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April 2010 Newsletter



Dear friends,

Welcome to our April Newsletter from [www.bestdoggietips.com](http://www.bestdoggietips.com).

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We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

"The great pleasure of a dog is that you make a fool of yourself with him, and not only will he not scold you, he will make a fool of himself too".

--Samuel Butler

## Recipe - Puppy Meatballs

### *Ingredients*

2750g (½ lb) ground beef or mince  
1 carrot grated finely  
1 tbsp finely grated cheese  
½ cup whole-wheat breadcrumbs  
1 egg beaten  
1 tsp apple sauce (optional)

### *To Make*

Preheat oven to 350F (180C). Combine all ingredients and mix well. Form into meatballs

Place on a greased or lined baking tray and cook for 15 minutes or until browned through. Cool and place in an airtight container. Store in fridge or freezer (and defrost as required). Makes 24.

*(Note: this recipe is based on a recipe from the I Love Dogs free recipe book available at BestDoggieTips.com).*

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## Dogs Helping with PTSD

Just weeks after Chris Goehner, 25, an Iraq war veteran, got a dog, he was able to cut in half the dose of anxiety and sleep medications he took for post-traumatic stress disorder. The night terrors and suicidal thoughts that kept him awake for days on end ceased.

Aaron Ellis, 29, another Iraq veteran with the stress disorder, scrapped his medications entirely soon after getting a dog — and set foot in a grocery store for the first time in three years.

The dogs to whom they credit their improved health are not just pets. Rather, they are psychiatric service dogs specially trained to help traumatized veterans leave the battlefield behind as they reintegrate into society.

Because of stories like these, the US federal government, not usually at the forefront of alternative medical treatments, is spending several million dollars to study whether scientific research supports anecdotal reports that the dogs might speed recovery from the psychological wounds of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In dozens of interviews, veterans and their therapists reported drastic reductions in P.T.S.D. (post traumatic stress disorder) symptoms and in reliance on medication after receiving a service dog.

Veterans rely on their dogs to gauge the safety of their surroundings, allowing them to venture into public places without constantly scanning for snipers, hidden bombs and other dangers lurking in the minds of those with the disorder.

In August, Jacob Hyde got his service dog, Mya, from Puppies Behind Bars, a program based in New York State that uses prisoners to raise and train dogs for lives of service. The organization has placed 23 dogs with veterans with P.T.S.D. in the last two years, training them to obey 87 different commands.

“If I didn’t have legs, I would have to crawl around,” said Mr. Hyde, 25. “If I didn’t have Mya, I wouldn’t be able to leave the house.”

If Mr. Hyde says “block,” the dog will stand perpendicularly in front of him to keep other people at a distance. If he asks Mya to “get his back,” the dog will sit facing backward by his side.

The dogs are trained to jolt a soldier from a flashback, dial 911 on a phone and even sense a panic attack before it starts. And, perhaps most important, the veterans’ sense of responsibility, optimism and self-awareness is renewed by caring for the dogs.

The dogs help soldiers understand “what’s happening as it’s happening, what to do about it, and then doing it,” said Joan Esnayra, a geneticist whose research team has received \$300,000 from the Defense Department to study the issue. “You can use your dog kind of like a mirror to reflect back your emotional tenor”.

The dog is also often the first visible manifestation of a former soldier's disability. Because people are curious about the animal, the veteran gets an opportunity to talk about his condition and his war experiences, discussions that can contribute to recovery. More broadly, the dogs help increase public awareness of P.T.S.D., which the Veterans Affairs Department said affects about one quarter of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with whom it has worked.

Under a bill written by Senator Al Franken, Democrat of Minnesota, veterans with P.T.S.D. will get service dogs as part of a pilot program run by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Training a psychiatric service dog and pairing it with a client costs more than \$20,000. The government already helps provide dogs to soldiers who lost their sight or were severely wounded in combat, but had never considered placing dogs for emotional damage.

But there is debate within the emergent field about the appropriate time to pair a veteran with a dog. Sara Meisinger, the chief of occupational therapy at the warrior transition unit at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, said a service dog should be used only in the final stage of treatment, after a soldier has accomplished as much as possible with traditional therapy. Many experts say the veterans should be living on their own for at least a year before they receive a dog.

But when Gloria Gilbert Stoga, who runs Puppies Behind Bars, received an application from Maj. James Becker, she decided, with support from his doctors, to take a chance on a veteran who had just left inpatient care.

Major Becker, 45, suffered two severe brain injuries in separate explosions, earning two Purple Hearts in his three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. When he came home last winter, his 24-year-old daughter, also an Iraq veteran, was being treated for leukemia.

In Major Becker's mind, home started to resemble Afghanistan's Helmand Province. His P.T.S.D. symptoms worsened, and a suicide attempt in July landed him in San Diego Naval Medical Center for seven months. A few weeks after leaving the San Diego hospital, Major Becker flew to New York to collect his dog, Annie, and participate in a two-week training session with Puppies Behind Bars. Still, he said he spent a lot of time alone in his room "because it's easier to deal with four walls than it is to come out and deal with crowds".

But within days, Annie was beginning to pull him out of his shell. "She helps me meet people," he said, describing how people are attracted to the dog.

He added, "I like to think it's going to get better".

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## Domestic Dogs and Native Dogs

In Australia, the Dingo is generally thought to have originated from domestic dogs which have reverted to a wild state for thousands of years, and today live largely independent from humans.

Today, many dogs called dingos are actually dingo-hybrids who have mated with our current domestic dogs. The number of these dingo-hybrids (or wild dogs) has increased significantly over the last decades and the dingo has been classified as vulnerable.

However, the similarities between dingoes and domestic dogs are many. The two most often cited differences – barking and pack behaviour – are closer than we think.

It is often wrongly asserted that dingoes do not bark. Compared to most other domestic dogs, the bark of a dingo is short and monosyllabic. Australian dingoes bark only in swooshing noises. Also, barking is almost exclusively used for giving warnings.

Although dingoes are usually seen alone (especially in areas where they are persecuted), most belong to a social group whose members meet from time to time and are permanently together during the mating season in order to breed and raise pups. Dingoes are generally highly social animals and form, where possible, stable packs with clearly defined territories. These packs as a rule consist of 3–12 individuals (mostly the alpha-pair, as well as the current litter and the previous year's litter), who occupy a territory throughout the whole year

Dogs may not even be pack animals, an idea found in nearly every pet store dog-training book. They may be social scavengers. This theory is supported by the diets of wild dogs. Free ranging dogs were found to subsist mostly on garbage, crop residue and the carcasses of livestock. Only a small amount of their diet came from hunting.

The idea that dogs may be scavengers is not far-fetched to pet owners. Many struggle with dogs that rummage through trash cans or pick up scraps of garbage on walks.

So lets look at another native dog – the wolf. The wolf has been around for over 300,000 years and is known to share a common ancestry with domestic dogs.

Wolves also live in packs. Normally, the pack consists of a male, a female, and their offspring, essentially making the pack a nuclear family. The size of the pack may change over time and is controlled by several factors, including habitat, personalities of individual wolves within a pack, and food supply. Packs can contain between 2 and 20 wolves.

Wolves are very intelligent, and in fact actually have larger brains than domestic dogs. However, when faced with a problem they cannot solve quickly, wolves just give up. However, researchers have shown that dogs will look at their people when faced with an unsolvable problem. Wolves will not, even if hand-raised. They are more apt to fall asleep.

Owners can catch a glimpse of this special dog behaviour when a ball is lost under a sofa. Frustrated at not being able to reach the toy, most dogs will eventually turn to look at their person. Most people see this gesture as a plea for assistance and willingly help out.

Looking to people certainly seems advantageous for the dog. It also may have provided benefits to early owners. Finding it easier to direct dogs that looked for direction, people may have selectively bred for this trait.

Certain instinctive and social behaviours displayed by wolves may not be expressed in dogs simply because the opportunity never arises in their captive social setting. However, even when dogs range freely in wild or semi-wild circumstances, they show marked divergences from their wild ancestors.

In a comparative study on poodles and wolves, wolf biologist Eric Zimen and his colleagues recorded 362 specific behaviours displayed by wolves, 64% of which were displayed by poodles with little or no change, while 13% of wolf behaviours had vanished altogether. 23% of wolf-like mannerisms persisted but in markedly modified forms. In performing many of these modified wolf-like behaviours, the poodles lacked a seriousness of purpose, being indiscriminate and ineffectual in their choice of "prey", similar to young wolves at play.

In the poodles, many of the subtle facial and body expressions characteristic of wolves were greatly simplified, while many were absent altogether. Aggressive and defensive postures were greatly muted, due to poodles being generally less fearful, less aggressive and more tolerant to invasions of personal space. Unlike adult wolves, which avoid physical contact with each other when sleeping, the poodles continued to frequently lie together through the age of eight months or older, even in hot weather when there was no conceivable reason for huddling to preserve body heat.

Dogs are much more accepting of strangers than adult wolves, which become increasingly xenophobic as they age. The fighting styles of wolves and dogs also differ significantly: while dogs typically limit themselves to attacking the head, neck and shoulder, wolves make greater use of body blocks, and attack the extremities of their opponents, causing greater damage.

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## Watch Out for that Stray

IT seems like a simple matter - a lost dog is found by a person who has no luck tracing the owner and wants to adopt it. But as Simone Strong, of Blackwall, learnt, once the dead hand of government regulation gets in the way it's not that easy. Instead you are told you will be fined unless you hand the dog over so you can buy it back later.

Ms Strong found an abandoned brindle staffie-cross two weeks ago and, with a vet unable to trace the owner through its microchip, took it home.

"It was riddled with fleas and obviously underfed and although the vet found a chip they couldn't find an address," Ms Strong said.

"I left my details and a few days later a Gosford Council ranger left a message with one of my children saying he would be in touch soon.

"Another week went by and then he contacted me and said I had to take the dog to the pound where it would stay for two weeks before being taken to the RSPCA, when I would have the opportunity to buy it."

Ms Strong rang the RSPCA, which said it was the owner of the dog, which had been rehoused once before, and she was welcome to keep it. But both Ms Strong and the RSPCA were then threatened with prosecution if the normal channels were not followed.

"It seems ridiculous to go through all that and then have to buy the dog back, which I can't really afford, when I am prepared to give it a home right now," Ms Strong said. "But I was told if I didn't surrender the dog to the pound it would be taken by force."

It seems there is no way around the red tape and if Ms Strong refuses to surrender the dog she faces a fine which she can't afford.

Gosford Council education and compliance manager John Parkes said the council was bound under the Companion Animals Act in its dealings with Simone Strong and the rescued dog. "There seems to be some confusion over the ownership of this dog," Mr Parkes said. "But the law says it must be surrendered to the council pound so we can conduct a search for the rightful owner".

"If that is unsuccessful, after 14 days it will be taken to the RSPCA, which will then become the rightful owner of the animal with the power to place it in a new home'."

Mr Parkes said the law could appear to be too bureaucratic but was in place in the interests of all pet owners. He said Ms Strong could surrender the dog after Easter without the fear of incurring a fine. It was then up to her and the RSCPA as to whether she had to buy the dog back.

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## Essential Oils for Flea & Tick Control

By Jeannie Thomason, The Whole Dog

As the warmer weather creeps up, we dog lovers start to worry about those tough, relentless survivors called fleas.

"Have you ever wondered why some dogs and cats have severe flea problems, while others are hardly bothered by the little pests? Fleas can be viewed as an indicator of an animal's general health. Parasites in general, and fleas in particular, are most attracted to the weak, unhealthy, or very young animal whose immune system is not functioning well. The long-term solution to a flea problem is to reduce your pet's susceptibility to fleas by improving his/her health." - Jeffrey Levy, DVM

The biggest key to flea and tick prevention - and to your dog's overall health - is good nutrition. A healthy diet of fresh foods (NOT processed kibble or canned foods) will do a lot to keep pests away.

The commonly used chemical based products used in over the counter and veterinary prescribed flea and tick collars or spray and even topical drops deterrents have been found that in large enough doses can cause breathing problems, tremors, vomiting, skin irritations, permanent nerve damage and death. Some dogs experience hair loss and sores around the neck from flea collars or where the topical drops have been applied, plus the chemical fumes given off by these products can negatively affect everyone in the house.

Did you know that your dog's liver and kidneys are adversely affected by the use of commercial flea products such as frontline and advantage, chemical de-wormers and even heartworm drugs? The toxic chemicals in these products will eventually result in renal failure (kidney failure), liver damage to the point of the liver becoming unable to filter the blood and complete liver failure.

Contaminated blood circulating throughout the body day after day will most definitely contribute to other more complicated health issues, such as diabetes and arthritis to name two of the most common long term side effects.

These toxic drugs can also cause severe skin rashes, loss of hair, epileptic seizures, brain damage. The list of adverse side effects amazingly goes on and on. Still people continue to use these drugs because they don't know there is a better, simpler, less expensive, safer way.

There is a safe effective alternative for your dog!

You can do it without chemicals!

Many plants produce essential oils as their own survival technique to repel bugs This makes essential oils great insect repellents for animals (and humans, too). Essential oils are all natural, mild and will leave your dog's coat healthy and vibrant. For centuries, they have been used in a variety of ways to repel fleas, ticks and other biting insects. These oils are nature's own God given repellents. They

ward off unwanted hitchhikers. Some of the more common oils that act as flea and insect repellents are citronella, cedar, peppermint, rosemary, eucalyptus, lemongrass, and lavender.

Essential oil formulations will need to be applied more frequently than synthetic pesticides, but the benefits far outweigh the exposure to harsh chemical smells and toxic side effects. They are great for misting your dog's legs (and your own) any time that you go out where fleas would be likely to be found.

## Basic instructions

Ten to 20 drops of any of the above oils or combination of the same may be put in a dark colored, glass, pint sized bottle with spring water or distilled water. This is used for misting your dog daily and it can also be sprayed on bedding or around doorways and baseboards in your home to keep fleas out.

Shake well before each use.

## Uses:

- 🔔 Mist the dog before going to training class and upon returning as well. You won't pick up fleas from other members of the training class.
- 🔔 Spray the area where you set up your exercise pens and crates at the dog shows. Fleas will choose to go to the neighbors instead. The dogs themselves can be misted when you leave home and again before returning from the show.
- 🔔 Set the squirt bottle near the door, so that you can mist the dog (and your own pants legs) when you take the dog for a walk. No hitchhikers will come home with your or your pet from public places.
- 🔔 If you have a dog with flea allergies, it can get instant relief while you are ridding the environment of fleas.
- 🔔 For dogs that are bothered by flies biting their ears, cover the eyes with your hand and mist the ear area. Flies will stay away and the ears can heal.
- 🔔 Mist your own hair and clothing when outside during mosquito season. The oils set up a very pleasant smelling barrier, so that you (and your party) won't be bothered by these pesky insects.

For longer term control, a few drops may be placed on a cotton flea collar and put around the dog's neck. Renew the oil whenever the aroma starts to fade. You can also put a few drops of one or more of the oils into the palms of your hands, rub your palms together and apply to the dog's coat and skin starting at the neck and down the front legs, then down the back to the base of the tail and down the back legs.

**Caution:** I only recommend Young Living Essential Oils due to their high quality and purity! To order Young Living Essential Oils, call 800-371-2928 and use the referral and Sponsor number 719671. For more information on the importance of essential oil quality [click here](#).

## About the Author

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## Fun Stuff - Dog Letters to God

- 🐶 Dear God, How come people love to smell flowers, but seldom, if ever, smell one another? What are they thinking?
- 🐶 Dear God, When we get to Heaven, can we sit on your couch? Or is it the same old story?
- 🐶 Dear God, Excuse me, but why are there cars named after the jaguar, the cougar, the mustang, the colt, the stingray, and the rabbit, but not one named for a dog? How often do you see a cougar riding around? We dogs love a nice ride! I know every breed cannot have its own model, but it would be easy to rename the Chrysler Eagle the Chrysler Beagle!
- 🐶 Dear God, If a dog barks his head off in the forest and no human hears him, is he still a bad dog?
- 🐶 Dear God, Is it true that in Heaven, dining room tables have on-ramps?
- 🐶 Dear God, More meatballs, less spaghetti, please.
- 🐶 Dear God, When we get to the Pearly Gates, do we have to shake hands to get in?
- 🐶 Dear God, We dogs can understand human verbal instructions, hand signals, whistles, horns, clickers, beepers, scent IDs, electromagnetic energy fields, and Frisbee flight paths. What do humans understand?
- 🐶 Dear God, Are there dogs on other planets, or are we alone? I have been howling at the moon and stars for a long time, but all I ever hear back is the beagle across the street.
- 🐶 Dear God, Are there mailmen in Heaven? If there are, will I have to apologize?
- 🐶 Dear God, When my family eats dinner they always bless their food. But they never bless mine. So, I've been wagging my tail extra fast when they fill my bowl. Have you noticed my own blessing?
- 🐶 Dear God, I've always lived at the shelter and I have everything I need. But many of the cats here have names and I don't. Could you give me a name please? It would be good for my self-esteem.
- 🐶 Dear God, The new terrier I live with just peed on the Oriental rug and I have a feeling my family might blame me 'cuz they think I'm jealous of this stupid dog. Since they have no sense of smell, how can I convince them I'm innocent? Does PetsMart sell lie detectors?

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## The Weird & the Wonderful

### Now This is Lazy .....

A dog owner too lazy to walk his pet has lost his driving licence after getting caught walking the animal while driving his car.

Paul Railton, of County Durham, wound down the window of his Nissan Navara to exercise his lurcher when police caught him. Officers reported seeing him driving at 5mph along a country lane.

A cyclist alerted police that two men were dragging a dog along from a car. She said: "The driver was hanging on to the dog's lead through the driver window, approaching a blind summit."

Railton was told to put the dog in the back of the car and was allowed to go, but five days later police turned up at his home to charge him. A police statement read out to the court said that "due to the narrow road there was no area for other cars to pass".

Railton pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity. "He accepts it was a silly thing to do and there was an element of laziness. He does not usually drive in a such a manner," his defence lawyer said.

Railton, who is unemployed, was fined £66 and ordered to pay £43 costs and a legal surcharge of £15. He had three penalty points added to his licence and, because he already had nine, this meant he was banned from driving for six months.

After the hearing, Railton is reported as saying: "I'm not bothered. I knew I'd get three points. I might save myself some money not having a car".

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