

Multiple Dogs



Why get a second or third dog

- People who are not professionals choose for a variety of reasons
 - Appearance
 - Perceived ease of care – dogs will share activities
 - One dog is not fulfilling all their needs
 - First dog has behavior problems
 - First dog is getting old, and they can't handle being dog-less
- Professionals often choose because they are looking for the perfect competitor or the perfect show dog

Advantages

- **Companionship**
 - Dogs who like each other can provide necessary stimulation and some exercise
 - Affection and fun for humans
- **Reduction of human guilt**
- **Fulfillment of different goals**
 - Dog is not required to meet all of her humans needs
 - Affection
 - Activities
 - Games, fun



Disadvantages

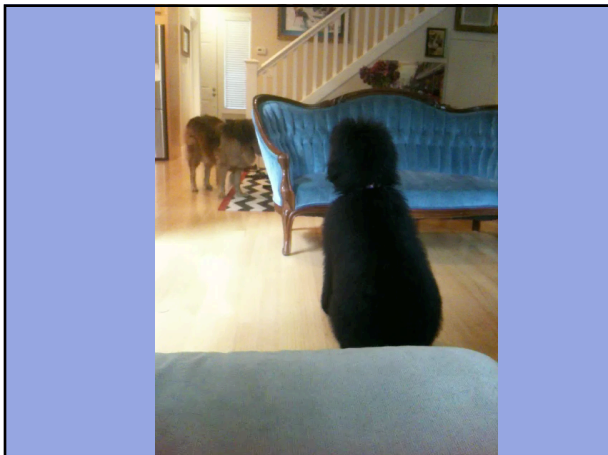
- Difficult to take places
- Guilt when we leave one home
- Medical and other bills
- Double or triple training
- Exacerbated behavior problems



Setting Yourself Up for Success

- Opposite sex usually best
- Siblings not a great idea!
 - Bond to each other more than to owner
- Some age difference is often ideal to help with future stability
 - But not too much
 - Old dogs get grumpy and young dogs get pushy
 - Poodle pounces





....Guidelines

- Temperament types should compliment rather than be alike
 - Similar dogs will compete for the same resources
 - If you give affection, they all want it...
 - If you play ball, they all want the same ball



Most dogs are competitive – Fairness does not exist

- They will try to surge ahead on leash
- They will try to get the most attention
- They will try to go through the door first
- They will try to get the food first or the treats first
- They will hog the bed they are on
- They will want the bed the other dog is on
- They will want the chewy the other dog has – plus their own
- Important to test for compatibility, and to expect competition

Introductions

- Introduce, introduce, introduce!
 - Best introductions between adult dogs should take place several times in different places



Testing compatibility

- Introduce in large, neutral area
- Virtual greetings often take some time
 - Most polite adults will do an involved perimeter check before they formally introduce themselves
- Watch body language and play behavior
 - Neither dog should bully; neither should be afraid



- Take to smaller, confined area
- Feed in proximity to each other
- Give valuable resources to each dog and watch behavior

Energy Matches

- If both or all dogs are relaxed, and not resource guarders, you generally will have no problems
- If one dog is tolerant and the other highly energized, you may have no problems
- If two dogs are highly energized, you are more likely to have problems



Introducing high energy dogs to other dogs

- Sometimes it's necessary to give more of a helping hand...
 - Some reactive, jumpy or bully type dogs actually need more restraint rather than less, so they can inhibit themselves.



Creating and Maintaining Stability

- Most people have no problems, or few problems.
- Others do...



Managing two or more dogs

- Imprinting, bonding and allegiances
 - Important that both dogs are bonded first to owner, and secondarily to each other
- Learning to separate
 - Daily time together; daily time apart

Structure

- Owner must understand what motivates each dog, and be prepared to give each *what he or she needs*



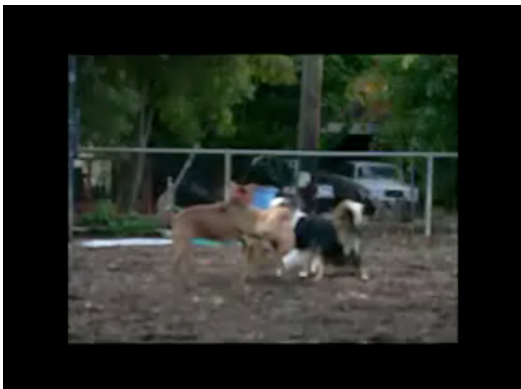
Dogs must trust owner implicitly

- Dogs should know what to expect from owner
 - Dogs must respect owner
 - Obedience training is mandatory – nothing fancy, just a few select exercises
 - Relaxation before food/walks is optimal
- Structure should be solid and predictable
 - Owner must reinforce appropriate behavior
 - Dogs should believe presence of other dog(s) equals reward

Play

- Though play is good, it should be monitored and controlled if necessary
 - Two playing dogs generally are fine (unless one is picking on the other)
 - Three dogs playing usually leads to issues
 - One dog often acts as police officer
 - Sometimes that can turn into a fight
 - » [Aroused play in park](#)
 - » [Hall Monitor](#)







Arousal/Energy

- More important than almost anything else
 - When a dog gets in a state of excitement, he or she will lose all the training that you have been so careful to instill
 - Even dogs that use their energy on appropriate objects might be problematic if the object is not available or something else becomes more attractive
 - We need to train when the dogs are calm...and when they are excited



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Handy exercises

- Group relaxation
 - Tie downs
 - Zen down
 - Calming Sit
- Cut-off signal for interaction (hot dog cue)
- Signals to send dogs to a particular location
- Individual training time with owner
 - **Zen down**



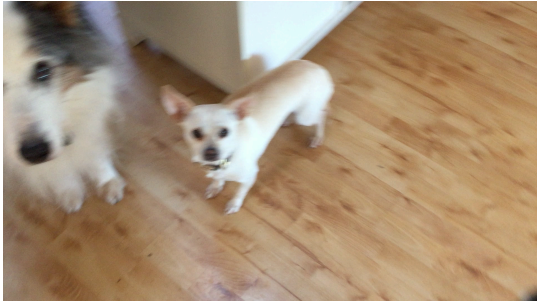


Learning to share

- In addition to the traditional 'leave it,' teach the dogs to look at you when things fall
 - Kitchen training
 - Food drops, dogs compete to get it
 - Dog looks at owner, dog gets food



Kitchen Training



The Handiest Exercise – Wait

Group wait
in Car



Wait for Food



Problems

- Multiple dog problems are very difficult - sometimes even impossible to solve
- The emphasis should always be on prevention

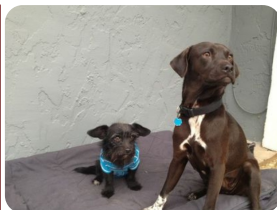


Possible issues....

- Instability of temperament in one or more dogs
- Age similarities or differences
 - Too close to call – dogs compete and challenge each other
 - Changing of the guard – as dogs get older, the younger dogs take advantage
- Personalities
 - Too similar -
 - Too different
- Same Sex issues
- Socialization issues

Instability

- When one dog is temperamentally unstable, he or she may have issues such as
 - Quick temper, or too much energy at odd times
 - Inability to adjust to different environments or situations
 - Intense need for affection
- In this case, the other dog(s) must be very tolerant
 - (Luke – zoomies; couch needs; fear of real and imaginary things)



Age Difference

- Age similarities or differences
 - Too close to call – dogs compete and challenge each other
 - Often certain triggers will cause problems
 - Beds, food, doorways
 - Changing of the guard – as dogs get older, the younger dogs take advantage



Personalities

- When dogs' personalities are too similar, they want the same thing at the same time
- Conversely, when they are too different, they often will not interact with one another and won't form the bond we want



Issues.....

- Intolerance – one dog to another
- Incompatible play styles
- Health problems with one dog or another
- Social dominance
- Resource guarding



Boys and Girls



- By and large, boys fight for points, girls fight for keeps
- Many same sex canine families can be quite successful; however, when they're not, it can lead to serious injury, as well as enemies for life

Breed Specific issues – communication issues between breeds

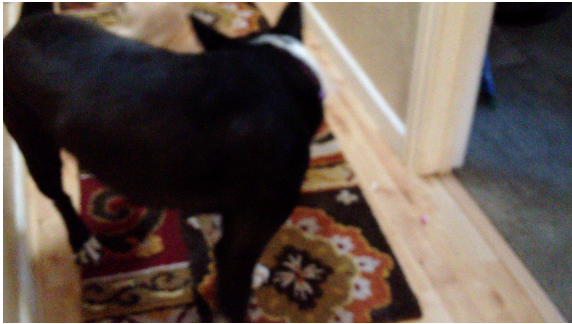
- Bullies
- Protection Dogs
- Herding dogs
- Terriers
- Northern Breeds
- Toys



Large/Small Differential

- This could be a problem with an intolerant large dog and an overly feisty small dog





Resource Guarding

- Dog-dog resource guarding is often overlooked or ignored....or is completely undiscovered
 - Resources include
 - toys
 - bones
 - food
 - people



DogDog Resource guarding



Long distance guarding



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Redirected Aggression

- Often an offshoot of over arousal
 - Dogs who fence fight or get overly excited during play will often redirect on the other dog(s)





Status

- Do dogs care about status? Some do... some don't
- And some only care about *some* resources
 - Food
 - Territory, thresholds, beds
 - Toys and other objects
 - Attention and grooming



Dominance Aggression

- One dog controlling the resources that he or she thinks is important...often not allowing other dog to do anything, go anywhere or own anything





Case Studies



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Old dog – young dog

- 13 year old heeler mix and seven month old Mini-Aussie
 - Problem behaviors
 - Normal adolescent behavior
 - Space invasion with regard to the 13 year old
 - Bullying on leash
 - Pouncing on 13 year old when they are let out of the house



Recommendations

- On leash in the house
 - Owner interferes with indoor bullying
 - Lots of impulse control work, including
 - » Permanent wait at door, sending youngster through first, where she needs to wait for older dog
 - » Wait (Aspen)
 - » Wait at door

Husky/Rott and Shep/Rott

- Intact Males - 6 and 7 years old
- Moved to California from New York
 - Rather overwhelmed by the number of free dogs where they live, but dogs cope relatively well
 - About once a year, the dogs fight, and they have injured each other
 - Husky/Rott is very insecure but tries to be on top
 - Shep/Rott is easy going, but won't back down

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What to do?

- Neuter? Who and When?
- Reinforce top dog?
- Treat them both the same?
- Separate them?
 - Each decision could have serious repercussions
 - Neutering could further upset the balance
 - Reinforcing top dog could cause more problems, as could treating them both the same
 - Separating causes even more problems (growling)

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Outcome

- Neutered both dogs
- Kept them in the same area most of the time
- Trained extensively
 - Taught them to share
- Successful outcome; they don't play, but they have a working truce

Breed similarities and differences

- Female Kelpie and Male lab lived together successfully for some time
 - Owner got a second – male - kelpie. The two herding dogs were very compatible
 - The lab was ostracized and bullied by both dogs



Breed Similarities

- Two Corgi's
 - Male – 7 // Female – 11
 - Picnic was acquired at 8 weeks old; Daisy when she was 5
 - Dogs get along reasonably well when they are relaxed
 - However, any attention will elicit aggression from Picnic (m) to Daisy.

Picnic and Daisy



Recommendations and Outcome

- Mostly management
 - Dogs are not allowed through doorways simultaneously
 - Neither dog is given attention in sight of the other dog
 - Picnic wears a leash for control
 - Muzzles were tried, but just caused more frustration
 - Both dogs sleep in crates

Two Pit Bull/American Bulldog mixes

- Siblings – male and female
- Got along well for two years
 - Male had major high arousal issues; doorways and birds flying near the deck
 - Female much more easy going, but wouldn't turn down a fight
- They'd had several fights that ended up at vet's
- Family had year old baby with another one on the way

Recommendation

- Rehome one of the dogs
- Meanwhile...block off access to the deck
 - Teach lots of impulse control to both dogs
 - Separate when they can't be watched (difficult because of the way the house was built)

Outcome

- Rehoming unsuccessful
- Everything went well until husband was out in the yard with the child
- A bird went by, the male tried to catch it, dogs fought
- Man was injured breaking up the fight
- Both dogs euthanized

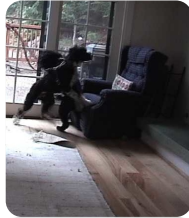
Three's a Crowd

- Golden Retriever and Lab lived well together – owner got second lab, who was compatible with first lab
 - The two labs ganged up on the Golden



Two Portuguese Water Spaniels Dominance Aggression

- Hannah – eight; Jessie – six
 - Been together since Jessie was three
 - Started fighting a year before I saw them
 - Owner saw no consistent triggers
 - [Hannah and Jessie](#)
 - Social Dominance, exacerbated by owner's treatment of both dogs



Recommendations

- More exercise!
 - Dogs were mostly exercised running up and down the stairs
- Appropriate treatment of both dogs
 - Owner to stop preferential treatment of older dog at the expense of the younger
 - System of tie-downs in hot-spots

Outcome

- Behavior modification unsuccessful
 - Owner could not follow through
 - Apparently consulted with other trainers, who made no difference either
 - Dogs kept separate for the rest of their lives

Incompatibility

- Two small dogs, separate households
 - One dog had to be integrated into home because of health problems
 - Dogs had a truce for a period of years; one incident involving people guarding cause a fight
 - Fights continued – more than five a day – no injuries

Scrappy and Buddha



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Recommendations

- Do not blend dogs
- If you do...
 - Create different territories inside
 - Walk dogs together, reinforce good behavior
 - Use two ex-pens if appropriate

The Rehoming Quandary

- Is it more humane to keep fighting dogs in a home where they are loved by the humans or be rehomed where their treatment is not necessarily predictable?

Training two or more dogs (Twofers Class)

- Collective noun
 - Remember that dogs do not know who you're talking to unless you tell them
 - Train apart
 - Train together
 - Train apart

Twofers Class
