

# DOG TRACKS

Back to Training



# President's Welcome to Club

The club training year is underway and we expect a very busy year ahead.



The February obedience intake will exceed 40 new members.

Those of you new to the club will undertake our beginner's classes with the aim of helping you achieve your goals of establishing good relationships with your dogs, so that they are well-behaved and beyond that, well-trained. As you progress through the classes and gather your skills, you may look to other activities in our club, such as agility and flyball.

Always welcome are experienced agility and flyballers who may have come from other clubs. You will find these activities rewarding and setting you up for competitive activities, such as trials.

If you are interested in competition in obedience, agility or flyball, please speak with your instructors at either obedience or agility and they can give you some guidance as to how you may be involved.

All the best for the training year ahead!

PS Don't forget to keep an eye on your dogs for paralysis ticks, which can make them very ill, and please don't leave dogs parked in a car in hot weather.

*Peter Coulthart*

with editorial help

from his English Setter "Venice"







# Training Treats



Always bring moist training treats to class cut into tiny pieces, you don't want your dog to have to chew and you want to be able to "jackpot" (several treats one after the other for really good work). Even big dogs should have very small treats.

Liver treats, even kibble can be used at home but in class you want to offer really yummy, high value treats such as roast chicken, kangaroo sausage, cheese etc. Check the Club website for a great selection of treats you can make, a special favourite of many dogs is the salmon and oats treat.

Make your life easy, for example cook a kilo of chicken sausages and once cool cut into tiny pieces and store in snack bags in the freezer. Grab and go whenever you need a bag of treats.

Never buy shop treats without reading the country of origin on the packet. If they are not made in Australia put them back on the shelf.

Always use a treat pouch for training, pockets, bum bags and handbags don't work. Always wear your treat pouch when out for a walk, you should always have a few treats on you in case you need a distraction and it's always good to take the opportunity to do some training on your walk.

Never treat without asking for a behaviour, your dog may be super cute but don't treat for looking cute, a simple "Sit" marked with a "Yes" when the bottom hits the floor will quickly have your dog understanding what training is all about.

**DO NOT LET ANYONE ELSE TREAT YOUR DOG** especially at training. Unless at home with the family **YOU** are the only person who should ever offer your dog a treat.

**YOU** need to be number one in your dog's life - if **YOU** control the treats, **YOU** control the dog!



## **“ You couldn't pay me to take my dog to a dog park ” Dr Katrina Warren reveals the dangers of dog parks**

Here's one thing I stand by on my day-to-day as a dog owner, I would never risk my dog going to a crowded dog park.

This might shock some dog owners, but there's a few good reasons why.

Number one, you do not know the dogs that are in the dog park, and neither does your dog. With no history together, it is easy for something to go wrong.

For me, I don't feel comfortable not knowing the other owners in the park and the temperament of their dogs. In a dream scenario, a professional would assess all dogs and match the right dogs together to play, but that's not realistic.

Because there's so little known about the dogs when you arrive to the dog park, it's very difficult to know where play will lead.

Sometimes their play will be fun and cheeky, but other times disagreements can spark, including fights or bullying.



### **They can be traumatic for smaller dogs**

Second, these days, dog parks are often very overcrowded and full of dogs of every shape and size.

For smaller dogs in particular, dog parks can sometimes be overwhelming and dangerous. They may be frightened by larger, more boisterous dogs.

If a small dog or puppy has a bad experience with a dog – say a bouncy Labrador – you can set that small dog up for a lifetime of being fearful of other dogs.

Dog fights are also common in dog parks and small or timid dogs can easily be injured or scared following the experience. These fights can also turn fatal in the worst of circumstances.

As a result, I do not let my dogs run off-leash at any dog park unless I am with other dogs that I know and trust.

### **They're a breeding ground for learning bad behaviour**

The bad behaviour dogs can learn at dog parks is another reason why you couldn't pay me to take my dog to one.

Dogs can learn bad behaviour from other dogs like ignoring the recall, and rough play.

One thing's for certain, if there's one thing you want your dog to know, it is the recall. Recall is an important training step for any puppy and ensures a sense of security for you as an owner - knowing that your pup will always run back to you when you call its name.

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Ironically, people tend to think they're taking their dog to the dog park to be socialised but that's not the case at all.

Unfortunately, at dog parks your dog isn't always learning from dogs that play nicely. One example is dogs who become possessive over their toys as this can often lead to dog fights.

In the end, I would rather teach my dog to focus on me before focussing on anything else in its life. It's the best way to ensure you build a strong bond with your dog, and instil the best behaviours and training possible.



Finally, dog parks are not the answer to owning the most socialised and well-behaved puppy possible.

If anything, they do a world of bad before they do any good. In my opinion, many of us have become confused about what "socialisation" for a dog actually means, so here's an explanation.

Socialising your dog, so that it is calm and comfortable in foreign places, on streets, around other dogs and new people, doesn't come by throwing them in a dog park without a lead.

Instead, socialisation comes from exposing your dog to a variety of well-controlled situations that are going to be positive, such as planned dog walks with dogs and owners you know and managed play dates.

*Dr Katrina Warren 2022*





# The Christmas Kilos

How often do we complain that all those Christmas parties and holiday outings left us with extra kilos?



Well unfortunately the same can often be said for our dogs. It's that time of the year when dogs often have access to more food, it's the scraps from the BBQ, guests who can't resist slipping your dog something, the children on holidays sharing their ice creams or less exercise due to the hot weather or busy schedules.

It's estimated that over half the dogs in Australia are overweight. So is now the time to take a good look at your dog?

There are plenty of weight charts you can refer to, however dogs are like people, some are small some are large and looking at a chart weight range for a breed can be confusing.

Start by feeling the dog's ribs just behind their front legs. If the ribs feel like the back of your hand, your dog has an excellent body condition. If the ribs feel like your knuckles, or stick out like knuckles, your dog is too thin. If the ribs feel like the palm of your hand, your dog is overweight. Being overweight puts pressure on their joints and organs and can certainly lead to a shorter and far less enjoyable life.

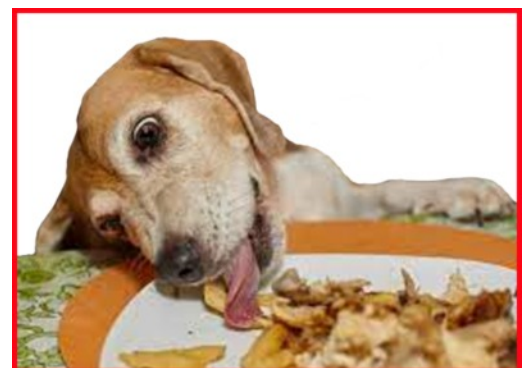
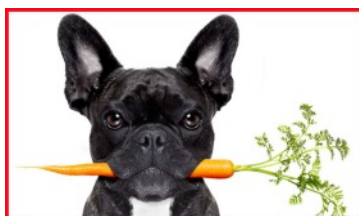
If you think your dog is overweight, talk to your vet, re-access your dog's diet, talk to the family about cutting out the titbits and ignore those pleading eyes when you're eating. Just because your dog will keep eating if allowed doesn't mean it should.

Also consider

The treats you bring to training should be counted as part of your dog's daily calorie intake.

Check the brand of kibble you buy. Many are loaded with fillers, always read the back of the packet, you may be surprised.

If you love your dog, don't ignore the D word.



# Treat Your Dog On Valentine's Day



*But Don't Share the Chocolates*

**Editor Wendy Jones**

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