



We put a twinkle in your eye, a smile on your face, a song in your heart, skills in your hands, so that the time with your family dog will be some of the best times of your life.

# cheerfuldogs chronicles

cheerful dogs, happy people

Issue 87

## A World of Dogs: Tenacious Tripaws

A common reaction when people see a three-legged dog is sympathy (“Poor thing...”), or admiration. (“What a brave pooch!”). Both are understandable. For humans, amputation can involve complex psychological and emotional issues. For dogs? Less so. Dogs have no notion of body image, no mental image of what they are supposed to look like. What they care about falls into two major categories: One, whether they are in pain. Two, whether they can do things they love: go for walks, play with toys, eat yummy food, get belly rubs, snuggle on the couch, etc. A pain-free, well-fed dog with a loving home doesn’t give a hoot that her daily walk happens in the characteristic tripaw hop instead of a four-legged lope.



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### Tips & Tools: Safe Food Storage for Dogs

Food-borne illnesses can affect dogs as severely as humans. Here are some tips for keeping your dog—and his dinner—safe:

**Use sealed containers.** Clean, sealed containers are essential. Store dry food in a cool, dry place and wet food in the refrigerator. Wash and dry containers between uses.

**Wash your hands.** Before you prepare your dog’s food, wash your hands in warm soapy water, just as you would before handling food for your family.

**Wash his bowls.** Would you reuse your plate tomorrow without giving it a wash? Probably not and neither should your dog. Wash his food and water bowls daily.

**Mind the expiration date.** Don’t risk feeding your dog expired food. Even if it’s safe, the nutritional value is likely to be greatly diminished.

cont.

## ... tenacious tripaws

Amputee dogs, often called tripaws or tripods, generally lose a limb either as a result of an accident or as a means to prevent cancer from spreading. In rarer cases, a congenital deformity makes the leg nonfunctional. The number one cause is canine osteosarcoma, or bone cancer, an aggressive disease that can rapidly spread into other parts of the dog's body. Treatment for this kind of tumour is limited to surgical removal and chemotherapy, and the prognosis is often dire. Radical as it may sound, amputation is usually the best option. Many tripaws go on to live normal life spans after surgery. Because dogs carry about 60 percent of their weight up front, losing a hind leg is easier than losing a front leg. But front-leg amputees adapt too. Even dogs with moderate arthritis can do well on three legs.

Guardians of amputee dogs can also do a lot to make the transition easier. A tripaw-friendly home has non-slip surfacing on stairs and floors, as well as ramps for climbing up on sofas and into cars. A harness with a handle the human can hold can help dogs navigate difficult stairs and uneven ground. Walking on softer surfaces, such as grass, while out and about can put less stress on remaining joints. And a whole range of fitness gear has been developed to help tripaws strengthen their remaining limbs and improve their balance. For the rest of us, encountering tripaws out and about? Love them up like nothing has changed, because, to them, nothing that truly matters has.



## Family Dog: Family Gatherings Without Doggie Stress

Family gatherings mean excitement, anticipation, and a lot of preparation. Whether a birthday party or holiday celebration, be sure to include your dog on your preparation to-do list. Even the most tolerant dog can get stressed around unfamiliar guests, especially small children, during a busy gathering. Some tips for safer, more successful visits:

- Keep interactions between your dog and unfamiliar children short and supervised by adults.
- Keep your dog close so you can guide him with familiar cues (sit, down). Dogs do best when they know what to do.
- Baby gates, safe havens (like a crate), and playpens for kids/babies are easy ways to make sure your dog is kept out of the commotion.

And don't be afraid to ask for help. Planning gatherings can be overwhelming. Something as simple as getting someone to entertain and exercise your dog before a party can make all the difference. Arrange for a good workout for your dog, then allow him a little private party with a yummy treat. That way, you can celebrate with your family and friends without looking over your shoulder all the time to see what your dog is up to.



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