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"There is no snooze button on a cat who wants breakfast."

If you think dogs can't count, try putting three dog biscuits in your pocket and then giving Fido only two of them.

~Phil Pastoret



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A CAT'S Amazing Whiskers

by: Sharon Cowherd

Have you ever experienced the tickle from one of your cat's whiskers as they brush against your face or neck? I have been tickled on many occasions from each of my cat's as they rub up against me for attention or curling up on my shoulder to go to sleep. I never really thought about what they use their whiskers for, all I really knew is that they tickled me a lot.

Besides giving each cat their own unique distinction, whiskers are a functional part of a cat. Whiskers are a sensory system for cats made up of nerve endings that allow them to feel the lightest touch, even an air current.

Cats are known to be farsighted and they will use their whiskers to move around in those areas that they are not able to see clearly. Even cats that are blind or their vision is deteriorating will rely more on their whiskers to move about. Cats that are born with their vision impaired will often have longer whiskers to help them move around. If a cat were to lose their whiskers, they would more than likely bump into things.

You also can tell the mood of your cat from their whiskers. When your cat is calm you will see that their whiskers will be pushed forward. And if your cat is stressed out or is being defensive their whiskers will be pulled closer to their face.

If you have more than one cat, have you noticed that the whiskers of each of them are not the same? The length of a cat's whiskers even varies between breeds. I currently have three cats and have noticed that each one has whiskers that are different in length to the others. I have also noticed that Tiggy my oldest cat has a few whiskers



that are not all white, but have some black in them. While the other two, Leena and Cooper, have whiskers that are all white.

Most of us see the cat's whiskers above their eyes and around their mouth, also called muzzle. But did you know that they also have whiskers on the back of their front legs or what would be considered their wrists. I never knew that, but after I read about it, I looked on mine and they have them. They are not as long as the whiskers on their face, but they have them.

Whiskers do get very long and some people are tempted to trim them thinking that they should be to help the cat. But whiskers are never to be trimmed, cut, or any other method of removing them. The cats do have nerve endings in the whiskers and they will feel the trimming and it will not be pleasant for them. Have you ever touched one of the whiskers on your cat's face? Did you notice them blink or twitch? It is because their whiskers are very sensitive and should be treated with care.

Whiskers can be ticklish when applied to us in the right fashion, and they are a very distinctive characteristic on a cat. We should always leave a cat's whiskers alone, as they are their guide to moving around.



HERDING DOG BREED

Alert, Busy And Determined. Clear The Way! Here Comes The Herding Dog



by: John E Adams

The herding dog has a long history, tracing as far back as Neolithic times in Europe when early farmers and domesticators in lands that are now Britain needed a more efficient, quicker way to move livestock from one place to another.

These early herding dogs were very large and powerful dogs. They were generally rough with the livestock and could be quite hard to control for their owners, but had an uncanny ability to gather and herd livestock.

By the nineteenth century, it became apparent that a dog that was both more versatile and more gentle with the animals was needed. Farmers could not afford to feed multiple large dogs for their needs.

They required a single dog who could not only nimbly gather and keep an eye on sheep and other livestock, but also hunt game and sniff out sheep that might have been buried in snow.

With a bond so close that required the farmer to trust his dog explicitly, he also needed an animal that was more cooperative and affectionate. It needed to be sensitive to the human voice, a whistle and hand gestures as it would be working alone, far away from the farmer in the field.

For that reason, there were multiple breeds introduced into the early strain of herding dogs.

The Whippet was selected because it was both quiet and quick. Pointers and setters were used to provide a good nose and a keen eye. Eventually, the perfect breed of dog developed –one that had a superior athletic inclination, light and fast movement, unmistakable livestock sense, and a good temperament that easily matched its handler.

The first modern herding dog, the Border Collie was introduced in 1894 in Northumbria, along the English and Scottish Border.

In other countries, the same early ancestors of that first Border Collie

began to spread out, taking on work in the growing expanse of the United States West. Cattle herding dogs soon became common and immigrants arrived with other livestock that could live comfortably off the land, along with their herding dogs.

Today, there are many breeds of herding dogs, all developed in the same manner or from the same breeding as the Border Collie, with the goal of creating a breed that was both quick and quiet, but able to bond well with its owner and seek out livestock easily.

Various types of herding dogs included the German Shepherd, Shetland Sheepdog, Australian Cattle

Dog, Bearded Collie, and many more.

Each breed has become well known in the years since those early breeds were developed as a loyal, intelligent and highly trainable breed of dog. Today, most herding dogs are kept as pets by families rather than used in the field to herd sheep.

Because they were bred to connect with their owners so well and be so sociable, herding dogs make ideal pets, both gentle and familiar with children and playful with adults.

Herding dogs have a vast supply of energy and a seemingly human-like intelligence at times, all hallmarks of their careful breeding.

BORDER COLLIE

The facts every owner of this dog breed should know

by: Robert W. Benjamin

Bred for their intelligence and herding instincts, Border Collies are descended from British herding dogs. A medium sized dog, Border Collies will grow to about 19 to 22 inches and 30 to 45 pounds. They will live about 12 to 15 years. Border Collies have medium to longer hair that comes in a variety of colors and are prone to shedding. Border Collies need to be brushed regularly to keep the coat healthy and dirt free. Border Collies are also known for their stare. Though their eyes can be brown, amber or blue, it is the Border Collie stare that people remember. This is part of the herding instinct, and a Border Collie will attempt to herd almost anything, including cars and children.

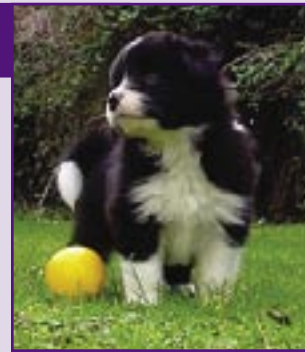
Great care must be taken with a Border Collie to ensure it does not hurt itself or others. A fenced in yard and plenty of leash training is a must with this breed. Border Collies are easy to train due to their intelligence, but, because of their desire to work, Border Collies must have work to do. If they are not given tasks to perform and room to roam, they will become bored and destructive.

They must have a lot of stimulation and activity to stay happy. Though good with children, Border Collies may attempt to herd them and, to keep the 'herd' in line, Border Collies have been known to nip. Border Collies usually do not do well with other animals, due to their herding instinct, and can become aggressive with other dogs of the same gender. Border Collies can be excellent household pets, but must be cared for by a family willing to give them the training, attention, care and activities they need. Border Collies are not recommended for people who live in apartments or those who do not plan on spending a lot of time with their pet.

Border Collies do have some breed specific issues. Some are prone to hip dysplasia, PRA (Progressive Retinal Atrophy) and Collie Eye Anomaly. Many Border Collies are allergic to fleas and some are prone to epilepsy and deafness. Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) is a shoulder lameness that can develop between the ages of 4 to 12 months. Border Collies have also been known to work themselves to exhaustion and suffer from heat stroke in the hot weather.

Because Border Collies are very physically active, they are prone to athletic injuries, such as pulled muscles, cruciate ligament ruptures, cuts and punctures, ripped toenails and footpads.

There is a website that has great information on Border Collies and most other breeds of dogs. It has details that pertain to a dog breeds health, grooming, living conditions, best food choices and more, the website is called: Dog And Cat Facts, and can be found at this url: <http://www.dogandcatfacts.com>





UNDERSTANDING Your Dog's Growling

by: Joann Henry

One of the most common times for a dog to growl is when he is approached by an unfamiliar person or animal. This growl typically communicates the desire to be left alone and if the person obeys and moves away, the dog usually stops the behavior and is satisfied.

It is important for people to understand this form of canine communication, especially people with small children. If someone continues to move closer to a growling dog, this may increase his anticipation and cause more adverse actions. A dog in this situation may bark, snap, and possibly bite the person approaching him if his growls are ignored.

How Should You React to Your Dog's Growls?

What if your toddler was walking toward your resting dog and the dog slowly turned away with a low, snarling growl? Would you understand your dog? Would you know what to do?

Growling is not necessarily a bad thing. In this scenario, your dog is most likely saying that he would prefer to be left alone and may

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Positive Dog Training for Newbies

by: Rodrigo Trigoso

Positive dog training was developed under the principles of Skinner's operant conditioning. While it's not a new technique, it didn't get enough popularity until the nineties.

Former students of Skinner, psychologists Keller and Marian Breland, pioneered commercial applications of operant conditioning when they created Animal Behavior Enterprises (ABE) in 1942. ABE was the first company that offered positive training services.

The huge popularity of traditional training prevented ABE to succeed in dog training. So, the Breland's company was forced to look for new niches and ABE got focused on training animals for TV shows and commercials. Keller and Marian also pioneered dolphin training for aquaria and US navy.

Positive reinforcement is the main teaching way of these techniques. Positive reinforcement is not the same as reward, though this is a common misconception.

Positive reinforcement is the process that strengthens a behavior because a pleasant situation occurs as a consequence of that particular behavior. For instance, if you give a food treat to your dog when he lies down, he will tend to lie down more frequently to get that delicious treat. Thus, your dog will be learning to lie down through positive reinforcement.

On the other hand, if your dog lies down and you reward him after 10 seconds, he may not associate the action of lying down with the reward. He may think you gave him the treat because he was looking up, or moving his ears. So, you rewarded your dog but you didn't reinforce the desired behavior.

Some people think that positive trainers never teach to the dog that a particular behavior is unacceptable. This is a common and big misinterpretation. Practitioners of positive training do teach this to dogs, but they don't use



punishment or negative reinforcement for that.

Clicker training is the most popular of these techniques in many countries. It is the same technique used by Keller and Marian Breland, and was popularized by the biologist and dolphin trainer Karen Pryor.

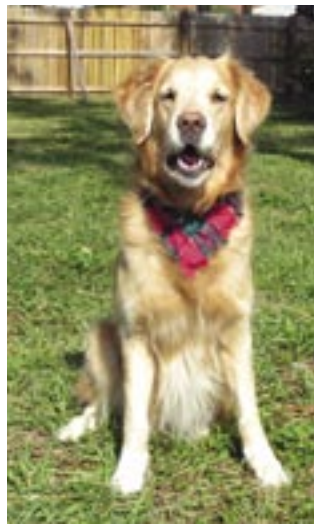
The main difference between clicker training and other positive techniques is the use of a clicker in the former. A clicker is just a small device that emits a click-click sound when squeezed. It is used to mark the exact moment in which the dog performed a desired behavior.

The absolute absence of negative reinforcement, punishment and training collars (choke, prong or shock) make of positive dog training a very friendly technique to both dogs and owners. This could be the main advantage of this kind of training.

Other advantages are that positive dog training is easy to understand and fun to carry out. Besides, these techniques are not only focused on obedience exercises. Instead, they are widely used to solve behavioral problems.

Detractors of these techniques claim that dogs trained in a positive way won't be able to respond properly unless they can see (or scent) a food treat. These people also claim that positive trained behaviors are not reliable under variable circumstances.

Although very common, those claims are not true. The efficacy of positive training is demonstrated each day by hundreds of service dogs for disabled people, police dogs, competition dogs and performing dogs.





Teaching Your Child How To Greet Dogs Safely And Prevent Dog Bites

By Julie Bjelland Lokhandwala

Understanding Your Dog's Growling

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be uncomfortable with your child nearby.

Many pet owners are confused in these situations and tend to take the behavior more personally than they should. You should never punish your puppy for growling at you or at anyone else. Dog's that are chastised for their natural expression often show more serious behaviors later on.

Growling is an important means of communicating for your dog. Punishing this behavior causes your pet to repress his desires and may become confusing. Continuing to reprimand your dog for growling may eventually cause the dog to stop growling, instead he may immediately snap at someone or even bite with no warning.

Growling is an important means of communicating for your dog.

Always tell children why a dog growls and explain how important it is to listen to the dog. Whenever your dog growls as you approach, it is best to simply respect his wishes and let him be.

Make sure your children understand what to do if a dog growls at them. They should stop anything they were doing that may have irritated the dog and slowly move away to a safe place away from the animal. Never run from an animal and tell your children to report any of these incidents to you so you can continue training your dog properly.

I've often been on walks with my dog and have heard a Child's plea to their parent to pet my dog and I've even seen children run straight up to my dog! For many children the idea of petting a new dog is very exciting, but for parents we are often unsure if we should allow our children to pet a new dog they've never met. What are the safest ways to pet a dog we don't know? There are some steps to take to help make sure we are doing the right things should we decide to let our child pet a new dog.

Most dogs are friendly and will not bite but they need to be treated with respect. Dogs may become aggressive for different reasons such as: fear, frustration or protection. Children can be susceptible to dog bites for many reasons such as the fact that their fast movements can trigger a chasing prey response. The pitch of their voice is also higher and can sometimes startle a dog. Children are also shorter and are closer to the dog's eye level and the eye-to-eye contact can make a dog feel threatened. Children may also pull tails or tease dogs making them uncomfortable.

A good approach to teaching our children to greet a new dog they've never met before is to understand how dogs actually prefer to greet each other. A good greeting is when two dogs meet by coming to each other in an arc, not a straight line, looking at each other then looking away, and then they move to smell each other. In other words they do not approach each other directly, face to face, and they do not make strong eye contact on the approach. So, the approach is calm, quiet, without eye contact and using smell. Dogs use their sense of smell to get to know you.

Here are the steps to take when greeting a dog.

1. Always ask permission of the dog owner. You can even go a step further and ask if their dog is comfortable around children.
2. Offer your hand, palm down for the dog to smell and allow the dog to approach you. Do not approach the dog first. If the dog does not want to greet you then leave it at that and do not approach.
3. Don't stare at the dog, instead it is better to look at the dog and then look away. When you take your eyes off the dog you are signaling to the dog that you are not a threat to them.
4. Don't pet the dog on top of their head; it is better to pet them on their chest or back.
5. Do not approach the dog from behind.
6. Do not scream or make fast movements; stay calm and quiet.
7. Do not kiss the dog or put your face near the dogs face.
8. Always observe the dog's body language and watch for signs that the dog is uncomfortable.

It is a good idea to discuss these rules with your child before you are in the situation. Try practicing the steps too so your child can feel comfortable with the process. And make sure your child understands that it is never ok to run up and pet a dog without following these rules.

You can even take your child to a dog park and watch the dogs together from outside the fence. Observe how dogs greet each other and talk about it together. Being around dogs can be a wonderful experience for your child if handled properly.

