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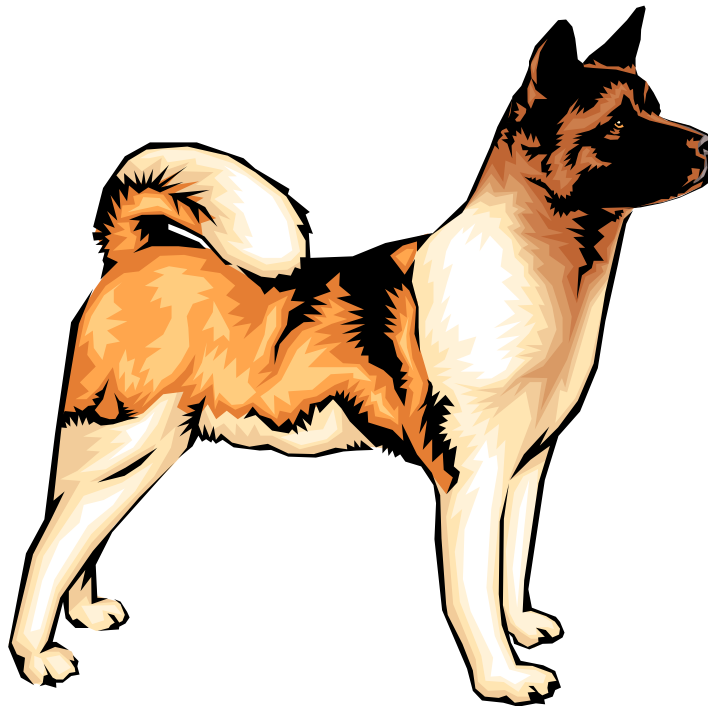
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INTRODUCTION

It is not a cliché when they say that dog is man's best friend. You can be the most miserable person in the world whom everyone hates but you are still the best in your dog's esteem. There are many benefits to dog ownership. It is a proven fact that dogs affect their humans' health in a most positive way. Dog owners have fewer health problems, are less stressed and are often happier than people without dogs. Dogs are particularly good to have when kids are growing up – they teach children responsibility, they encourage the act of nurturing and they help kids feel safe in their surroundings. And because of these things, as well as countless others, the dog has grown to be a full-fledged member of the modern family.

In return for the unconditional love and the well-being dogs bring to our lives, we reward them with affection, fine food and lots of toys. We make monthly trips to the pet store to pick up food, stopping at the toy aisle to see if there are any new stuffed squirrels or squeaky toys that we can take home to our ever-expectant four-legged friends. But these trips can take a large chunk out of the wallet as more advanced toys and snazzier looking outfits become available. But what does a devoted dog owner do when they want to spoil their pet but don't have the funds to do so? With a little creativity and, in some cases, a bit of elbow grease, you can spoil your dog with ordinary items found around the house, treasures bought at a yard sale or rewards that only come with a big hug and a kiss.

This book contains 101 ways to spoil your dog that cost no more than \$10.00. The majority of the ideas found here are free, some require a little skill to accomplish but all are accompanied with a tremendous amount of love. I know that my life changed when my first dog came into it. I have become a more patient and understanding human being and have had the pleasure of being taught how to love unconditionally. And because of this I present you with ways to repay your faithful companion that won't send you spiraling into debt. So forge ahead, show your dog how much he means to you.



GROOMING AND SKIN CARE



This happy pooch gets the royal treatment at a doggy spa.

Who likes a stinky dog? Not many. And when your dog is less than spring fresh, your attitude towards him may change. Although this may be as little a thing as turning your face away when he jumps on you; however, your dog can read into this behavior and translate it into a sign of rejection. Like it or not, all dogs have to be groomed. And despite what you might think, even shorthaired dogs need a good brushing now and again.

But groomers can be quite expensive and may cause your dog undo stress. So you don your raincoat and lure your dog into the tub. Your next hurdle: what shampoo do you use? Some dog owners use people shampoo under the assumption that if it's fine for them, it will be o.k. for Spot. This is not the case. In fact, many commercial shampoos meant for dogs are actually too harsh for their skin and may cause irritation and/or dryness. Buying all natural shampoo may be the ticket but again, it is expensive. So what is one to do? Make your own and give your dog a salon grooming in the comfort of

your own house at a fraction of the cost.

Herbal Shampoo

You can make an excellent doggie shampoo from things that you probably already have around the house. A mixture of Aloe Vera gel and water work well. It is very mild on dog's skin and leaves their coat quite shiny. Slightly dilute a handful of Aloe Vera gel with water and work the mixture into your dog's coat (it is best to apply this to a dry coat). Rinse with warm water. If you prefer to have a foaming shampoo, add a touch of baby shampoo to the mixture and use accordingly.

Cost: under \$5

All-natural Rinse

If you use a store-bought shampoo, follow it with this all-natural rinse. It will restore the ph balance of your dog's skin and will help remove any excess shampoo. Mix one teaspoon of apple cider vinegar with one pint of warm water and work into your dog's coat. Follow with warm water if desired.

Cost: under \$5

Perfume

Let's face it; washing a dog does take time. If you don't have the time, the energy or any protective rain garments handy, you can always use a bit of scent in a pinch. A spray will rest on top of the dog's coat and will not harm the skin. This means that you can go to the local drugstore and pick up a moisturizing body spray that is to your liking and use it for your dog's toilette. Make sure you spray away from the dog's face and in a spot that she can't lick.

If you want to use an application that is sure not to irritate your pal's skin, go to the health food store and pick up one of the following essential oils: rose, lavender, geranium, sandalwood or sweet almond. A tiny bit rubbed into the skin along the spine will last longer than a body spray (it will become more fragrant with body heat, so make sure you like the scent!) and will not cause any irritation at all.

Cost: under \$10

Bath Accessories

When I say bath accessories, I don't mean a rubber ducky (unless it makes the dog more comfortable) or bubble bath. What I suggest is having a set of towels and washcloths that are Buddy's and Buddy's alone.

Cost: from \$2-10 per item

Towels

An absolute necessity in a dog's bath kit is two large fluffy towels. Regardless of their size, dogs always seem to manage to soak through the first towel. Walmart has a great selection of towels for extremely reasonable prices so buying two won't break the bank. But before we get to the drying part of the bathing exercise, there is two other must haves: a regular facecloth and a loofah wash cloth.

Face Cloths

To avoid getting soap in your dog's eyes or water in their ears, vets and groomers recommend you wash your dog's face with water and a face cloth. This prevents causing the dog undue stress and ensures that soapy water doesn't go anywhere that it's not supposed to.

Loofahs

Just like using a loofah to get rid of unwanted flakey skin, you can use a loofah on your dog to get rid of loose excess hair. This will save you from starting a hairball farm when you go to brush your yummy-smelling companion after her bath ...especially if you have a dog with a thick or curly coat. Dampen the loofah and start stroking your dog from head to tail. Do this after you have washed off the shampoo and before you apply your rinse. You'll be surprised at how much hair goes down the drain with the bath water that would otherwise end up on your floor!

Bathmats

Lastly, get your dog one of those fuzzy bathmats made from towel material. Couple this with a third fluffy bath towel and your dog will be warm and cozy until she dries off (this also saves your carpets from smelling like wet dog!).

Bath kit essentials

For your faithful friend include: towels, face cloths, loofahs and bathmats

Dry Skin Care

Many dogs suffer from dry skin. Causes of this affliction can include allergies, a dry house or diet. But whatever the cause, a simple solution is rinsing your dog with a bit of chamomile tea. Just boil up the kettle, make the tea, allow it to cool down and pour it over your dog. This will sooth your pup's dry skin without leaving any oily residue that other dry skin treatments can leave. If your dog has severe dry skin, rub some olive oil into the affected area and then towel him off with a paper towel.

Cost: under \$1

Summer Sun Protection

Hard to believe but dog's can get sunburned. This is particularly true of dogs with lighter noses and pink skin. My poodle is the type of dog that is susceptible to burns and as such, I have had to learn how to prevent and treat burns.

The best way to prevent a burn is to avoid outdoor activities when the sun is at its hottest: i.e., in the middle of the day. If this is not possible, you can put an old t-shirt and a hat on your dog to keep direct light off of her skin. If you aren't comfortable walking around with a shrouded dog, use sunscreen. However, there are some things you should keep in mind when selecting a sun protection product for your pooch:

- The sunscreen should have an SPF of 15 or higher
- Find a sunscreen of a thinner consistency – it will be easier to apply to your dog's coat
- Get a waterproof sunscreen – this will help it stay on your dog for longer, therefore increasing its effectiveness
- PABA is dangerous to dogs – avoid products that contain this ingredient
- Distract your dog when you are applying the lotion – do it right before she eats or you are going to take her out for a walk; this will make her forget she is wearing any and will help prevent her from licking it off
- Don't worry if your dog does consume some sunscreen; as long as it doesn't contain PABA, she will be fine

There will be times; however, when even the best prevention will not stop the inevitable. So if your dog does get burned, there are a couple of things you can do to ease the discomfort. These include:

- Hosing her down with cool water
- Getting her out of the sun
- Mixing two parts cool water with one part witch hazel and then gently applying the mixture to her coat
- Give her a cool bath with baking soda in the water
- Apply Aloe Vera gel

Cost: under \$10

Doggy Breath Be Gone

Whenever my dog and I meet someone on the street and they bend down to plant a kiss on the top of his head, I always warn them that he, hands down, has the breath of death.

I have tried all the pet store remedies that claim they will rid dogs of smelly breath, but none of these “miracle cures” worked that well. Finally I went to the vet and begged for the secret of how I could once again sit beside my dog when he yawned and not almost pass out. What went wrong, I asked the knowledgeable doctor. When he was a puppy, he had the most wonderful breath. Why does he now stink like a garbage dump on a hot summer day? And it was then that the vet let me in on the solution to swamp mouth: parsley pills and baking soda.

The parsley pills are pretty obvious. You give them to your dog with every meal. The baking soda is not as obvious but it is the key to achieving and maintaining good dog breath. Mixing baking powder with enough water to make a paste, apply the paste to the dog's teeth using a clean washcloth. Paying particular attention to the gum line, rub gently and follow with a rub with a second washcloth dipped in water to remove any grit. It takes about a week before your dog's breath is bearable, but it is well worth the wait. Do this at least three times a week while administering the parsley pills daily as maintenance.

Cost: under \$10

OVERALL WELL BEING



An owner starts at the head before massaging down her dog's back

When people think of spoiled pooches, they often conjure up images of highly coiffed dogs with fur jackets and diamond studded collars. And while this may be a way of spoiling man's best friend, it can be expensive and a little over the top for most dog owners. So how does one go about spoiling their pet? Well, there is nothing better than pampering your dog in ways that encourages overall well being.

All Over Massage

Dogs, like humans, feel stiffness and tension in their joints and muscles. This is particularly true of older dogs or for dogs that have gone through a traumatic experience (such as an injury, illness or prolonged separation for their masters). One great way to alleviate their discomfort is to give your dog a massage. But this suggestion isn't exclusively for older or injured dogs – young dogs and puppies can greatly benefit from the relaxation and bonding that is accomplished through gentle massage.

Top dog masseuses agree that the best way to give your dog a massage is when she is totally relaxed. Lay your dog on her side and stroke her until she is relaxed. Next, apply gentle pressure working from the head down to the tail and then focus on each leg. The first few times you massage your dog she may get antsy or try to squirm away from you. That's o.k. because with repeat sessions, she will get used to this new sensation. If you know of any areas on your dog's body that is giving her trouble, gently squeeze and then release the area – this will relieve pain and ease tension. If you have any worries, always consult your vet.

Massage is a wonderful way to get in some quality time with your dog. It is relaxing for both of you and makes your bond grow even stronger.

Cost: free!

Head and Neck Massage

Don't have time to give your dog an all over massage? If so, just focus on his head and neck. Begin by rubbing the bony protrusion (also known as the nuchal crest – a bone that seems to have no purpose other than a starting place for a head massage) and work down the back of the head to the neck. When you get to the collar area, begin to rub and then scratch the area under the collar. After this, your dog will be putty in your hands!

Did you know that there are now schools that offer dog massage certificates!

Cost: free!

Paw Care

Imagine what your feet would be like if you ran around all day every day outside and in with bare feet. Not only would they be rough and filthy, they would also be vulnerable to scratches and scrapes as well. Welcome to a dog's world. Yes, dogs have been roaming the earth for thousands of years with unprotected paws; however, they have only recently been introduced to concrete, toxic chemical residue, hot asphalt, road salt, etc. And because of these caustic elements, many dogs suffer from paw discomfort in the form of cracked pads and dry skin. The solution: a mixture of equal parts lanolin and

petroleum jelly. Rubbing this into your pet's paws will not only moisturize dry skin, it also acts as a barrier cream that can be used in the winter months to protect your dog from street salt. If the paws are cracked, mix in a teaspoon of hydrogen peroxide. This will help heal the cracks and prevent infection. Both mixtures are 100% safe if consumed. **Cost: under \$7**

Aromatherapy

With non-traditional approaches to general well-being gaining more main stream acceptance, it makes sense that there are some techniques that are applicable for dogs. Aromatherapy is one such approach that both humans and dogs can share. But there are two key aromas that are particularly beneficial to have lingering in your house or car.

Lavender, besides smelling quite nice, is an aroma that helps calm people and animals. It is common to hear that a drop of lavender oil on a pillow will help a person fall asleep or having a lavender-scented candle burning will help relax you after a hard day's work. This is also the case with dogs. If your dog is stressed or upset, put a drop of lavender on her bed, blanket or rub it into her paws for instant relief. This tip comes in handy if you are traveling with your dog. Some dogs don't enjoy long car trips but by using this scent, you can help make the trip more tolerable.

Peppermint is another substance that is beneficial for man and dog alike. It is particularly effective if your dog has an upset stomach or suffers from motion sickness. As with the lavender, put a couple drops on the dog's bed, blanket or rub into his paws and the nausea should lift within a few minutes. Again, this comes in handy if you are traveling with a dog that tends to get carsick on long car rides. You can even mix a tiny bit of prepared peppermint tea into his water if his stomach troubles are severe. Please note that this is not a cure for vomiting or prolonged stomach trouble. If your dog becomes sick for no apparent reason, take him or her to the vet immediately.

Top aromatherapy scents
*For your dog include:
lavender, geranium,
almond, peppermint and
eucalyptus*

Cost: under \$10

Nutrition

In today's world we can buy almost any meal ready-made. But recent studies have found that these convenience items are laden with processed ingredients that are potentially detrimental to our health. Unfortunately, this is also true in today's modern dog world. Because dog food requires a long shelf life, preservatives and other chemicals are found side-by-side with the healthy ingredients listed on the nutritional labels. Food containing "unnatural" ingredients isn't necessarily that terrible for a healthy dog but can affect dogs with special dietary needs or different illnesses.

A new trend is to make your own dog food. The natural train of thought is to equate a dog's diet with giving him meat, meat and more meat; however, in the wild dogs' weren't just meat eaters. Many of the animals dogs ate were plant eaters whose stomachs were full of vegetation. If times were tough, dogs would graze on grass and shoots. Therefore, a diet of meat and vegetables is perfectly natural.

Did you know
52% of pet owners have
cooked at least one meal
for their pets!

*- American Animal Hospital
Association Survey*

One vet-recommended diet includes a baked two ounce boneless pork loin chop (chicken, beef or lamb can be used as well), four ounces of Tofu, eight ounces of cooked long grain brown rice, two teaspoons of extra virgin olive oil, a quarter cup of Molasses, two steamed carrots, one cup cooked spinach, half a

steamed green pepper, a few steamed broccoli spears, one teaspoon ground ginger, two garlic cloves (crushed), half a teaspoon of dry mustard and one teaspoon of bone meal. One serving of this recipe is equal to a large can of dog food and is much healthier.

If cooking is not up your alley you can always supplement your dog's diet with readily available natural substances. To begin, garlic is an excellent "extra" to add to your dog's food. Raw garlic is an antibacterial and anti-fungal agent. In addition, it is also an anti-inflammatory and works wonders for dog's that suffer from arthritis and other joint ailments. Ground ginger is also an anti-inflammatory and when combined with garlic, it can replace the need for expensive drugs if your dog suffers from an ongoing condition. Fresh ginger is great for calming a dog's stomach while dry mustard improves digestion and bowel functions. And all of these items are available at any grocery store for mere pennies!

Next, make a trip to the pharmacy. Why? Because most commercial dog foods do not contain enough vitamins to maintain a balanced diet. Again, this will probably not affect a healthy young dog but older dogs can really suffer from a lack of key nutrients. Ready? Here is your shopping list.

- B complex: vital for certain biological processes, a complex of B vitamins twice a day will benefit your dog greatly. Small dogs should be giving a regular B complex, medium dogs a high potency B complex and large dogs a high potency stress B complex formula. And don't worry – B vitamins are water-soluble so any excess passes through the body via the bladder.
- Vitamin E: an important vitamin for physiologic effects and a potent anti-inflammatory, dogs under the age of two should be given 400 IU daily while those dogs over two can have the dose increased to 800 IU daily.
- Vitamin C: an antioxidant that works with Vitamin E, dogs under the age of two should be given 250 mg daily while those dogs over two should be given 500 mg daily.
- Beta-carotene: an important antioxidant found in carrots, beta-carotene has been linked to protecting against certain cancers in both humans and dogs. The easiest way to dispense this nutrient to your dog is by giving him a raw carrot as a snack. If your dog doesn't like carrots, slip 10,000 IU into his food each day.
- Omega-3 fatty acids: these acids found in fish oils can help dogs with autoimmune disorder or arthritis. Again, these acids can be found in supplements but it is easier to feed your dog some cooked salmon or sardines occasionally. If these don't suit your dog's palette you can add one teaspoon of ground flax seeds, flax oil or kelp oil to his food.
- Gammalinolenic acid: if you can't pronounce it, that's o.k. because it is found in evening primrose, black currant or borage oils. A fatty acid that promotes hair, nail and skin health, it has been found to aid skin conditions, arthritis and auto-immune disorder when a couple of tablespoons are added to your dog's food.
- Gingko biloba: a great supplement for dogs with nervous system disorders, Gingko biloba increases blood flow to the brain. Give your nervous Nellie a capsule a day to keep anxiety at bay.
- Green tea: an energy booster, green tea can be given to older dogs that have lost their pep. In addition, it is very good for the digestion. Green tea can be dispensed either in tea form mixed in to your dog's drinking water or via one capsule per day.
- Siberian ginseng: a supplement that helps to reduce stress while increasing endurance and improving your dog's immune system, this is a key nutrient to give to working dogs. For best results, give your dog one capsule per day.

Cost: from \$1-\$10

Emergency Preparedness

Emergencies happen – this is a fact of life. While you can't foresee an emergency, you can be prepared for one. That is why it is a wise decision to put together a first aid kit for your dog. Before stocking your kit, get a business card from your vet. On the back, write the number of the closest 24-hour veterinary hospital. Keep the card in your wallet or bag at all times, and it's best if you can also keep one in each car. Also program the vet's number into your cell phone. While this may seem excessive, it ensures that you'll be prepared at any place, any time if your dog is injured outside your home. As for the first aid kit, keep at least one of each of the following on hand, preferably in a large freezer bag:

- Sterile gauze pads
- Adhesive tape
- Antiseptic wipes
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Antihistamine
- Tweezers
- Scissors
- Thermometer
- Cotton balls
- Hydrocortisone cream

Why a freezer bag? It's an easy size, you don't have to spend the extra cash on a fancy carrying case, and it's see-through. Quick treatment is important in an emergency, and being able to see into the first aid kit without opening it can make a huge difference. *Cost: under \$10*

Doggie Diagnosis

The downside of dog ownership is that communication can sometimes be a guessing game. This is particularly true when your dog is not feeling well. Sometimes your dog may just be "off" – not as energetic or acting odd. This may be nothing but it could be a sign of a serious health issue. Educating yourself in the signs that indicate all is not right with your dog can mean the difference between life and death.

Bloat: If your dog's belly starts to swell for no apparent reason, this could be an indication that she is suffering from Bloat – a condition in which the abdomen fills with gas to the point that it will become tight enough to play like a drum. This is a very serious condition as it can decrease her circulation and must be treated by a vet immediately.

Fainting: Often related to heart disease, fainting can occur when your dog gets excited and his heart has failed to pump enough blood to his brain. Low glucose levels in the blood can also cause fainting, which is often a result of strenuous exercise. Either way, if your dog faints, take him to the vet ASAP.

Falling: When a dog falls over for no apparent reason, it can be an indication that she has an inner ear infection. This is very treatable and can be cured with a trip to the vet and a course of antibiotics.

Heat Stroke: One of the most common summer ailments dogs suffer from is heat stroke. This can come on very rapidly even if your dog has not been outside in the heat for a prolonged period of time. If your dog shows any of the following signs, move him to a shady spot and pour cool water all over his body and then take him to the vet immediately:

- Heavy panting
- Glazed eyes
- Rapid pulse
- Bright red gums
- Unsteadiness
- Vomiting

Shock: A dog can suffer from four different types of shock: hypovolemic, cardiac, neurogenic or septic. All four exhibit similar symptoms including:

- Pale mucous membranes (inside of the mouth, gums, eyes, etc.)
- Weakness
- Rapid pulse
- Tangible loss of heat to the extremities, particularly the ears

The most common type of shock is hypovolemic, occurring when there is not enough blood circulating throughout the body. The cause can include internal or external bleeding or poor circulation. Cardiac shock occurs when the heart cannot pump blood fast enough. Neurogenic shock, although rare, can occur when the dog suffers a massive brain or spinal cord injury. Septic shock occurs when an infection has reached the blood stream.

If your dog exhibits any of these symptoms or experiences any type of injury that can cause shock, take him to the vet immediately.



DOGGIE ACCESSORIES

In a world where accessorizing is all the rage, why leave your pooch out? While they may not have wrists to sport a fantastic bracelet on, they do have collars that can be spruced up.

Collars with Panache

There is no reason why you and your dog have to settle for run-of-the-mill collars. It is always a good idea to use a traditional collar to go for leashed walks; however, it is also a good idea to get your dog a collar that she can wear the rest of the time that expresses her individualism and style.

If you are a crafty type, go to your local craft store and buy some colorful yarn or embroidery floss and braid or weave a good-looking collar. If you aren't as crafty, go to the second hand clothing store or yard sale and pick up a stylish beaded necklace. You can also use a braided leather belt, trimmed to size. You'd be surprised at how many things you can make or turn into a collar. *Cost: under \$5*

Collars with Dash

Your dog starts scratching himself obsessively. What do you do? Take him to the vet. You are told that your dog has fleas and will need a flea bath. Then you are told that you should start using some sort of preventative treatment for the rest of the flea season. You have a few options available to you, including a flea collar. But did you know that the main ingredient in many of these flea-control aids is insecticide? Scary? Yes. But what is your alternative?

Next time this happens to you don't go running to the pet store to spend a good deal of money on poison. Instead, go to a health food store and pick up one of the following essential oils: eucalyptus, citronella, tea tree, lavender or geranium. By rubbing a few drops of any of these oils onto your dog's collar or a bandana, you will prevent a flea infestation naturally and safely. This maintenance program is easy as can be and only requires a reapplication to the collar once a week. And as an extra bonus, your dog will smell wonderful all summer long. *Cost: under \$10*

Neck Adornments

In addition to a collar, why not spruce up your pal's look with a bandana or an old scarf? Pet stores sell doggie bandanas, but these can be seriously overpriced. Go to a sporting goods store and pick up a stylish bandana or two. You can also take accessorizing one step further and go to a thrift store to pick up a neck scarf. In winter, adjust an old scarf to an appropriate size to keep your dog's neck nice and warm. *Cost: from \$1-\$5*

Collar Charms

Go to any pet store and you will find charms that can be personalized. These often come in a variety of shapes and sizes but aren't too unique. If you are looking for something special and different, go to an accessory store and pick up a charm or pendant marketed towards humans. There are many to choose from with the variety ranging from Viking protection amulets to hearts and beads. Simply put this on a split ring (used for key rings, available at any hardware store) and attach it to your dog's collar. *Cost: under \$10*

Dress Up



Dress up can be as simple as putting ribbons in your dogs “hair” or going full out with hat, jacket, sunglasses, etc. You can dress your dog up for Halloween, costume parties, photographs or just for the heck of it. You’d be surprised how carried away you can get with a little imagination and a few simple articles of clothing.



Dressing up can be as easy as putting a grass skirt on or putting an old tube top on her with a faux gold chain!

Sometimes it’s fun to take your dog and make him look a little more human. After all, William Wegman, the famous photographer, took his beloved Fay Ray and dressed her up in all sorts of wild and wonderful outfits that are forever captured on celluloid.

GATHERINGS & HOLIDAYS



Birthday parties, weddings and holiday parties are just a few of many ways you can honor your dog

There are many gatherings you can organize for your dog and his friends. Recently birthday parties and weddings have become quite popular. However, why wait for a whole year to pass or a once in a life time event to take place to organize a canine club meeting.

Picnics

Plan to meet both your two-legged and four-legged friends from the dog park for an afternoon of fun and frolic. Have everyone bring their own lunch and snacks for the dogs. Once everyone is content, initiate games with both humans and dogs such as catch, hide and seek or chase.

Cost: under \$5 per participant

Barkbeques

Don't just use your backyard as an oversized playpen for your pooch. Open it up to her doggie friends and their parents for a barbeque. Prepare some dog-friendly food, throw it on the grill and enjoy. Chicken, without the skin, is often more tolerable for dogs who aren't used to eating "people" food. In addition, there are many vegetables that are very beneficial for dogs including carrots, celery and broccoli. If you aren't comfortable serving "people" food to your four-legged guests, feed them dog food and their parents can enjoy the grilled food.

After the meal has been served and stomachs have settled, why not play a few games? If you are hosting the barbeque at night, you may not want to play games that involve running around. And anyway, unless you have a huge backyard, you won't have the space to fully enjoy these activities. Instead, play "Find the Treat" or "Smash the Piñata" (see Party Games).

When it is time to see your guests off, send them away with little loot bags – fill a plastic bag (which can then be used as a poop bag later!) with some yummy treats, tennis balls or chew sticks. Both the dogs and their masters will appreciate this token.

Cost: under \$5 per participant

Holiday Parties

Why should bi-peds have all the fun during the holiday season? What about organizing a festive-season dog house party for your faithful friend's faithful friends? Bake doggie friendly treats, play games and distribute homemade gifts. Passover and Easter can be celebrated as well. Hide doggie treats around the yard for a Treatser egg hunt or hide a piece of rawhide in the house so your dog can find the Afikomen.

Cost: under \$5 per participant

Trick or Treat

It isn't that uncommon nowadays for a neighborhood to have equal amounts of dogs and kids. So when Halloween comes, why not dress up your canine and take him out for a little trick-or-treating. But what about a costume? Well, don't despair – there are many costumes that can be made from things that are lying around your house right now.

An angel costume can easily be made from everyday common things such as cardboard, a wire coat hanger, string, plastic food wrap and a silver-color

pipe cleaner. In addition, you can make a ballerina costume from a couple of feet of tulle (available at any craft or sewing store), a Dracula costume can be

made from a piece of black cloth for the cape or a baseball player costume is as easy as strapping a baseball cap to your dog's head and dressing him in an old t-shirt.

Cost: under \$10



Dog costumes can be very easy to make and the options are endless

Costume Parties

Costume parties can be so much fun; and the great thing about them is that you don't have to have a reason to host one. Yes, they typically take place around Halloween but that doesn't mean this is the only time you can throw one. I have attended costume parties that honor the host's birthday, to celebrate the release of a long awaited movie and just for the sake of having a party. So what's stopping you from hosting a costume dog for both your friends and their dogs? You can serve food, play games and even have a contest for the best costume; and it doesn't take much to make a costume for a dog.

If you read the "Dress Up" or "Trick or Treat" sections you will know that you can use almost anything lying around your house as a dog costume. Take an old sun hat and a pair of shades, put them on your dog and there you have it – your dog is a beach bum. What about using a discarded red glove as the crowning piece of a rooster costume? You can even have a theme costume – you dress up a knight (or princess) and your dog can be your faithful steed. Again, it just takes a little creativity and a couple of odds and ends lying around your basement to come up with a smashing costume.

Cost: under \$5

FUN TIME



Dogs are always ready to have fun!

There is no better way to show your dog how much you love her than by dedicating a part of your day to fun time. And what better way than to customize your play time to suit her breed. Until recently, a dog's station in life was to work with, and for, their masters. However, this cooperation is steadily declining as fewer dogs are used for hunting and herding and more for hugging and horsing around. This can often result in a very bored dog. Yes, walkies are one way to relieve their boredom, however, dogs can greatly benefit from tapping into their working past even if it is only "pretend" work.

Time Tested and True Games

Bird dogs, or retrievers, particularly enjoy games in which they have to retrieve an item. Equip yourself with plenty of projectiles and in no time your dog will be running and jumping with a look of ecstasy on his face. For water retrieving dogs, go to a ravine (in a dog friendly park) or set up a kiddie pool in the backyard and throw the ball, stick, toy, etc. into the water. It may make your dog a bit smelly for a short time but it is well worth it considering the joy it brings.

Hunting dogs such as hounds and terriers were bred to seek out fast moving game such as fox or mink. As such, they are very good at games that involve hide and seek. A great way to initiate a game is to have the dog smell the ball, sock, toy, etc., they have to seek out and then throw this item into a thick bush or pile of leaves and watch them go. Some dogs will tear into the obstacle to get at their quest while others will stand by the location of their quarry until you come to claim the item.

Getting to know what natural inclinations your dog has can really spice up play time. Tailoring activities that you know he will enjoy will make play time that much more fun. ***Cost: free!***

“Party Games”

It's not a party until the games start...or at least that's what I've heard. But it's kind of hard to play board games with dogs – their paws often knock the pieces off the board or they run away with the paper money. But don't let that stop you from gaming it up at your next dog party. There are many games that don't involve pushing a miniature car around a game board. ***Cost: free!***

The Shell Game

Play this fun game by using three cups and a dog treat. Show the dogs the treat, secret it under one of the cups and try to confound the observers by switching the cups around at top speed. When you're done, solicit the crowd to see if one of them will guess right. A word of caution though, due to their excellent olfactory senses and their appetites, the dogs will always win making this a game you wouldn't want to put money on!

Smash the Piñata

This is a great variation of the people version. Take a brown paper bag, draw a traditional piñata design on it, fill it up with treats, attach it to a pole with rope and dangle it in front of your guests (dogs only please). This game is sure to excite and, as a bonus, this is great exercise as it makes the dogs jump repeatedly.

Bobbing for Apples

This is a super sloppy game but fun nonetheless. Fill a large bucket, or if you are outside, a kiddie pool with water, drop some treats in and let the dogs go wild. The treats for this kind of game should be somewhat impervious to water so throw in some chew toys, rawhide or apples.

Toys

Dog toys have become a very lucrative industry for pet suppliers. There are some that are very reasonably priced while others can cost up to \$15. And it is a little known fact that those cute little bears for Bowser will actually teach him that all bears are fair game...much to the chagrin of your children, should you have any. Dogs don't care what the toy looks like, just as long as it is chewable, throwable and destroyable. So why spend "mucho dinero" on commercial dog toys when you can make just as fun ones at home? ***Cost: under \$5***

Shaker

A common arts and crafts project in junior school, this toy will provide a great many hours (or minutes depending on your dogs penchant for destruction) of fun. Take a toilet paper or paper towel roll, fill it up with dried peas, seal both ends with masking tape and hand it over to the hound. The dog will go crazy for the sound it makes and her curiosity will be piqued by what's making the sound. Of course, once the dog manages to chew through the roll there may be some disappointment when your dog discovers that her fun shaker toy is filled with dried peas instead of yummy treats. However, if you dog likes vegetables, she may be considerate enough to clean the mess up for you or, alternatively, you can fill the shaker with some kibble to ensure the mess is kept to a minimum.

Mr. Sock

There are a number of variations of this toy. Here are the most popular two: Take a new sweat sock, stuff a tennis ball into the sock, draw a silly face on it, put a knot in the sock to hold the tennis ball in place and there you have it – a fun toy for less than a buck. Your dog will go nuts throwing the sock around and it is a great interactive toy that the two of you can play a game of fetch with.

The second variation is to take a new sock and draw a funny face on it. Stuff your hand in the sock and use it as a hand puppet. Initiate play by talking to your dog through the hand puppet and playfully "nipping" her ears with the mouth of the puppet. Your dog may be a bit confused at first but will eventually accept this odd new play friend and will reciprocate.

It is essential that you use new socks for these toys and that you make them appear as different from the socks you wear on your feet. With the absence of your scent and the funny faces, your sock toys will not resemble your real socks saving you from having to buy in bulk.

Frisbee

Traditional hard plastic Frisbees are very hard on a dog's mouth and for this reason alone, you should look for a Frisbee made from alternative material for your dog to play catch with. But if you go to the pet store you may be shocked to see that rope Frisbees are over \$10. This is a bit ridiculous considering you can make one for less than \$2. How? Take a trip to the hardware

store and buy a foot of thick braided cotton rope. When you get it home, attach the two ends with either a couple of stitches or a dab of hot glue. And there you have it – a rope Frisbee at less than half the price of a store bought one.

Tug of War

Another use for your hardware cotton rope is to use it for tug of war. Again, when you go to look for this type of toy in the pet stores, you will find that they are a bit pricey. But by buying at the hardware store, you can save big. Anyway, once you have your foot or foot and a half length of rope home, tie a knot at both ends and get ready to use your muscles because your dog will be on the other end of that rope so fast you may not know what hit you.

...and a Place to Put Them

Are you sick of tripping over your dog's toys? Do you find toys that your dog hasn't touched in months covered with dust under the sofa? All this can be solved by providing your dog with a toy chest. This need not be an expensive wooden chest decorated with bones and puppies. You can use an oversized basket, an old fruit crate or even an old laundry hamper. Gather your dog's toys up and place them all in the toy chest. Your dog will quickly learn that toys come from a specific area in the house. This is especially important if you have small children. If trained properly, the dog will stop taken your kids' dolls and toys and will automatically go to their own chest for fun times. You may not be able to train them to put the toys back but it does cut down on lost toys and mess in the long run.

Cost: from free-under \$10

MEAL TIME

Home baked goodies are the current ‘thing’ with dog owners. Look at any dog magazine and you will read an article about the merits of making your own dog food and baking your own biscuits. And while this is one way to spoil your dog, there are numerous others that are meal time related.



Although dogs should never be given alcohol, there is nothing wrong with offering them a drink of water from a real glass

Fine China

“Fine food daintily served,” is one of my mother’s favorite expressions when serving a mishmash of leftovers on her attractive dinner plates. If we can have indistinguishable food made better by a good-looking plate, why can’t our dogs?

Finding good china that suitable for being pushed around the floor when your dog attempts to get that last piece of kibble can be a challenge. Perusing the pet store can prove disappointing when you see how much those cute food bowls with the little bones on them cost. So where do you go? Try a thrift shop, a church bazaar or a garage sale. You’ll be pleasantly surprised with the variety of nice tableware that can be found at such venues. And talk about reasonable! Most people will sell their old china off for next to nothing, justifying your purchase of several bowls for different occasions.

Cost: under \$2

Tables

Now that you have the fine china, are you really going to let your pooch eat directly off the floor? I’m not suggesting that you set a place for the dog at the dinner table. Make your dog his or her own dinner table instead. Sound crazy? It’s not really.

This concept has already been introduced to the market in the form of raised bowls on metal stands. In fact, vets recommend that larger dogs and/or older dogs should be fed from an elevated position as it minimizes strain on their necks and backs. So why not go out and buy a set of raised bowls, you may ask. First off, your attractive thrift store dinner bowls will not fit. Secondly, you want to spoil your pet, remember? Well, it’s time to go back out to the yard sales or fruit market in pursuit of a table for your best friend.

Foot stools that stand about eight to twelve inches off the ground work best. If you can’t find a stool that is the right shape or size, go to the fruit or liquor store and ask if they have any wooden grape crates or old wine crates. Either of these works well and, as a bonus, is terribly chic.

Cost: under \$10

“Table Linens”

Whether you decided to get a table for your friend or if you are a traditionalist and want to keep the bowls on terra firma, there is no reason why the dog’s eating space shouldn’t be visually appealing. If you went the way of the table, drape a “table cloth” over the top. A cloth napkin will probably be just the right size to sufficiently cover the table top.

If you're a believer in "everything has its place", which in this case is the floor, lay a vinyl or plastic placemat under the dog bowls. This not only makes the doggie dining room more attractive but it also minimizes the amount of food bits that land on the bare floor. *Cost: under \$5*

"Candy" Bowls

Most people will leave out a candy bowl when they have visitors or position one on the coffee table within arms' reach of the couch in the TV room. Guests certainly appreciate this gesture and the candy bowl often comes in handy when you are in the middle of a good movie and are struck by the munchies. In saying this, it seems natural that a dog would enjoy this accessibility to treats as well.

When your dog has guests, leave a small bowl within snouts reach as a way to make them feel welcome; or, leave a bowl of treats in the room you and your dog spend the most time in and offer this to your dog every now and then, especially during commercials.

A word of warning though – it goes without saying that dogs can be, well, little pigs. If you do leave goodies about, make sure that you don't dump an entire box of dog bones into the bowl. A couple should sate your pooch's palate. Also, avoid putting the bowl on a surface that would also be used for human treats. If you give your dog permission to grab a snack from the same table as the one that holds your scrumptious treats, he or she will think that all the treats in this certain area are fair game. In addition, never leave chocolate in any area that can be accessed by the dog – chocolate is poison to the canine digestion system and, if consumed, can cause severe illness or even death.

Cost: under \$5

A PLACE TO CALL THEIR OWN, OR DECORATING DOGGIE STYLE

You know how important it is to have a place to go when you are feeling low or tired. You probably have a bedroom or a den. Some have a garage or a basement. But where does your dog go when he or she wants a little alone time? Although dogs are, by nature, pack animals, it doesn't mean that there are times when they crave a time out now and again. In fact, when dogs are stressed (for example, during parties or if a workman is in the house) it is essential that he or she has a safe and secure place to go to calm down.



Even though dogs are pack animals, there are points when they need some quiet time too.

Large Spaces

If you have the space, why not give your dog a room of his own? This may be as small as a closet or as large as a spare bedroom. One of my friends has designated a downstairs powder room as her dog's spot, furnishing it with a dog bed and a couple of his toys. If you have an upstairs linen closet, make some space at the bottom of it, put a pillow or a blanket down and show your dog his new room. Likewise, if you have a spare bedroom or a den, why not turn it into the dog's room complete with all of her toys, bed and a place to store her accessories.

Cost: free!

Small Places

Don't have enough room to spare for your pal? Well, a dog doesn't have to have a physical room to have a place to call his own. If you don't own a crate or a pen, you can create a makeshift one by throwing a blanket over the seat of a chair to make a "tent". Again, place a pillow or blanket underneath the chair and presto – your dog has his own quiet place.

Cost: free!

Beds

It breaks my heart to see a dog lying on a cold floor, especially if it is tile or hardwood. All I can think about is their little bones pressing against their skin in the areas where flesh meets floor. Yes, I have an

overactive imagination; however, I ask – have you ever lay on the floor for a prolonged period of time? It's no wonder dogs go straight for the carpet or the couch. But this couch-hogging is probably a behavior you want to avoid, especially when guests are over. So, what do you do? Give your dog a bed.



These two lucky pooches have an entire room to call their own. If you don't have the space, even a basket could be considered your dog's room.

An old basket is a wonderful thing. There are so many uses for an item such as this including being used as a dog bed. Of course, the basket should be large enough to fit your dog comfortably. It

should also have enough room to hold some sort of padding to keep your dog comfy. Baskets can be found at yard sales, discount stores or in your attic.

They are portable, easy to clean and provide your dog with a soft place to lay her little head.

Can't find a basket? Take an old sheet and some stuffing. Cut two pieces of the sheet to size (should be a rectangular shape that is slightly larger than the length of your dog from head to tail), sew the pieces together with stuffing in between and in the end you have an instant dog bed. Again, this bed is completely portable and easy to clean and your dog will love it because your scent will still be in the sheet. *Cost: from \$5-\$10*

Blankets

I feel that having a blanket for your dog is one of the most important dog-essential there is. If you have ever watched a dog get ready to lay down you know that they will turn in circles over and over again and scratch the area they have decided to make their "nest" in. If they do this on your carpet or floor, there is a chance that these surfaces will eventually begin to show wear – not with a blanket though!

I gave my dog an old throw blanket for the kitchen because he insists on lying down on the cold kitchen floor watching me while I cook. I can't stand those big brown eyes staring at me, saying "see how much I love you...I'm lying on the freezing cold floor just to be near you" (or, on second thought, maybe he's just waiting for me to drop some food on the ground). Anyway, I could not take it anymore so whenever I enter the kitchen, I grab his blanket and toss it on the floor. As soon as it makes contact with the tiles, my dog takes it, starts spreading it out with his scratches, makes small adjustments with his teeth and eventually settles down.

Older dogs also really appreciate a blanket. When it is cold or damp outside, old dogs tend to get achy joints or experience stiffness. Providing him with a warm blanket can help fight the pain of old bones. Puppies also love the warmth of a blanket – it brings back memories of the days when his brothers and sisters would lay beside him, pressed up against Mommy's belly. Providing a puppy with a blanket is particularly crucial when you first introduce him to your home. It will give him a place to go to if he feels scared or confused.

Finally, a blanket can be your best friend when your dog comes in out of the rain or snow. The dry-off that most dog owners do at their front door does not thoroughly dry the dog off. As such, she is still damp when she goes to lie down on the carpet. Combine her damp coat with a damp carpet and you have some foul odors going on. Prevent this by having a blanket waiting for her when she arrives home. A blanket can easily be washed once the dog is dry; saving your carpet and your nose from the smell only a wet dog creates. *Cost: under \$10*

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS & OTHER WAYS TO IMMORTALIZE YOUR DOG

Just like having kids, owning a dog will probably result in numerous pictures. And nine times out of ten, when you are taking pictures of your kids or your dog they will probably pull a face or turn their



Photo opportunities present themselves in the most unlikely places. If you see an interesting location or a cool prop, use it to add extra flair to your dog photos.

head at the last minute. But this doesn't stop you from insisting on taking these actions shots; however, it may make looking at these pictures a little disappointing with so many of them depicting a dog-shaped blur or a shot of the dog's behind as it walks out of frame.

The solution to this is not going and hiring a professional photographer to capture your dog's image. Instead, set up your own camera and click away. You will have complete creative control (unless your dog decides otherwise) and both of you will enjoy the process.

Glamour Shots

Look around your house for a nice background for a picture. Maybe you have a formal sitting room or an attractive looking den. When you find a background you are happy with, get your dog into position

and take a shot. It is often easier to have another person with you to get your dog to look into the camera. Have your friend squeeze a squeaky toy behind your head and when your dog looks up, take the picture. You can also take great outdoor shots in the backyard or at the park. The world is your backdrop; it's up to you to choose your location. You can make this a monthly or seasonal outing, a special time that you and your dog can look forward to. Turn it into a road trip – go to a farm and take photos of your dog on a bale of hay or to the beach and take action shots of your dog in the water. The possibilities are endless.

Cost: under \$10

Raw Video Footage

When you have your doggie get-togethers or are on a trip, take along your video camera and get live action shots of your dog at play. If you have a computer that is capable of editing video, you can create a visual journal of key events such as holidays, birthdays, etc.

Cost: free!

Albums

Now that you have all these great photos of your dog, put them in order and catalogue them in an album. The dog is part of the family so you can either combine family photos with dog photos or devote an entire album to the dog alone. Either way your photos will be preserved and ready for viewing the next time you have guests.

Cost: from \$5-\$10

Framed

Another thing you can do with your dog's photos is put them in frames and place them in key display areas throughout your house or office. Group like-photos in a multi-photo frame or hang multiple framed prints together.

Cost: from \$1-\$10

Calendars

You know you spoil your dog, your dog knows you spoil her, but does the world know it? Aside from the picture on your desk, is there anything else that shouts to all who walk by your workstation that your dog is number one? If the answer is no, think about making a calendar. With the progress of desktop publishing and applications that spit out ready-made calendar pages, it takes no time to make a professional looking personalized calendar.

Remember all those great photos you've taken over the years of your dog in different outfits, with different backdrops and in different action poses? Take those, scan them in (if you don't already have them on your computer), enlarge them to fill an 8.5 by 11 sized page in landscape orientation, print out a year's worth of months, take them to the nearest copy shop to have them spiral bound and there you have it – your very own calendar. But why just have one at work? Make a second one to hang in your kitchen or make a few to distribute to family. This way everyone will know who is top dog in your house.

Cost: under \$5

Set in Stone

Did you ever write your name in wet concrete when you were a kid in an attempt to immortalize yourself? Do the same thing for your dog. There are kits available that are marketed to parents that want to make stepping stones of their children's handprints. These kits are expensive though and you can achieve the exact same thing by nailing four pieces of wood together and mixing some concrete. Once the concrete has started to set, coat your dog's paw with Vaseline and press firmly into the mixture. Leave it to dry (but remember to remove the paw) and when it has fully set, remove the wood and place the stepping stone in the garden.



This is a variation of the “set in stone” idea. With a little creativity, you can immortalize your dog in many different ways.

A variation of this arts and crafts project is to take the cast paw and fill it with modeling clay. Pack the clay into the “mould” and carefully extract it once you feel that the clay has filled the impression completely. To achieve a clean removal, rub the impression with Vaseline to prevent the clay from sticking. Bake the clay paw print as per the instructions on the clay package and when the 3-D paw is ready, adhere it to a board (as pictured above) or place it in a shadow box frame.

Cost: under \$10

Book of Years

My mother made sure she carefully documented the milestones of my life. She kept records of my first steps, the progression of my growth, school photos and report cards all in one book. Similarly, when my dog came to live with us, I began a book of his development. I have photos that show his transformation from puppy to adult, I have every vet visit report and even made notes of his major achievements – things that I taught him or things that he figured out himself – all in one book. This does not cost a whole lot to start; you just need a scrapbook that can be bought at any department or craft store. Use this book as a place to put fond pictures, important facts of funny anecdotes.

Cost: from \$1-\$10

Cyber Dogs

Part of spoiling your dog is letting everyone know that you do it. A spoiled dog need not be lavished with gifts or carried around on a soft pillow; no, having a devoted owner is sometimes enough. And part of being a devoted dog owner is to have images of your dog everywhere. Just like parents who bring framed photos of their kids to work, you too should plaster your dog's picture wherever you can. But with the changing nature of the work world, where 90% of your productivity is done on the computer, why not digitally enhance your dog to suite your work lifestyle? Here are just a few ways to incorporate your dog into your workday. *Cost: free!*

Websites

With the availability of sites that offer free web hosting, everyone and their brothers have a web site. This is where new parents proudly display their babies, car fanatics post pictures of their engines and hobbyists show off their newest project. So what about a site dedicated to your dog?

Many of these web hosting sites offer some sort of software or a template you can use to create your own web page. All you have to do is add your pictures and text and click save. If you are more advanced and can create your own site, why not make it a community page where all your pals from the dog park can log in and add their own content. You can use this as a forum to swap advice, stories or even notices. And this way, if you have to be away from your pooch for some time (like when you are at work), you can always go to your site and admire him for as long as you want!

Screen Savers

Another way to get your dog into computers is to put her on the computer. No, I don't mean physically sitting her on your desktop; I mean use her picture as your screen saver. This way you can see her smiling face whenever you come back from the bathroom or return from any other activity that takes you away long enough for your computer to go into screen saver mode.

There is tons of information on the Internet that will walk you through creating a screen saver but if you aren't that computer savvy, you can always take a picture of your dog and make it the backdrop on your screen. To do this (for a PC), you must:

- Save the picture you have chosen on to your C drive.
- Click on the **Start** icon at the bottom of your screen, point the mouse at **Settings** and select **Control Panel**
- From the **Control Panel** window, click on the **Display** icon
- From the **Display Properties** window, click on the **Desktop** tab
- Click the **Browse** button to open up your C drive and double click on the picture you want to use and then click on **Apply**

Once you have completed these steps, you will have a beautiful picture of your best friend to look at lovingly all day long.

Mouse Pads

So now that your dog is on the web and an integral part of your computer system, why not complete the package with a personalized mouse pad? These are very easy to make; some

stationary stores even sell kits. Basically all you have to do is follow the instructions that come with the kit or, if you want to make one from scratch, go out to the craft store and get a cork sheet. Trim the sheet to mouse pad size. Next, take a photo of your dog and glue it on to the cork sheet. Finish the project off by covering the photo with a sheet of self adhesive plastic film (also found at the craft store).

Cost: under \$7

Personalized Items

As mentioned earlier, spoiling your dog need only take the form of sincere public displays of admiration (and some hugs and kisses too!). Short of walking around with a sandwich board strapped to your shoulders that proudly displays a picture of your pet, there are other ways you can show your appreciation for your dog that don't involve two pieces of wood and a couple of straps!

T-shirts

Personalized t-shirts have been around for years. The majority you see will have some proclamation such as #1Dad or I Love My Grandkids accompanied by the t-shirt givers' pictures. And because this type of personalization has become so popular, label companies have started making iron-on transfers that you can use at home! You can either buy a box or, better yet (and less expensive) you can go to a large-scale photocopy place and buy one off of them.

In fact, it is better to go to a professional as they will be practiced in the art of placing an image on the transfer sheet. Once you have taken your dog's picture to the copy shop and had it printed on the transfer, bring the sheet home and using a hot iron, place the transfer on a cotton t-shirt and iron away. Remove the sheet and you will find your dog staring right back at you.

Cost: under \$10

Mugs

Unfortunately this is not a project you can do at home. But, fortunately, this is something that can be done fast and cheap at your local mall. Many malls have kiosks where they will transfer an image onto a mug of your choosing. All you have to do is take them a photo, choose the mug color and wait for the final product. This mug can then be taken and placed with pride in the office kitchen where everyone will see it and admire your four-legged friend.

Cost: under \$10

Memorials

No one likes to think of it but there will come a day when your dog will no longer be here. The grief a dog owner feels when their companion animal passes on is not much different from the grief felt when a close friend dies. In saying this, why then should your dog be sent off without ceremony or something that signifies her life?

Backyard Burial

Although it is against many city by-laws, backyard burials are an excellent way to honor your dog. She probably spent a lot of time here and would like to be laid to rest somewhere close to her family. And as long as it is done on the low, there is no reason why you shouldn't inter your dog in a place where you can visit her daily.

When my first dog passed on, my mother kindly had a friend dig a grave in the backyard in which we placed her little body shrouded in a sheet. It gave me great comfort to be able to look out the back window or sit by her final resting spot and know that in some way she was still with me. It helped me with the grieving process – essential for a young child to learn about and now, twenty some-odd years later, I can (and do) still visit her.

When the time comes to say your final farewells, organize a small family funeral and delegate one person to say the eulogy. A final farewell shared by those who loved her most will give the family closure and an opportunity to openly share the grief you all are feeling.

Markers

While it isn't essential, it is nice to have something to mark your dog's final resting place. While actual grave stones are very expensive, you can always make your own marker out of wood or paving stones. Exterior paint can be substituted for etchings or engravings and you can design your marker anyway you want. I have even seen people use a stick with their dog's collar attached.

Memorial Service

If your dog passes away at the vet or you live in an apartment, you can always have a memorial service in place of a backyard funeral. Invite those who loved your dog over for a few hours of remembrance, have someone say a eulogy, and let people support you in your time of grief. Remember, a dog is a part of the family and her loss is no less painful than if you lost a close friend. It is ok to be upset and those who loved her as much as you will understand this grief and help you through this hard time.

Cost: under \$10

GIFTS & CARDS

With more and more people thinking of their dog as a full-fledged family member, the pet industry has increased exponentially. The American Pet Products Manufacturing Association (APPMA) has found that the average American household spends more on pet food than it does on wine, over-the-counter drugs, candy, or television sets. In addition, people are now spending more on veterinary services for their pets than they do on coffee, books, video rentals, or computer software. Therefore, it should not be surprising that APPMA has projected that pet owners will spend over \$34 billion on pet products in 2004. So join the ever increasing ranks of pet parents and get your beloved dog some presents to mark special occasions!



Pet product sales have increased by 100% in the last ten years. It has been projected that over \$34 billion will be spent on pets in 2004.

Festive Stockings

It is the festive season and most are experiencing the anticipation of good food and gifts. Whether you exchange gifts all in one day or you span it out for a week, why not include the dog in the festive giving. You can prepare a stocking filled with treats, little toys and a new leash. Or you can separate these gifts, wrapping each individually and include your dog in the gift giving. For very little money, it is easy to make the dog feel like one of the family during this family-oriented season.

Cost: from \$2-\$10

Birthday Pressies

While you may not know your dog's actual birthday, you can always consider the day you brought her home as her birthday. And as long as she has a birthday, doesn't she deserve a birthday celebration...with gifts? With dog birthday parties increasing in popularity, it goes to figure that dog birthday gifts would follow suit. As with the festive gifts, birthday presents can be as simple as a new chew toy to something more substantial such as a dog bed. Whatever you end up getting for your best four-legged friend, it will be much appreciated and the love behind the gift it will be reciprocated ten-fold.

Did you know the top five dog toys include rawhide chews, fluffy toys, tennis balls, a new collar and a bed.

Cost: from \$2-\$10

To My One True Love

When you love someone, you want to tell them, right? Whether it is your best friend or your cousin, your Mom or your brother, there is a card out there that will express your feelings for the recipient. The gesture of love expressed by giving a card should not exclude your dog. It may feel odd to put affectionate thoughts onto paper for someone that can't read but then again, when giving a card to your dog, you are not only the author but the orator as well. Write the card in the morning, leave it on the counter until you get home from work and then, with a surprised voice, announce to your dog that he has received a card. Sit on the ground with him, wrap an arm around his shoulders and read the card to him in an animated voice. Before the words "with love, your master" leave your mouth, your dog will

be wagging his tail and giving you kisses from the sentiment (ok, and the excitement in your voice helps a lot). ***Cost: under \$5***

From the Dog

On the flip side, maybe your dog would like to express her feelings with more than a tail wag. The greeting card industry has marketed this idea by creating many different occasion cards from the dog. You can always go out and get one of these or make your own by taking a piece of cardboard, folding it into a card, gluing a fabulous picture dog picture on the front and writing a special message from the pooch. I am partial to the latter idea as it is less expensive and more personal. And you can use these cards for all occasions. Make a batch and send them out during the festive season. Use a Valentine's Day theme and hand them out to your dog's pals at the dog park. The possibilities are endless and the recipients' gratitude will make the gluey fingers worth it! ***Cost: under \$5***

“ALL ON MY OWN”



Dogs are pack animals and if left alone for an extended period of time they can suffer from anxiety and depression. Leaving on lights, music or the TV can help alleviate these symptoms.

As a pack animal, wild dogs would hunt, travel, sleep and eat together. This is an inborn drive that no amount of domestication can eradicate. As such, when your dog is left alone, he will feel quite lonely. You and your family have become his pack and without you, he is lost. Some dogs handle being alone a lot better than others. But no dog enjoys being alone for extended periods of time. Short of buying another dog to eliminate separation anxiety, there are other things you can do to make his alone time a little more bearable.

Symphony in ‘Bark’ Flat

Although this is not a substitute for your presence, leaving the radio on while you are out does help to reassure your dog that he is not alone.

Some dogs develop likes to certain types of music, while others enjoy talk radio. With a little experimenting with the radio dial, you will find something that your dog will enjoy.

My dog seems to enjoy classical music. As soon as I put it on the radio, he lies down and gets a dreamy look in his eyes. If I put on some be-bop type jazz music, he becomes quite agitated, running around the house and barking at the radio. It was a good thing for the neighbors’ sake that I clued into this before leaving him alone with the radio on.

But like any repeated action, a Pavlovian affect will inevitably result. When your dog sees you approaching the radio, he will automatically assume you are going out. He may start to follow you around and whine or become hyperactive. Either way, if you aren’t going out but are having dinner guests over instead, this can be very annoying. It is also stressful for the dog as he will be very confused when he sees that people are coming instead of going. The solution, don’t leave your dog with your favorite CD playing – turn the dial to talk radio instead. *Cost: free!*

The Beauty of Timers

Ah, timers. What a wonderful invention. Police have recommended using timers as a theft deterrent for years. Hooking your TV or lights up to a timer set for dusk is a sure way to make the outside world think you’re home. But what about the inside world...namely the dog?

As night begins to embrace your house, darkening rooms with its oppressive black blanket, your dog may become agitated. Now, not only is she alone but she’s in the dark as well. Solution: use a timer. This is a great way to comfort your dog in the hours between nightfall and your return home from work. Set your lights and your TV to turn on right when it starts to get dark. Not only are you comforting your dog, by setting a timer you are providing a safety measure for yourself as well. With the lights on, you won’t trip over anything when you’re walking in with an arm full of groceries. *Cost: free!*

Grrr Rated Movies

Did you know
over 100 movies
have been made
that star dogs!

When you have to go somewhere without your dog and you know you'll only be gone for a couple of hours, why not throw a movie on for him watch. There are videos and DVDs available at the pet store geared towards a canine audience; however, why spend the dough when you can just record a nature show – preferably one with lots of animal sounds – and play it when you're gone. The neighbors may not love you (some dogs react by barking non-stop) but your dog sure will and that's all that matters.

Cost: under \$5

JUST THE TWO OF YOU

In recent years, studies have found that dogs contribute many positive benefits to their owners as well as to society as a whole. Because of the calming affect that owning a dog brings, medicare costs dramatically decrease in households that own dogs. In addition, dog owners are less likely to suffer from depression and have a lower risk of suffering a heart attack.



It is very important to make time for just the two of you.

Some say that considering a dog a member of the family is a recent trend. Yet, archeologists discovered a 12,000 year-old tomb in Northern Israel containing the remains of a human and a dog. Lying side-by-side, the human's hand was arranged so that it rested on the dog's shoulder to show the bond between the two. Needless to say, many are starting to think that the dog-human relationship is as much an inbred emotion as a dog's instinct to growl when a stranger approaches. And to celebrate this bond, it is important that dog and human make time to spend some alone time.

Good Dog

Obedience training is one of the best things you can do for your dog – it is the foundation of integrating your dog into your household, it opens the line of communication between the two of you and, more importantly, it can save her life.

The simple “stay” command can stop your dog from bolting out the door, running into traffic or entering a dangerous place. Other commands such as “sit” or “off” keep dogs from acting like animals (pardon the pun). Because dogs are naturally social creatures, they are eager to jump all over anyone who enters their territory either to greet or to intimidate. “Off” is a useful tool in this kind of situation.

However, obedience training is also a way for you to create a social hierarchy within the family. This is important because if she is not taught her place within the family unit, behavioral problems can occur.

Obedience training should always be followed with hugs and treats. When your dog does something right, you reward her. If she does something wrong; however, reprimand her in a strong voice. Training will come easily to a dog that enjoys the experience and there is no better way to make a dog like learning than feeding her goodies. In addition, knowing your dog's limitations will also help the process along. Dogs have a very short attention span, so keeping your training sessions short will help the dog stay alert during the lesson, therefore helping her learn quicker.

If you are unsure as to what type of commands you should teach your dog, there are many helpful books available at the library or sites on the Internet. And remember – it's never too late to start.

Cost: free!

Bedtimes Stories

It's night time, you and your dog are getting ready for bed. You lie down only to find that you can't sleep. You reach for the remote, thinking a little TV will help you nod off. But passively watching the

boob-tube isn't really spending quality time with your dog. Instead, why not pick up a book and read out loud? You'd be surprised at how attentive your dog will be during your story telling. Also, if you use different voices for each character, you're sure to keep your dog's interest until it's time to go to sleep.

Cost: free!

Would You Like to Dance?

Maybe you've seen it on TV; it's called cat dancing. There are actual dance schools that offer this innovative form of expression. But this begs the question: if cats can dance, why can't dogs?

I own a miniature Poodle, a breed known for tripping the light fantastic. I like to think that he is a canine Fred Astaire – he will start dancing anywhere at the drop of a hat. The first time I came upon the theory that dogs have rhythm was when we were in a bookstore in the music section. A lady came over to pat him and as she reached down, he stood on his back legs to meet her half way. I guess she had never seen a dog do this and she interpreted this act as an invitation to dance. When she started to wiggle around, my dog followed her lead and started dancing around on his hind legs! And the more attention he received, the more he got his groove on.

After this, I wanted to test my theory on other dogs. I went to the dog park, over to friends houses and bothered my neighbors in pursuit of the truth. The result: nine out of ten dogs can dance without much provocation. So, next time a good song comes on the radio, grab your dancing shoes and your dog and clear the dance floor. Both of you will enjoy the fun and the exercise!

Cost: free!

Tricks for Treats

Another great way to interact with your dog is to teach him some tricks. He will enjoy the learning process as well as the attention he receives when he performs his stunts. And it is very simple to get a dog to learn a trick – especially if you have a treat with his name on it.

Tricks such as “Shake a Paw” and “Play Dead” are easily taught because you put the dog into position and then reward him for it. For either trick, get your dog into the desired position (paw extended or laying on his side), say the command and reward him with a treat. Repeat this a few times for several days in a row and soon he will do it on command.

“Crawl” and “Take a Bow” are interactive tricks in which you have to bribe your dog into action or wait until he naturally falls into the desired position. For “Crawl” it's a matter of having him lie on his belly and then luring him across the floor with a treat in your hand. It may take some time for him to understand that he has to remain close to the ground when advancing but with your guidance and lots of goodies, he'll figure it out soon enough. “Take a Bow” is somewhat of a waiting game because you have to get him when he is in a stretching position. When you see him getting up, have a treat ready and when he stretches repeat the command several times and reward him with a treat. Do this every time you catch him in the act and eventually he'll be doing it at the end of all his shows!

Cost: free!

The Art of Conversation

It wasn't until after hours of working silently in the den that I realized I had someone I could talk to the whole time – my dog. I had found myself alone at home one afternoon and I began puttering around, doing some chores and other little jobs I had been putting off. Everywhere I went, my dog followed. Whenever an expletive popped out of my mouth when I dropped something or I uttered a grunt after some heavy lifting, there he was, one eyebrow lifted as if he was questioning what I was doing. Finally I figured it out; we were both starved for conversation. Since that day I have taken to talking to my wee pal whenever, wherever. He enjoys it (I think) because it is interaction with his master; I enjoy it because I can say what I want and he won't say anything back. I warn you though; once you start you will do it out in public. I often find myself on the street, begging my dog to do his business. Yes, people give me odd looks but I don't care. He's probably a better conversationalist than they are.

Cost: free!

Playing Stupid

Dogs love to figure things out. They relish finding something and they live for learning how to open things, especially dog food bags. But seriously, dogs are smart and sometimes it is fun if you let her think she is smarter than you. There are two approaches to this: throwing something and then acting like you don't know where it went or leaving something out that you know she will grab and then ignoring her when she stands in front of you with it in her mouth. Either way, you're playing stupid:

Where did it go?

Make sure your dog is looking at you and throw a toy over your shoulder and then act as if you didn't just do that. Your dog will probably stare at you with a look that says "are you crazy?". When he does this, ask "where did it go?" making sure that the inflection is on the end of the question. Repeat this a number of times until he gets really hyper and then tell him to "go get it". Repeat until you both get tired of the game.

Whatcha got?

Another great game is to leave something that your dog absolutely loves in the middle of the floor. My dog likes an old sock. Walk away from the object and wait. Within a couple of minutes, your dog will appear with the object in her mouth taunting you to come and get it. Look at her casually as if nothing is happening. It is at this point, she will probably drop it and step back. When she does this, pretend to get up and act as if you just noticed the object lying in front of her. She'll grab it and start to make off. Don't follow her. Instead, sit back down and wait. Once she notices that you are sitting casually, she will drop it again. Keep this up for a little while and then suddenly burst into a chase asking "whatcha got?" over and over.

Cost: free!

Act Like a Dog

Your dog sees you as one of the pack and, as such, he will appreciate it when you initiate playtime in a canine way. If you watch dogs in the dog park, you will see that they approach each other and then stop a few feet apart. After a couple of seconds of staring at each other, one or both will lay their forepaws on the ground and stick their bums up in the air. In this stance, they will beat their front paws on the ground a couple of times before they charge. At this point, they will probably rise up on their

hind legs and gently push at each other which will then be followed by a good chase. This is how dogs initiate play. Copy this and your dog will love you even more than he already does! *Cost: free!*

Cartoon Voices

Sound odd? I thought so too. But it just so happened that one day I copied a voice I heard on the television and my dog went nuts for it. He seems to particularly like when I do high squeaky voices. Keep practicing on your dog until you find the voice that works best. You know you've got it when he starts to bark and jump around. Use this voice whenever he looks bored or when you would like to initiate play time. It is a guaranteed way to get your dog in the mood for fun. *Cost: free!*

Exercise Partners

Dogs love to be active: a major reason why they are great walking/jogging/running /bike riding partners. Howard Erickson, professor of physiology at Kansas State University's College of Veterinary Medicine says that jogging, in particular, can benefit your dog greatly. Not only does it help dogs stay healthy and maintain muscle tone but it also helps with temperament. Some dogs can get very antsy if left alone for an extended period of time. An activity that allows them to burn off this stored up energy can only help to relieve stress and eradicate any destructive behavior.

Key points when jogging with your dog include:

- When jogging in summer, avoid asphalt and concrete; it gets really hot and is hard on the paws. Instead, choose a grass or dirt-covered route.
- Keep an eye on your dog and slow down if you see that she is lagging.
- Always bring enough water for the both of you.
- Jog when it's coolest – either in the morning or at night. Because dogs don't have the same cooling mechanisms as humans, avoiding situations where dogs can become overheated quickly.
- When jogging at night, attach reflective or illuminated strips to your dog's collar.

Cost: free!

Shakespeare 101

I hope that this doesn't come as a surprise but dogs don't comprehend verbal language. We teach them commands through repetition and reinforcement but that's just it – they learn what the word sounds like and what reaction we expect when it comes out of our mouths. However, if you start speaking in rhyme, you are bound to see one ear twitch or an eyebrow raise. Your dog may think that you are trying to teach him a new trick; therefore, he will listen intently to what you are saying. I tried this on my dog and he was intrigued for a good half hour.

This really comes in handy if you are an aspiring poet, or just like to write rhymes for the heck of it. Use your dog as a test market. If he stays interested during your poem, you probably have a hit on your hands. If he doesn't, well he probably hasn't mastered the art of literary criticism yet.

Alternatively, you can look up dog related poetry on the internet or browse through the library for things to read to him. Although he won't understand what is being said, I'm sure he will pick up on the emotion in your voice while you are reading such passages as:

"I'm a lean dog, a keen dog, a wild dog, and lone;
I'm a rough dog, a tough dog, hunting on my own;
I'm a bad dog, a mad dog, teasing silly sheep;
I love to sit and bay the moon, to keep fat souls from sleep."

An excerpt from Lone Dog
By: Irene Rutherford McLeod

Cost: free!

Karaoke Time

Even if they don't admit it, almost everyone has broken out in song for no apparent reason at some point. This occurrence happens often in the home when the person is alone or cooking in the kitchen. Sometimes people sing in the shower while others sing along to the radio. Now, what if you could teach your dog to sing as well? This could be a practical lesson if you don't have the best voice and you want something to drown you out a bit. But seriously though, teaching a dog to sing is very easy.



Believe it or not, dogs are natural singers. O.K., maybe they are more howlers than singers but close enough, right?

As descendents of wolves, domesticated dogs have been given a wonderful set of vocal cords. When their forefathers were running wild in the forest, they communicated over far distances by howling. In modern day, your dog still has the pack mentality and considers you and your family members as part of her social group. Some dogs will naturally respond to their owners singing with a loud howl. This isn't a critique on the master's abilities; it is an instinctual response to a member of their pack.

Don't despair if your dog doesn't immediately strike a chord when you're singing along to the newest pop song on the radio. It may take some prompting but once she gets it, you will never sing alone again. The first step in encouraging your singing partner to join in is to hold a note for an extended period of time...your dog will probably respond immediately. For example, stretch out the last word of every chorus. It may take a couple of choruses for your dog to get into the song but when she does, give her a treat and a big hug. Eventually your dog will need no reward because she will sing on cue like a pro.

Cost: free!

Quality Time

No amount of money, parties, treats or anything else can replace the time you spend with your dog. There is no hard and fast rule as to where or when you spend this time, just as long as you set aside as much time as possible for one-on-one time.

Experts say that a dog's view of companionship is just being near their owner. You could be sitting anywhere (relaxing in the backyard, watching a great movie, etc.) or doing anything and as long as you acknowledge your dog, he will feel contented.

Feeding is another quality time activity. A dog will feel more like part of the pack if you feed him in the same room as you eat. If this is not possible, sit nearby while he eats or do some chores in the same room while he is eating.

Sleeping is another great way to spend quality time. It may seem like these activities are two extremes; however, remember what the expert's say, a dog is content just being near you. He doesn't have to sleep on the bed with you, just as long as he is in the same room with you or another family member.

Just like people, dogs like routine. Regularly scheduled activities can give your dog something to look forward to. This can be as simple as doing things at the same time each day including feeding him, going for a walk or going to bed. But regardless of what the activity is, make sure you spend as much time with your dog as possible. *Cost: free!*

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Dogs are naturally outdoor creatures. Having lived in the wild for thousands of years, dogs love to spend as much time out of doors as possible. However, in this very busy world there are many dangers that constantly threaten outside dogs. To protect your dog from these dangers while sating his appetite for fresh air, plan outdoor activities that both of you can enjoy.



For thousands of years dogs lived outside. Now that they mainly live inside, it is important that they get “back to their roots” at least once a day.

Go Take a Hike

Hiking is a great activity for both dog and human. It allows the two of you to get back to the great outdoors and it’s a wonderful way to get a workout. However, hiking may not be suited to all dogs. There are breeds that are meant to hike but when it comes down to it, it is really an individual call as the most unlikely dog can surprise you.

When planning a hike, the following must be considered and prepared:

- Check the weather. If it is going to be a particularly hot day, don’t go or go for a shorter hike. Dogs overheat quickly and the last thing you want is to have your dog fall prey to heat exhaustion.
- Predetermine a route. This way you can estimate the total time of your hike and know exactly when to turn back.
- Prepare a backpack with water, a plastic bowl and food for both man and beast. Stop for a water and snack break frequently.

Cost: free!

Living La Vida Loca...! Park

The more I think about it, the more dogs are like kids. They love attention, they love to play games and they love going to the park! But there is more to a park for a dog than being an oversized place to do their business. Jungle gyms equipped with ramps, slides and tubes are a great substitute for an agility course. Some dogs naturally like to climb up things or slink through a tunnel. I have even seen a dog enjoy a ride on the teeter totter! If this is your dog, just let him run wild (providing it’s not a school day). If your dog needs a little coaching, help him out by climbing up a slide together, running on narrow ledges, etc. Your dog is bound to pick up the idea of playing in the park in no time.

Cost: free!

Last One in is a Wet Dog!

Dogs have an inborn ability to swim and most dogs enjoy this activity very much. But swimming in a chlorinated pool is not good for your dog and most public pools don’t allow patrons of the four-legged variety. The solution: organize an outing to a lake or stream! Some fortunate people have easy access

to a ravine, which is another great place for your dog to swim. A note of caution, ensure your dog has her annual shots or is on heartworm medication before your outing. Prevention is the best cure.

If you don't have time for such an outing, go to a yard sale, get a kiddie pool and fill it up. There probably won't be enough room for your dog to swim but at least it's a place for her to go to cool down and frolic in the water. Alternatively, you can kill two birds with one stone by using your sprinkler to



A great way to cool off a hot dog is to fill a kiddie pool full of cool water.

water your lawn as well as a your dog. Just like kids, dogs love running through a sprinkler. They chase the water back and forth and try to grab the water drops before they hit the ground. And again, it is a good way for your dog to cool down on a hot summer day.

Lastly, if you are a boater, bring your dog. Whether you decide to go for a mid boat-ride swim or you just cruise around the lake, your dog will have a great time accompanying you on your trip. If you do decide

to go for a swim in deep waters and you have a long coated dog, give him a trim before shoving off. This way your dog won't be weighed down by long, wet hair and you won't be sprayed as much when he shakes off. ***Cost: under \$10***

Cruising



secure by using a specially made seatbelt for dogs.

I have yet to meet a dog that doesn't like going for a car ride. My dog, like most, enjoys the ride most when the window is rolled down just enough for him to get a good sniff of the surrounding area. He gets a bit antsy sometimes we go for a long ride so I try to limit our trips in the car to match his tolerance.

If your dog has a tendency to get car sick, introduce her to car travel slowly and withhold food and water for a couple of hours before your departure. Eventually she will become accustomed to this kind of travel and will enjoy it thoroughly every chance she gets.

However, there are some precautions you should take when taking your dog out with you in the car. This includes preventing your dog from hanging her head out of the window as bugs, pebbles and other road debris can cause serious injuries to his eyes. In addition, there is always the risk of her jumping out! Also, never leave your dog alone in the car during adverse weather conditions. Many animals die every year because they were left to overheat or freeze in an automobile. It can happen faster than you think. ***Cost: free!***

Mush!

If you live in a cold climate, winter is probably the time when you dread taking the dog out, never mind engaging in an outdoor activity. However, lack of exercise during these dark months can mean extra pounds for both you and your dog. And why stay in when there are so many great things you can do with your dog in the snow.

While dog sledding may seem a bit extreme for the average dog to accomplish, there are other wintertime activities in which you and your dog can participate. Much like the fun times your dog had in the summer with the lawn sprinkler, she will have just as much fun trying to grab handfuls of snow out of the air. Instead of making snow balls, just grab some loose snow and throw it above your dog's head.

How about taking your dog tobogganing? You don't even need a toboggan as long as you have a large-sized garbage bag. Just spread the bag out at the top of a steep hill, position the two of you so your dog is in front and you are both completely on the bag, dig your heels in a couple of times until you start to slide downhill and hold on tight! *Cost: free!*

Playing in Leaves

Ah, the beauty of fall. If you live in a northern city you know all about the leaves turning and that favorite children's' game of jumping into a pile of leaves. Well, this game is not just for children anymore – dogs get a kick out of it too.

For safety sake, it is best if you do this activity in your backyard. When there are enough leaves on the ground, rake them into a big pile and then jump into the pile with your dog. Better yet, hide treats under the pile and watch your dog pounce and dig for their delicious rewards. Or bury your dog under the leaves and when he finds his way out, bury him again. *Cost: free!*

OUT ON THE TOWN



Always call before taking your dog out to a patio!

With more and more people bringing their dogs with them every where, there are certain key items you shouldn't leave home without if you are bringing your dog along. There are also some things that need to be considered before embarking on an excursion.

I'll have an Evian Please

Some call it ridiculous while others remark that it can be excessive but that doesn't stop me from bringing bottled water for my dog when we are on an outing. Sure some stores offer a water bowl for dogs but I don't let my dog use these. No, I am not a snob. It's just that I like to know a couple things about the liquid my dog is ingesting that I can't know about these watering holes. For example, how long has the water been there? Has a dog with kennel cough drunk from this bowl? Have any toxins inadvertently found their way into the water? Without the answers to these key questions, I just can't take the chance.

If you go to some of the upscale dog boutiques, you will now find water designed especially for dogs. Some are flavored (chicken and liver seem to be the top choices) while others are along the same line as sports drinks that humans consume. These aren't expensive (staring at \$1.50 a bottle) and can be a nice treat for your thirsty hound. If designer water isn't your thing, just grab a bottle of spring water off of any corner store shelf and bring it with you on your outings. Plus, there is no need for a bowl. Most dogs will drink right from the bottle with a little assistance from you! **Cost: under \$2**

Tote Bags for Tiny Tots

Small dogs can be a blessing and a burden at the same time. Often allowed in places that larger dogs aren't, small dogs have the advantage of being easily carried. However, as a small dog owner, I often find that while I can bring my dog in to these "elite" establishments, I am short one hand because it is filled with my furry friend. In addition, after about fifteen minutes, my arm starts to get tired and I have to switch arms – no easy feat when your other hand is filled with items.

Desperately seeking a solution I began to research doggie bags. To my astonishment, I found that these tote bags can cost up to \$200 with the cheapest starting around \$30. It was obvious that I was going to have to find a solution. I went to the mall and found a bag and accessory store. I was surprised to find a vast quantity of small tote bags available for under \$10.

My recommendation: don't go to an upscale pet place to get a dog tote; go to an accessory or department store and pick up a bag there. Try to find one that has a few outside pockets for treats and poop bags. Once you get your new tote home, cut out a small square in the side and sew in some mesh (available at any fabric store). Next, place a towel or a cozy blanket at the bottom of the tote and voila! You have a dog tote. Now you can take your dog in to stores and have free hands to browse. Or you can sneak your dog into a café. In any case, you and your dog are now totally portable, which greatly expands the places the two of you can go together. **Cost: under \$10**

Go Where the Goodies Are

With more and more people bringing their dogs on everyday errands, businesses are responding by having a bowl of goodies just for their four-legged patrons. In my journeys, I have found these little bowls on the counters of banks, hair salons and clothing stores. And of course there are always goodies lying around at pet stores. The point – take your dog on the errands that lead you to these places. You know that your dog will be appreciated on these outings and those that work at your destinations will most likely be happy to be able to spend some time with the dog. *Cost: free!*

Patio Season

Patios are great. You can sit outside, have a bite and watch the world go by. They are also great in the fact that many restaurants with patios will allow you to bring your dog. The best thing to do is call ahead to make sure that a particular restaurant's patio is dog friendly. When you find a place, take your dog and enjoy a meal in the great outdoors. *Cost: free!*

Bakeries

Among many new trends for dog owners, bakeries for dogs are one of the hottest. These “barkeries” have a little for both two- and four-legged patrons and most allow you to enjoy your treats together in the establishment. The best way to find one in your city is to inquire at the local pet store or ask fellow dog owners. You can also try to find a listing in the phone book under “Pets” or check on the Internet.

If the dog bakery in your area is anything like most, your dog will have his pick of biscuits, pies, cakes and even ice cream. These treats can be enjoyed there or taken home to be relished later. In addition, some barkeries host events such as dog birthday parties and weddings. *Cost: under \$5*

EVERYONE NEEDS TIME OFF



Even your dog needs a change of scene once in a while.

As much as you love your dog, sometimes you need a break from her. Sometimes these breaks are self-inflicted while others are unavoidable. When it is time for a break, look to these tips to ensure your dog is still being spoiled even when you're not around.

Call a Pro

Sad as it is to say, we don't always have time to spend with our faithful furry friend. I know that there are entire days when I am forced to be away from my little guy such as when I attend a wedding or somewhere else that my dog can't go. And on those days, when I knew we would be separated for over eight hours, I would leave my house with a heavy heart and a big bag of guilt weighing down my shoulders... That is, until I found a local dog walker.

For a mere \$10 for an hour walk, I am confident that my pooch is being well taken care of in my absence. In addition, it is a great way for him to socialize as the dog walker will usually have at least one other dog with her on the walk. But most importantly, I can be rest assured that he won't be home, eye balls floating and hind legs crossed waiting for me to take him out. In my opinion, this service is well worth the money. ***Cost: \$10***

Sleepover Parties

Remember how much fun sleepover parties were? You'd stay up most of the night eating junk and watching movies. Why not organize such an event for your dog and her friends? Instead of candy, provide healthy treats such as carrots or apples, play games and take them for a long adventurous walk. You'd be surprised how much your dog and her friends (plus their owners) will enjoy this change of pace from the everyday and how well she will sleep once her friends are gone! ***Cost: free!***

Packing for the Weekend

Regardless if you and your dog are going on a week-long trip or if your dog is flying solo at a sleep over party, there are certain things that need to be with the dog at all times. In addition to these crucial items, there are other "nice to have" things that can be included in your dog's luggage.

Must have items include:

- Collar
- Leash
- Dishes
- Poop bags
- Recent copies of health and vaccination certificates
- Food

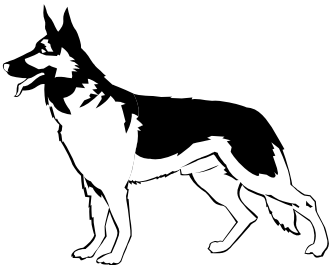
“Nice to have” items include:

- Treats
- Toys
- Bottled water
- Blanket

Cost: free!

CONCLUSION

Whether it is making your dog a personalized collar or setting up a kiddie pool in the backyard, any amount of attention and love you show your dog will be happily received. In the preceding pages, I have made many useful and cost efficient suggestions for ways to spoil your dog. However, these are in no way the only ways you can return your dog's affection for under \$10. With a little thought, creativity and elbow grease, you can build on these tips and come up with your own ways to spoil your dog while preserving the cash in your wallet. I hope you find these tips useful and your dog finds great pleasure in receiving them.



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