



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

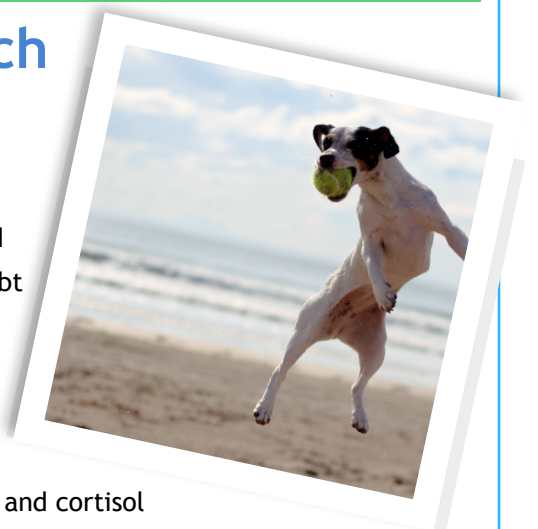
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Issue 72

Living With Dogs: Is Your Dog Fetch Obsessed?

Throwing a ball for your dog can seem like a quintessential part of the human-dog relationship. Parks are often full of people flinging balls and frisbees into the air as their dogs tear after them. While there's no doubt some dogs relish this, is it possible to have too much of a good thing?

Certain dogs are more vulnerable to ball obsessions, and it's important to keep an eye on how this pursuit can affect them. When dogs become feverish about an activity, it's like a chemical bath. Adrenaline and cortisol rush through their bodies, and it can take time (sometimes days) for these to return to a balanced state. These hormones are also great at blocking pain, which is why some dogs will play fetch for hours, only to start limping when they get home. Even if your dog seems at their happiest while chasing down that ball, it might be placing them in a state of mental and physical stress. They may also stop engaging with the environment - all eyes on the ball rather than sniffing and interacting with other dogs. Or they may start to guard their ball, leading to tension and scuffles at the dog park.



Dog quotes

“No one appreciates the very special genius of your conversation as the dog does.”

- Christopher Morley

cont.

... fetch

If you're worried your dog is a ball addict, what can you do about it?

- Try cold turkey for a few weeks and note any changes. Is your dog calmer? Are they sleeping better? Are they more relaxed on walks? These may be signs that ball play is running their life.
- If you do throw things for your dog, allow them to warm up first before they start running after things at speed.
- Keep fetch sessions short! Set a 10 minute timer so you stick to it.
- Use their ball obsession for good. Try hiding balls around the garden for them to sniff out and find, or as a powerful recall reward in emergencies.
- Give your dog days off. Aim to have at least one non-fetch day per week and focus on slow sniffy walks and enrichment like treat searches and food toys.



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Healthy Dog: Why dogs roll in the grass

Few dogs don't have this habit to some extent – whether it's a good shoulder-first roll in fresh grass with all its hidden secrets or a nosedive into a freshly manured field. The behaviour is called scent rolling and researchers speculate that it originated as a way to bring information back to the pack. Of course, dogs have had much time and adaptation to make the behaviour their own, so it's likely dogs roll in grass and other interesting materials for a number of reasons. One is to get rid of unwanted smells, for example that doggie shampoo you enjoy but that Fido does not appreciate. Itchy skin can be another cause for frequent and vigorous rolling, so look out for fleas, tick bites, or tell-tale signs of skin conditions such as scabs, redness, rashes, or bald patches.

Rolling in grass is not dangerous in itself. Just be sure your dog has flea and tick protection and be mindful of potential hazards like pesticides and herbicides that might be on the grass. Even without any foul-smelling residue on his coat, your dog may still need a good rinse post-roll.



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