came across a

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program that has received high praise for its effectiveness. It was created by a professional dog trainer. I like that his instructions are so easy to follow.

Shortly after opening the package, I discovered what I needed to do to stop my dog from pulling on the leash. Admitted, it's not a permanent solution because Tyler is so demanding, energetic and dominant. He KNOWS how to heel. He just refuses to obey. And I'm not physically strong enough to stop him. It's probably me, but I did make huge progress with this advice. At least he doesn't drag me off into the bushes any more.

Take a look at [Secrets To Dog Training](#) by Daniel Stevens. Dogs love to play catch, fetch things and in general, please their owners. In his book, he demonstrates how to train your dog to do all these things, and more.

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**Dog Nutrition** is vital to your dog's life expectancy and quality of life. I've written a book on how to make sure your dog gets a healthy, nutritious diet and avoids many of the dangers that come with certain foods. Find out more at <http://healthydognutritionsecrets.com/healthydogPP1.htm>

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That's it for this week. I hope you enjoyed the issue!

Sylvia

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