



Dog Sports

We all know that breed characteristics were selected for the breed's intended work, and breed mixes carry the inherited traits of each of the breeds, to a greater or lesser degree. But nowadays it's rare that we ask our house dogs to do the work for which they were intended, even as those traits still surface, often to our dismay. The trick is to tap into those natural traits of your dog, channeling them in positive, creative games and tasks, while discouraging some of the more troublesome aspects of their behaviors. Becoming involved in breed-specific sports can be a great way to tire them out while also giving them the joy of practicing the jobs they were bred to do!

Herding dogs were bred to herd flocks of sheep, so the sport of sheep herding can be great fun for them! The *American Herding Breed Association* (www.ahba-herding.org) has a compiled list of training facilities as well as events and competitions in the sport and there are extensive on-line resources available. As an alternative, herding behavior can be directed to other outlets, such as the waves at the beach.



Trista herds waves

Dogs bred for pulling large loads, like Newfies and Berners and the working dogs of the Northern breed group (like huskies, samoyeds, malamutes) can enjoy many canine sports that exist today. Clubs exist for the sports

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Trista herds sheep

About the Trainer

Dog trainer **LAURA GARBER**, CPDT-KA, is a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and is certified by the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), the first national certification for dog trainers.

Laura has authored articles about dogs and dog behavior in dog-centric magazines and on-line resources.

Laura believes strongly in strengthening the bond between human and companion animal. For this reason, she regards training as an exercise in building relationship rather than obedience. Such an approach promises greater understanding and symbiosis within our family packs.

Log on to www.myWoofGang.com.



Introductory Training Offer

Get an extra 30 minutes of training when you purchase a 4-session training package.

Call **WOOF GANG** at **646.345.5116** to make an appointment.

A Baby on the Way

If you have a new baby on the way, a little being who will in many ways consume the attention and energy that has until now been channeled toward your pup, patient, positive preparation will help the relationship between your dog and your new baby start out on the right foot.

WOOF GANG can help your pup learn to navigate his new world in baby steps. Call **646.345.5116** today!

Mine!

Does your dog stiffen or growl when you approach his bowl, toy, or favorite resting spot? He is *resource guarding*, a potentially dangerous behavior, particularly in a home with kids. Even accelerated eating can be an indication that he's uncomfortable with people around his bowl.

WOOF GANG can help you get your pup more comfortable with you around his stuff. Call us today!

Dog Sports (cont.)

of carting, weight pulling, sledding and skijoring. There are also more informal sports programs: the Training Wheels® Urban Solutions Lug-Nuts™ (www.suesternberg.com/03programs/04lugnuts.html) program was created in answer to the dangerous urban activities that predominantly involve the bully breeds and threaten their well-being. Lug-nut dogs are put in harness and compete by dragging plastic children's sleds piled with bags of dog food.

Scent hounds like bassetts and beagles were bred to follow a scent, so getting involved in the sport of tracking can satisfy their desires. A neighborhood training facility may offer classes in tracking, but it can be a difficult sport to practice without a private yard. Nose work is a variation on the theme that is easier to do in smaller spaces. Even games (see **WoofGang's** article *Games to Play with Your Dog*) such as "go find it!" are great activities you can do at home with your nosy pooch!

For sight hounds like greyhounds, the sport of lure coursing is a great option. For some fun on your own, you can simply buy a lure course whip from a tack shop, attach a squeaky toy to the end of it and take your pup out into a large fenced-in area for some fun!

Terriers were bred to rout out the hiding places of small game such as badger, fox and otter, so offering them a sandbox for digging (see **WoofGang's** article *New Year's Resolution – A Healthier Dog*) can satisfy this inclination while also affording a good workout. Many of these dogs also enjoy games of chase such as lure coursing.

Retrievers enjoy swimming and a brisk game of retrieve. The sport of dock diving provides a combination of these activities – a toy is thrown into the water and the dog dives in to retrieve it. In competition, the length of the jump is measured.

Sports such as competition obedience, rally obedience (www.apdt.com/rally/about/), agility (www.cleanrun.com/), freestyle (www.canine-freestyle.org/) and flyball (www.flyball.org/) can be great fun for both dog and handler. Look for a neighborhood training facility that teaches classes. And, finally, training your dog as a therapy dog through such organizations as the Delta Society (<http://www.deltasociety.org/Page.aspx?pid=183>) can be deeply rewarding and gratifying.

Ultimately, you know your dog and you know his strengths, so use them to best advantage, for your dog's well-being as well as your own.

For this article in its entirety, and more information on where to find dog sports activities and resources, log on to www.myWoofGang.com.



Ask Woofie...

WOOFIE, I recently adopted a 6 year old, 21-pound corgi mix named Sophie. Sophie is terrible with other dogs. I took her to a dog park by our apartment and she was snarly with two dogs. I put her on the leash the remainder of the time we were there because I was nervous about what she'd do if I let her off leash. However, I have another dog staying at my house and Sophie was fine with her. Any advice you can give would be great. Liaan

Hiya, Liaan! Firstly, it's a bad idea (and increases aggressive behavior) to have a dog on leash in an off-leash dog area. If she's not being good with the other dogs, then leave altogether. But having her with other dogs while she's on-leash and they're off-leashes her feeling defensive and limited in her movement. Further I would suggest not introducing her to other dogs while on leashed walks, for the same reason. She or the other dog could feel defensive and a fight could ensue. Finally, if there are particular dogs that she plays well with, then set up play dates with those particular dogs. Dog runs do not bring out the best behavior in most dogs. Only goofy, happy-go-lucky dogs seem to thrive in dog runs. The rest of dogs do better with play dates with dog pals who share the same play style.

Hope that helps! **WOOFIE**



Rusty is a sweet boy who craves attention and affection and would do well with a family. He keeps getting overlooked at the Liberty Humane Society in Jersey City, so he's currently in a foster home to give him a little break from shelter life. Rusty is looking for love this Valentine's Day in a new forever home!