



www.bestdoggietips.com
October 2010 Newsletter



Dear friends,

Welcome to our October Newsletter from www.bestdoggietips.com.

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We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Ever consider what our dogs must think of us? I mean, here we come back from a grocery store with the most amazing haul -- chicken, pork, half a cow. They must think we're the greatest hunters on earth!

--Anne Tyler

Recipe - Atlas's Autumn Golds

Ingredients

2 medium carrots – peeled, roasted and roughly mashed
1 cup of pumpkin, roasted & roughly mashed
2 eggs
1 tablespoon of turmeric powder
1½ tablespoons of minced garlic*
¼ cup of crushed flax seed
¾ cups of rolled oats
1¾ cups of Kolchak's Favourite Flour Mix or wholemeal flour**
Low fat, low sodium chicken stock - as needed

To Make

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Roast your pumpkin and carrots. I prefer to buy small pumpkins, chop them in half, scoop out seeds and roast as it is less preparation, but if you are in a time crunch you can chop the pieces small and they will roast faster - or you could even use plain canned pumpkin.

Place pumpkin halves face down in a baking dish, place carrots around them (no need to peel/chop). Roast for 45 - 60 min or until tender enough to mash. Roughly mash, adding chicken stock if necessary (some small chunks are desirable.)

Measure out 1½ cups of the mashed pumpkin/carrot mix. Mix with garlic, turmeric, & eggs. Measure out ¼ cup of flax seed and use rolling pin to crush. Add flax and rolled oats and mix well. Add Kolchak's Favourite Flour Mix (or flour) and combine. (This is easier with your hands - don't be afraid to TAKE CHANCES! MAKE MISTAKES! GET MESSY!). Depending on the moisture content of your carrot/pumpkin, the mix may be a little wet or dry. If the mix is wet, add a little extra flour mix to bring it to a non-sticky texture. If it is dry, add chicken stock as needed to keep it from crumbling.

Lightly flour counter top with Kolchak's Favourite Flour Mix or flour. Turn out dough onto counter and roll out to 1/4". Cut out with cookie cutters - or use a pizza cutter or knife to cut into bite sized squares. Line cookie sheet with parchment paper and transfer cookies to cookie sheet.

Bake for 40 - 50 minutes. Remove from oven, let sit 10 min and transfer to a cooling rack. For very hard, crunchy cookies leave the tray in the oven, turn it off and let sit until oven has completely cooled.

** BestDoggieTips note: the jury is out on whether garlic is bad or good for pets. We personally do use a little garlic every now and then – all things in moderation! You can leave this out if you are worried about feeding garlic to your dog.*

**** Kolchak's Favourite Flour Recipe – a note from Kolchak**

When my brother Felix first came to live with Mom, he was a big rotten mess. He had a bad case of the itchies, his fur was rough and dull and, let's be frank - he smelled. At first, Mom and our vet thought he was allergic to grain. After allergy tests, we learned that he was only truly allergic to corn, pollen, dust, scented room sprays, laundry soaps etc and (get this!) dogs.

Mom did quite a lot of research on the subject of canine allergies and found that most of the most common grain allergies had one thing in common - they contained gluten.

Mom has since come to learn that Felix can eat grain but that he is severely gluten intolerant - and she has come to believe that to varying degrees, almost all dogs are. Dogs seem particularly intolerant of grain based glutens.

As such, she has spent a lot of time trying to come up with great gluten free dog treats. To achieve this, we use a special flour blend that is gluten free and delicious.

Kolchak's Favourite Flour Recipe

2 cups stone ground quinoa flour
1 1/3 cups tapioca flour
1 cup potato flour

Mom makes big batches of this in a big Tupperware container, so that it is always on hand. Then she uses it cup for cup to replace flour in all of our recipes.

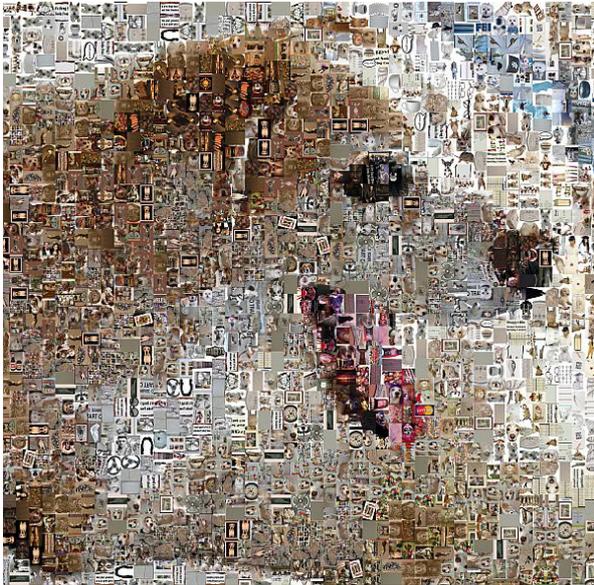
If you can not get these flours at your local grocery store, try the health food store or you can use any flour that says it is "celiac-safe".

Recipe (c) Kolchak's Kitchen (see our [Site of the Month](#) section)

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Amazing Mosaics

At BestDoggieTips, we are part of a fantastic community called [Doggyspace](#). Doggyspace is like MySpace or Facebook, but for dogs, cats and their owners. There are some amazing animals and people on Doggyspace, none more so than Steve, owner of a beagle called Tommy Tunes.



Steve does amazing mosaics of animals. The one to the left here is a mosaic of Tommy Tunes made up of 8000 individual pictures (many of them dogs).

And the most incredible part is that Steve has had no formal training. He doesn't even consider himself an artist!

According to Steve "my entire career has been working with computers as a programmer/analyst. That goes way back to my first job, just out of the Navy, with the Federal Government in Washington, DC."

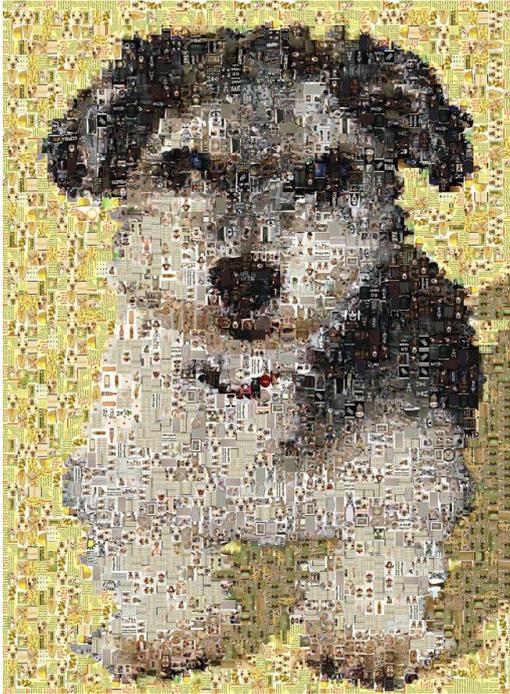
"At that time computers took up a whole room, were 1/1000th or less the power of the computer on my desk today, and were so expensive only big government offices and large corporations could afford them. I was overjoyed back in the late 70's when microcomputers like the Apple and TRS-80 were introduced. I bought a TRS-80 Model II early on and have been fiddling with microcomputers since then."

"Doggyspace has been a big influence on my current interests. I got interested in pictures and how to modify them and make them funny. That led me to search for programs that edited pictures, Gimp and Photoshop being the most useful. I got into mosaics as just another way to modify pictures. I have NO artistic training or ability. I continue to insist that I am NOT an artist, but a computer technician. Everything I do with pictures involves a computer".

"This is a hobby for me, nothing more. I get enjoyment out of working with complicated details. Learning how to do a very complicated task, and succeeding in making something work can be intensely satisfying."

Steve has done quite a few mosaics for other doggies on Doggyspace, such as the picture of Bentley shown here.





Not to mention our very own Hamish McPup! I am sure you'll agree they are absolutely amazing, and do require artistic talent!

Steve is retired, and just does this as a hobby, however, if you are interested in getting a mosaic of your favourite pooch (or yourself), you can contact Steve by email at laddi1003@earthlink.net

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Power from Dog Poop

Conceptual artist Matthew Mazzotta is using dog faeces to power lampposts in a park in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Mazzotta's Project Park Spark, which was funded through MIT and created in partnership with the City of Cambridge, comprises a special "methane digester" that converts freshly scooped poop into methane.



Dog owners collect their dog waste in a special biodegradable bag and throw it into the digester — an airtight cylindrical container, where the dog faeces are broken down by anaerobic bacteria. A by-product from that process is methane, which can then be released through a valve and burnt as fuel. In this case it is being used to power an old-fashioned gas-burning lamppost in a park.

The artist is keen to make sure that the energy is used as the community wishes, and so in the next couple of weeks the Park Spark project will be holding a number of design meetings to gather ideas from the community for how to best use the flame. Suggestions already include a shadow-projection box, a popcorn stand and a teahouse.

Currently when organic material (including dog waste, food and plant matter) goes into landfill, it releases methane into the atmosphere. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas that is approximately 23 times more harmful than carbon dioxide.

When it's burned in the presence of oxygen, it separates into carbon dioxide and water vapour, so businesses can actually earn carbon credits from burning off excess methane. As a result, the digesters are a good way to collect and use the volatile gas as a fuel.

In the future Mazzotta hopes to install permanent underground digesters in parks throughout the United States.

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Dog Site of the Month - Kolchak's Recipes

If you liked our mouth watering recipe this month – it's all thanks to Kolchak and Kolchak's Recipes.



KOLCHAK PUGGLE'S
DOG FRIENDLY
RECIPES



FELIX DOODLE'S
DOGGYSPACE
PROFILE CSS



Kolchak has plenty more great recipes for cookies, dips, cakes, ice treats and main courses. Our favourite is the Sweet Potato Chewies.

Here's just a sample:

- 🐶 Anty Seal-Yak's Pasta
- 🐶 Bok-Bok Chewies
- 🐶 Buck's Breath Busters
- 🐶 Koly's Carrot Pupcakes
- 🐶 Cheese Dog Cookies
- 🐶 Crunchy Carrot Bone Bones
- 🐶 Gobble 'Til Ya Wobble Cookies
- 🐶 Hannah Banana's Biscotti
- 🐶 Here Fishy Fishies
- 🐶 Liver Biskits
- 🐶 Lip Lickin' Liver Dip
- 🐶 Love 'Em Liver Brownies
- 🐶 Maya's Oatmeal Pumpkin Cookies
- 🐶 Nutter Butter Oatmeal Cookies
- 🐶 PB & Hannah Banana's Love Bites

- 👤 Pepsi's Veggie Bites
- 👤 Polly Punkie's Biscotti
- 👤 Rudiolis
- 👤 Sweet Potato Chewies
- 👤 Turkey Gobblers

So do yourself (and your dog) a favour and head on over to Kolchak's Recipes at <http://kolchakandfelix.weebly.com/kolchaks-recipes.html>.

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Is Pet Food Poisoning Our Dogs?

By Rebecca Hosking

Rebecca Hosking decided to turn detective when her collie fell ill. What the woman who led Britain's first campaign to ban plastic bags discovered will alarm every animal lover.

It was early spring this year and my other half, Tim, and I were down in one of the lower meadows on our Devon farm, coppicing willow while keeping half an eye on our ten-month-old border collie, Dave, as he indulged in his favourite pastime: moth hunting. Not that we knew it then, but that was the last time in months we would all be worry-free.

Half an hour later, as we sat down for tea back at the house, we heard a horrible thumping sound from outside.

The following seconds are still a blur. I don't remember getting to the kennel, I just recall pulling Dave into the recovery position and putting a blanket under his head. He was convulsing violently, legs wildly paddling, frothing at the mouth.

Dave, we would later discover, was having a grand mal seizure and that thumping sound was his head uncontrollably banging on the kennel floor. It was a sound we would come to dread and one we would sadly hear all too often.

The vets told us that dogs can have seizures for many reasons and that there are only so many tests you can run. If, as in Dave's case, the specific cause cannot be identified, the diagnosis of 'idiopathic epilepsy' is made. That translates as: 'He's having seizures and we don't know why.'

Dave was prescribed anti-convulsant medication but the seizures continued. They were particularly severe and we knew that any one could be lethal.

Vets tell you: 'Live with canine epilepsy, not for it.' Good advice, but much easier said than done. We went entirely the other way and buried ourselves in research, starting on a journey that would take us far beyond canine epilepsy.

A concerted internet trawl through scientific journals, veterinary publications and pet-owner forums revealed a huge and growing incidence of dogs with diseases of the joints, internal organs, immune system, eyes, ears, skin, teeth and nervous system; not to mention cancers, behavioural disorders and, yes, epilepsy. And, this being the internet, the suggested treatments encompassed everything from fancy pharmaceuticals to collective prayer.

There was one piece of advice, however, that cropped up far too often to ignore – 'get your dog off commercial pet food'.

At the time we were feeding Dave what we thought was a high-quality dried food or 'kibble'. According to the description on the side of the packaging, it was 'rich in meat' with 'wholesome ingredients' and '100 per cent complete and balanced'.

But the 'ingredients' section on most pet food packaging is notoriously vague and misleading. Manufacturers don't really want you to know what's in there. After some serious delving, I could understand why.

In all probability we had been feeding Dave the waste by-products of industrial grain processing, vegetable pulp (and possibly woodchip), a ground-down mix of non-nutritious animal parts, along with used fats and oils, possibly from restaurant fryers and industrial food-processing units. This mixture is preserved with powerful antioxidants banned in the UK for human consumption and linked to liver and kidney damage, stomach tumours and cancer.

Like so many pet owners, I just didn't think to question my dog's food until something went wrong. But when I did, I stumbled upon a battlefield, with commercial pet food manufacturers on one side and those who advocate a more natural diet for pets on the other.

Pet-food makers say processed pet food is safe and nutritious; natural feeders argue that commercial food, being mainly composed of cooked cereal grains, is inappropriate for animals that evolved to eat raw meat and bones.

I simply wanted to know what I should be feeding my dog. Asking vets seemed a sensible approach but many were reluctant to be drawn on the issue.

Roger Meacock, however, was one vet who was happy to talk at length. He was also unashamedly in the natural diet camp: 'You only need to look at David Attenborough programmes to know that wild dogs eat carcasses. They catch live animals or scavenge carrion; they don't attack wheat fields, they don't dig up potatoes, they don't cook, they don't add preservatives or flavour enhancers . . . if it doesn't happen in the wild we shouldn't be doing it for them.'

If it's that obvious, why the confusion? Meacock says: 'Pet-food manufacturers would have us believe dogs are not carnivores but omnivores. This deliberate misclassification flies in the face of all the scientific evidence.'

The pet-food industry is dominated by a handful of multinational corporations and is estimated globally to be worth £30 billion a year. Profits are maintained by using the cheapest possible ingredients that regulations will allow.

In North America, 'mammalian meat and bone meal', a key animal component in pet food, has been shown to include the ground-up remains of euthanised cats and dogs – flea collars, name tags, microchips and all.

Pet-food manufacturers like to point out that our pets are living longer than ever, and argue this is because of improved nutrition.

Meacock has little time for this claim: 'Human beings today are living longer than ever but if KFC and Burger King tried to take the credit they'd be met with utter disbelief.' He believes huge advances in veterinary care, particularly in immunisation, have extended animals' lives despite their processed diets.

The vets I talked to agreed that a diet of processed food was linked to many chronic ailments and degenerative conditions.

‘I tend to see a lot of dogs with cancer or arthritis or allergies,’ said Meacock. ‘The main part of what I do is taking them off a commercial diet and putting them on to a raw diet, and that is where I see the biggest difference. I’ve had dogs which have been expected to die and they’ve left me with a clean bill of health simply because I’ve put them on the raw diet.’

Pete Coleshaw is a recently retired vet with decades of experience from his practice in Staffordshire. He sees the cereal content of many commercial pet foods as the problem: ‘Dogs and cats are not meant to eat large amounts of highly fermentable starch. They have not struggled to survive for millions of years on a diet of meat and bones; they have thrived.’

A month or so after Dave’s seizures started we noticed his physical condition was deteriorating. His coat had become ragged, his gums were pale and he had recurring diarrhoea, persistent rashes and skin irritations. I felt I had nothing to lose by trying Dave on a more natural diet.

There are enough scare stories out there – about bacteria and choking on bones, for instance – to make changing to a raw diet a very anxious time. The majority of these stories can be traced back to people or companies selling processed pet food.

The idea of Dave choking on a bone played on my mind but vet Richard Allport commented: ‘Nothing is risk-free in life but I think the risk of not feeding raw bones is far higher than the risk of feeding raw bones.’



One of the risks of not feeding raw meat is gum disease. Some 85 per cent of dogs over the age of three now have gum disease or tooth decay. A raw bone is nature’s toothbrush for a dog.

A criticism levelled at raw feeding is that its not ‘scientifically proven’. True, unless you are prepared to accept several million years of evolution as a scientific experiment.

And a closer look at the ‘scientific’ testing behind processed pet food reveals it to be about as useful as ‘the science bit’ in shampoo adverts. ‘Complete and balanced’ is the gold-standard claim on a pet food, but what does it actually mean? The specific combination of nutrients, vitamins, minerals and trace elements that a ‘complete’ food must contain are derived from feeding trials carried out in the United States under the guidance of the Association Of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), an organisation seemingly influenced by the pet food industry.

Coleshaw explained: ‘AAFCO feeding trials consist of at least eight dogs being fed the same diet for 26 weeks. During this time, 25 per cent of the dogs can be removed from the test and the dogs eating the food can lose up to 15 per cent of their weight and condition; the food will still pass the test and be labelled “complete and balanced”.’

That doesn't sound quite so reassuring, does it?

Dave's illness meant a lot of visits to a lot of different vets and every surgery waiting-room was adorned with displays for processed pet food. If these processed foods are so inappropriate, why are they sold or endorsed by so many vets?

Some people believe there is a grand conspiracy between pet-food manufacturers and vets. However, I'm pretty sure this isn't the case. All the vets that helped us with Dave were fantastic. If they thought commercial food was making him sick I know they would have said so.

Richard Allport said: 'This has really come about not because vets decided to do it, but because of the marketing campaigns of the pet-food companies. What saddens me is that my profession, which I like to think is ethical, has been taken in by this.'

The pet-food industry is heavily embedded in the veterinary profession. It runs courses that give veterinary nurses qualifications in animal nutrition; it publishes textbooks on nutrition and hands them out free to veterinary students. And, as Allport explained, it doesn't stop there.

'In many cases, the salaries of lecturers in nutrition in veterinary colleges are paid by the pet-food companies,' he said. 'So most students today don't get any information about anything other than commercial pet food.'

If I were a veterinary student, this would make me very angry indeed. Vet schools obviously need their departments funded. Universities admit the money from pet-food companies is important but also regularly proclaim their independence when it comes to nutritional teaching.

True independence, however, is hard to argue when FOI disclosures reveal contractual clauses like this: 'The University agrees that Royal-Canin will be allowed to provide expertise and material for integration into the agreed university courses on basic and clinical nutrition teaching.'

Pete Coleshaw believes 'it's a constant indoctrination into commercial pet nutrition'.

The acceptance of processed pet food is so ingrained in veterinary teaching nowadays, it is unlikely to change in the near future, but people such as Coleshaw show it is never too late to teach an old vet new tricks.

'I'm a late convert,' he said, 'and I've had clients say to me, "Yes but you told me ten years ago to feed a commercial food." My answer to that is to hold my hands up and say I was wrong, I swallowed the company line and believed it – I don't any more.'

Since then he hasn't looked back: 'By the time I left the practice we had the best part of 100 dogs all raw fed, and all of them were absolutely thriving. I'd see them out on dog walks and get very positive feedback from every owner.'

Between them, the vets I spoke to had more than 2,000 dogs and cats on natural diets, and business was booming.

Sadly we ran out of time with Dave and he had one big seizure too many, but that's not to say the dietary change was a failure – quite the opposite. In the three months we had him on a wild-type diet we saw some remarkable improvements in his overall health and condition.

Within days his coat became super glossy and he lost that dog smell we had assumed was normal. His teeth became whiter, his bad breath disappeared, his skin allergies cleared, his energy levels picked up and his eyes brightened. For a while, even the severity of his seizures was reduced and he recovered from them in hours rather than days.

We really can't say if a processed diet caused Dave's illness but it certainly didn't help. A developing young carnivore being fed a diet of less than five per cent meat may well have the odds stacked against him.

We have a new puppy arriving next month – Wilf – and I want to give him the best start in life, so that means a raw diet from day one. The pet-food industry tends to dismiss the evidence of tens of thousands of healthy dogs on raw diets as 'anecdotal', but I'd rather be another anecdote with a healthy dog than another clinical statistic sat in a waiting room.

Some will question the views of Meacock and Allport. Yet both are fully qualified and respected vets, vocal members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and frequent contributing writers to the Veterinary Times.

As Roger Meacock says: 'There's an old phrase, "Fit as a butcher's dog." Doesn't that say it all?'

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Fun Stuff

My parents had not been out together in quite some time.

One Saturday, as Mom was finishing the dinner dishes, my father stepped up behind her.

"Would you like to go out, girl?" he asked.

Not even turning around, my mother quickly replied, "Oh, yes, I'd love to!"

They had a wonderful evening, and it wasn't until the end of it that Dad confessed.

His question had actually been directed to the family dog, lying near Mom's feet on the kitchen floor.

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The Weird & the Wonderful

World's Longest Tongue!



This tiny Pooch has a tongue that's anything but - it's four-and-a-half inches long - good enough to earn him the new Guinness world record for lengthy doggie tongues!

Puggy, 10, lives in Fort Worth with his owner, Becky Stanford. Stanford says, "A lot of people will come up and ask "What happened to his tongue? How does he eat?"

She says people often do a double-take when they see Puggy walk by but, "It makes me feel good that he can bring a smile to someone's face. That, in itself, brings me so much joy!"

But the new world record holder had a rough start.

Stanford says Puggy was abandoned as a puppy -- possibly because of his strange look - the same one now putting him in a positive light - and world spotlight!

And, while others may find it funny-looking or even freakish, Stanford says -- to her, Puggy's tongue is perfect. "I never thought for once his tongue was ugly," she says. "It was always just - it just added to his character! ... He's a silly cartoon-looking dog; that's why I love him."

Dog Rescued after Falling into Crevice

Grace the German shepherd is aptly named.

Swallowed by a narrow 20-foot-deep crevice atop the Rimrocks on Saturday morning, the frightened dog was rescued after an hour by an animal rescue officer, with help from two Billings fire engine companies.

The drama began about 8:15 when owner Terri Steinbrink and Grace, a 3-month-old pup, went for their usual walk on the path along the Rims. The dark-haired dog went to step over a narrow crack just south of the path, but instead went down it.



"She kept sliding farther and farther down and it was so scary, I didn't know when it was going to end," a shaken Steinbrink said afterward.

With no phone, the frantic dog owner had to wait for someone to come along. Just a few minutes later, Mark Hertz came jogging by. Hertz pulled out his cell phone and called 911. Then he stayed on the scene until the dog was rescued.

Grace couldn't move far in the space below. Steinbrink lay prone on the ground, her head in the crack, speaking soothing words to the whimpering dog.

Animal control officer Jeremy Kehrer arrived on the scene a few minutes after the call came in, followed soon after by members of Engine Cos. 1 and 2. Kehrer and the firefighters conferred on the best way to extricate Grace.

As one firefighter shined a bright light into the dark space, Kehrer lowered a lasso down to the dog at the bottom of the crevice. After a few frustrating attempts of trying to catch her, Grace walked into the lasso. Kehrer pulled it tight and quickly plucked the dog out of her rocky prison.

Kehrer, who does ranch work as a hobby, said he's familiar with how to use a lasso. He removed the rope, then, as Steinbrink tightly hugged the puppy, Kehrer quickly put Grace's red leash back on her.

Steinbrink petted the dog and buried her face in the puppy's fur.

"I'm just glad she got out," a relieved Steinbrink said.

Grace slurped down some water from a bottle that an onlooker offered her. Steinbrink thanked Kehrer and the others for their help.

"She loves to walk and hike," Steinbrink said of Grace, which she's owned for six weeks. "I bet she'll be careful now when she steps over cracks."

The two walked away, Grace wagging her tail with a spring in her step, frequently gazing up at Steinbrink. The dog looked ready for her next big adventure.

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