



Yard Games

For those lucky dogs who enjoy access to a fenced-in yard, there is an assortment of activities that can be enjoyed, for the solitary dog as well as for dog-human playmates!

Digging

Some dogs are unabashed diggers. The dachshund is such a breed, bred to dig in search of rodents. Digging is actually a good source of exercise – it’s a great workout for the forelimbs. So, rather than trying to inhibit the behavior completely, it’s better to reach a compromise by giving your pooch a designated digging area or sandbox in which to exercise this instinctive behavior. In order to attract the behavior to the designated area, dig a shallow hole and bury a ziplock baggy of treats. As he digs to reveal the baggy, open it up and produce a treat for him. As he progresses, plant the baggy slightly deeper in the dirt. You can use a heavier dirt medium or pack it more tightly for added challenge.



Other Yard Activities

- Some dogs enjoy tossing a jolly ball (large, inflatable rubber ball) around the yard.
- Putting a Kong Wobbler or Tricky Treat ball filled with kibble out in the yard can be a great pastime.
- Fill a kiddie wading pool with water for a pleasant cooling station for your pooch. *(cont.)*



Healthy Hound

You may have heard people say, “Dogs are descended from wolves so they should eat like wolves,” when they’re trying to justify feeding their dog a meat-only or grain-free diet. First let’s consider this: dogs are *not* wolves. Though they are descended from wolves, we domesticated dogs – or, rather, they domesticated themselves – more than 13 thousand years ago.

(cont.)

Featured Rescue Dog: NICKFOLES



Meet Nick Foles. Named for the 2018 Super Bowl MVP QB, this gorgeous 3 year old is 115 pounds and looking for a new home. Sadly, his owners need to rehome him because of their granddaughter’s severe allergies. Perhaps mixed with Mastiff or Great Dane, he is very Labby looking and with the loyal, devoted personality so characteristic of Labs.

Nick’s absolute favorite activity is going for walks, and, though he does have some leash reactivity towards other dogs, his

(cont.)

Beyond the Brush

Springtime is here!... and so is atopic dermatitis. Atopic dermatitis is an inflammation of the skin that affects many dogs during allergy season. Although it can be harmless and treatable, when left unmanaged, skin infections can occur. Please contact your veterinarian if you notice any signs of distress or pain, open sores or foul odor. Vets have an arsenal of antibiotics and prescription shampoos to help address these issues.

(cont.)

Beyond the Brush (cont.)

Grooming your dog regularly can support healthier skin. Bathing will remove allergens and limit the contact of skin irritants. Oatmeal added to a bath will further promote positive results. It possesses emollient properties that soothe irritated skin. Luckily for groomers, there are numerous oatmeal shampoos available for professional use. Colloidal oatmeal products provide the best results because they contain the highest levels of oatmeal particles, thus reducing inflammation and hydrating the skin.

As our industry continues to make strides to improve skincare, a variety of products have been developed for home use as well. When using these products at home, always follow the instructions and allow the products to remain on the skin for ample time. This is where contact time has the most benefit. The same rules apply to prescription shampoos. In order for them to be effective, they must have time to work. Apply these shampoos liberally and then massage into the skin for several minutes before rinsing. You should also consider bringing any prescription shampoos to your grooming appointments to ensure the best outcome.

Battling the effects of atopic dermatitis can be at times very frustrating, especially when flare-ups cause discomfort to your four-legged BFF. Veterinarians and groomers are fighting alongside you to find good options for treatment and preventative care. We all strive to achieve the same goal... Happy, healthy paws to enjoy life's journey with us, one step at a time.

Professional groomer Willie Sanchez works for Ahead of the Pack in Haddonfield, NJ. For more info, contact her at groomingWillie@gmail.com.



Healthy Hound (cont.)

That's more than enough time for their bodies to adapt to new food sources.

We're still learning how these diets may affect dogs. Feeding a meat-only diet can lead to a deficiency in vitamin E and calcium, and an excess of phosphorus. In some dogs, this can lead to some heart and skeletal issues. Also, such diets are typically bad for dogs who already have kidney disease as the protein ratio is too high.

It's likely that the legumes, such as lentils or chickpeas, used to replace the grains in a grain-free diet may cause taurine deficiency which, over time, can lead to a serious heart condition called dilated cardiomyopathy. This is certainly *not* the majority of cases, so don't panic! But, if your dog has been eating a grain-free diet a while, ask your vet to do a taurine level test. Supplementation should be a decent fix. Still, there are some dogs who truly cannot have any grains, such as those with a grain allergy or with cancer.

So, before falling for one of the many fad diets that have taken root in the pet care industry, talk to your veterinarian or a Board Certified Veterinary Nutritionist about formulating a diet that meets your dog's individual nutritional needs.

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The authors of the *Wag Rag* are inspired by all things dog and love to educate dog guardians on the topics that contribute to the physical and behavioral health and happiness of our best furry friends. Is there a topic of interest to you? Contact Laura at laura@mywoofgang.com with questions and suggestions!

Featured Pet (cont.)

owners have been working with him and he is improving. Great with kids, housebroken, and a real snuggler, he'd do best as an only dog in a cat-free home. Neutered, up-to-date on vaccines, he's a very healthy boy with a beautiful coat. Might Nick be your MVP (most valuable pup)?!

To give Nick Foles the loving forever home he deserves, please follow the instructions here: <https://brooklinelabrescue.org/adopt/our-adoption-process/>. Visit his blog here: <https://brooklinelabrescue.org/blog/nick-foles-black-3-yr-male/> Brookline is a 501©3 non-profit volunteer organization funded entirely by donations.

Yard Games (cont.)

Exercise care with small dogs – they should be able to get in and out easily and the water level should be appropriate for their size.

- Take a class in adventure coursing, agility, or NoseWork with a local trainer and then set up a course in your backyard. These are fun activities that you can do together!
- Of course, it goes without saying that there are such games as fetch and “go find it!” Go to the article *Games to Play with Your Dog* on www.WoofGang.com!

It's important that you supervise your dog while he spends time in the yard. You don't want him developing bad habits like barking at passersby, fence running, or chasing small critters that enter the yard unwittingly. And of course, too much time outside, especially on especially hot or cold days, can be dangerous, so watch for signs of excessive panting, heat exhaustion, or shivering. If your pooch asks to go inside, he's had enough!

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