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it, she must avoid you at all cost. She also learned very quickly that by taking off with the object and you chasing her in an attempt to get it back – was a game. And given the fun of a chase, who in their right mind would even consider relinquishing their prize?

The most effective way to go about dealing with this is to teach her 'leave it'. What you're doing is teaching her that by choosing to listen to you and leaving the object she has found, she will get something even better. To start you will need two types of treats. Make one treat, plain – like dry dog kibble, and the other something a whole lot better – like BBQ chicken. Without showing her the chicken, hold a few pieces in your left hand and some kibble in your right hand. With Jarrah in front of you, hold the hand with the kibble out towards her. When she starts to sniff at it, clench your fist so she can't get at it and keep your hand perfectly still. Ignore any attempts to get the food out of your hand and watch her closely. The minute she stops assaulting your hand and looks away, give her a piece of chicken from your other hand. Repeat these steps over until Jarrah gets the idea that when she looks away from the kibble, she will be rewarded with something much better.

Once she is doing this every time, you can introduce the command 'leave it' the moment she looks away. Repeat this step over until she is associating the command 'leave it' with withdrawing from your hand and looking away, making sure you reward her each time with the chicken.

Once you feel she is competent at that step, hold out a treat to her in an open palm, at nose level and tell her 'leave it'. If she goes to take it, clench your fist so she doesn't have access to it and start again. When she leaves it, reward her. Each time she progresses, up the ante. Sit crossed legged on the floor and have Jarrah sit in front of you. Put the treat on your knee, and as she moves toward it, tell her 'leave it'. If she tries to take it, cover the treat with your hand and start again. By this stage she should have a good understanding of what 'leave it' means and you can then start changing the position of the treat, along with the period of time that she is to leave it before she is rewarded.

Now that she understands the concept of 'leave it', you can start to incorporate other things like toys and swap the treat reward for something other than food, like a game with the toy. To strengthen and further progress the concept of 'leave it' continue the process in different environments by taking it out to the park where there are other dogs and distractions.

Remember it takes time to get to this stage. Make sure you keep your sessions short and upbeat. Do them randomly, but regularly and it won't be long before she understands that 'leave it' means she'll be rewarded for NOT taking it!



Photo by Animax

Sit Happens

Tips and Techniques for Training Your Pet

Trudi Thorpe – dogLOGIC

Trudi Thorpe runs a dog behaviour and training company dogLOGIC based in Sydney. As Trudi says "DOGS, DOGS, DOGS... A childhood obsession that I never grew out of." She devises and implements individual behavioural strategies and obedience techniques based on 18 years of studying dog problems and problem dogs.

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Ask Trudi a question regarding behaviour by emailing behaviour@urbananimal.net

Hi Trudi

HELP! We need some advice on what to do about our dog Jarrah. She is an 11 month old spaniel – crossed with a thief! Anything she comes across inside or outside of the house – be it a rogue sock or one of the kids' toys – immediately becomes hers, and no amount of coaxing (including food) can convince her to give it back. I have tried everything. She started her thieving career very young, but as a little pup I could simply walk up to her and take it off her. But as she has grown older, it seems she has wised up to my intentions and now, the minute I spy her with anything she's not supposed to have, she takes off. I chase after her, but she is just too quick. I am at my wits end and it's now getting to the stage where it's probably a good thing that I can't catch her! What can I do?

Pam

Hi Pam

One of the most important things when it comes to dog training is taking into account breed characteristics – and the dog that is crossed with a thief is no exception!

In order to deal with this particular 'trait' you must first consider that, dogs will be dogs. They are opportunists. If you want your dog to act and behave in any way other than a dog – you're going to have to teach her.

Consider also, that dogs have absolutely no concept of rightful ownership the way that we do. If they find it and can manage to keep it – it's theirs!

Resources of any kind – be it food, toys, an item of clothing or even attention, are of great value to a dog. They learn the value of resources very early, along with various basic tactics on how best to go about keeping them. Intervention of any kind is the catalyst to transforming a basic tactic into a well-learned skill.

What this means is, when you first noticed she had something she was not supposed to have and walked over to her and took it away, she quickly learned that to keep

Street Smarts for a Safe Summer

By Michelle Heald

Walking a dog in urban areas has a completely different set of challenges than strolling in quieter suburban or rural streets. Urban areas provide many distractions for dogs and their handlers—congestion, crowds, noise, large vehicles, cyclists, super-sized prams, hidden alleys and other animals. Where you can openly exercise your dog is limited, especially if you want the freedom of leash-free parks.

We're more inclined to increase outdoor activity with our dogs during the longer daylight hours. The holiday season affords us opportunity to spend more time with our pets and pastimes including longer walks, backyard barbies, trips to the beach and driving to holiday destinations.

Practise Street Smarts

I'm often amazed at how many people I see walking their dogs around our busy streets without a lead on. There are some very well trained dogs that cross my path but even the most obedient pooch can be distracted, and this can lead to disaster. Before you consider walking your dog off-leash, you have to ask yourself whether she could get distracted by a cat, possum or another dog dashing in front of her. A recent incident in my neighbourhood reinforced that even the most placid, well-mannered dog can come to grief in a split second.

It was a little Dachshund, whose build and breed makes him low to the pavement and less agile than most dogs. On many occasions I've seen this little snag lag-off-leash—well behind his owner more than three lead-lengths behind. A couple of weeks ago

they were crossing a moderately busy street. The owner had no knowledge how far behind his little dog was until the sickening sound of the dog's scream. A car had come around the corner and the driver had not seen the dog over the dashboard. The little Dachshund was hit just as he was about to reach the curb.

It only takes a minor distraction for an accident to occur. Thankfully the Dachshund only had his scapula broken, but this required three weeks of forced immobility, being kept at home in a crate.

Switch On not Off in leash-free areas

The luxury of a leash-free dog park does not mean you should switch off and let your dog explore, socialise and romp without your full attention. Keep a watchful eye on your pooch at all times. Broken glass and spoiled left-over food is more likely to be found in summer as people take to parks for picnics and social gatherings.

Beat the heat

You may have to modify the time you walk your dog in the summer months—the cooler hours of early morning and evening is the safest. As the temperatures soar, the risk of pets being affected by heat-stroke increases. Remember that heat from the pavement is going to be more intense closer to the ground.

Dogs cool themselves by panting and only have sweat glands on the pads of their feet and on their nose. It's not a very efficient cooling system during hot and humid days. Leave your dog at home with plenty of fresh water. If you're taking your dog in the car, make sure that she'll be welcome at your destination. Never allow her to be left in the car alone. A car parked in the shade, with windows open to 8 to 10cms, isn't enough to prevent your dog from becoming sick. The interior heat far exceeds the outside temperature in warmer weather.

All pets are susceptible to heat related stress. Cats, rabbits, guinea pigs and birds can overheat very quickly. Short-nosed (or Brachycephalic) dog breeds like bull-dogs and pugs don't pant as effectively as their longer snout cousins. The same for young puppies, senior dogs, overweight dogs, and dogs with respiratory, cardiovascular or other health problems.

Cats protect against higher temperature by panting and licking the fur. Like dogs, short-nosed breeds and heavier coated cats are predisposed to heat related stress.

Look for the warning signs

Look for heavy panting—which is usually the first sign of heatstroke. If it looks like your pet is having trouble breathing—with increased huffing and puffing—then you should try to get her into shade or a cooler location.

Serious signs of heatstroke include a lost or staring expression; warm or dry skin, rapid heartbeat and excessive salivation. Disorientation, vomiting, muscle tremors and collapse are very serious and you should get your pet to a vet immediately.

Alleviate the symptoms

Wet your pet's coat with cool (not cold) water and make sure that you're not just dampening the fur but actually getting to the skin. Thoroughly wet the belly and the inside legs and run cool water over the muzzle and tongue. A fan will also assist in getting the temperature down by evaporative cooling.

A core body temperature of 40°C or above is dangerous so aim to lower it by a couple of degrees. Be careful not to cool the animal too much. While cooling, take the animal's temperature every five minutes (rectally) to prevent hypothermia (over-cooling). Your vet may administer intravenous fluids or other medical treatment to prevent organ injury.

Slip, Slop & Slap

Sunscreen should be used regularly on your pets. Animals that have light-coloured noses or are missing pigmentation need protection from the harsh sun. Pets with very short or missing fur also need regular applications of sunblock.



UV protection for sensitive pooch peepers. Photo by Animax.

Very often, our pets are found lazing in the summer sun, exposing their bellies, inside legs and groin to warm rays. These areas are susceptible to sun damage and even burning as the hair is quite thin in these areas. Pay careful attention to areas exposed through hair-loss from allergies, hot spots or shaving. Sunburn can exacerbate existing skin conditions, such as allergies or hot-spots.

Always check whether the sunblock is suitable for pets. There are ones specially formulated for pets—most human sunscreens have warnings because the ingredients can be toxic if ingested. Most pets will lick at sunblock, especially when it's applied over and around sensitive noses.

Read the instructions

Tick and flea season is upon us so it's important to read and follow all instructions on your chosen medications.

This is a time of year when our dogs are washed and go swimming more frequently, so make sure the effectiveness of their treatments are not compromised. This includes flea and tick sprays, drops, collars and other items that may be exposed to water and washing.

Above all, we wish everyone a safe and happy summer season. It's a time to catch up with friends, renew acquaintances, get active and enjoy ourselves.



Products to repel annoying flies & bugs. Photo by Animax.



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