



Dear friends,

Welcome to our November Newsletter from www.bestdoggietips.com. This month we have an article on canine obesity – how to recognise it and what to do about it. And in keeping with this theme, our recipe this month is for a low calorie stew. We've got an update from the American Kennel Club on the most popular dog breeds of 2008, as well as a look at the most popular, and most unusual, dog names of 2008. And if you have a long haired dog who sheds a lot of fur, don't miss our article on reusing that shed fur! Plus in our weird & wonderful section this month, meet the dog thief of Utah who stole his own Christmas present.

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We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

We give dogs time we can spare, space we can spare and love we can spare. And in return, dogs give us their all. It's the best deal man has ever made. – *M Acklam*

Recipe - Low Calorie Stew

This high volume, low calorie stew recipe was devised by Dr Mark Allison from Balgownie Veterinary Hospital.

Ingredients

1 cup white rice
500g (1 lb) lean meat
2 beef stock cubes (or 2 tsp beef stock powder)
5 cups (2 pints) water
4 tbsp gelatine

To Make

Place all ingredients into a large saucepan and stir to combine.

Bring to the boil and simmer, uncovered, for 12 to 15 minutes or until the rice and meat are cooked. Let cool (to set gelatine) and then refrigerate.

Can be frozen.

Serving size: Feed 200g (6.7 oz) per 10Kg (20 lb) target weight.

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Most Popular Dog Breeds & Names for 2008

For the 18th consecutive year, the **Labrador Retriever** is the most popular purebred dog in America, according to 2008 registration statistics released today by the American Kennel Club® (AKC). But, while more than twice as many Labs were registered last year than any other breed making it a likely leader for many years to come, the Bulldog continues to amble its way up the list. The breed made news last year by returning to the AKC's Top 10 for the first time in more than 70 years and now has jumped 6%, advancing two spots to land in 8th place.

"The playful Lab may still reign supreme, but the docile and adaptive nature of the Bulldog is gaining ground as a family favourite," said AKC Spokesperson Lisa Peterson. "It's no surprise to learn that this devoted family companion is still growing in popularity."

The 2008 Most Popular Dogs in the U.S. were:

1. Labrador Retriever
2. Yorkshire Terrier
3. German Shepherd Dog
4. Golden Retriever
5. Beagle
6. Boxer
7. Dachshund
8. Bulldog
9. Poodle
10. Shih Tzu

Pet Preferences: Top 50 Cities

While time periods are indicators for the popularity of certain pets, so is geography. Each year, AKC looks at the most popular breeds in each of the 50 largest cities in the U.S. Some highlights:

- While the Bulldog continues to climb the national list, it's really marking its territory in a number of western cities -- Las Vegas, Long Beach, Los Angeles, and San Diego -- where it comes in 2nd, right after the Lab.
- Only Honolulu, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Portland, Raleigh, and Salt Lake City snubbed the Bulldog -- opting for a wide variety of other breeds in their Top 10.
- Detroit and Miami are the only cities that do not have the Labrador Retriever in the top spot, both favouring the German Shepherd Dog.
- The Boxer is muscling its way to the top in a few cities, ranking second in Baltimore, Cincinnati, Des Moines, Louisville, Omaha and Kansas City. It's 3rd in Atlanta, Cleveland, New Orleans, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Pittsburgh, St. Louis and even Philadelphia -- where like its boxing brethren "Rocky" it's still a literal underdog, but if movie plots are any indication, perhaps not for long.

- Californians seem to love the Miniature Pinscher (ranked 32nd nationally). It came in 6th (up from 15 last year) in San Diego and also ranked 8th in Sacramento.
- The Vizsla is tied for 10th with the Shih Tzu in Chicago. Ranked 44th nationally, the Vizsla has long been a favourite in the Windy City, having made the local top 10 list in 2007 and 2003.
- Unusual breeds on local top ten lists including the Great Dane (10th in St. Louis), the Mastiff (10th in Indianapolis), the Brittany (10th in Minneapolis), the Belgian Malinois (8th in Kansas City) and the Siberian Husky (9th in Long Beach).

Most Popular Dog Names

Move over, Fluffy and Fido. There's a new batch of pet names in town: "people" names!

Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI), the US's largest and oldest provider of pet health insurance, scoured its database of more than 466,000 insured pets to find the most popular dog and cat names of 2008. (Animals not insured by VPI were not included in the survey.)

Top Dog Names

1. Max
2. Bailey
3. Bella
4. Molly
5. Lucy
6. Buddy
7. Maggie
8. Daisy
9. Sophie
10. Chloe

Most Unusual Dog Names

1. Rush Limbark
2. Sirius Lee Handsome
3. Rafikikadiki
4. Low Jack
5. Meatwad
6. Peanut Wigglebutt
7. Scuddles Unterfuss
8. Sophie Touch & Pee
9. Admiral Toot
10. Spatula

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Choosing a Dog Trainer

There has been some controversy in the news lately about dog trainers and their methods. Selecting a dog trainer for your canine family member is a very important decision and your opportunity to turn your best friend into a great canine citizen.

Dogs do not learn by rough treatment and/or intimidation--they may respond to the bully doing the training, but the dog will not respond to a different handler. A dog who learns through humane methods knows to offer learned behaviours (sit, down, loose leash walking) for a reward – be it praise, a treat or even just the opportunity to stay near you. Chances are very good that she will also offer her 'good' behaviours to others handlers to try and please them too.

Here are some simple tips:

- Look for trainers who use only teaching methods that use positive reinforcement for good behaviour rather than punishment for unacceptable behaviour.
- Observe an obedience class without your dog. Watch to see if the dogs and people are having a good time. Talk with a few participants and ask if they are comfortable with the trainer's methods. If someone won't let you sit in, don't enrol.
- Don't feel you must do something that the trainer told you to do if you believe it is not in your dog's best interest. S/he's counting on you for safety and protection.
- Do not use trainers who offer guarantees about results. That trainer is either ignoring or doesn't understand the complexity of animal behaviour.
- Avoid trainers who object to using food as a training reward. Food is an acceptable positive reinforcement training tool.
- Avoid trainers who won't let you use any training collar other than a choke chain or pinch collar. Head collars are humane alternatives to choke chains and pinch collars.
- Look for trainers who treat both people and dogs with respect, rather than one who presents him or herself as "I'm the boss."
- Have fun while training your pet! The rewards for you and your dog will last a lifetime.

These tips were published by Brenda F. Barnette, the CEO of the Seattle Humane Society.

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How to Give Your Pet a Pill

How To Give A Cat A Pill

1. Pick up cat and cradle it in the crook of your left arm as if holding a baby. Position right forefinger and thumb on either side of cat's mouth and gently apply pressure to cheeks while holding pill in right hand. As cat opens mouth, pop pill into mouth. Allow cat to close mouth and swallow.
2. Retrieve pill from floor and cat from behind sofa. Cradle cat in left arm and repeat process.
3. Retrieve cat from bedroom, and throw soggy pill away.
4. Take new pill from foil wrap, cradle cat in left arm, holding rear paws tightly with left hand. Force jaws open and push pill to back of mouth with right forefinger. Hold mouth shut for a count of ten.
5. Retrieve pill from goldfish bowl and cat from top of wardrobe. Call spouse from garden.
6. Kneel on floor with cat wedged firmly between knees, hold front and rear paws. Ignore low growls emitted by cat. Get spouse to hold head firmly with one hand while forcing wooden ruler into mouth. Drop pill down ruler and rub cat's throat vigorously.
7. Retrieve cat from curtain rail, get another pill from foil wrap. Make note to buy new ruler and repair curtains. Carefully sweep shattered figurines and vases from hearth and set to one side for gluing later.
8. Wrap cat in large towel and get spouse to lie on cat with head just visible from below armpit. Put pill in end of drinking straw, force mouth open with pencil and blow down drinking straw.
9. Check label to make sure pill not harmful to humans, drink 1 beer to take taste away. Apply Band-Aid to spouse's forearm and remove blood from carpet with cold water and soap.
10. Retrieve cat from neighbour's shed. Get another pill. Open another beer. Place cat in cupboard, and close door on neck, leave head showing. Force mouth open with dessert spoon. Flick pill down throat with elastic band.
11. Fetch screwdriver from garage and put cupboard door back on hinges. Drink beer. Fetch bottle of scotch. Pour shot, drink. Apply cold compress to cheek and check records for date of last tetanus shot. Apply whiskey compress to cheek to disinfect. Toss back another shot. Throw Tee shirt away and fetch new one from bedroom.
12. Call fire department to retrieve the damn cat from across the road. Apologize to neighbour who crashed into fence while swerving to avoid cat. Take last pill from foil wrap
13. Tie the little bastard's front paws to rear paws with garden twine and bind tightly to leg of dining table, find heavy-duty pruning gloves from shed. Push pill into mouth followed by large piece of filet steak. Be rough about it. Hold head vertically and pour 2 pints of water down throat to wash pill down.

14. Consume remainder of scotch. Get spouse to drive you to the emergency room, sit quietly while doctor stitches fingers and forearm and removes pill remnants from right eye. Call furniture shop on way home to order new table.
15. Arrange for RSPCA to collect mutant cat from hell and call local pet shop to see if they have any hamsters.

How To Give A Dog A Pill

1. Wrap it in bacon.
2. Toss it in the air.

Why People Live Longer Than Dogs

A Dog's Purpose (from a 6-year-old's perspective).

Being a veterinarian, I had been called to examine a ten-year-old Irish Wolfhound named Belker. The dog's owners, Ron, his wife Lisa, and their little boy Shane, were all very attached to Belker, and they were hoping for a miracle.

I examined Belker and found he was dying of cancer. I told the family we couldn't do anything for Belker, and offered to perform the euthanasia procedure for the old dog in their home.

As we made arrangements, Ron and Lisa told me they thought it would be good for six-year-old Shane to observe the procedure. They felt as though Shane might learn something from the experience.

The next day, I felt the familiar catch in my throat as Belker's family surrounded him. Shane seemed so calm, petting the old dog for the last time, that I wondered if he understood what was going on. Within a few minutes, Belker slipped peacefully away.

The little boy seemed to accept Belker's transition without any difficulty or confusion. We sat together for a while after Belker's Death, wondering aloud about the sad fact that animal lives are shorter than human lives. Shane, who had been listening quietly, piped up, 'I know why.'

Startled, we all turned to him. What came out of his mouth next stunned me. I'd never heard a more comforting explanation.

He said, 'People are born so that they can learn how to live a good Life -- like loving everybody all the time and being nice, right?' The Six-year-old continued, 'Well, dogs already know how to do that, so they don't have to stay as long.'

Remember, if a dog was the teacher you would learn things like:

- ☺ When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.

- ☺ Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joy-ride.
- ☺ Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure Ecstasy.
- ☺ Take naps.
- ☺ Stretch before rising.
- ☺ Run, romp, and play daily.
- ☺ Thrive on attention and let people touch you.
- ☺ Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
- ☺ On warm days, stop to lie on your back on the grass.
- ☺ On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.
- ☺ When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.
- ☺ Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
- ☺ Be loyal.
- ☺ Never pretend to be something you're not.
- ☺ If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
- ☺ When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by, and nuzzle them gently.
- ☺ ENJOY EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY DAY!

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Reusing Shed Dog Hair?

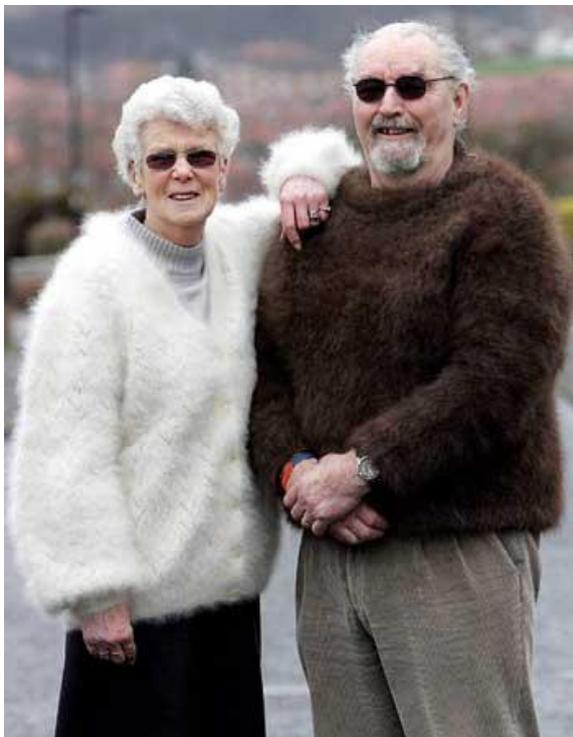
Furry fashions: wearing the hair of the dog (and cat)

If you've ever owned a long haired breed of dog or cat, you'll know that whenever they shed, life becomes a nightmare. There seems to be fur everywhere you look.

At one stage I had a black cat, a white cat and a tan dog. It was inevitable that whatever colour clothes I wore, exactly the right animal would come and deposit spare fur all over me. Wearing white? Here comes the black cat! Wearing black? Here's the long haired white cat!

And it doesn't seem to matter to how often you groom them. I do believe there are times of year when my cat just grew extra fur so she could shed it all over my clothes and furniture!

One thing I never thought of was to make clothes out of it – and yet some people do!



Warm and woolly in 'dead dog' jumpers.

One couple in Newcastle, England (photo above) turned their deceased dogs (Kara, a white Samoyed and Penny, a Swedish Lapphund) into woolly "jumpers" to keep their furry friends "close to their hearts." As for their inspiration, they credited the dog-fur stole Princess Diana once wore to Crufts (a fantastically fashion-forward pick for a dog show). The pair describe their oft-worn doggie duds as "warm and waterproof."

"It is the most amazing stuff. It's like mohair but more lightweight and more soft, and the more you wash it, the more soft and fluffy it gets."



Back in 2005, the growing pet-fur fascination caught photographer Erwan Fichou's eye, who initiated an ongoing portrait series showcasing people in canine couture posing next to their dogs (see one of his photos above).

Amazon even sells a book called "[Knitting With Dog Hair: Better A Sweater From A Dog You Know and Love Than From A Sheep You'll Never Meet](#)". Who knew?

The trickiest bit is getting all that fur spun into yarn, and that can be quite expensive. So, Amazon even have "[Spin It: Making Yarn From Scratch](#)".

What are you waiting for?

Canine Obesity

Pet obesity is the most common nutritional illness in dogs, and its incidence has been on the rise for the last 15 years. It's almost an epidemic

Obesity is an excess of body fats which is associated with many life threatening health problems such as heart and respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes, joint diseases, osteoarthritis, ruptured ligaments, back and spinal disc problems, liver disease and pancreatitis.

"Vets are the best experts to give you a diagnosis of canine obesity, or even just gently letting you know if your dog is overweight" says Dr Matthew Miles, veterinarian and Executive Officer of the Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association (ASAVA).

If you feel your pooch is carrying a little too much weight, a visit to your vet is essential, as not all obesity is caused by overfeeding or poor diet. Some hormonal disorders such as hyperthyroidism or an overactive adrenal gland can cause weight gain too.

However the vast majority of obesity in animals is caused by us – their owners!

Many owners refuse to face the fact that their dog is overweight or is being fed too much. This does not help the dog – we are loving our dogs to death.

If a dog is fed more calories than it needs, it puts on weight. Excess weight gain can also be caused by feeding our dogs "fast food", poor quality tinned food and biscuits, and fatty treats. Many dog treats are fat and preservative laden, and the effect on our dog's health is the same as it would be on ours if we lived off that kind of food.

So, what can you do?

First off – visit your vet for a full diagnosis. If possible, agree with the vet what the ideal weight is for your dog, and agree an appropriate feeding plan for getting your dog down to that weight, and get an indication of how long it should take.

Fresh rather than tinned or dried dog food is best – but don't put your pal on a crash diet – that doesn't work for humans either. Agree with your vet how much food and what type will be best to reach your desired pet's weight.

And don't forget exercise. Just as exercise is an important part of our weight loss regimes, so it is for a dog. But remember, if your dog is quite overweight, or has joint problems, start them off slowly. Swimming is a great exercise for dogs with arthritis or joint problems.

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The Weird & the Wonderful

Four Army dogs to aid Secret Service in guarding new president



Mike, an Army working dog. (Department of Defense)

President-elect Barack Obama and family are said to be in the market for a dog to liven up the White House.

But there are already dogs in their near future: four Army dogs are being detached to the Secret Service to do crowd control duties before, during and after the Jan. 20 inauguration.

The dogs, from Fort Myer, Va., are experts in sniffing out bombs and taking down bad guys. Among them is Mike, a six-year-old Belgian Malinois.

Mike and his handler, Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Konrardy, have done presidential duty before. They spent Christmas at Camp David when President Bush was there.

Furry thief grabs Christmas present out of grocery store aisle

Some people just can't wait to open their Christmas presents. That apparently was the case with a short and very fast thief who went to a store in Murray, Utah, grabbed a present and made a clean getaway on all fours.

At Smith's Food & Drug in Murray, a popular place these days is the manager's office, where they have the surveillance video.

"You had to see to believe it, but it happened. So, it's crazy," said Tracy Jacobson, with Smith's Food & Drug.

A suspicious character entered through the front door. "I've never seen him shop in here before; brand new customer, didn't even have his Fresh Value card," store manager Roger Adamson said.

What happened next is already becoming legend. "I mean, how likely is that? For a dog to walk into a store, go down the pet aisle, get his bone and walk out?" Jacobson said.

Let's reconstruct the crime a step at a time: Entering at the checkout area, the dog approached a young girl. "He just kind of sniffed the customer up, and then headed down the aisle," Adamson said.

At that point, he had a decision to make: Left? No dog food. Right? Dog food. He turned right and went straight to aisle 16, the dog food aisle.

There are so many fun Christmas presents he could have picked, but he seemed to know exactly what he was after. He grabbed a rawhide bone and headed down the aisle, only to be confronted by the manager.

"I looked at him. I said, 'Drop it!'" Adamson said. "I decided I wanted to keep all my fingers, so I didn't try to take it from him. He looked at me, and I looked at him, and he ran for the door and away he went, right out the front door."

Marshall Tanner with Alpha Dog Training says the culprit's sense of smell is 100,000 times better than the typical crook.

"[He] smelled the rawhide bone, grabbed it and walked out of the store, thereby being a shoplifting dog!" Tanner said.

At last word, the dog was still at large, presumably enjoying his Christmas gift. "He's enjoying the heck out of it," Tanner said.

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