

Why it is important to treat a dog as a dog

There is no doubt the species known as *Canis lupus familiaris* is an utterly unique phenomenon in the history of evolution. No other species on Earth has evolved to so closely mirror humans in every way.

To that point, genetically speaking, did you know your dog is so closely bonded to you that his facial muscles (especially [the eyebrows](#)) have literally evolved to better mirror your own expressions?

Pretty cool, huh?

But this very same evolutionary closeness can also place your dog - and you, and others - in harm's way. You may not realize it at all. And this isn't your fault. It is just a difference that separates "dog people" (dog lovers) from everyone else.

In other words, it is such an easy mistake to make. Happily, it is an equally easy mistake to fix!

In this article, learn fascinating facts about what it would be like if you could be your dog for a day. This will help you make any little adjustments that could make a big difference to your dog's health, longevity and enjoyment of your life together.

Your Dog Senses the World Differently

Imagine for a second that your nose had [300 million olfactory receptors](#) instead of the estimated six million you actually have.

How would your perception of your world change?

Imagine you could sniff out the equivalent of one teaspoon of sugar, or pee, or drugs, or anything, really, mixed into a million gallons of water.

What would it be like if your nose was that sensitive, that attuned, that aware? It would probably be crazy!

Your dog is in constant communication with a world that exists far outside of your ability to access - it is truly amazing.

But this also means, at any moment, your dog may pick up a scent that conveys important, even urgent, information that can. not. wait.

For example, your dog may sniff something that smells dangerous, or enticing, or [off-putting](#), reacting instinctively by charging ahead or barking or pulling back or stopping all of a sudden.

If this happens and you don't have a firm hold on the leash, it could mean your dog breaks free and goes charging into traffic or towards a dog in heat or at someone who is afraid of dogs.

As your understanding of how keen your dog's nose really is, you can put additional protections in place to keep your dog safe in scent-rich environments.

Your Dog Has Different Biological Needs

Did you know there is now an organization called the [Association for Pet Obesity Prevention](#)?

According to these good folks, a whopping 55 percent of pet canines are now overweight or obese.

Sure, a few of these pups might have simply ripped into an unattended bag of dog chow a few too many times. But if we are honest, most overweight pooches have become treat-aholics.

And as a dog owner, if your pup is double-coated or is sporting thick waves or curls, it can be really hard to tell when they are packing a few extra pounds, especially if they always act like they are starving!

Luckily, your veterinarian can teach you how to palpate your dog's body so you can feel areas where dogs tend to put on some weight. This will help you adjust food and treat portions to keep your dog healthy and trim.

Your veterinarian can also help you work out a daily meal and treat plan and fitness schedule to keep your dog's daily caloric intake in line with daily calorie burning.

You and Your Dog Are a Team

To hear Whole Dog Journal tell it, in the canine-human relationship there is always ongoing training going on in both directions.

As time goes on, you and your dog learn to communicate in the unique way any close pair of beings will learn to do. You may even eventually feel like you and your pooch have your own secret language that only the two of you know how to speak!

This is pretty cool when you stop to think about it. It is part of why people love dogs so much. And it can also be a blind spot in some areas since it is easy to forget that other people can't interpret your dog's body language and vocalizations like you do.

Other people won't necessarily know that your dog means no harm by eagerly barking while wagging their tail as a squirrel races by.

Your dog may be loving and lovable and every way, but impulse control is never going to be a canine strong suit.

This makes you the ambassador of your little duo whether you particularly want to be or not. It may not mean you will always be in time to stop your dog from jumping up or barking or doing the things you love that non-dog people typically don't love.

But it does mean you can keep your eye out for things that might set your dog off that only you know about. (Non-dog lovers may never know they have you to thank for this, by the way. It can feel like a thankless task. But if it keeps your precious pup out of harm's way it is ultimately worth it.)

Your Dog Will Always Need Your Help to Navigate a "People World"

The truth is, this is the only time in modern history people have lived so separated from animals. Living side by side with companion creatures is wired into our DNA. There is nothing odd or wrong about wanting your pooch with you in your daily life.

And yet, as you are out and about together, and even when you visit businesses that are dog-friendly, your pup will always be at a disadvantage living in a "people world."

Luckily, your dog has you. You can help your pup learn to successfully navigate the dangers and temptations of this modern world and stay safe, healthy and happy.

Bio

Olivia Harper is the co-founder of the blog [Daily Dog Stuff](#). Read more of her guides and tips by visiting the blog.