



# NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION – **A Healthier Dog**

**I**t is the season of New Year's Resolutions so, as we're setting some goals for ourselves, let's consider how we can help our beloved pooches get in better, healthier shape in the New Year, too! Fortunately, some of our everyday tricks are not only fun to train but also make for a great workout. And you'll be happy to hear that there's plenty you can do inside!

## **Sit Pretty:**

Sitting pretty is a great workout for the core muscles and it aids balance. Starting with your dog in a sit, lure her into a beg position by slowly moving a treat from above her nose back towards her tail. This should result in her balancing on her butt with her front paws off the ground. As she does this more easily, increase the length of time she remains in position.

## **Back Up:**

Backing up is a great workout for the core and hind leg muscles. The easiest way to shape the back-up behavior is to hold a treat at the level of your dog's chest with you facing her and then walk towards her. Allow her to nibble the treat along the way to keep her interested. Say "yes!" when she takes a step back, giving her a treat, then repeat. As she does this more easily, increase the number of steps she's taking backwards.

## **Rollover:**

For the benefit of working your dog's core muscles, do this exercise in both directions. From a "down" position, notice which hip your dog is settled on, and use a treat to lure her nose around her opposite shoulder. So, if she's lying on her right hip, lead her nose around and over her left shoulder. As she twists her neck to follow the treat, she will roll first flat, then on her back, and then over

onto her other side. If she has trouble doing the whole movement right away, reward her in stages – first for just going over onto her side, then for going from her side to her back, and finally for rolling from her side to her back to her other side.

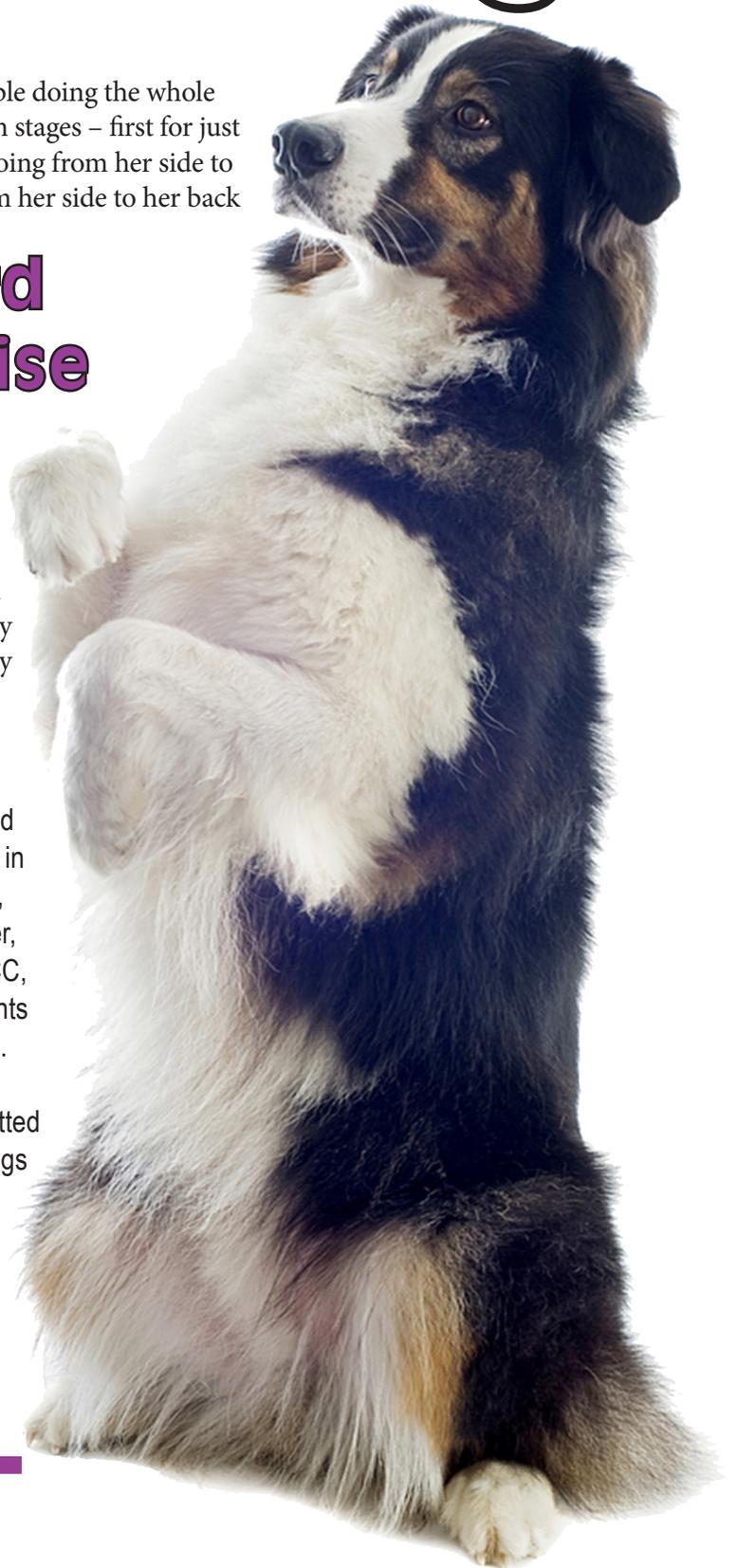
## **A Word to the Wise**

Include your parents when first training these behaviors, and ask your parents to consult with your dog's vet about what exercises should be avoided due to any physical limitations she might have. And remember that outdoor activity is still an essential component of any exercise regimen.\*



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FFCP, CBC, led behavior departments in animal shelters for over a decade. Her company, WoofGang, LLC ([www.myWoofGang.com](http://www.myWoofGang.com)), is committed to deepening the bonds between dogs and their people through positive training and behavior modification techniques, and it is these same topics that inspire her writing. You can contact her at [laura@myWoofGang.com](mailto:laura@myWoofGang.com).



\*For added difficulty to these tricks or for more exercises to include in your New Year's Get Fit program, go to [http://www.mywoofgang.com/archive\\_VTC\\_NYresolution.php](http://www.mywoofgang.com/archive_VTC_NYresolution.php)