



We continually update our skills and knowledge so that we stay current with the best practices that can help you and your dog.

cheerfuldogs chronicles

cheerful dogs, happy people

Issue 61

A World of Dogs: Let's Play

Youngsters of most species like to play. Elephant calves wrestle and chase each other, bighorn sheep lambs leap about, and otter pups slide down muddy hills just for fun. But in most species, play behaviour dwindles with adulthood. Think about it. How many times have you seen a flock of adult sheep frolic in a meadow? And when grown elephants chase each other, things are about to get dangerous. But humans continue to play throughout life and, as any dog lover can testify, so do dogs. This might be another reason we have bonded so closely with them. In a nutshell: animals who play together stay together – shared fun is a strong relationship glue.

Take our mutual obsession with object-related play or, in nonscientific language, toys. There are toys galore, of course, but look no further than balls. Forget the occasional ball-uninterested dog and the person who doesn't care for sport; other kinds of toys appeal to them. Consider instead how many human play-related activities revolve around balls. Tennis, baseball, golf, football, soccer, bowling, cricket, volleyball, lacrosse, croquet, polo, basketball, squash, ... It's a very long list. To a visitor from another



Dog quotes

“If you can look at a dog and not feel vicarious excitement and affection, you must be a cat.” -Carrie Latet



... let's play

planet, humans would not seem that different in this respect to the Border Collie that refuses to give up her ball or the German Shepherd Dog that carries three tennis balls in his mouth. It's all about the little round thing!

Aside from the fuzzy warm feeling it gives us about our deep affinity with dogs, the knowledge that we are both highly play-motivated species can help us in other areas of life with dogs. The science of dog training tells us that the more rewarding an activity is, the more the dog learns. It's a win-win situation: Humans and dogs love to play – and fun accelerates your training results. Rather than commands issued in a Darth Vader-like voice, the training of cued behaviours from *sit* to *high five* can be made into a thoroughly enjoyable game for the two- and four-legged both. As Ralph Waldo Emerson put it, "It is a happy talent to know how to play."



Certified. Force-free. Dog-centred.
cheerfuldogswalking.com



Dogs In Action: Here We Go Rally-O!

Rally-O is a fun, energising, less formal version of traditional obedience trials. It is one of the most inclusive dog sports in the world – and the benefits reach well beyond the exercise field. Lavishing attention on your dog and working on improved communication while doing something creative pays off in a happier, more focused, better-behaved dog.

The concept of Rally-O sprung from the practice of using a variety of interesting freestyle exercises as warm-up before an obedience competition, and the name derives from rally-style auto racing, another sport that encourages creativity. In Rally-O, the handler and her dog navigate a course of 10 to 20 stations (depending on the level), each marking an exercise like heel, stand, turn, sit, and back up. The handler is allowed to talk to and encourage her dog along the way, use hand signals, and go through the course along a designated route on her own without a judge calling out the exercises.

If you're curious and want to know more before you jump in, search for Rally-O online. You'll find articles, books and YouTube videos on the activity.



cheerfuldogs.com

Your go-to trainer for enlightened dog lovers

Website: cheerfuldogs.com

cheerfuldogswalking.com

Professional dog walking you can trust

Website: cheerfuldogswalking.com

Tel: 9630 3884

Email: cheerfuldogswalking@gmail.com

Save the environment, access our e-newsletters on our websites

Follow us

