



Dog Talk Weekly

Where we talk about dogs, share stories, solve problems

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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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## **Feature Article: Bathroom Solutions For Your Housebound Dog**

You can't always be there for your dog, can you? You have to work, go shopping, take care of various errands, most of which cannot include your dog. When the trip consists of many short stops, you could leave your dog in the vehicle, but only on cool days. Then, you can let her out every now and then.

What about those days when you just can't take him along? She's left indoors for up to 8 hours at a time, or more. It is amazing sometimes just how long a dog can wait to relieve itself. The problem is that waiting extended periods can lead to health issues such as kidney disease and those related to constipation.

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I just came across some bathroom solutions, one in particular that is quite ingenious. It was created by Joni MacLaine, a stand-up comedian who needed a system that her Pekingese could use, especially in its later years when holding her bladder was difficult.

This portable doggy potty, named the Patio Park, can be put anywhere inside the house or on a balcony, for those of you living in apartments and condos. It consists of a 2x4 foot piece of real grass, a water reservoir, a mock fire hydrant, liner bags, an irrigation system and a 22" high plastic splash guard.

Because it is self-irrigating, the waste is quickly taken away from the dog's grassy area. Just replace the sod once a month. It sounds like the ideal solution for dogs because it gives them the essence of being right outside. Plus, you do not have to deal with any foul odors.

I don't know how available this product is, but it's certainly worth investigating, especially if you live in the United States. As far as I'm concerned, it should be made available everywhere.

If you can't find it, there are doggy litter boxes now. These are often used for housetraining puppies, but are also useful as suitable indoor toilets for senior and ailing dogs. The litter used is made of highly absorbent recycled paper and wood pulp products. You simply scoop out the deposits daily and replace the absorbent materials on a regular basis.

These doggy litter boxes are available in a variety of sizes and at most pet supply stores.

So you see, there's no need to make your dog suffer needlessly while you're away. Take the time to train your dog to use the litter box by enticing her to it with words of encouragement and praise with reward when she obeys.

Another option, of course, is to rent a local child to let your dog out after school or at lunchtime. Maybe you know a responsible neighbor who you can trust to take care of your dog. The added benefit in going with a child is that your dog also gets to play, which is always a treat.

## **Personal Story: Keeping Tyler Calm While He Heals**

Don't worry. It wasn't anything serious. Tyler somehow managed to injure his left knee one day last week. He came in limping and I couldn't figure out what was wrong. Since he loves to bound up and down, trying his darndest to climb the tree out back to get the squirrels, I figured he's twisted something.

I checked his knee and saw nothing, but when I touched a certain spot, he pulled his leg away. His reaction to my gently feeling around his injury was kind of sweet. He knew I was trying to help and lowered his ears and licked my hand. Dogs sure can be grateful, can't they?

Anyway, I wasn't sure what to do. He seemed worse when he had been lying down for some time. After moving around a bit, he only limped slightly. This told me that it couldn't

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be too serious, and I did not feel any odd bulges or fragmented bones in his leg. Still, I figured I'd try to keep him calm for a few days to see if it got better on its own.

Dogs can quickly ignore pain when they get excited, so it was a bit of a struggle to keep him from lunging off the deck and tearing down the yard to the squirrel area.

A few times, he flew down the yard, twisting his body as he left the 4-foot deck (he never uses the stairs). Moments later, he'd come back limping. He needed to be quieted before he even went out the door and before he left the deck.

I've been working to teach him to wait before going out the door. It's a struggle, since he insists on barging through the moment it opens. It must be 3 months now since I began this training. He will stay if I give him the command, but quickly departs when he sees a squirrel.

Eventually, he seems to have gotten the "wait" while inside, but coming back in is another story. He just refuses to wait. Again, I did the "wait" command before I open the door. As soon as the door moves, he pops up and noses the gap, in some cases forcing the door out of my hand so he can enter.

As you can see, he's very dominant. He demands to be the boss and do things when HE wants to, not when I give him the okay. I read somewhere that these types of dogs must be constantly reminded that they cannot be the boss. Boy, were they right.

So he's finally learning to sit automatically before I open the door, but not always, so we're still working on that.

Anyway, by making him wait indoors with the door open before I release him, he does calm down a little. Then, when he steps out his first inclination is to tear away. Sometimes I can make him wait again when he's on the deck. I hadn't been teaching him this part until he injured himself.

With his injury, he was a bit more inclined to obey and actually seemed to learn "Easy" before going off the deck a little more slowly.

Needless to say, I decided not to walk him a couple of times that week to give his leg a chance to heal. And it seems to be fine now. But I've been trying to figure out what he might have done to it.

Watching him fly down the yard since then, I see that he comes dangerously close to a concrete slab in front of my little water feature. It sits about 18" off the ground, right about the level of his knee. I'm guessing he smacked it on there.

Do you think maybe I should put some rubber padding on the edge?

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## Dog of the Week: The Pomeranian



I once owned a Pomeranian that looked just like this one.

We got him when he was 6 weeks old. We named him Randy. He was orange with a bit of cream.

I'll never forget the day we took him for a walk along a river in a wild area. It never occurred to me that being so small, he'd have trouble with the tall grass, which was well over his head. More than once, he disappeared.

We'd travelled about 100 yards or so when

he finally just sat down and refused to continue. Obviously, he had either gotten tired of the struggle or just decided it was too much work. Or maybe he just didn't like the idea that he couldn't see anything. It was probably stressing him out. He did look a little tense as he squinted to prevent grass and weeds from getting his in the eyes.

It was a good thing he was a lightweight because I ended up carrying him for the next half hour or so.

Right after we bought him, I got a scare. As we were putting him into the car, he leaped out of my arms and fell on the concrete, hitting his head. For a few moments he was stunned, but quickly revived. It was alarming all the same. I was afraid that he might have a serious injury. The vet kept him overnight and he returned with kennel cough. Other than that, he was fine and lived to the ripe age of 15 years.

The Pomeranian (Pom) is generally referred to as a lap dog. It originated in Pomerania, in Germany/Poland region, but the breed has become more popular in the United States and England than in Europe.

The Pom is described as a happy, confident, intelligent dog with a "boundless love for its master", according to the book, *Dogs from A to Z*, Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 2005. New York.

I can attest to that. Randy was my dog and tailed me everywhere. He was quite affectionate and fun to have around. As far as training, he was amazing.

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The book also says that the breed is self-assured to a fault, especially with bigger dogs. You can imagine my distress when Randy challenged a large standard poodle while off-leash at the park. The thing was 5 times his size, at least, but he didn't care. Fortunately, the poodle was inquisitive, but certainly not aggressive toward him. They touched noses, Randy yapped in his face, and the poodle hurried back to its owner.

They do make good watchdogs, not so much for their ability to actually defend you, but they certainly can make a lot of noise. My apartment neighbor commented to me one day that when she knocked on the door, she thought there were a couple of huge dogs inside. It was Randy and my American Eskimo, Nikki. You can be sure Randy sounded the most threatening.

I should add, however, that while this breed is often referred to as yappy, you can train him not to be that way. You just have to start when they are young. Give them their few seconds of vocalization and then make them stop. Randy was very quiet unless someone came to the door.

This breed can suffer from some pretty serious health issues, including displaced kneecap, hydrocephalus (water on the brain), heart and kidney diseases, tracheal collapse, dwarfism and epiphora, among others. Randy, we later discovered, had an enlarged heart, which is a common problem for tiny breeds because of the inbreeding to make them so small.

Facts: The Pomeranian's standard size is about 9 inches, weighing 4-7 lbs. It has long, straight hair with a thick undercoat that needs to be groomed to prevent matting. Their usual colorings include black, white, brown, orange, spotty gray, crème and sable, black and tan, and crème. Their life expectancy is about 15 years.

If you want a cute, lovable dog that really doesn't take a lot of work, the Pomeranian is perfect. He'll lie on your lap and welcome your attention, but he also will enjoy getting out and romping around.

## **Regular Sections:**

### **- Dog Training - Retrieve**

Start by getting some work gloves. Wash them thoroughly to remove any chemicals that often come with manufactured goods. Stuff one glove with newspapers to give it substance. You want your dog to open his mouth wide to retrieve the glove, otherwise if he only grasps it by a finger, he is more likely to drop it.

Put your dog on a 20-foot long line. Tell your dog to "Stay".

Toss the glove and then command your dog to "fetch". When he gets to the glove, have him "Take it". Until he understands this command, you will need to go to the glove yourself. Point to the glove as you issue this command. Praise him when he 'takes it.

After he has learned these two commands, issue them again, but do not follow him. Wait for him to get to and take the glove. Command him to "come".

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It will take a few times for him to learn all three elements of this command. When he knows them, have him do them all at once with your one command, "fetch".

If you want to move on to the next stage and use hand signals, you can use those as well or instead. The proper hand signal for fetch is to hold your hand beside the dog's ear with your elbow bent, hand flat with palm facing up. Your hand should be just in front of his nose so that he can see it easily. Keep your fingers together and your thumb flat on top of your index finger.

Initially, you will want to include the vocal command until he starts to recognize the hand signal. Some experts like to give the command to retrieve simultaneously with the hand motion.

Begin the signal from behind the dog's head and bring it forward in a straight line, slowly. Stop when your arm is lined up along the dog's line of vision. After he goes, stand up and lower your arm.

Don't forget the praise.

### **- Dog Care**

I already discussed the value of using a dog potty for those times when you just cannot get home to let your dog out. It will help her in many ways. For one, she will be trained when she has to stay at a strange place, a kennel or dog sitter's or a neighbor's home. You will know that she will always have a place to go whether you are around or not. Imagine how this can be useful when you travel and getting outside is not quick.

Plus, as mentioned, you will avoid the risk of your dog developing kidney problems and waste system distress from not being able to relieve herself when she needs to.

You should make sure your dog is house trained properly first, however. Do not try to train your dog to use the potty until she is trained to go outside. Or if you choose, you can teach your puppy to use it until she is housetrained. Just understand that you cannot teach her both things at the same time. It will only confuse her.

### **- Dog Games**

This is always my fun part of the newsletter because there are so many fun games you can teach your dog. They not only provide her with a form of entertainment, but you get to bond together, too.

#### **Dog Volleyball**

If your dog has learned to push a ball around, this is just a next step that you can take. Realize, however, that this game is a little difficult for dogs to learn, but it's not impossible. Of course it does help if your dog likes to use her nose. Pushy dogs, like my Tyler would probably take to this game. He loves human ball games.

Make it easy on your dog. Keep the lessons short so that he does not get frustrated or bored and lose interest. The biggest problem is getting your dog to hit the ball with his nose, rather than doing what comes natural and grabbing it.

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First, you'll need a low net (low enough that he can rest his chin on the top of it) and, of course, a soft ball. It doesn't have to be as big as a regular soccer ball. One a little larger than a tennis ball is ideal. A children's badminton net is fine.

Now, there is one other command that your dog should know before doing this one. That's the "Push" command, where your dog learns to push a ball around the floor. You might want to start with that before tackling this tougher challenge.

The key is that your dog has to figure out how to push the airborne ball with his nose. It cannot be rushed. Then, he has to figure out how to bounce it on his nose, not take it with his mouth.

Getting the ball over the net is not important at the beginning. Get him to look up at the ball, and start by dropping the ball on his nose. Tell him to "Push" it. He will make the connection between pushing the ball in the earlier exercise, but it will take time. Allow him what he needs to make the connection.

When he gets the general idea (tries to push instead of bite the ball), stand back a bit and gently lob it in his direction. After he has accomplished it, move on to the next stage of getting him to aim it back at you over the net.

Again, praise does wonders in his progress.

(For more fun games, look for the book, *"50 Games to Play With Your Dog"* by Suellen Dainty, Ivy Press, East Sussex, U.K., 2007. I found it at my public library.)

### **- Dog Trivia**

Are you tired of all the dog fur around your house, on your clothes, in your car? I can relate, big time, between Tyler, Nikki and Cindy, the lab/chow. I thought you might like to know which dogs have a low shed rate.

### **Dogs with a low tendency to shred**

Bichon Frise  
Chinese crsted  
Italian greyhound  
Miniature schnauzer  
Poodle  
Puli  
Wire fox terrier  
Soft-coated wheaten terrier

I couldn't let this go without also giving you a heads up on some breeds that have a high tendency to shed.

Akita  
American Eskimo (that's my Nikki)  
Bearded collie  
Shepherd (that'd by Tyler)

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Collie  
Golden Retriever  
Malamute  
Siberian husky  
Labrador retriever (that'd be part Cindy)

When you go in search of your next dog, this list will help you to avoid the hair attack from your pet.

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

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 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 the end of this week's issue. I hope you enjoyed it.

**By the way, I'm still waiting for your ideas? Do you have any?**

Best regards,

Sylvia

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