



The World of Dog Sports

When a dog breed was being created, characteristics were chosen based on the breed's intended work, and breed mixes carry the traits of each of the breeds, to a greater or lesser degree. Nowadays it's rare that we ask our pet dogs to do the work for which they were intended, which can lead to a lot of troublesome behaviors in the home. The trick is to tap into those natural tendencies of your dog, channeling them in positive, creative games and tasks, while discouraging some of the more bothersome aspects of their behaviors. Becoming involved in canine sports can be a great way to tire them out while also giving them the joy of practicing the jobs they were bred for!

Herding dogs were bred to herd, so the sport of sheep herding can be great fun for them, though it can be expensive. As an alternative, herding behavior can be redirected to



other outlets, such as the sport of Treibball, moving or "herding" large inflated balls around, or even just herding the waves at the beach!

There are dogs bred for pulling large loads, like Newfoundland and Bernese Mountain Dogs, and the Northern working dogs, like huskies, samoyeds, and malamutes. These breeds can enjoy many canine sports that exist today, like carting, weight pulling, sledding and skijoring.

(cont.)



Healthy Hound

Let's talk about meals. I don't mean lunch or dinner; I mean "chicken by-product meal" and other things that sound similarly scary to pet owners when looking for the best supper for your pupper. Dog food companies love to throw these words in your face and brag to be free of them. But is that really as important as it seems?

Here are the facts: by-product
(cont.)

Featured Rescue Dog: MALIBU



Once you meet sweet Malibu, a 9 year old, 22 lb. Beagle, she will steal your heart! She is kid-friendly, housebroken and thoroughly enjoys running around and exploring her foster mom's fenced-in yard. Completely accepting of other easy-going dogs, Malibu has shown some tension at meal time around one of her foster fur-siblings, so they are being fed separately for now.

Malibu walks nicely on leash, though she is content just hanging out in the yard, too. She loves to

(cont.)

Beyond the Brush

Kennel clip, sporting clip, summer cut... A shave by any other name is still so short. Whether to shave or *not* shave your dog for the summer has been an ongoing debate for the decades. The truth about shave-downs is that science supports that there are good ones, bad ones, and then just plain ugly ones.

Dog hair and skin are both part of a system designed to protect from the elements. The more complex and layered the coat (like with the husky or German Shep-

(cont.)

Beyond the Brush (cont.)

herd), the greater the risk of damaging this system when shaving it down. These double-coated breeds have multiple layers designed to insulate *and* ventilate. This is how their biological make-up protects them from climate, UV rays, and toxins. The soft coat insulates, while the glossy, bristly hairs, known as guard hairs, ventilate. Each guard hair acts like the individual slat of your window blinds, moving up and down to create barriers or provide air flow down to the skin. Regular brushing and removal of dead hair is the best way to maintain your dog's fur in optimal working condition, much like dusting your blinds.

Drop coat and curly-coated breeds (like the Maltese and Poodle) are different in that they can withstand a short clip. Very active pets can even benefit from a wash-and-go style, especially if they're swimmers. Their hair acts as a protective layer from the environment rather than a ventilation system. Short functional lengths are great summer styles, keeping in mind that exposed skin is never a good choice, nor a good look. Unfortunately, in some cases, it may be inevitable and even necessary, such as with a severely matted dog. Although the end results may not be attractive, the intention is only to remove the discomfort and damaging effects of a matted coat.

So, there you have it, folks... the Good, the Bad and the Ugly!

Professional groomer Willie Sanchez works for Ahead of the Pack in Haddonfield, NJ. For more info, contact her at groomingWillie@gmail.com.



Healthy Hound (cont.)

is the stuff that's left over after getting all the meat off a carcass (necks, feet, organs, etc.). Meal is the purposely rendered tissue (skin, bone, cartilage, etc) cooked down to a dry concentrate. Neither of these things is inherently bad. In fact, using meals can increase the protein concentration of a food while keeping it low-carb and biologically appropriate. However, if you see "meat meal" on a label, put it back on the shelf. Vague use of the word "meat" is dangerous.

By-product is more on the fence. It can contain many nutrients that aren't present in meat alone. Ideally, a well-balanced canine diet includes not only meat but also organ meat and bone, so the inclusion of these animal products is actually desirable, depending on the source and the quality. However, some dogs may have a harder time digesting by-products. And, remember, vague meat by-product is bad so, again, look for a specified protein source.

Don't let mass marketing convince you that every ingredient absolutely must be an unprocessed or whole food. That's not a bad recipe, but it isn't the only healthy option available to you. Ask a Board Certified Nutritionist to help find the right diet for your dog.

Savannah Carr, CVNC, works for PetPT in Cherry Hill, NJ. For more info, contact her at savannahmcarr@gmail.com.



The authors of the **Wag Rag** are inspired by all things dog and love to educate dog guardians on the topics that contribute to the physical and behavioral health and happiness of our best furry friends. Is there a topic of interest to you? Contact Laura at laura@mywoofgang.com with questions and suggestions!

Featured Pet (cont.)

sleep on her dog bed, burrowing into her comfy quilt and making a nest! One of the most cuddly, affectionate dogs you could meet, Malibu absolutely loves to be close to people, and who could resist gazing into her big, brown eyes and rubbing those floppy, silken ears?

Recently, foster mom noticed Malibu favoring her hind legs, so she is scheduled for a vet appointment. Malibu is spayed, up-to-date on all vax, HW neg. and micro-chipped.

If you are interested in adopting Malibu and giving her the furever home she is dreaming of, please apply at www.tprescue.org. She is currently being fostered in Haddon Township, NJ.

Canine Sports (cont.)

Scent hounds like bassetts and beagles were bred to follow a scent, so getting involved in the sport of tracking can satisfy their desires. Nose work is a variation on the theme that is easier to do in smaller spaces. Even games such as "go find it!" are great activities you can do at home with your nosy pooch.

For sight hounds like greyhounds, the sport of lure coursing is a great option. Just buy a lure course whip from a tack shop, attach a squeaky toy to the end of it.

The retriever loves a brisk game of retrieve. The sport of dock diving – where a toy is thrown into the water and the dog dives in to retrieve it – is fun for these water-loving dogs.

There are more general sports like competitive obedience, rally obedience, agility, adventure course, freestyle, and flyball that can be great fun for both dog and handler! Ultimately, you know your dog better than anyone. Pick something you think you'll both enjoy!

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