



Puppy Temperament and Personality Tests Measuring Puppy's Stability, Shyness, Friendliness and More

by Amy Shojai

Think of puppy temperament testing as a canine crystal ball used to identify your puppy's personality in order to predict, and so manage, potential problems. Temperament tests can measure a puppy's stability, shyness, aggressiveness, and friendliness.

Every pup in a litter is different, and where you find your puppy also impacts behavior. Figuring out a puppy's potential helps to match it to the best owner and helps owners pick the perfect match. There are ranges of behaviors, of course, and some pups may be more or less shy or outgoing. But if the pup shows unprovoked aggression, panics and cannot overcome this, or exhibits strong avoidance, then that is a pup that may need more rehabilitation work or socialization than most owners are able to provide.

Kinds Of Tests

There is no one-size-fits-all test. Some tests are used by breeders to assess Schutzhund performance or tracking ability. Shelters use temperament tests to measure general temperament and suitability for adoption. Others may test dogs for their therapy or assistance dog potential. Most also test for aggression.

Ask your breeder or shelter what temperament tests, if any, have been performed and the result. They may use these tests to help choose a puppy for you based on what you are looking for, your experience with dogs and the type of home environment you are able to provide. For instance, an experienced dog owner would do better handling a pushy puppy, and a fenced yard might be required for a "nosy" breed obsessed with running off after scents.

Tests Are Not Perfect

Personality and temperament are not set in stone at birth. Early experience, socialization, development and the consequences of learning all impact your puppy's future behavior.

Resistance to handling, possessive aggression, territorial vocalization, excessive reactivity and many forms of fear might not emerge until the dog is older. Shelter pups (especially older ones) you may test can display fearfulness or aggression in the shelter, but then, behave very differently once out of the stress of an overwhelming environment.

You can start testing puppies as early as 7 weeks old, but, if you can test puppies as late as possible (at 3 to 4 months) your tests may be more accurate. A good thing with these tests is that if you can recognize the potential for negative behaviors

(*"Puppy Temperament..." cont.*)

from assessment indicators, then you can diminish or negate these behaviors with interventions such as socialization and proper training.

Five Puppy Assessment Tests

You can perform these simple puppy assessments for puppies over age 7 weeks.

Test No. 1 for independent-mindedness: Cradle the puppy on its back like a baby, place a hand gently on its chest, and look directly in its eyes. Pups that accept this handling are considered biddable, while those that resist are more likely to be independent-minded.

Test No. 2 for independent-mindedness: Hold pup suspended under its armpits with hind legs dangling, while looking directly in its eyes. Those pups that submit are said to have a low score for willfulness, while those that struggle may want to do things their own way.

Noise sensitivity test: Drop keys or a tin pan to test the dog for noise sensitivity. Sound sensitivity in puppies is a strong emotional or physical response to a sudden or loud sound within the environment. You want the dog to react and acknowledge that the sound occurred, but the puppy should not be cowering or apparently losing its mind.

People-friendly test: See how the pup reacts to a stranger entering the room or to being left alone in the room. Does the puppy run and greet or cower and cry? You want a puppy to be fully socialized with people by 3 months of age.

One more test that is helpful for assessing older puppies can go a long way to help you ascertain whether a dog is more independent, prone to attachment issues and separation anxiety, or more calm and easygoing. Place the individual puppy with his breeder (or shelter worker) in a room with new toys, and see how the pup reacts when the person leaves. *Pups usually fall into three broad categories:*

Independent: The puppy could not care less when the person left or came back. This may indicate a tendency toward more independent, willful behavior or improper bonding.

Super needy: The dog whined and ignored toys when the person left and clung to the person when present. This may suggest over-attachment issues that can be predictive of future separation anxiety.

Middle of the road: The pup paid attention to the person coming and going, but was not traumatized and enjoyed the toys. This suggests a healthy attachment and an easygoing personality without the need for either firmness or coddling. □



Five Training Commands to SAVE Your Dog’s Life

— PetPav, Pet Insurance U

Imagine how you would feel if your dog ran into a busy street, ignoring your calls because he or she didn’t understand what you were trying to communicate?

Obedience training needs to be about safety, rather than tricks. Here are five ‘must-know’ obedience commands that you should start practicing now.

These 5 Commands Could Save Your Dog’s Life!

- #1. **Sit:** From stopping dogs at the curbside to keeping them from jumping up, “sit” puts you in control.
- #2. **Stay:** Keeps the dog in one spot so that you can catch up and put the leash on.
- #3. **Recall:** Stops the dog from running off or approaching unfriendly canines (or people).
- #4. **Leave it:** Prevents dogs from eating something they shouldn’t.
- #5. **Look:** Focuses the attention so dogs don’t see dangerous distraction.

The Lies Dog Trainers Tell

Lie: The whole “pack theory” idea is a myth and it doesn’t work for training dogs.

Fact: Positive reinforcement or reward-based learning with treats and praise is the best way to train your dog. This scientifically validated approach follows the laws of operant conditioning, which state that actions that are rewarded are likely to be repeated.

For example:

- Giving praise and/or a small treat for sitting makes a dog eager to repeat the action to earn the reward.
- Shouting at dogs when they bark actually rewards them with attention, making them more rather than less likely to bark in the future.

#1: How to Teach a Dog to “Sit”

Tiny but tasty treats are the perfect thing to hold dogs’ attention and reward them. Start out teaching your dog the steps listed below in a quiet room with few distractions.

Once the behavior has been reinforced, try rewarding sitting in a variety of locations so that the command will be followed regardless of the circumstances.

Here’s all you need to do: [1]

- Hold a treat between your finger and thumb, just in front of the dog’s nose.
- Let your dog sniff the treat (but not eat it).
- Raise the treat and move it slowly so that the dog’s nose follows it.
- When dogs track something this way, they naturally sit down.
- As soon as the dog is in a sitting position, say “sit”, in a pleasant but firm voice.
- Give the dog the treat along with lots of praise.
- Repeat these steps several times during each training session and whenever opportunities arise during the day, such as before feeding or putting on a leash.

When To Use “Sit”

“Sit” is a great way to put you back in control. Here are some situations where this command comes in handy: ↗

(“Five Training Commands...” cont.)

- **Curbside:** Training dogs to sit at the curb helps keep them from dashing out into the road.
- **Greeting:** Train your dog to greet visitors by sitting rather than jumping up.
- **Prevent Chasing:** Teaching dogs to sit in any situation means that you can stop them from chasing other pets or children.
- **Door Barging:** Training dogs to sit before leaving the house will help prevent them from running out the door.
- **Calming:** Sitting gives an over-excited dog a chance to calm down.

What If Your Dog Won’t Sit?

When a dog fails to follow this command:

- **Distractions:** Try reinforcing the behavior in a different room or area without a TV or other people or pets present.
- **Treats:** Make sure that the reward is a really tasty treat that the dog loves and will work for.
- **Technique:** Make sure that your hand isn’t too far away from the dog or moving too fast, and that the reward comes immediately after the behavior and is accompanied by praise.

What if Your Dog Sits At Home But Not Outside?

Failure to follow the command in unfamiliar situations could be due to:

- **Incorrect Associations:** A dog can come to associate obedience with only one particular location. For example, a dog that is always trained in the kitchen may link sitting to the presence of the refrigerator. The answer is to practice sitting in lots of different locations.
- **Distractions:** Young dogs, in particular, have short attention spans and are easily distracted. Keep practicing away from home but be sure to keep your voice gentle and friendly. It may help to use special, extra-tasty treats when you are in unfamiliar places.

What If Your Dog Isn’t Motivated By Food?

A chowhound is usually easier to incentivize, but with some canine cunning, you can find the right motivator.

- **Try different treats:** Almost every dog has a weakness for something; you just have to work to discover what it is. Hint: very few dogs can pass up a slice of liver.
- **Try different rewards:** If food really doesn’t do it, then use something else the dog likes, such as a game of fetch or even just a whole lot of “who’s a good dog?”

#2 How to Teach a Dog to “Stay”

Teach this command after sitting, working first on the amount of time the dog stays, and then on the distance (rather than both time and distance at once). [1]

- Start with the dog in the sitting position at your side.
- While the dog is sitting, take one step away.
- Hold your palm out toward the dog and say “stay.”
- Wait a second or two, then step back toward the dog and deliver the reward.
- Gradually increase the interval between the command and the reward.

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(“Five Training Commands...” cont.)

- Once the dog learns to sit still for ten seconds or so, take another step away before giving the command.
- Gradually build up the “staying” distance between you and the dog.

When To Use “Stay”

Staying is important for convenience and safety in such situations as:

- **Attaching a leash:** This command gives you time to keep your dog in place until and while you put a leash on.
- **Avoiding danger:** Staying in one spot helps keep a dog from unsafe situations such as running in front of cars and getting into fights with other dogs.
- **Control:** A dog that knows how to stay can be prevented from such undesirable behaviors as grabbing food or jumping up on people.

What If Your Dog Won’t Stay?

Failure to follow this command means a failure in training, so review the steps outlined above:

- **Back to Basics:** Make sure that the sitting command has been thoroughly taught, and then slowly build up the amount of time that the dog stays. It might be that you are expecting too much too soon from your pooch.
- **Build Concentration:** Remember to work first on getting the dog to stay for a few seconds before working on distance.
- **Hide Frustration:** Never let your dog see that you are unhappy with the progress you are making; this just makes for more anxiety and encourages the dog to run over to you.

#3: How to Teach a Dog Recall Training

When a dog returns to your side on command, you have taught perfect recall. This is a crucial part of safety, and it allows you to exercise a dog without a leash.

- Puppies have a strong instinct to follow their owners, so reward this natural behavior. [1]
- Add the cue word “come” as the dog runs to you and deliver the reward together with lots of praise and/or a treat, thus associating the behavior with the reward.
- When training older animals, use a toy to attract the dog’s attention from only a short distance away and then shout “come” in an excited voice. When the dog reaches you, give a reward and the toy. [2]
- Repeat these steps often and at every opportunity. For example, say “come” at the dog’s feeding time so that dinner becomes a reward.

When To Use Recall

- When a dog is off the leash and you spot a potential danger.
- To prevent a dog from running off.
- To get a dog back in the house or the car after play.

What If Your Dog Ignores My Recall?

- **Persistence Pays:** Don’t give up. Some dogs are slow learners, especially with recall.
- **Ultra-Tasty Treats:** Use your dog’s most favorite treat so that the word “come” is strongly linked to an irresistible treat.
- **Remove Distractions:** Start training in a place with as few distractions as possible to reinforce the habit of responding before moving to more challenging environments.
- **Never Punish:** Never, ever, scold your dog, no matter how long 7

(“Five Training Commands...” cont.)

it takes finally to return. Punishment makes being reunited an unpleasant experience that a dog will therefore seek to avoid. No matter how frustrated you become, welcome your dog with open arms and lots of praise so that there are only positive associations with recall.

- **Never Nag:** Avoid “nagging” your dog with repeated shouts to come. If you use a command too often, the dog will simply tune it out. Instead, keep the dog on a long leash during training until you are more confident with the recall command.

#4: How to Teach a Dog to “Leave It”

What would you do if your dog was about to bite into some rat poison? This is the kind of situation in which you need to be able to command your dog to “leave it!”

Learning this command takes some time since it must be done in stages, but it’s obviously worth the effort, since it could save your dog’s life. [3]

Training Your Dog to “Leave It” in 5 Easy Steps

Step 1: Interrupt your dog’s focus on a treat

- Have the dog sit. You will need a treat that is interesting, but nothing too tasty.
- Show this so-so treat in your hand, then close your fingers around it.
- Allow the dog to sniff your closed hand. The moment he looks away, say “leave it” and open your hand to deliver the reward.
- Once the dog associates looking away with receiving the treat, move on to Step 2.

Step 2: Have your dog look to your other hand for the reward

- For this step, you will need two treats, one of the so-so kind and one that is especially tasty.
- Hide the exciting treat in one hand behind your back, then show the dog the boring treat with your other hand and proceed as in Step 1.
- This time, when the dog looks away and you say “leave it,” deliver the hidden super tasty treat as the reward. The message here is that leaving one object of interest leads to a far more tasty reward.
- Once the dog reliably leaves the so-so treat alone and waits for a reward, move on to Step 3.

Step 3: Have your dog ignore a treat on the floor

- Instead of holding the so-so treat in your hand, place it on the floor, but keep a finger on it to keep the dog from grabbing it.
- Say “leave it,” and when the dog looks up from the so-so treat, deliver the tasty treat as a reward.
- Build up the dog’s willingness to leave things alone by moving the so-so treat slightly further from your hand and removing your finger. Be sure to give lots of praise when the dog does “leave it!” and looks for a reward instead.

When Should You Use “Leave It”?

From that dead bird in the park to your tennis shoe to a diamond engagement ring, the “leave it” command is for

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(“Five Training Commands...” cont.)

anything that you don’t want your dog to chew up or swallow.

What If Your Dog Won’t “Leave It”?

- Some dogs stumble at the first hurdle. If your dog is completely focused on the so-so treat in your hand and keeps trying to grab it, try using an even less tasty treat, such as a piece of regular kibble. Attract the dog’s attention, but not to the point of obsession.

- Other dogs stumble at the second step. If your dog won’t shift attention from the first hand, then make the second treat even tastier (consider cheese or sausage or some other delicacy reserved for special occasions) and make sure that the dog sees and sniffs it, and then take away the first treat.

- Sometimes leaving things on the floor is a step too far. Try covering the treat on the floor with a cupped hand, and once the dog learns to keep away from your hand, then try holding the treat on the floor with just a finger.

- Some dogs figure out that there is a difference between training and real life, and won’t leave things away from home on walks. The key here is to beef up the training by doing the steps in different locations. It can also help to use different items as your so-so treat, thereby reinforcing the idea that “leave it” leads to a sure-fire reward, while the so-so reward is not worth the effort.

#5: How to Teach Your Dog Eye Contact with “Look”

“Look” is a command for getting your dog’s attention focused on you, rather than on some distraction off in the distance. To teach this command, follow these steps:

- Hold out a tasty treat near the end of your sitting dog’s nose.
- As your dog watches the treat, slowly move it up toward your forehead and eyes.
- While your dog’s attention is focused on the hand holding the treat, say “look.”
- Count to ten, then give the treat to the dog.
- With practice, the dog’s attention will automatically move to your forehead and eyes when you say “look.”

When To Use “Look”

- This command is for situations where you spot a potential problem, such as something your dog fears or is aggressive toward.
- Use “look” to distract a dog from something that might set off barking.
- Getting your dog to “look” can give an unfortunate cat a chance to slink off without being chased.

What If Your Dog Won’t “Look”?

- Make sure that your dog is rock solid at sitting and is able to resist the urge to jump at the treat before moving it toward your head.
- For dogs that lack concentration, use a super tasty treat.
- If your dog looks away too soon, start with just one second before delivering the reward and build up the time from there.

Dog training is an ongoing effort but sticking with it will improve your relationship with your pooch and make your time together more enjoyable.

Here are the most important tips to come back to during your dog training:

Always remember to...

- Keep training fun for both you and your dog.
- Make your training sessions brief and frequent, for instance five minutes four times a day (this is much more effective than fewer, longer sessions). ↗

(“Five Training Commands...” cont.)

- End each training session on a positive note with a command that your dog already knows.

- Train every day.

- Be liberal with praise.

- Never punish mistakes; just let them go and try again with something less tricky.

References:

[1] The Happy Puppy Handbook. Pippa Mattinson

[2] Total Recall. Pippa Mattinson

[3] Leave it! Positively Victoria Sitwell

For more information and advice regarding your dog, check out more articles on our Dog Blog (<https://www.onlynaturalpet.com/>). □



The Best Exercises and Activities For Dogs and Cats

— Only Natural Pet

We tend to emphasize nutrition, and rightly so because it truly is the foundation of good health. However, one of the other great cornerstones of vibrant health and long life is exercise. Moderate, regular exercise will help keep your pet at a healthy weight and keep the joints flexible. It also provides mental stimulation, which is important for all pets, but especially those who spend most of their time indoors.

Exercise for Dogs

Big dogs make great hiking companions, especially here in rugged Colorado, where we’ve joked for years about the Labrador Retriever being the “state dog.” Most medium-sized and large dogs seem able to handle all kinds of weather. But it’s easy to let a smaller dog become a couch potato, going out only to answer the call of nature and hurrying right back in. They’re not built for long treks, and they can disappear completely in a foot or two of snow!

The first step with any dog is to make sure you have the right collar or harness. Studies have shown that excessive pressure from a neck collar can damage a dog’s trachea (windpipe), so a walking harness may be a better choice for dogs that pull. Small dogs do exceptionally well with supportive harnesses.

Of course, a good leash that’s sturdy and easy to handle is always a good investment!

Don’t forget to prepare for walking in the dark. The Ruff Wear Beacon Safety Light is designed to increase your dog’s visibility to cars to increase the safety of night time walks.

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("The Best Exercises and Activities..." cont.)

If it's icy outside, or if your dog has furry paws that snow can pack into, consider canine footwear to protect those tender toes. Pawz Biodegradable Natural Dog Boots are an easy choice for everyday outings.

When you can't get out for a walk, there are many fun, interactive toys that will keep your dog entertained and moving, like the West Paw Design Zogoflex Jive, the Babble Ball Interactive Toy, and IncrediBubbles.

Exercise for Cats

Cats need exercise too, and while it's possible to train a cat to walk with a cat harness and leash, at-home interactive play is the best way to keep your cat's mind and body engaged and resilient. A 15-minute session once or twice a day is ideal.

To help your cat get the most from these interactive toys, the key is to "BE the prey." Use your imagination, and have fun! If you're a mouse, run, jump and hide; if you're a bird, flutter and dive.

Always let your cat catch the prey in the end, and follow up with a high-protein treat such as canned food.

This not only exercises your cat's physical side, but also satisfies the mental/emotional "hunter" part—an important consideration in multi-cat homes to prevent aggressive behavior. It's also a terrific way to help chubby kitties lose weight, as well as to prevent boredom and the unwanted behaviors that sometimes go with it!

Importance of YOU in Playtime

When you start an exercise program for your pet, use the same common-sense precautions you would with any other new activity. Don't go hog wild all at once; your pet can get sore muscles and even cause damage to joints, because they don't know when to stop and will usually keep going as long as you can. Build up your pet's endurance gradually, and watch for signs that he's had enough (wanting to lie or sit down, or showing any degree of labored breathing).

You'll notice that all of these suggestions have one thing in common — you! Sure, you can leave toys out for your pets to play with, but their greatest joy is to play with you, so please make room for that quality time with your best buddy. □



Finding Your Perfect Pooch:

A Guide To The 12+ Best Apartment Dogs

by Heidi Thiel

Just because you're living in a small rental space, doesn't mean you have to go without your favorite furry companion. However, it is important that you put thought and consideration into the type of dog you're going to be bringing home, as not all breeds are well-suited to apartment living. Whether they're extra rambunctious or bark at every person who walks by, most rental agreements stipulate that pets are not allowed to damage rental property or disturb neighbors. Read on to learn about the ideal traits found in the best apartment dogs.

Traits in the Best Dogs for Apartment Living

In general, you will want to look for pups that don't mind being indoors for most of the day and living in a small space. However, this doesn't mean that you're limited to tiny terriers as many big dogs are actually suited to apartment living as well.

Illustrated list of best traits in apartment dogs

Energy Level – Almost any dog is going to be unruly as a puppy, but it's important to choose a breed that tends to mellow out as they get to be 1–2 years old. Dogs that need a lot of physical and mental exercise, such as Border Collies, would not be a good choice. You'll want to pick a breed that is satisfied with just morning and evening walks and is fine to snooze during the day, unless you can afford a dog walking service.

Barking Tendency – Another big consideration is your dog's tendency to bark. If they woof a couple times when you come home every day that's okay, but there are some breeds that will bark at anything and everything throughout the day and will likely drive your neighbors crazy. Little dogs are usually the worst offenders here, such as cairn and Yorkshire terriers.

Friendliness to Strangers – Dogs that are very territorial and act threateningly when their space is invaded are another bad choice for apartment living. You are likely going to be running into neighbors in elevators and hallways, so the dog you choose is going to need to meet strange people every so often. A couple of the more territorial dog breeds include Rottweilers and Doberman pinschers.

Attachment Style – Sometimes, a dog's love can be a little too much. Unless you work from home, you won't want to choose a dog that's going to get overly attached to you. They will be miserable during the day while you're gone, and their constant whining will be sure to bug your neighbors. Some breeds known for separation anxiety include German Shepherds and Cocker Spaniels.

Now that you know which traits to look for in your perfect pooch, here are our recommendations for the best apartment dogs by size.

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("Finding Your Perfect Pooch" cont.)

Best Small Dogs for Apartment Living

These little pups are the perfect size for apartment living, and won't yip and yap at every little noise in the city.

1. Bichon Frise — Who wouldn't fall in love with these friendly snowballs? Bichons are known for their sunny personalities and happy-go-lucky attitudes, and of course their soft, poofy white fur. (Weight: 13–17 pounds; Lifespan: 15 years; Traits: Curious friendly, happy; Doggy Detail: Bichon Frise is French for "curly lap dog")

2. Boston Terrier — This goofy little gentleman makes friends wherever he goes, and his short stature and calm nature make him an ideal dog for city living. Weight: 15-25 pounds; Lifespan: 12 years; Traits: People-oriented, comedic, jaunty; Doggy Detail: They were the first official dog type bred in the U.S.)

3. Corgi — The Pembroke Welsh corgi reached internet fame for a reason — their outgoing attitudes and stout bodies are both adorable and hilarious. (Weight: 25 – 30 pounds; Lifespan: 12 years; Traits: Lively, athletic, sensitive; Doggy Detail: Legend has it that they were magical steeds ridden by fairies)

4. French Bulldog — One of the most well-loved breeds in the U.S., the Frenchie is known for its over-large ears, compact body, and strange but oh-so-cute face. In recent years, this breed has become increasingly popular with city-dwellers in particular. (Weight: 20 – 25 pounds; Lifespan: 10 years; Traits: Alert, playful, companionable; Doggy Detail: They are sometimes known to "sing" along to music)

Best Medium-Sized Dogs for Apartment Living

If lap dogs aren't your thing, there are plenty of medium-sized dogs that can thrive in the city as well.

5. Barbet — Originating in medieval France, today the Barbet is one of the most beloved family dog breeds. Barbets are instantly recognizable for their huge mop of curly fur and energetic nature. (Weight: 35 – 60 pounds; Lifespan: 12 years; Traits: Intelligent, sweet, calm; Doggy Detail: They were bred for duck hunting and still have webbed paws)

6. Basset Hound — The basset hound is an American classic, known for its endearing droopy ears, sad eyes, and hefty little legs. Though its bark can be alarming, a well-trained basset hound is the perfect apartment companion. (Weight: 45 – 65 pounds; Lifespan: 12 years; Traits: Loyal, steadfast, agreeable; Doggy Detail: They have one of the strongest senses of smell in the dog world)

7. Bulldog — The iconic face of the bulldog can't be mistaken for any other breed. Though they do enjoy a lazy day spent inside, they also love daily walks and exercise around the city. (Weight: 40-50 pounds; Lifespan: 10 years; Traits: Docile, friendly, easygoing; Doggy Detail: They were originally bred to attack and bait bulls or other sport animals)

8. Japanese Spitz — This distinctive breed has a fox-like face and a pretty tail that curls over its back. They are true people-pleasers and are always looking to earn attention. (Weight: 15 – 25 pounds; Lifespan: 14 years; Traits: Playful, adventurous, loving; Doggy Detail: Their puppies can be hard to find, costing up to \$2,500)

Best Large Dogs for Apartment Living

For some people, it's go big or go home. Contrary to popular belief, there are actually a number of large dog breeds that are well-suited to small apartment living provided they get enough daily ↗

("Finding Your Perfect Pooch" cont.)

exercise.

9. Great Dane — Great Danes are imposing at a first glance, as they are taller than most people when standing on their hind legs. However, Great Danes are actually gentle giants and make excellent family companions. (Lifespan: 8 years; Traits: Gentle, patient, people-pleaser; Doggy Detail: They were once thought to ward off evil ghosts and spirits)

10. Greyhound — Bred for their incredible speed, these lanky, lovable dogs tend to mellow out when they reach adulthood and make ideal home pets with sufficient walks every day. (Weight: 60-70 pounds; Lifespan: 12 years; Traits: Independent, gentle, sweet; Doggy Detail: They have a noble history dating back to the Ancient Egyptians)

11. Mastiff — Mastiffs are one of the biggest dog breeds out there, with many far outweighing their owners. Though they are powerful, they're also very sweet dogs and you can get lost in their soulful, wrinkle-protected eyes. (Weight: 130-230 pounds; Lifespan: 8 years; Traits: Patient, kind, protective; Doggy Detail: The world record for heaviest dog was a mastiff at 343 pounds)

12. Poodle — Despite their reputation as fancy show dogs, poodles are actually great companions for city-dwellers because of their intelligence and adaptability. Plus, there are three different sizes of poodles (standard, miniature, and toy) if you're confined to a very small apartment. (Weight (standard): 45-65 pounds; Lifespan: 14 years; Traits: Intelligent, active, adaptable; Doggy Detail: Their fur never stops growing, unlike dogs that shed)

Apartment Pet Honorable Mentions

Many landlords don't allow dogs because they are relatively high-maintenance pets, so if you find yourself in this situation there are plenty of other animals that make excellent companions.

Cats: The obvious alternative and rival of dogs, many landlords will choose to allow cats because they are quiet and generally lowkey animals. Though they have a reputation for being aloof, many cats are just as cute and cuddly as dogs. Their small size, indoor potty training, and independence are also great "cat"sets.

Bearded Dragons: If you have a fur allergy or a landlord that is very restrictive about pets, you may want to give reptiles a try. Bearded dragons have become popular family pets over the last decade because of their easy care routine and sociability. However, they are not for the squeamish as they will need to be fed live insects to remain healthy.

Tarantulas: Speaking of squeamish, tarantulas actually make excellent pets despite their fearsome reputation. These furry behemoths are pretty cute once you get used to them, and easy to care for as long as you

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Why Does My Cat Scratch Around Its Food Bowl?

A common mistake cat owners make is that when their cat swipes their paw on the floor around their food dish they think that they are covering up the food like they would their poop in a litter box. Many cat owners assume this is a clear sign that the cat isn't interested in the food. This assumption is inaccurate.

Here is why:

What Does the Scratching Mean?

Cats have been noticed to scratch around their food bowls even when their bowls are placed inside the house, on tiles or carpets. Even though there is no soil to scratch or move around, this behavior remains present in cats because it is related to an instinct.

In the wild, felines must hunt to eat. In spite of the fact that they hunt and eat in packs, there is always leftover food after they are done with their meal. It is extremely important that they bury their leftovers to cover their tracks. This way, other predators can't link the trail of carcasses to their whereabouts.

All felines are born with a full set of instincts meant to keep them safe in the wild. This is also true when it comes to cats. They may not need to use this type of instinctual behavior as long as they live in a loving home, but when push comes to shove, cats know how to keep safe.

Do Cats Try to Bury Their Food to Eat Later?

Another theory commonly used to explain this behavior in cats is that felines bury their leftovers to come back and continue eating. However, this is false because felines are not scavengers. They typically feed on as much of a carcass as they can eat in one meal after which they stop. Felines, including house cats, have a very strong sense of smell that can detect food that is not fresh. Their survival instinct will keep them away from food that is not fresh so that they do not get sick.

Some cats stick to scratching the tiles around their food bowl, but other cats have actually adapted to their environment. If they cannot bury their leftovers in the ground, they will keep it out of sight by covering it. Cat owners have reported seeing them cover their bowls with anything from paper towels from the kitchen to the towels in their bathroom. The explanation is the same, but the method is quite ingenious.

Should This Behavior Be Stopped?

While it can be somewhat annoying for cat owners to have their pets scratching their carpets or tiles after every meal, this behavior is completely harmless for the cat. So, unless carpets or furniture are damaged, there is no need for the owners to intervene in any way.

Is There Anything That Can Be Taken Out of This Behavior?

Even though there is no need to correct the scratching/covering behavior, there is one aspect that cat owners might want to pay attention to. As mentioned above, cats only bury their leftovers. ↗

(“Why Does My Cat Scratch...” cont.)

This means that the cat may be getting more food than it can eat in a single meal. Pet owners must check how much food the cat should be getting to prevent obesity and other health issues.

So, what does it mean when a cat tries to cover up their food bowl? Nothing more than the fact that it is a feline fully equipped for the wild. Have you ever seen your cat scratching around its food bowl after a meal? What about covering up the bowl? If you have, tell us the story in a comment.

If you leave food out all day, try putting it in puzzle feeders instead. This way they will have to “hunt” for their meal, which will distract them from covering and give them some mental stimulation! ☐

FIVE REALLY COOL CAT FACTS

1. Abraham Lincoln was definitely a ‘cat person.’ He once even famously proclaimed that his cat Dixie, one of two he kept in the White House, was smarter than his “whole cabinet.” He didn't mean it literally, of course, but I think we all have days when we'd rather deal with cats than people.

2. When cats jump (or fall) from high places, they shape their body like a parachute to slow their descent. That's why they often walk away from major tumbles relatively unscathed and have such a good track record of landing on their feet. Please...don't set your kitty up for a fall just to see them do this!

3. Most male cat's are left-pawed, while most female cats are right-pawed. Though, just like humans, some cats are ambidextrous. (Can you tell if your cat is a righty or a lefty? Watch them for a bit to see if you can spot their “dominant” paw!)

4. Did you know that cats are the most common four-legged pet in the U.S? It's true. According to the latest data, they now rank just slightly ahead of dogs! But, while being a cat owner may not be the most exclusive club to be part of, it's certainly a healthy one since studies show that having a cat may reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke by up to a third.

Oh, and the “cat lady” stereotype? It's hogwash because a 2017 survey found that the MAJORITY of cat people in the U.K. are now male!

5. Cats are basically furry little machines. They purr at the same frequency as an idling diesel engine and can run at speeds of up to 30 mph (for comparison, the world's fastest human, Usain Bolt, has a record speed of 27.8 mph). Pretty cool, right? ☐



Litter Boxes?

by Dr. Marty Goldstein

You already know how important it is to make your kitty's bed comfortable. After all, your cat sleeps up to 16 hours a day. But what about their LITTER BOX? It turns out, making your cat's litter box comfy is just as important. Even though they're just jumping in and out to do their business.

If your cat doesn't find their litter box convenient or comfortable, it can make them feel stressed or anxious. In some cases, they may even go to the bathroom outside of the litter box, or even worse, hold it. Which can lead to some serious health issues.

Good news though: There are a few easy ways to make your kitty's bathroom serene and pristine. That way, you can make your cat's litter box visits easy and comfortable.

Here's how to "Feng Shui" your cat's litter box area:

Tip #1 — Declutter and remove any obstacles: Nobody likes using a bathroom in cramped quarters so make sure your cat's litter box is easy to enter and exit.

Take a look at the area. If the litter box seems too close to nearby furniture, or it's backed-up behind a door, this might be too cramped for your kitty.

Similarly, make sure the area is clutter-free so your cat can easily hop in and out when they're doing their business.

Tip #2 — Make the space "light and airy": Two words: sunlight and ventilation!

If possible, try placing your cat's litter box near a window. This way, you can easily crack the window for fresh air AND give the area some sunlight. By adding some airflow and letting some sun in, you can make the area much more inviting for your furry friend.

Tip #3 — Add some cat-friendly greenery: Plants don't just give the space some atmosphere, they also help purify the air. That's right. By converting carbon dioxide into fresh oxygen, plants naturally help remove "smelly" toxins from the air. Try setting up a plant near your cat's litter box or even hanging one.

Just make sure to choose plants that aren't toxic to your cat, in case they take a nibble. (Spider plants, Boston ferns, and Prayer plants are all great options.)

Tip #4 — Keep it fresh: This one seems like a no-brainer, but it's up to you to keep your cat's litter box fresh with regular cleanings. That means scooping the litter box at least once or twice a day.

But even with regular scoopings, it's a good idea to do a full litter replacement every 3 weeks. This means dumping their old litter, scrubbing the box with hot water and unscented dish soap, and replacing the box with fresh litter.

Note: Using unscented dish soap is key. You see, your kitty's nose is very sensitive, and if they don't like how the soap smells, they might be less enthusiastic about using their litter box.

Even if your cat isn't showing extreme signs of discomfort (like "going" outside the box), I'm positive they'll appreciate these small changes to their environment. □



Two Ways To Get Your Cat's FULL Attention!

by Dr. Marty Goldstein

Throughout my years as a veterinarian, I've met some pretty incredible cats with some pretty great names to match. So when Banfield Pet Hospital (one of the largest veterinary practices in the world) rounded-up the names of their patients and released The Most Popular Kitty Names of 2019, I thought it'd be fun to share it with you!

The Most Popular Kitty Names of 2019 were: #1: Luna, #2: Bella, #3: Kitty, #4: Oliver, #5: Lucy, #6: Leo, #7: Charlie, #8: Shadow, #9: Simba and #10: Milo.

Pretty cute stuff, right? Did you see your kitty's name on the list?

What's interesting is a few of these cat names also happen to be popular baby names of 2019 as well, like Oliver and Luna. Which really shows how we consider our feline companions true "fur babies." (And also makes me wonder when I'm going to run into a cat named Marty!)

Of course, any cat name that's lovingly chosen is the perfect name, but a cat's name should also be EASY for them to hear.

So, if you're thinking of getting another kitty, or want to give your cat (another) cute nickname, there's ONE THING you should know: *Cats respond best to high-pitched noises.* That means felines commonly respond best to names that end in "eee" sounds, like Lucy or Charlie. Rather than names where the last syllable isn't emphasized, like Oliver or Shadow.

The reason has to do with feline evolution. Over time, feline ears became fine-tuned to high-pitched sounds like mouse squeaks and bird chirps so they could survive in the wild. With this in mind, if you want to pick a name that'll REALLY get your cat's attention, choose one that ends in an "eee" sound and call to them with a clear, high voice. (This concept is actually why my wife had named one of our cats Squeeki!)

That said, if your cat's name doesn't end in an "eee," I'm sure they have no problem coming to you when called.

(continued on next page)

(“Two Ways To Get Your Cat’s FULL Attention” cont.)

After all, the bond you share with your feline companion goes way beyond the field of sound.

If you ever find your cat isn’t responding when you say their name, they might just be struggling to hear the syllables. If this is the case, try giving them a nickname that ends with that squeaky “eee” sound. For example, if your cat’s name is Oliver, you can try calling, “Ollie!” and see if they respond. Or, try raising the pitch of your voice to sound squeakier, like how I call to my cat Miko.

Chances are, these little changes will make it much easier for your cat to hear their name, and they’ll come running whenever they hear you calling. □



Your Cat’s Worst Nightmare

by Dr. Marty Goldstein

Do you have a monster in your closet? You might not think so, but I bet your cat thinks you do. I’m talking, of course, about your vacuum cleaner. It might sound silly to you, but think about it from your kitty’s perspective—this weird thing is roaring and scooting around the room, and YOU seem to be fighting with it, pushing and pulling it all over the place.

It’s easy to see how your furry pal could be a little scared, right? And, because he doesn’t understand what’s actually happening, his only memory of the vacuum will be “I’m afraid!” So, even though your vacuum doesn’t actually hurt your cat... in his mind... “VACUUM = DANGER.”

This type of memory is called “associative memory,” and it’s the main way your cat recalls past experiences.

Fears like these aren’t just scary for your kitty, they can actually be bad for his health, too. You see, fear triggers the release of adrenaline and cortisol. And, these two STRESS hormones can drain your kitty’s immune system, making him vulnerable to viruses and other illnesses.

In fact, studies show stressed-out cats often have more health issues than calm, confident cats. So, it’s important to help your cat overcome his fears as soon as possible.

Here’s the good news: “Associative memories” can work both ways. YOU can teach your cat that the “Vacuum Monster” (or any other object that they fear) is actually harmless. And, *you can do it in five simple steps*. Here’s how...

Step 1: Let your cat see the vacuum when it’s turned off. For example, roll the vacuum out into the living room and leave it there for a while. Then, roll into the hallway, so your cat can experience it in a different area of the house. This lets your cat get used to the vacuum and explore it on his own.

Step 2: Play games around the vacuum. Play your kitty’s favorite games near the vacuum. His brain will release dopamine and ↗

(“Your Cat’s Worst Nightmare” cont.)

endorphins (the happy hormones) as he plays, and, he’ll begin to associate good feelings with the vacuum.

Step 3: Pretend to use the vacuum in front of your cat. It may sound silly, but don’t turn anything on...just roll the vacuum around. You’re showing your kitty that even when the vacuum moves, it doesn’t hurt you or him.

Step 4: Teach your cat that the vacuum can make good things happen. Start with short, three-second rounds of turning on the vacuum in another room. Ask a friend to work the vacuum while you sit in another room with your kitty and a handful of treats.

As soon as the vacuum starts, give your cat small bits of his treat, chin rubs and a ton of praise. This way, he’ll associate the roar of the vacuum with snuggles and yummy snacks.

Step 5: Time to introduce your kitty to the vacuum. Break some of your cat’s treats into pieces and keep them in your pocket. Roll the vacuum into the room with your cat and toss a few pieces of the treat in his direction. Then, start vacuuming. Toss a treat to your cat as you run the vacuum to reward him for staying in the room.

Note: If your cat tucks his tail or runs to hide on this, he’s still too afraid. I suggest you repeat the first four steps, and try “Step 5” again after a week or so. After all, you’re making happy memories with your kitty, not scary ones. And, although it may take a few sessions, pretty soon your cat won’t mind the vacuum because he’ll be too busy looking for treats!

Now, if your cat is fearful all the time (not just around vacuums) it’s a good idea to take him for a check-up with your vet to make sure everything’s okay. But, if it’s just the vacuum that spooks your cat, you can absolutely help them overcome their fear...simply by giving them good memories to associate with the “vacuum monster.” □



("Finding Your Perfect Pooch" cont.)

have a good-sized tank kept at the proper humidity. If you're looking for a low-key pet, tarantulas are ideal as it is not recommended that you handle them (for both your own safety and theirs).

Rats: You're telling us to bring more rats into the city? Yes! Though they do have a "garbage" reputation, rats are one of the best rodent pets a person could ask for. When not left to fend for themselves, they are actually quite clean creatures and many enjoy snuggling. They're also highly intelligent and easy to train. However, it's important to note that they are social creatures so it's recommended to have two rats to keep each other company.

Just because you live in a small apartment, doesn't mean you have to do without a beloved animal companion. It just takes a little extra time and research to find the right furry (or scaly) friend for you. Landlords looking to find the perfect tenants and pets for their rentals can visit TurboTenant's rental application (<https://www.turbotenant.com/rental-application/>) and tenant screening services (<https://www.turbotenant.com/tenant-screening/>). □

Never Do THIS Around Your Cat!

Cats enjoy the rustling sound of crumpled up paper, but did you know, there's ONE sound that can actually hurt your cat?

New studies find that certain noises, such as a metal spoon hitting a tile floor, a hammer striking a nail or even the sound of crushing tin foil can cause seizures in adult cats.

Your cat's very sensitive ears can pick up on high frequencies that you and I can't hear. This is important for felines in the wild who are hunting or trying to avoid being hunted. Your cat can hear high-pitched cries of baby rodents like alarm bells in their ears. And, they can hear a tree-branch creak as a predatory hawk takes off, looking for it's dinner.

But, in your home, your cat's "super ears" can be a pain... literally. Take crushing aluminum, for example. When the thin metal sheet bends and tears, it makes high-pitched sounds our ears can't detect.

Not only are those sounds annoying to your cat, they **can trigger a neurological and physical reaction** in your kitty...in the form of a **seizure**.

This is called a "feline audiogenic reflex seizure." Cats ages 15 years and up, as well as cats with impaired hearing, are the most at risk. It could be that, when your cat has lost (or never had) the ability to hear lower frequencies, their high frequency hearing is extra strong...

So, extremely high-pitched sounds have a much sharper impact on their ears. Of course, all cats will respond to loud sounds, so use your best judgement.

If your cat seems to have a strange reaction to a noise, visit your veterinarian right away to make sure everything's alright.

And, when you're cooking, maybe avoid using tinfoil entirely, or simply keep your kitty out of the kitchen area (especially if you have a cat over the age of 15, or who's hard of hearing.)

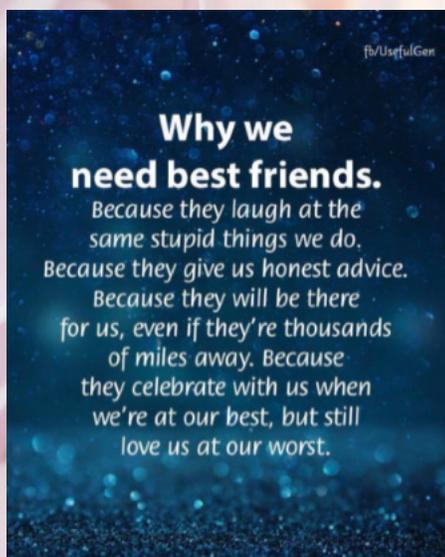
If you really want to protect your cat's sensitive ears and nerves, you can make them their own cat playlist. Cat purrs, meows, and other vocalizations are music to your cat's ears. And, cat-loving musicians and animal behaviorists are composing songs just for felines.

"Cat music" (yes, it's real) combines the vocals of cats with the melodies and tones of human instruments. These "cat songs" mimic the vocalizations and rhythms of your cat's natural "speech." In other words, these special songs may actually "speak" to your cat.

And, that's not all, scientists have found these "feline symphonies" are a way for your cat to relax and unwind—sort of like a daily meditation, or should I say meow-ditation?

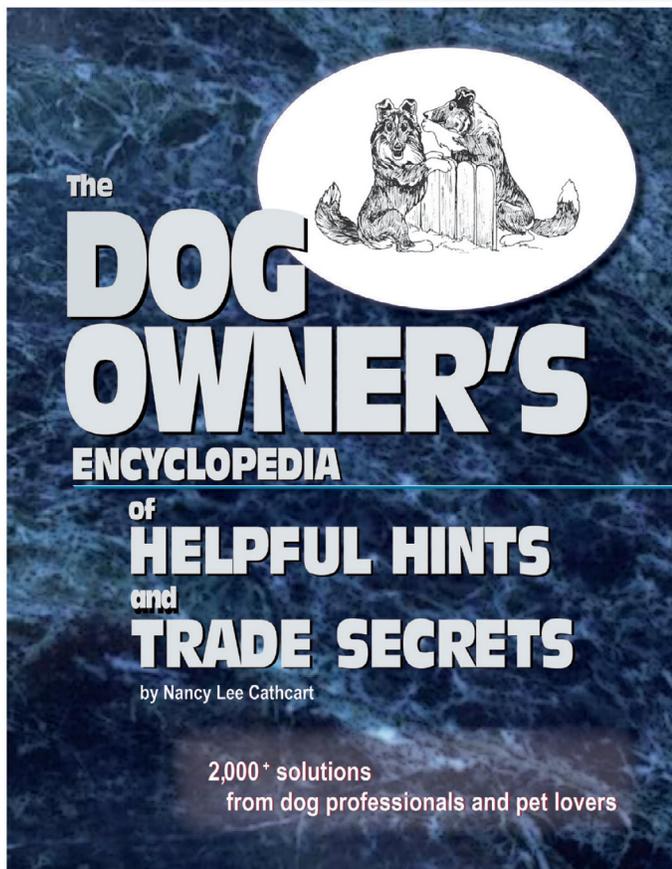
So, this music could be an easy way to protect your cat's sensitive ears from jarring noises, and can even help them relax when they're home alone. With just a quick internet search, you can find entire "cat albums" on YouTube for free, and you might even be able to find "music for cats" through a music streaming service.

And, who knows, these feline tunes might end up at the top of your playlist too, so don't be surprised if you and your kitty start listening together. □



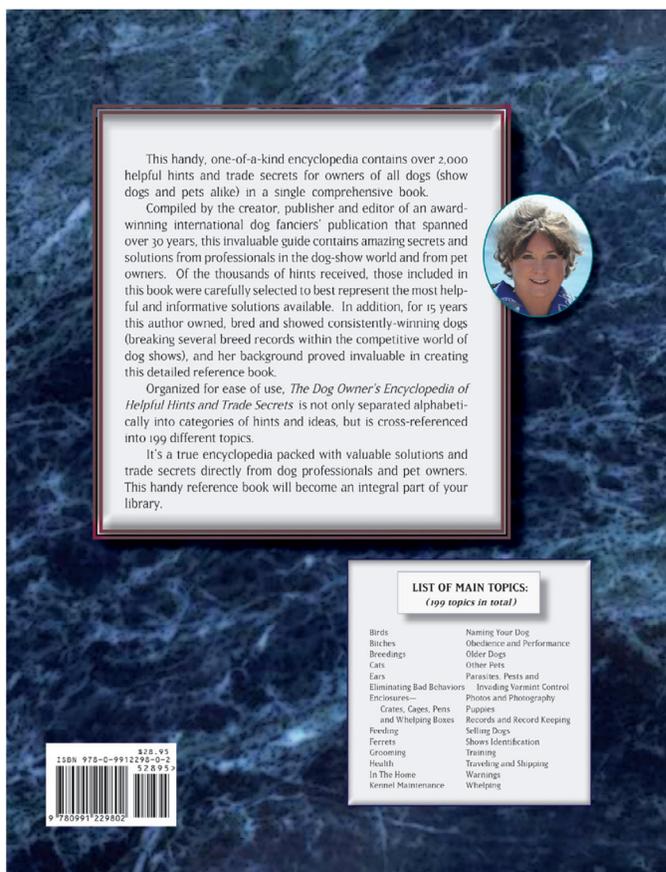
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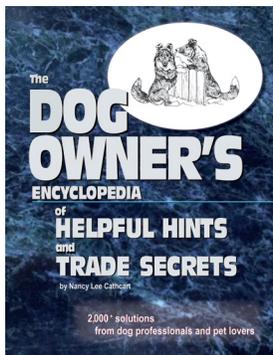
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