Your complete guide to natural dog care and training
WholeDog Journal™

CALM DOWN ROVER!

TEACH YOUR HIGH-ENERGY DOG TO CHILL OUT + RELAX

Dealing with an excitable dog can be challenging. Figuring out whether your dog is truly hyperactive (a clinical diagnosis) or just high-energy is a start.

A disconcerting number of dog owners preface the explanation of their dogs' undesirable behaviors with the pronouncement, "He is really hyper!" The vast majority of the time, they have perfectly normal dogs. The explosion of apparently "hyper" dogs in our world can be traced to several factors:

• The popularity of breeds that are (when well-bred) genetically programmed to have enhanced environmental alertness, vigilance, and high activity levels. While high activity levels are distributed across all breeds, they are especially prevalent in the sporting breeds (Labradors Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, etc.) and herding breeds (Border Collies, Australian Shepherds, etc.).

• The puppy-milling and retail sale of those popular breeds that results in poorly bred, poorly socialized pups ending up in the hands of owners underprepared to care for and train them.

• Unreasonable expectations of dog behavior by owners who have a poor understanding of their dogs' needs and behaviors, which results in . . .

• Lack of adequate exercise and socialization.

Just as with humans who have ADHD, dogs who display this syndrome can excel at "jobs" requiring activity and/or quick responses, such as agility, sheepherding, or tracking.

Hyperactive or High-Energy: What's the difference?

That said, hyperactivity does exist in dogs. It is, however, relatively uncommon and greatly overdiagnosed. Hyperactivity, otherwise known as "hyperkinesis," can be defined as dogs who display frenetic activity, abnormally short attention spans, and high impulsiveness. They can also demonstrate overbearing attention-seeking behavior. It is truly a canine form of Attention Deficit Hyper-Activity Disorder (ADHD). Like some children who are prescribed Ritalin or some other stimulant, it seems that some dogs who are truly hyperkinetic can benefit from the administration of stimulants to help them focus and pay attention.

What differentiates normal, high-energy dogs from dogs who have ADHD is that the ADHD dogs demonstrate exceptionally short attention spans and a high degree of impulsiveness that makes it impossible for them to focus on one task for long. They are easily distracted.

In contrast, most high-energy dogs will focus very quickly on the click-and-treat game. They are normal, active dogs who haven't learned how to control their own behavior – but they can, if you show them how. In fact, owners are often amazed by the undivided attention their previously intractable canine companions will offer – as soon as the dogs are given a reason to focus; when they're shown that focused attention makes good stuff happen. The truly hyperactive dog can't focus even if she wants to; everything she encounters, regardless of how trivial or irrelevant, is given equal and minimal, active but fleeting interest.

Hyperactive dogs also tend to be especially sensitive to sudden environmental changes – overreacting to the presence of a strange person or animal, and apparently unable to adjust to the new stimulus. In addition, they seem to have an intolerance for boredom and an exaggerated need for novelty and variety. They don't do well with repetitive tasks (such as basic obedience drills), but may excel in situations requiring creative solutions, such as the Border Collie who often must think for himself and make his own decisions about how to move the sheep.

Hyperactive dogs also are likely to get into everything (bored, looking for creative opportunity), can be destructive, and are often emotionally unstable. They can become almost unmanageable if physically restrained, and may exhibit uncontrollable rage-like aggression if frustrated.

How to Test Your Dog for ADHD

How can you tell if you have a "normal" high-energy dog or one with ADHD? The proof is in the Ritalin. Your veterinarian can administer a low dose of an appropriate amphetamine after measuring your dog's respiration, heart rate, and reaction to restraint. Some 30-120 minutes after the amphetamine is given, most hyperkinetic dogs will show a marked decrease in excitement and activity level as well as a measurable drop in respiration and heart rate, and greater acceptance of restraint. A normal-but active dog will have the opposite response, with an increase in excitement, activity, heart rate, and respiration, and a decreased tolerance of restraint.

First, however, you might want to try a 10-minute ADHD experiment at home. Make sure your high-energy dog hasn't eaten for at least four hours. Take him out for a good hard romp in a safely enclosed area to take the edge off – don't run him into exhaustion. Then leash your dog, grab your clicker and a treat bag full of very high value treats, and take him to a place with minimal distractions (indoors) for some clicker-testing fun:

1. "Supercharge" your clicker, using a very high rate of reinforcement and tiny treats for 1 minute (30-60 treats per minute). Click the clicker, and then feed the dog a smidgen of chicken for each click. Click, treat. Click, treat. Your dog doesn't have to do anything but focus on you; don't ask for sit, down, stay, or any other behavior. If he tries to jump on you, turn away, but keep clicking and giving him treats. Be sure to deliver the treats at his nose level so he doesn't have to jump up to get them. If he's grabby, toss the treats on the floor in front of him.

2. After 1 minute, reduce the rate of reinforcement to 15-30 clicks/treats per minute. Start moving the treat over his head to lure a sit. If he does sit, briefly increase the rate of reinforcement for three to four clicks, then slow down again. Do this for 2 minutes. Conduct a 10-Minute ADHD Test

3. For the next 2 minutes, continue at a reinforcement rate of 10-20 clicks/treats per minute, but now, if he sits, click the clicker but hold off delivering the treat for 2 seconds at first, gradually increasing the delay of the treat's delivery for up to 4 or 5 seconds.

4. For 2 more minutes, click and treat on a variable/random schedule of reinforcement. That is, vary the number of seconds between clicks and treats, sometimes doing several click/treats rapidly in a row (remember to treat after each click) sometimes pausing for 1 second, or 5, or 3, or 7, between clicks. Try to keep it random; we humans are very good at falling into patterns!

5. Now, stop clicking for 30 seconds.

6. After 30 seconds, click the clicker only if he looks at you. If he keeps looking at you, keep clicking, using the random reinforcement schedule in Step 4. If he looks away, stop clicking. If he looks back at you or looks in your general direction, click again. Do this for 2½ minutes.

Time's up – the test is over! If your dog was willing to play this game with you for the entire 10 minutes with only occasional minor attention lapses, you probably have a normal high-energy dog. It's time to increase his exercise, socialization, and training programs. If, however, you lost your dog's attention totally somewhere between Steps 2 and 4, there's a good chance you really do have a hyperkinetic dog. Time to call your vet to schedule that amphetamine test, and while you're there, have a full thyroid panel done as well as a blood test for lead poisoning. Remember that thyroid results within the clinically normal-but-low range can be a contributing factor to behavior problems.

Are Hyperactive Dogs Trainable?

In some cases, these dogs exhibit behaviors that are so intrinsically driven by organic causes that behavior modification and positive training alone can't help.

Fortunately, a high percentage of ADHD dogs can be helped with the judicious use of stimulants in combination with a behavior modification program. Hyperactive dogs tend to be very responsive to positive reinforcement shaping procedures in conjunction with brief time-out periods. Think back to the results of your 10-minute ADHD test. At what step did you start to lose your dog? If he was with you through Step 2 and you lost him at 3, you know that he does well with a continuous schedule of reinforcement at a fairly high rate.

Go back to the step where he did well (Step 2), and work toward Step 3, breaking your "gradually" into even smaller increments – perhaps a half-second rather than a full second – so you don't lose him with too big a leap.

Keep your expectations low. Shape most of his behaviors in very tiny increments with a high rate of reinforcement. Keep your training session brief (five minutes, maximum), with a short time-out to calm him before you start another brief session.

Sample Task for ADHD Dogs

With many dogs, lure-shaping a down is a simple matter, accomplished in short order by moving the treat toward the floor and clicking the dog for following into a down position. We often have success in just three or four clicks, as we hold the treat at the dog's nose and he focuses on it (click and treat), we move it halfway to the floor and he follows (click and treat), three-quarters of the way and his feet are sliding forward (click and treat), and he's down (click and a jackpot of treats!).

In contrast, the hyperkinetic dog may require 20 or even 100 clicks, over several sessions, before you reach your final behavior goal. Teaching "Down" to this dog might require the following:

• The dog is sitting. You hold a treat in front of his nose and he focuses on it. Click and treat.

• He stays focused on the treat. Click and treat.

• Lower the treat a half-inch. His nose follows. Click and treat.

• He stays focused. Click and treat.

• Lower the treat another half-inch. He follows. Click and treat.

• Lower another half-inch. He follows. Click and treat.

• He stays focused. Click and treat.

• Release him from the sit, tell him he's a great dog, and both of you take a five-minute brain break.

• Start with the sit again. As soon as he focuses on the treat, click and treat.

• Lower the treat an inch. His nose follows. Click and treat.

• Lower the treat another inch. He follows. Click and treat.

• He stays focused. Click and treat.

• Lower the treat another inch. Click and treat.

• He stays focused. Click and treat.

• Lower the treat another inch. Click and treat.

• Take another brain break.

You get the idea: slow and steady. Anytime you increase the increment, say from 1 inch to 2 inches, make sure he stays with you. If you lose him between 1 and 2 inches, go from 1 inch to 1½ inches. Take frequent brain breaks, and don't make your total session more than about 15 minutes. If you lose his attention a lot, you are expecting too much. Use smaller increments, a higher rate of reinforcement (click him often just for staying with the game), and more breaks.

What You Can Do: Training Your High-Energy Dog to Calm Down

There are several things you can do to help curb your dog's energy level. Whether you're dealing with an ADHD dog or a high-energy dog, the goal remains the same: To get your dog to shift gears

To lure-shape a Down, start by holding a treat to your dog's nose while he sits. An ADHD dog may require many more clicks over several sessions to successfully achieve a Down.

and find a state of calm. In truth, most "hyper" dogs are just under-exercised. In addition to providing an outlet for your dog to burn some physical energy whenever possible, consider incorporating exercises and activities meant to engage your dog intellectually. We'll have a look at some of these activities a little further ahead.

For the high-energy dog, the first step towards achieving a state of calm is to teach him to control his impulses. Once he's learned to be a little more patient, you can incorporate this new skill into some everyday activities and training exercises.

Teaching Impulse Control

We've all seen those dogs who lack impulse control – dogs who can't seem to handle excitement and become over-excited, pushy, or reactive. Sometimes that lack of impulse control results in problem behaviors such as chasing cars, barking for balls, and jumping to say hi.

Building impulse control can take time and energy, but it can also be a totally fun way to spend time with your dog. Rather than making it all about self-containment, make sure your dog understands that calm and focused behavior is the way to keep fun happening, and a great way to keep rewards of all types flowing.

Because impulse control is challenging for some dogs, it's important to make sure all of your impulse-control games and activities are offset with plenty of activities where your dog can let loose and have some uninhibited fun. In fact, to keep a dog enthusiastic about offering impulse control, balance every minute or two of impulse-control activities with several more minutes of fun.

For example, if you are playing an impulse control game using a toy, every minute or so take a quick break and simply toss the toy and let your dog have it, run around, and be goofy. A useful formula would be for every minute of impulse-control games, incorporate five minutes or more of active, expressive activity.

Impulse control is built progressively. Some dogs pick up the skills quickly, but some need a little more assistance.

Trainer Mardi Richmond describes watching an Aussie-mix pup learn about impulse control from another pup: "The 14-week-old Aussie started out pouncing and biting a little too hard for his Spaniel-mix playmate. The Spaniel started calmly stopping the play each time the Aussie went over the top, and inviting play when the Aussie calmed down. With each repeated stop and start, the Aussie began to pay attention to his body, his enthusiasm, and his teeth! He began approaching more slowly, pouncing more softly, and keeping his mouth open rather than clamping down. This lovely young Aussie learned about impulse control through a totally fun play session. (And the Spaniel obviously enjoyed the interaction, too!) These pups clearly demonstrated that the key to learning impulse control is through experiences and actions . . . and the consequences those actions bring. They also showed that impulse control can be learned quickly when the consequences involve fun."

All types of consequences (both positive experiences, such as invitations to play, and negative experiences, such as the play ending) influence the development of impulse control. Fortunately, most dogs can learn this important skill from us as well as through their interactions with other dogs. A very effective way to help your dog learn

impulse control is through a variety of enjoyable games and interactions.

Relaxing Is Rewarding

Many dogs who have trouble with impulse control really don't understand that being calm is an option. For these puppies and dogs, learning that they can settle and that calm behavior is rewarding is the first step. Here are some activities you can incorporate into your daily life to help your dog learn that a calm, relaxed state is always a good option.

First, **simply catch your dog in the act of being relaxed**, for example, when she has settled on her bed or is sunning on the patio. When you see your dog settled, approach calmly with quiet praise or a gentle touch, and then drop a treat right near her paws or nose.

The first few times you do this, your dog may get up and follow you around to see if more treats might be forthcoming. If she does, simply go back to what you were doing without giving her more attention. After a few repetitions, your dog will learn to settle right back in after being rewarded.

Settle Down, Already!

A second activity is to reward your dog for settling on cue. "Settle" means to relax lying down on one hip for an extended period of time (several minutes) on a particular spot. This exercise teaches your dog to lie quietly at your side while you are otherwise engaged.

1. Sit in a chair with your dog next to you, and invite her to lie down. Lure her down, if necessary.

2. When she is down, click or say "Yes!" and treat, then quickly click and treat again, before she has time to get up. (If you can get her to rock onto one hip by moving the treat to the side and toward her ribs, even better. She should be relaxed, not poised to leap into action!)

3. Continue to click (or "Yes!") and treat several times while she is down, then say "Release!" and invite her up.

4. Gradually increase the time between clicks, so she is staying down on her own, waiting for the next click. When she will stay down with only a few clicks for 20 seconds or more, add the cue "Settle" before asking her to "Down." (Eventually you will drop the "Down" cue and just cue her to "Settle.")

5. Continue to decrease your rate of reinforcement (number of clicks and treats) until she can lie quietly at your feet for an extended period with very little reinforcement. (Tip: This is a great one to practice while watching television; you're just hanging out anyway!)

To teach"settle," position a mat or bed near you, and invite your dog to lie down there. You can use a food lure to encourage her to rock onto one hip and mark this posture (with the click of a clicker or a verbal marker such as the word "Yes!") and a reward.

Reward her with small bits of tasty treats for initially short, but increasingly longer periods of relaxation. Add a "Settle!" cue as soon as you are able to elicit the entire behavior of "come here to the mat and lie down in a relaxed fashion on one hip, and wait.

What should you do if she doesn't just "settle"?

Challenge: Your dog won't lie still for very long.

Solution: Practice for shorter bits of "settle." Try to release her before she "releases" herself, and very gradually increase the length of time you ask her to remain settled.

Challenge: Your dog won't lie still at all.

Solution: She probably has too much energy! At least at first, try practicing this exercise when she's had a good, hard exercise session and you know she's tired. Set her (and yourself!) up to succeed.

Challenge: Your dog will settle nicely when it's just you there, but not if anyone else is present.

Solution: First, use the solution above (a good, hard exercise session) and then practice. Start with just one other person present, and ask your helper to just sit quietly in one place at first, ignoring your dog. Very gradually add small bits of activity, conversation, and/or different or additional humans.

Know When to Stop

An important skill for impulse control is the ability to settle down in the face of excitement. There is a lot of value in **"installing an off switch"** in your dog! It translates into the ability to get your dog to settle on cue even when she is very excited. This is especially useful when you want to let your dog know that an activity or a game has ended. Some high-energy dogs simply don't know when to stop, and they can keep going long after you've already tired of the activity.

An effective way to turn off activity in an action-loving dog is to teach an "all done" cue. This one doesn't specifically tell the dog what to do – it just signals to her that the activity is over. Use any cue that makes sense to you, such as "All done!" or "That's all!".

The sooner you "install" an off-switch in your high-energy, activity-persistent dog, the better. Remember, the longer the reinforcement history for persistence, the more persistent she'll be.

1. Start teaching this behavior by engaging in your dog's favorite activity – say, fetching a ball.

2. After a reasonable period of fetch time, say "All done!" and put the ball away, out of sight, perhaps in a nearby cupboard.

3. Give your dog a reasonable alternative that she can do by herself, such as emptying a stuffed Kong.

4. Go sit down and occupy yourself with something, such as reading a book, watching TV, or web-surfing.

5. Ignore any attempts on your dog's behalf to re-engage you, such as going to the cupboard and barking, or bringing you a different toy. Don't even repeat your off-switch cue, just ignore her.

6. Warn all other nearby humans to similarly ignore her attempts to engage them in activity when she's been given the "All done" cue.

7. Be prepared to quietly (so as not to get her aroused again) praise her when she finally lies down and starts to chew on the stuffed Kong.

8. Use your off-switch cue every time you end a play session with her favorite activity, and don't give in if she persists. The more consistent you are, the sooner you will see her resign herself to the fact that the fun really is over when you say it is.

If your dog does not like to fetch a ball, try another similar "get excited and settle" game such as running around together with a stop and settle. Or, play tug-and-drop, or try playing with a flirt pole (a toy on the end of a rope, which is fastened to a pole) to get your dog running, and then incorporate the stop and settle.

Go to Your Spot

Another useful exercise involves teaching your dog to go to a specific place, like a mat, to lie down and relax. This can be a fixed location in your home (in front of the fireplace, by the toy box, etc.), but I find it more valuable to use a portable carpet square, mat, or dog bed of some

sort. This gives you the flexibility to send your dog to her spot wherever you are; you just have to take her mat along with you. This behavior is very useful for a dog who tends to "bug" you (or your guests) for attention.

1. Take your dog to a bed, mat, carpet square, or throw rug you have obtained for this purpose, say "place," "go to bed" (or whatever word or phrase you plan to use). You can lure her to the bed with a treat, or place a treat on the bed and encourage her to go to it and eat it. Click or say "Yes!" when she does it, then ask her to "Down," and click and treat for that.

2. Do this a number of times until you think your dog is beginning to associate the word or phrase with lying down on the mat.

3. Then you can start cueing the behavior without the lure. Click (or say "Yes!") and give her a reward when she complies. You can also request a "Wait" so she doesn't pop right back off the mat.

4. When the dog is doing this part well, begin moving farther away from the mat before giving your "Place" cue.

5. Ultimately, if you wish, you can ask your dog to go to her place from anywhere in the house. You can name several different places and teach her to go to each on your request. You can also take the mat with you when you go out and use it in public or at friend's houses (this is why a small, portable throw rug or mat is ideal).

One alternative to the approach described above is to "shape" the behavior. This is done by marking (click or "Yes!") and rewarding any behavior remotely related to the mat, gradually raising the criteria (what she needs to do to get a click and treat) until she reliably goes to the mat and lies down on it. Add the cue when she reliably moves to the mat, and then go to Step 4 above.
Challenge: Your dog lies near or only partially on the mat in an effort to be nearer to you or your guests (or whatever he'd rather be doing).

Solution: Be clear about how much of your dog has to be on the mat for it to "count" (your choice!) and reinforce your dog only if he meets that standard.

Leave It Alone

Impulse control requires patience, and Leave It (sometimes called "Off") is a very powerful impulse control exercise. It involves having the dog turn away from something that he is interested in and make eye contact with you instead. An excellent way to jump-start this behavior is through a "Doggy Zen" exercise. (Doggy Zen: In order to have the treat, you must leave the treat.)

1. Have a handful of super-exciting treats and one rather boring treat available. Put the boring treat in one hand and the good treats in a pouch or container behind your back. Present the boring treat to your dog in a closed fist (so she can smell it, but can't get to it). Allow your dog lick and sniff your hand, and try to get to the treat.

2. The *moment* your dog backs away from your treat/hand a tiny bit, mark the moment with a click or a "Yes!" and give your dog one of the super-good treats from your other hand. Be very patient; the first try or two can take several minutes before a dog gives up and backs away.

3. Once your dog understands the game and quickly backs away from the treat in your fist, change it up a little by switching which hand is holding the boring treat. Again, reward with the yummy treat from your other hand.

4. Once your dog easily backs away from a boring treat in either hand, pause a moment after your dog backs away from the treat (without immediately marking or rewarding the behavior). Watch your dog carefully; almost always, after a few moments of not getting the expected reward, dogs will look at your face for information, trying to figure out why they haven't been rewarded yet. The moment he offers that eye contact, click (or "Yes!") and reward him.

5. When your dog easily backs off a treat and subsequently makes eye contact with you each time, add a verbal cue such as "Leave it." Present the treat first, and when your dog takes notice, say

Practice "Leave it!" with everything your dog like in real life: food, interesting smells, the sight of other dogs or squirrels, and his favorite toys.

"Leave it," and click/"Yes!" and reward when your dog makes eye contact.

6. Practice "Leave it" while placing the treat on the floor. Make sure you can cover it quickly with your foot if your dog makes a move for it!

7. Take the cue on the road, and practice with different items such as a favorite toy, or a distraction like an interesting smell or the sight of another dog.

Activities to Help Your Dog Relax

We mentioned earlier that physical exercise plays an important role in helping a "hyper" dog burn some pent-up fuel. High-energy dogs usually need a lot of intense exercise to be capable of focus and participation in training. Walking around the block – once, twice, even three times! – doesn't cut it for dogs like this. A long, challenging off-leash hike is more like it. Unfortunately, not every dog owner has access to large tracts of acreage upon which to exercise their unruly canines, and in any case, what trainer Pat Miller calls "wild child canine syndrome" (WCCS) is more than just lack of exercise; it's also lack of appropriate reinforcement for calm behavior – i.e., training. Sadly, all too often a dog loses his happy home – maybe even his life, as a result of his high-energy behavior, especially since WCCS dogs often include inappropriate biting in their repertoire of undesirable behaviors.

A successful WCCS behavior modification program contains three elements: **physical exercise, management, and training**. While any one of these alone can make your high-energy dog easier to live with, apply all three for maximum success. Let's look at each of these elements in greater detail.

Physical Exercise: A Primer to Training

Intense physical exercise alone won't tire out a high-energy dog, but it does take the edge off so that when you're ready to work with him to teach calm behaviors, he is able to focus and participate in the training. The physical exercise sets him up for training success.

First, let's agree that leaving your dog out in his own fenced-in backyard does not qualify as "exercise". He needs to be actively engaged.

Outings to your local well-run dog park can be a good exercise option. If you don't have one in your area, invite compatible canines over to play in your dog's fenced yard. If you don't have one, invite yourself and your dog over to your dog-friend's fenced yard for play dates.

Absent any access to a dog-friendly fenced yard, play with your dog on a long line. A 50-foot line gives him a 100-foot stretch to run back and forth and work his jollies off.

Caution: Work up to 50 feet gradually, so he learns where the end of the line is. You don't want him to blast full-speed to the end of his long line and hurt himself. Also, wear long pants. A high-speed long-line wrapped around bare legs can give you a nasty rope burn.

If none of those work for you, having him wear a pack when you walk him, or even better, pull a cart (which takes significant training), or exercising him (safely) from a bicycle may be options for using up excess energy.

The Best Games for High-Energy Dogs

If outside exercise is simply out of the question, here are some indoor activities that can help take the edge off:

Find it. Most dogs love to use their noses. Take advantage of this natural talent by teaching yours the "Find It!" game:

1. Start with a handful of pea-sized tasty treats. Toss one to your left and say "Find it!" Then toss one to your other side and say "Find it!" Do this back and forth a half-dozen times.

2. Then have your dog sit and wait or stay, or have someone hold his leash. Walk 10 to 15 feet away and let him see you place a treat on the floor. Walk back to his side, pause, and say "Find it!" encouraging him to go get the treat. Repeat a half-dozen times.

3. Next, have your dog sit and wait or stay, or have someone hold his leash and let him see you "hide" the treat in an easy hiding place: behind a chair leg, under the coffee table, next to the plant stand. Walk back to his side, pause, and say "Find it!" encouraging him to go get the treat. Repeat a half-dozen times.

4. Again, have your dog sit and wait. This time hide several treats in easy places while he's watching. Return to his side, pause, and say "Find it!" Be sure not to help him out if he doesn't find them right away.

You can repeat the "find it" cue, and indicate the general area, but don't show him where it is; you want him to have to work to find it.

5. Hide the treats in harder and harder places so he really has to look for them: surfaces off the ground; underneath things; and in containers he can easily open.

6. Finally, put him in another room while you hide treats. Bring him back into the room and tell him to "Find it!" and enjoy watching him work his powerful nose to find the goodies. Once you've taught him this step of the game you can use it to exercise him by hiding treats in safe places all over the house, and then telling him to "Find it!" Nose work is surprisingly tiring.

If you prefer something less challenging, just go back to Step 1 and feed your dog his entire meal by tossing pieces or kibble from one side to the other, farther and farther, with a "Find it!" each time. He'll get a bunch of exercise just chasing after his dinner!

Hide and Seek. This is a fun variation of the "Find it" game. Have your dog sit and wait (or have someone hold him) while you go hide yourself in another room of the house. When you're hidden, call your dog's name and say "Find me!" Make it easy at first so he can find you quickly and succeed. Reinforce him with whatever he loves best – treats, a game of "tug," petting and praise, a tossed ball – or a combination of these. Then hide again. As he learns the game, make your hiding places harder and harder, so he has to really search.

Treat & Train (formerly called the Manners Minder). If you are into higher-tech exercise, use a treat dispenser called the Treat & Train that spits out treats when you push a button on the remote

The Treat & Train enables you to dispense a treat to your dog some distance away from you.

control. A Maryland trainer, Elizabeth Adamec of Sweet Wag Dog Training, shared her exercise secret for her high-energy adolescent Golden Retriever, Truman. This one is especially useful if you don't feel like exercising along with your canine pal or can't, due to physical restrictions of your own:

Teach your dog to use the Treat & Train, by showing him several times that when he hears the beep, a treats fall out of the machine. You can use his own dog food, if he really likes his food.

1. Set the machine a few feet away and have your dog sit next to you. Push the button, and let him go eat the treats. Repeat several times, encouraging him, if necessary, to go get the treats when he hears the beep.

2. Put the machine across the room, and have your dog sit next to you. Push the button, and watch him run over and eat the treats. If he's not doing this with great enthusiasm, repeat Steps 1 and 2 several more times with higher value treats, until he really gets excited about the treats when he hears the beep.

3. Set the machine in the next room, and repeat the exercise several times. Call him back to you each time, so he runs to the Treat & Train, when he hears the beep, eats the treat, and runs back to you to wait for the next beep. Gradually move the treat dispenser into rooms farther and farther away from you, until your dog has to run all the way across the house, or even upstairs, when he hears the beep. Now you can sit back with the TV remote in one hand, your dog's remote in the other, and enjoy your favorite show while canine pal gets exercise and dinner, all at the same time.

There are tons of other ways to provide your dog with indoor exercise. Play tug. Teach him to bowl. Teach him to catch, then repeatedly toss him his ball 10 feet away and have him bring it back to you.

Some trainers use treadmills and canine exercise wheels to exercise their dogs. (These must be carefully trained and supervised, and it must be enjoyable for your dog.) Get creative. Get busy. Have fun. Let the indoor games begin!

Managing Hyperactivity

Successful positive training, especially for high-energy dogs, relies on the appropriate use of management tools to prevent the dog from practicing – and being reinforced for – undesirable behaviors.

Here are examples of when to use various management tools for your wild child dog:

Crates and Pens. Use crates and exercise pens when you can't directly supervise his energy to consistently reinforce appropriate behaviors and prevent reinforcement for inappropriate ones. The best times for the appropriate use of crates and exercise pens include:

- When you can provide adequate exercise and social time in addition to his time in the crate or pen.
- When your dog has been properly introduced to the crate or pen and accepts it as a good place to be. Note: Dogs who suffer from isolation or separation distress or anxiety often do not crate or pen well.

Make sure your dog's crate is comfortable and equip him with a nice chew or foodstuffed Kong.

- When you know you'll be home in a reasonable period of time so you don't force your dog to soil his den – no longer than one hour more than your pup's age in months, no more than an outside maximum of eight to nine hours for adult dogs.

Leashes and Tethers. Leashes and tethers are useful for the "umbilical cord" technique of preventing your wild child from being reinforced for unwanted behaviors. With your dog near or attached to you, you can provide constant supervision. Also, with your dog tethered to your side, you should have many opportunities to reinforce him for appropriate behavior.

The leash can be hooked to waist belts that are designed for that purpose, or clipped to your belt or belt-loop with a carabineer. Your WCCS dog can't zoom around the house if he's glued to your side.

If inappropriate mouthing behavior is included in his high-energy repertoire, however, this may not be the best choice. Tethers are better for keeping this dog in view, with easy access for reinforcement of calm behavior, while keeping his teeth from your clothing or skin. Appropriate situations for the use of leashes and tethers include:

- For dogs who get into trouble when they are unsupervised.
- **Leashed** when your activities don't preclude having a dog connected to you – okay for working on the computer; not okay for working out.
- **Tethered** when you want to keep your dog near but not directly connected to you, to teach good manners and/or prevent inappropriate behaviors.

Baby Gates and Doors. Baby gates and doors prevent your dog's access to vulnerable areas when he's in wild child mode. A baby gate across the nursery door keeps him safely on the other side while you're changing diapers, but still lets him be part of the "baby experience." Not to worry if the older kids left their stuffed toys strewn across the bedroom floor; just close the bedroom door when your dog is in a "grab toy and run" mood. The most appropriate uses of baby gates and doors include:

- To prevent your dog's temporary access to areas during activities you don't want him to participate in.
- To prevent your dog's access to areas when you can't supervise closely enough, to prevent inappropriate behaviors such as counter surfing or getting on forbidden furniture.

Everyday Training – Putting It all Together

Everything we've covered so far tackles how to help your dog become calmer in order to be primed and ready to focus on learning new behaviors, and how to use management to prevent your dog from practicing unwanted behaviors. Now you're ready to incorporate some training.

Here is an illustration of how to put all of these elements together in real life. We'll use the example of solving your dog's overexcited behavior at the door – a common issue with wild child dogs! What follows is trainer Pat Miller's three-step process that provides a simple framework to help you modify your dog's inappropriate door-related behaviors:

Step #1: Visualize/articulate the behavior you do want

Old-fashioned training focuses on physically and/or verbally punishing the dog for unwanted behaviors in an attempt to suppress them. While this method can be successful, it carries with it a lot of baggage, including the potential for teaching your dog to fear you, to avoid offering behaviors in training sessions, and to become aggressive in response to the punishment. Obviously, we don't recommend it.

Modern, positive-reinforcement-based training focuses on the behaviors you want your dog to do. In order to successfully modify an unwanted behavior, you need to start by identifying the desirable behavior(s) you would like your dog to do, instead.

Step #2: Manage the environment to prevent your dog from being reinforced for the behavior you don't want.

Management is critical for successful behavior change. Every time your dog is reinforced in some way for an undesirable behavior, it increases the

likelihood that he'll repeat that behavior, and it will be harder to make that behavior go away. (Keep in mind that a "reinforcement" for your dog is not just a tasty treat or word of praise; if anything that your dog enjoys happens as a result of his behavior, – or anything he doesn't like goes away – it's a reinforcement. So, if he manages to dart out the door when you open it for someone, and he then gets to run around, or pee, or bark at the UPS truck, he will have been "reinforced" for the door-darting behavior.)

By implementing a well-thought-out management program, you will prevent reinforcement for the unwanted behavior while you install a new behavior in its place. Note that it's not enough that you don't reinforce the behavior. You also have to prevent the rest of the world from reinforcing the behavior if you want to change it.

Instead of fixating on what you *don't* want, start the "improving door behaviors" project (and *all* problem-behavior-solving projects) by visualizing what behavior you do want your dog to exhibit in a given, specific situation.

Step #3: Generously reinforce the behavior you do want.
This is where you replace the unwanted behavior with the desired behavior you identified in Step #1. Figure out how to create an environment in which your dog is able to offer the behavior you want so that you have ample opportunity to reward him for it. Behaviors that are consistently reinforced increase, while those that are not reinforced extinguish.

In time, along with the good management you've implemented in Step #2, your dog will choose to offer the desired behavior instead of the unwanted one.

Now let's apply the three-step process to an inappropriate door-related behavior:

Excited Greeting of Arriving Humans

Step #1: Visualize/articulate the behavior you do want. Here are some possibilities:

- I would like my dog to greet me, other family members, and any visitors at the door (and anywhere else!) by sitting politely in front of them.
- I would like my dog to go lie down on his bed (or go get in his crate) when visitors come to the door.
- I would like my dog to sit for a toy that the visitor holds up and then fetch it when the visitor tosses it.

Step #2: Prevent your dog from being reinforced for the behavior you don't want. So, consider the following:

- Use tethers, leashes, crates, baby gates, etc. to restrain your dog and prevent him from happily jumping on people to greet them.
- Instruct family members and visitors to turn away and step away if your dog tries to jump on them.
- Put a note on your front door asking visitors to wait a moment while you put your dog away before answering the door.

Step #3: Generously reinforce the behavior you do want. So, in this case, you could try:

- **Teach your dog to "Sit politely for greetings."** This is a good-manners behavior best taught to young puppies so they don't have a strong reinforcement history for jumping up, but it's never too late to begin.

Baby gates, exercise pens, and tethers are simple and valuable management tools. Use them to prevent your dog from being reinforced for practicing an unwanted behavior during the period of time when you are working to promote his new, better behavior.

You can practice polite greetings with your dog on a tether or leash. Step toward him when he's restrained, and if he starts to jump up, step back. Pet or feed him a treat only if he stays in a polite sit. Don't ask him to sit; you want him to figure it out himself – otherwise he will sit only when someone asks him to.

If you consistently reward your dog for sitting anywhere and everywhere, sit will become his "default" behavior – he'll sit whenever he's not sure what else to do. That's a good thing!

If company is coming, tether your dog a safe distance from the door so you can greet your guests without worrying about him, and hand them each several treats. Tell them to walk over to greet your dog one at a time, and to pet or feed him only if he remains sitting.

When the initial excitement of the visitors' arrival subsides, you can remove him from his tether. If necessary, keep him on leash for a bit so he can walk around to greet your guests but you can restrain him if you see him gathering himself to jump up.

When he is settled enough, take him off leash and let him interact freely. Remember to remind your guests to turn their backs if he jumps up!

- **Teach your dog to "Lie down on your bed (or go in your crate) when visitors are at the door."** You can teach your dog that the sound of the doorbell, or a knock at the door, is his cue to go lie down on his bed, or run and jump into his crate. Once there you can tether him at his bed or close the crate door, if necessary, to prevent him from running to greet your guests.

Use the "Go to Your Spot" exercise mentioned earlier, only now, you can add a new cue – the knock and/or sound of the doorbell.

To install the new cue, start with your dog just a few feet from his crate or bed. Make a knocking sound or ring the bell and then give your dog the verbal cue to go to his bed/crate. If he seems confused, go ahead and prompt/lure as needed, until he's no longer distracted by the knock or bell and begins to realize that it means the same thing as your verbal cue. When he will go to his designated spot consistently from just a few feet away at the sound of the knock or bell, gradually increase distance until he will run there from anywhere in the house at the sound.

Now do setups with people actually coming to the door. Be prepared to follow the knock or doorbell with your verbal cue until he can get past his excitement over someone being at the door and respond promptly and consistently to the cue. Continue to practice with setups until he will run to his spot upon hearing the knock or bell, even with the exciting stimulus of a stranger at the door.

- **Teach your dog to "Sit for and fetch a toy."** This one is our favorite because it's fun for dog and guests alike. Keep a basket of toys outside your front door, with clear and simple instructions for your visitor to:

1. Take a toy out of the basket before you enter.
2. Hold the toy at your chest and wait for your dog to sit.
3. When he sits, toss the toy 10-15 feet into the house.
4. If he brings it back and drops it or hands it to you, you can wait for him to sit and toss it again, if you want.

Of course, you will have practiced this with your dog ahead of time so you are confident that he knows how to play the game. You may also have to eventually put the toy up so he will stop pestering your guest to throw it again. Unless, of course, your guests are enjoying the game as much as your dog, in which case you can just sit back and let them exercise him for you!

Excessive Arousal in Anticipation of Anouting

Okay, let's apply the three-step process to another door-related behavior commonly displayed by high-energy dogs. This time, we'll be brief, in order to streamline the logic of the three steps.

Let's say your dog gets highly aroused, leaping into the air and bouncing off of you or the door, when you pick up the leash to take him out for a walk. Here's what you do:

Step #1: Visualize/Articulate the behavior you do want: "I would like my dog to sit calmly and wait for me to attach the leash."

Step #2: Prevent reinforcement for the behavior you *don't* want: As soon as your dog starts acting silly, say, "Oops!" in a cheerful tone of voice and set the leash down. If necessary, turn your back or go sit down until he is calm. Then start the process again. Not only are you preventing reinforcement, you are also telling him that his wild behavior makes the opportunity for a walk go away.

Step #3: Generously reinforce the behavior you *do* want: When he stays calmly seated for you to attach the leash, reinforce the behavior by opening the door and taking him for that highly anticipated walk. You don't even need treats to reinforce him for this one – although, of course, you always can reinforce with treats as well.

Your Tun

Now it's your turn. If your hyper dog has any other undesirable door-related behaviors, take the "three-step process for changing a behavior you don't like" and give it a go.

But, heck, why limit it to door-related behaviors? You can try it out with any unwanted behaviors your wild child dog exhibits. Try to commit the "three-step process for changing a behavior" to memory so you have it at your fingertips when you need it. Make a list of your dog's unwanted behaviors in order of importance. Select one or two behaviors from your list and start applying the "three-step process." You will be amazed at how quickly those troublesome behaviors can just fly out the door, never to return!

Some Final Tips:

Here's a short recap illustrating what we think are the crucial elements involved in calming your high-energy dog:

• **Increase his exercise.** Whatever he gets now, give him more, and make it quality exercise. Tossing him out in the backyard is not quality exercise. Go out with him. Throw sticks, balls, play tug of war, get him to swim in the pond, take him to the dog park. And add structure to his exercise. Have him sit politely for you to throw the ball. Make sure he will "Give" you the tug toy when you ask him to. Have him sit before you open the gate into the park.

• **Increase his socialization time.** If you've been leaving him outside because he's too wild, grit your teeth and bring him in. Dogs don't learn to be calm by being banished to the backyard. Dogs are social creatures, and time spent in isolation causes stress, which frequently causes hyperactivity. Dogs learn to be calm by spending time with people and being rewarded for their calm behavior. Rewards can be attention, praise, petting, and yes, Clicks! and treats. Use leashes, tethers, crates, and baby gates as needed to preserve your sanity while integrating him into the family.

• **Increase his training time.** If you've already taken him to a basic training class, sign up for a Level 2. Or a tricks class, or agility – anything that will keep the two of you active and learning together. Keeping his brain occupied and busy is just as important as occupying his body.

If, after reading and doing all this you still think your dog suffers from clinical hyperactivity or ADHD, then it's time to visit a qualified behavior professional for help. More likely, though, increas-

ing his exercise and training time and combining that with some solid management will make for a well-behaved dog and a happy owner! You never know, with patience, in the right positive environment, your "hyper" pal may turn out to be a great agility, herding, tracking, or drug-sniffing dog!

The content of this ebook is based on articles by trainers Mardi Richmond, MA, CPDT-KA and Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA originally published in the Whole Dog Journal.

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Hyperactive dogs also are likely to get into everything (bored, looking for creative opportunity), can be destructive, and are often emotionally unstable. They can become almost unmanageable if physically restrained, and may exhibit uncontrollable rage-like aggression if frustrated.

How to Test Your Dog for ADHD

How can you tell if you have a "normal" high-energy dog or one with ADHD? The proof is in the Ritalin. Your veterinarian can administer a low dose of an appropriate amphetamine after measuring your dog's respiration, heart rate, and reaction to restraint. Some 30-120 minutes after the amphetamine is given, most hyperkinetic dogs will show a marked decrease in excitement and activity level as well as a measurable drop in respiration and heart rate, and greater acceptance of restraint. A normal-but active dog will have the opposite response, with an increase in excitement, activity, heart rate, and respiration, and a decreased tolerance of restraint.

First, however, you might want to try a 10-minute ADHD experiment at home. Make sure your high-energy dog hasn't eaten for at least four hours. Take him out for a good hard romp in a safely enclosed area to take the edge off – don't run him into exhaustion. Then leash your dog, grab your clicker and a treat bag full of very high value treats, and take him to a place with minimal distractions (indoors) for some clicker-testing fun:

1. "Supercharge" your clicker, using a very high rate of reinforcement and tiny treats for 1 minute (30-60 treats per minute). Click the clicker, and then feed the dog a smidgen of chicken for each click. Click, treat. Click, treat. Your dog doesn't have to do anything but focus on you; don't ask for sit, down, stay, or any other behavior. If he tries to jump on you, turn away, but keep clicking and giving him treats. Be sure to deliver the treats at his nose level so he doesn't have to jump up to get them. If he's grabby, toss the treats on the floor in front of him.

2. After 1 minute, reduce the rate of reinforcement to 15-30 clicks/treats per minute. Start moving the treat over his head to lure a sit. If he does sit, briefly increase the rate of reinforcement for three to four clicks, then slow down again. Do this for 2 minutes. Conduct a 10-Minute ADHD Test

3. For the next 2 minutes, continue at a reinforcement rate of 10-20 clicks/treats per minute, but now, if he sits, click the clicker but hold off delivering the treat for 2 seconds at first, gradually increasing the delay of the treat's delivery for up to 4 or 5 seconds.

4. For 2 more minutes, click and treat on a variable/random schedule of reinforcement. That is, vary the number of seconds between clicks and treats, sometimes doing several click/treats rapidly in a row (remember to treat after each click) sometimes pausing for 1 second, or 5, or 3, or 7, between clicks. Try to keep it random; we humans are very good at falling into patterns!

5. Now, stop clicking for 30 seconds.

6. After 30 seconds, click the clicker only if he looks at you. If he keeps looking at you, keep clicking, using the random reinforcement schedule in Step 4. If he looks away, stop clicking. If he looks back at you or looks in your general direction, click again. Do this for 2½ minutes.

Time's up – the test is over! If your dog was willing to play this game with you for the entire 10 minutes with only occasional minor attention lapses, you probably have a normal high-energy dog. It's time to increase his exercise, socialization, and training programs. If, however, you lost your dog's attention totally somewhere between Steps 2 and 4, there's a good chance you really do have a hyperkinetic dog. Time to call your vet to schedule that amphetamine test, and while you're there, have a full thyroid panel done as well as a blood test for lead poisoning. Remember that thyroid results within the clinically normal-but-low range can be a contributing factor to behavior problems.

Are Hyperactive Dogs Trainable?

In some cases, these dogs exhibit behaviors that are so intrinsically driven by organic causes that behavior modification and positive training alone can't help.

Fortunately, a high percentage of ADHD dogs can be helped with the judicious use of stimulants in combination with a behavior modification program. Hyperactive dogs tend to be very responsive to positive reinforcement shaping procedures in conjunction with brief time-out periods. Think back to the results of your 10-minute ADHD test. At what step did you start to lose your dog? If he was with you through Step 2 and you lost him at 3, you know that he does well with a continuous schedule of reinforcement at a fairly high rate.

Go back to the step where he did well (Step 2), and work toward Step 3, breaking your "gradually" into even smaller increments – perhaps a half-second rather than a full second – so you don't lose him with too big a leap.

Keep your expectations low. Shape most of his behaviors in very tiny increments with a high rate of reinforcement. Keep your training session brief (five minutes, maximum), with a short time-out to calm him before you start another brief session.

Sample Task for ADHD Dogs

With many dogs, lure-shaping a down is a simple matter, accomplished in short order by moving the treat toward the floor and clicking the dog for following into a down position. We often have success in just three or four clicks, as we hold the treat at the dog's nose and he focuses on it (click and treat), we move it halfway to the floor and he follows (click and treat), three-quarters of the way and his feet are sliding forward (click and treat), and he's down (click and a jackpot of treats!).

In contrast, the hyperkinetic dog may require 20 or even 100 clicks, over several sessions, before you reach your final behavior goal. Teaching "Down" to this dog might require the following:

• The dog is sitting. You hold a treat in front of his nose and he focuses on it. Click and treat.

• He stays focused on the treat. Click and treat.

• Lower the treat a half-inch. His nose follows. Click and treat.

• He stays focused. Click and treat.

• Lower the treat another half-inch. He follows. Click and treat.

• Lower another half-inch. He follows. Click and treat.

• He stays focused. Click and treat.

• Release him from the sit, tell him he's a great dog, and both of you take a five-minute brain break.

• Start with the sit again. As soon as he focuses on the treat, click and treat.

• Lower the treat an inch. His nose follows. Click and treat.

• Lower the treat another inch. He follows. Click and treat.

• He stays focused. Click and treat.

• Lower the treat another inch. Click and treat.

• He stays focused. Click and treat.

• Lower the treat another inch. Click and treat.

• Take another brain break.

You get the idea: slow and steady. Anytime you increase the increment, say from 1 inch to 2 inches, make sure he stays with you. If you lose him between 1 and 2 inches, go from 1 inch to 1½ inches. Take frequent brain breaks, and don't make your total session more than about 15 minutes. If you lose his attention a lot, you are expecting too much. Use smaller increments, a higher rate of reinforcement (click him often just for staying with the game), and more breaks.

What You Can Do: Training Your High-Energy Dog to Calm Down

There are several things you can do to help curb your dog's energy level. Whether you're dealing with an ADHD dog or a high-energy dog, the goal remains the same: To get your dog to shift gears

To lure-shape a Down, start by holding a treat to your dog's nose while he sits. An ADHD dog may require many more clicks over several sessions to successfully achieve a Down.

and find a state of calm. In truth, most "hyper" dogs are just under-exercised. In addition to providing an outlet for your dog to burn some physical energy whenever possible, consider incorporating exercises and activities meant to engage your dog intellectually. We'll have a look at some of these activities a little further ahead.

For the high-energy dog, the first step towards achieving a state of calm is to teach him to control his impulses. Once he's learned to be a little more patient, you can incorporate this new skill into some everyday activities and training exercises.

Teaching Impulse Control

We've all seen those dogs who lack impulse control – dogs who can't seem to handle excitement and become over-excited, pushy, or reactive. Sometimes that lack of impulse control results in problem behaviors such as chasing cars, barking for balls, and jumping to say hi.

Building impulse control can take time and energy, but it can also be a totally fun way to spend time with your dog. Rather than making it all about self-containment, make sure your dog understands that calm and focused behavior is the way to keep fun happening, and a great way to keep rewards of all types flowing.

Because impulse control is challenging for some dogs, it's important to make sure all of your impulse-control games and activities are offset with plenty of activities where your dog can let loose and have some uninhibited fun. In fact, to keep a dog enthusiastic about offering impulse control, balance every minute or two of impulse-control activities with several more minutes of fun.

For example, if you are playing an impulse control game using a toy, every minute or so take a quick break and simply toss the toy and let your dog have it, run around, and be goofy. A useful formula would be for every minute of impulse-control games, incorporate five minutes or more of active, expressive activity.

Impulse control is built progressively. Some dogs pick up the skills quickly, but some need a little more assistance.

Trainer Mardi Richmond describes watching an Aussie-mix pup learn about impulse control from another pup: "The 14-week-old Aussie started out pouncing and biting a little too hard for his Spaniel-mix playmate. The Spaniel started calmly stopping the play each time the Aussie went over the top, and inviting play when the Aussie calmed down. With each repeated stop and start, the Aussie began to pay attention to his body, his enthusiasm, and his teeth! He began approaching more slowly, pouncing more softly, and keeping his mouth open rather than clamping down. This lovely young Aussie learned about impulse control through a totally fun play session. (And the Spaniel obviously enjoyed the interaction, too!) These pups clearly demonstrated that the key to learning impulse control is through experiences and actions . . . and the consequences those actions bring. They also showed that impulse control can be learned quickly when the consequences involve fun."

All types of consequences (both positive experiences, such as invitations to play, and negative experiences, such as the play ending) influence the development of impulse control. Fortunately, most dogs can learn this important skill from us as well as through their interactions with other dogs. A very effective way to help your dog learn

impulse control is through a variety of enjoyable games and interactions.

Relaxing Is Rewarding

Many dogs who have trouble with impulse control really don't understand that being calm is an option. For these puppies and dogs, learning that they can settle and that calm behavior is rewarding is the first step. Here are some activities you can incorporate into your daily life to help your dog learn that a calm, relaxed state is always a good option.

First, **simply catch your dog in the act of being relaxed**, for example, when she has settled on her bed or is sunning on the patio. When you see your dog settled, approach calmly with quiet praise or a gentle touch, and then drop a treat right near her paws or nose.

The first few times you do this, your dog may get up and follow you around to see if more treats might be forthcoming. If she does, simply go back to what you were doing without giving her more attention. After a few repetitions, your dog will learn to settle right back in after being rewarded.

Settle Down, Already!

A second activity is to reward your dog for settling on cue. "Settle" means to relax lying down on one hip for an extended period of time (several minutes) on a particular spot. This exercise teaches your dog to lie quietly at your side while you are otherwise engaged.

1. Sit in a chair with your dog next to you, and invite her to lie down. Lure her down, if necessary.

2. When she is down, click or say "Yes!" and treat, then quickly click and treat again, before she has time to get up. (If you can get her to rock onto one hip by moving the treat to the side and toward her ribs, even better. She should be relaxed, not poised to leap into action!)

3. Continue to click (or "Yes!") and treat several times while she is down, then say "Release!" and invite her up.

4. Gradually increase the time between clicks, so she is staying down on her own, waiting for the next click. When she will stay down with only a few clicks for 20 seconds or more, add the cue "Settle" before asking her to "Down." (Eventually you will drop the "Down" cue and just cue her to "Settle.")

5. Continue to decrease your rate of reinforcement (number of clicks and treats) until she can lie quietly at your feet for an extended period with very little reinforcement. (Tip: This is a great one to practice while watching television; you're just hanging out anyway!)

To teach"settle," position a mat or bed near you, and invite your dog to lie down there. You can use a food lure to encourage her to rock onto one hip and mark this posture (with the click of a clicker or a verbal marker such as the word "Yes!") and a reward.

Reward her with small bits of tasty treats for initially short, but increasingly longer periods of relaxation. Add a "Settle!" cue as soon as you are able to elicit the entire behavior of "come here to the mat and lie down in a relaxed fashion on one hip, and wait.

What should you do if she doesn't just "settle"?

Challenge: Your dog won't lie still for very long.

Solution: Practice for shorter bits of "settle." Try to release her before she "releases" herself, and very gradually increase the length of time you ask her to remain settled.

Challenge: Your dog won't lie still at all.

Solution: She probably has too much energy! At least at first, try practicing this exercise when she's had a good, hard exercise session and you know she's tired. Set her (and yourself!) up to succeed.

Challenge: Your dog will settle nicely when it's just you there, but not if anyone else is present.

Solution: First, use the solution above (a good, hard exercise session) and then practice. Start with just one other person present, and ask your helper to just sit quietly in one place at first, ignoring your dog. Very gradually add small bits of activity, conversation, and/or different or additional humans.

Know When to Stop

An important skill for impulse control is the ability to settle down in the face of excitement. There is a lot of value in **"installing an off switch"** in your dog! It translates into the ability to get your dog to settle on cue even when she is very excited. This is especially useful when you want to let your dog know that an activity or a game has ended. Some high-energy dogs simply don't know when to stop, and they can keep going long after you've already tired of the activity.

An effective way to turn off activity in an action-loving dog is to teach an "all done" cue. This one doesn't specifically tell the dog what to do – it just signals to her that the activity is over. Use any cue that makes sense to you, such as "All done!" or "That's all!".

The sooner you "install" an off-switch in your high-energy, activity-persistent dog, the better. Remember, the longer the reinforcement history for persistence, the more persistent she'll be.

1. Start teaching this behavior by engaging in your dog's favorite activity – say, fetching a ball.

2. After a reasonable period of fetch time, say "All done!" and put the ball away, out of sight, perhaps in a nearby cupboard.

3. Give your dog a reasonable alternative that she can do by herself, such as emptying a stuffed Kong.

4. Go sit down and occupy yourself with something, such as reading a book, watching TV, or web-surfing.

5. Ignore any attempts on your dog's behalf to re-engage you, such as going to the cupboard and barking, or bringing you a different toy. Don't even repeat your off-switch cue, just ignore her.

6. Warn all other nearby humans to similarly ignore her attempts to engage them in activity when she's been given the "All done" cue.

7. Be prepared to quietly (so as not to get her aroused again) praise her when she finally lies down and starts to chew on the stuffed Kong.

8. Use your off-switch cue every time you end a play session with her favorite activity, and don't give in if she persists. The more consistent you are, the sooner you will see her resign herself to the fact that the fun really is over when you say it is.

If your dog does not like to fetch a ball, try another similar "get excited and settle" game such as running around together with a stop and settle. Or, play tug-and-drop, or try playing with a flirt pole (a toy on the end of a rope, which is fastened to a pole) to get your dog running, and then incorporate the stop and settle.

Go to Your Spot

Another useful exercise involves teaching your dog to go to a specific place, like a mat, to lie down and relax. This can be a fixed location in your home (in front of the fireplace, by the toy box, etc.), but I find it more valuable to use a portable carpet square, mat, or dog bed of some

sort. This gives you the flexibility to send your dog to her spot wherever you are; you just have to take her mat along with you. This behavior is very useful for a dog who tends to "bug" you (or your guests) for attention.

1. Take your dog to a bed, mat, carpet square, or throw rug you have obtained for this purpose, say "place," "go to bed" (or whatever word or phrase you plan to use). You can lure her to the bed with a treat, or place a treat on the bed and encourage her to go to it and eat it. Click or say "Yes!" when she does it, then ask her to "Down," and click and treat for that.

2. Do this a number of times until you think your dog is beginning to associate the word or phrase with lying down on the mat.

3. Then you can start cueing the behavior without the lure. Click (or say "Yes!") and give her a reward when she complies. You can also request a "Wait" so she doesn't pop right back off the mat.

4. When the dog is doing this part well, begin moving farther away from the mat before giving your "Place" cue.

5. Ultimately, if you wish, you can ask your dog to go to her place from anywhere in the house. You can name several different places and teach her to go to each on your request. You can also take the mat with you when you go out and use it in public or at friend's houses (this is why a small, portable throw rug or mat is ideal).

One alternative to the approach described above is to "shape" the behavior. This is done by marking (click or "Yes!") and rewarding any behavior remotely related to the mat, gradually raising the criteria (what she needs to do to get a click and treat) until she reliably goes to the mat and lies down on it. Add the cue when she reliably moves to the mat, and then go to Step 4 above.
Challenge: Your dog lies near or only partially on the mat in an effort to be nearer to you or your guests (or whatever he'd rather be doing).

Solution: Be clear about how much of your dog has to be on the mat for it to "count" (your choice!) and reinforce your dog only if he meets that standard.

Leave It Alone

Impulse control requires patience, and Leave It (sometimes called "Off") is a very powerful impulse control exercise. It involves having the dog turn away from something that he is interested in and make eye contact with you instead. An excellent way to jump-start this behavior is through a "Doggy Zen" exercise. (Doggy Zen: In order to have the treat, you must leave the treat.)

1. Have a handful of super-exciting treats and one rather boring treat available. Put the boring treat in one hand and the good treats in a pouch or container behind your back. Present the boring treat to your dog in a closed fist (so she can smell it, but can't get to it). Allow your dog lick and sniff your hand, and try to get to the treat.

2. The *moment* your dog backs away from your treat/hand a tiny bit, mark the moment with a click or a "Yes!" and give your dog one of the super-good treats from your other hand. Be very patient; the first try or two can take several minutes before a dog gives up and backs away.

3. Once your dog understands the game and quickly backs away from the treat in your fist, change it up a little by switching which hand is holding the boring treat. Again, reward with the yummy treat from your other hand.

4. Once your dog easily backs away from a boring treat in either hand, pause a moment after your dog backs away from the treat (without immediately marking or rewarding the behavior). Watch your dog carefully; almost always, after a few moments of not getting the expected reward, dogs will look at your face for information, trying to figure out why they haven't been rewarded yet. The moment he offers that eye contact, click (or "Yes!") and reward him.

5. When your dog easily backs off a treat and subsequently makes eye contact with you each time, add a verbal cue such as "Leave it." Present the treat first, and when your dog takes notice, say

Practice "Leave it!" with everything your dog like in real life: food, interesting smells, the sight of other dogs or squirrels, and his favorite toys.

"Leave it," and click/"Yes!" and reward when your dog makes eye contact.

6. Practice "Leave it" while placing the treat on the floor. Make sure you can cover it quickly with your foot if your dog makes a move for it!

7. Take the cue on the road, and practice with different items such as a favorite toy, or a distraction like an interesting smell or the sight of another dog.

Activities to Help Your Dog Relax

We mentioned earlier that physical exercise plays an important role in helping a "hyper" dog burn some pent-up fuel. High-energy dogs usually need a lot of intense exercise to be capable of focus and participation in training. Walking around the block – once, twice, even three times! – doesn't cut it for dogs like this. A long, challenging off-leash hike is more like it. Unfortunately, not every dog owner has access to large tracts of acreage upon which to exercise their unruly canines, and in any case, what trainer Pat Miller calls "wild child canine syndrome" (WCCS) is more than just lack of exercise; it's also lack of appropriate reinforcement for calm behavior – i.e., training. Sadly, all too often a dog loses his happy home – maybe even his life, as a result of his high-energy behavior, especially since WCCS dogs often include inappropriate biting in their repertoire of undesirable behaviors.

A successful WCCS behavior modification program contains three elements: **physical exercise, management, and training**. While any one of these alone can make your high-energy dog easier to live with, apply all three for maximum success. Let's look at each of these elements in greater detail.

Physical Exercise: A Primer to Training

Intense physical exercise alone won't tire out a high-energy dog, but it does take the edge off so that when you're ready to work with him to teach calm behaviors, he is able to focus and participate in the training. The physical exercise sets him up for training success.

First, let's agree that leaving your dog out in his own fenced-in backyard does not qualify as "exercise". He needs to be actively engaged.

Outings to your local well-run dog park can be a good exercise option. If you don't have one in your area, invite compatible canines over to play in your dog's fenced yard. If you don't have one, invite yourself and your dog over to your dog-friend's fenced yard for play dates.

Absent any access to a dog-friendly fenced yard, play with your dog on a long line. A 50-foot line gives him a 100-foot stretch to run back and forth and work his jollies off.

Caution: Work up to 50 feet gradually, so he learns where the end of the line is. You don't want him to blast full-speed to the end of his long line and hurt himself. Also, wear long pants. A high-speed long-line wrapped around bare legs can give you a nasty rope burn.

If none of those work for you, having him wear a pack when you walk him, or even better, pull a cart (which takes significant training), or exercising him (safely) from a bicycle may be options for using up excess energy.

The Best Games for High-Energy Dogs

If outside exercise is simply out of the question, here are some indoor activities that can help take the edge off:

Find it. Most dogs love to use their noses. Take advantage of this natural talent by teaching yours the "Find It!" game:

1. Start with a handful of pea-sized tasty treats. Toss one to your left and say "Find it!" Then toss one to your other side and say "Find it!" Do this back and forth a half-dozen times.

2. Then have your dog sit and wait or stay, or have someone hold his leash. Walk 10 to 15 feet away and let him see you place a treat on the floor. Walk back to his side, pause, and say "Find it!" encouraging him to go get the treat. Repeat a half-dozen times.

3. Next, have your dog sit and wait or stay, or have someone hold his leash and let him see you "hide" the treat in an easy hiding place: behind a chair leg, under the coffee table, next to the plant stand. Walk back to his side, pause, and say "Find it!" encouraging him to go get the treat. Repeat a half-dozen times.

4. Again, have your dog sit and wait. This time hide several treats in easy places while he's watching. Return to his side, pause, and say "Find it!" Be sure not to help him out if he doesn't find them right away.

You can repeat the "find it" cue, and indicate the general area, but don't show him where it is; you want him to have to work to find it.

5. Hide the treats in harder and harder places so he really has to look for them: surfaces off the ground; underneath things; and in containers he can easily open.

6. Finally, put him in another room while you hide treats. Bring him back into the room and tell him to "Find it!" and enjoy watching him work his powerful nose to find the goodies. Once you've taught him this step of the game you can use it to exercise him by hiding treats in safe places all over the house, and then telling him to "Find it!" Nose work is surprisingly tiring.

If you prefer something less challenging, just go back to Step 1 and feed your dog his entire meal by tossing pieces or kibble from one side to the other, farther and farther, with a "Find it!" each time. He'll get a bunch of exercise just chasing after his dinner!

Hide and Seek. This is a fun variation of the "Find it" game. Have your dog sit and wait (or have someone hold him) while you go hide yourself in another room of the house. When you're hidden, call your dog's name and say "Find me!" Make it easy at first so he can find you quickly and succeed. Reinforce him with whatever he loves best – treats, a game of "tug," petting and praise, a tossed ball – or a combination of these. Then hide again. As he learns the game, make your hiding places harder and harder, so he has to really search.

Treat & Train (formerly called the Manners Minder). If you are into higher-tech exercise, use a treat dispenser called the Treat & Train that spits out treats when you push a button on the remote

The Treat & Train enables you to dispense a treat to your dog some distance away from you.

control. A Maryland trainer, Elizabeth Adamec of Sweet Wag Dog Training, shared her exercise secret for her high-energy adolescent Golden Retriever, Truman. This one is especially useful if you don't feel like exercising along with your canine pal or can't, due to physical restrictions of your own:

Teach your dog to use the Treat & Train, by showing him several times that when he hears the beep, a treats fall out of the machine. You can use his own dog food, if he really likes his food.

1. Set the machine a few feet away and have your dog sit next to you. Push the button, and let him go eat the treats. Repeat several times, encouraging him, if necessary, to go get the treats when he hears the beep.

2. Put the machine across the room, and have your dog sit next to you. Push the button, and watch him run over and eat the treats. If he's not doing this with great enthusiasm, repeat Steps 1 and 2 several more times with higher value treats, until he really gets excited about the treats when he hears the beep.

3. Set the machine in the next room, and repeat the exercise several times. Call him back to you each time, so he runs to the Treat & Train, when he hears the beep, eats the treat, and runs back to you to wait for the next beep. Gradually move the treat dispenser into rooms farther and farther away from you, until your dog has to run all the way across the house, or even upstairs, when he hears the beep. Now you can sit back with the TV remote in one hand, your dog's remote in the other, and enjoy your favorite show while canine pal gets exercise and dinner, all at the same time.

There are tons of other ways to provide your dog with indoor exercise. Play tug. Teach him to bowl. Teach him to catch, then repeatedly toss him his ball 10 feet away and have him bring it back to you.

Some trainers use treadmills and canine exercise wheels to exercise their dogs. (These must be carefully trained and supervised, and it must be enjoyable for your dog.) Get creative. Get busy. Have fun. Let the indoor games begin!

Managing Hyperactivity

Successful positive training, especially for high-energy dogs, relies on the appropriate use of management tools to prevent the dog from practicing – and being reinforced for – undesirable behaviors.

Here are examples of when to use various management tools for your wild child dog:

Crates and Pens. Use crates and exercise pens when you can't directly supervise his energy to consistently reinforce appropriate behaviors and prevent reinforcement for inappropriate ones. The best times for the appropriate use of crates and exercise pens include:

- When you can provide adequate exercise and social time in addition to his time in the crate or pen.
- When your dog has been properly introduced to the crate or pen and accepts it as a good place to be. Note: Dogs who suffer from isolation or separation distress or anxiety often do not crate or pen well.

Make sure your dog's crate is comfortable and equip him with a nice chew or foodstuffed Kong.

- When you know you'll be home in a reasonable period of time so you don't force your dog to soil his den – no longer than one hour more than your pup's age in months, no more than an outside maximum of eight to nine hours for adult dogs.

Leashes and Tethers. Leashes and tethers are useful for the "umbilical cord" technique of preventing your wild child from being reinforced for unwanted behaviors. With your dog near or attached to you, you can provide constant supervision. Also, with your dog tethered to your side, you should have many opportunities to reinforce him for appropriate behavior.

The leash can be hooked to waist belts that are designed for that purpose, or clipped to your belt or belt-loop with a carabineer. Your WCCS dog can't zoom around the house if he's glued to your side.

If inappropriate mouthing behavior is included in his high-energy repertoire, however, this may not be the best choice. Tethers are better for keeping this dog in view, with easy access for reinforcement of calm behavior, while keeping his teeth from your clothing or skin. Appropriate situations for the use of leashes and tethers include:

- For dogs who get into trouble when they are unsupervised.
- **Leashed** when your activities don't preclude having a dog connected to you – okay for working on the computer; not okay for working out.
- **Tethered** when you want to keep your dog near but not directly connected to you, to teach good manners and/or prevent inappropriate behaviors.

Baby Gates and Doors. Baby gates and doors prevent your dog's access to vulnerable areas when he's in wild child mode. A baby gate across the nursery door keeps him safely on the other side while you're changing diapers, but still lets him be part of the "baby experience." Not to worry if the older kids left their stuffed toys strewn across the bedroom floor; just close the bedroom door when your dog is in a "grab toy and run" mood. The most appropriate uses of baby gates and doors include:

- To prevent your dog's temporary access to areas during activities you don't want him to participate in.
- To prevent your dog's access to areas when you can't supervise closely enough, to prevent inappropriate behaviors such as counter surfing or getting on forbidden furniture.

Everyday Training – Putting It all Together

Everything we've covered so far tackles how to help your dog become calmer in order to be primed and ready to focus on learning new behaviors, and how to use management to prevent your dog from practicing unwanted behaviors. Now you're ready to incorporate some training.

Here is an illustration of how to put all of these elements together in real life. We'll use the example of solving your dog's overexcited behavior at the door – a common issue with wild child dogs! What follows is trainer Pat Miller's three-step process that provides a simple framework to help you modify your dog's inappropriate door-related behaviors:

Step #1: Visualize/articulate the behavior you do want

Old-fashioned training focuses on physically and/or verbally punishing the dog for unwanted behaviors in an attempt to suppress them. While this method can be successful, it carries with it a lot of baggage, including the potential for teaching your dog to fear you, to avoid offering behaviors in training sessions, and to become aggressive in response to the punishment. Obviously, we don't recommend it.

Modern, positive-reinforcement-based training focuses on the behaviors you want your dog to do. In order to successfully modify an unwanted behavior, you need to start by identifying the desirable behavior(s) you would like your dog to do, instead.

Step #2: Manage the environment to prevent your dog from being reinforced for the behavior you don't want.

Management is critical for successful behavior change. Every time your dog is reinforced in some way for an undesirable behavior, it increases the

likelihood that he'll repeat that behavior, and it will be harder to make that behavior go away. (Keep in mind that a "reinforcement" for your dog is not just a tasty treat or word of praise; if anything that your dog enjoys happens as a result of his behavior, – or anything he doesn't like goes away – it's a reinforcement. So, if he manages to dart out the door when you open it for someone, and he then gets to run around, or pee, or bark at the UPS truck, he will have been "reinforced" for the door-darting behavior.)

By implementing a well-thought-out management program, you will prevent reinforcement for the unwanted behavior while you install a new behavior in its place. Note that it's not enough that you don't reinforce the behavior. You also have to prevent the rest of the world from reinforcing the behavior if you want to change it.

Instead of fixating on what you *don't* want, start the "improving door behaviors" project (and *all* problem-behavior-solving projects) by visualizing what behavior you do want your dog to exhibit in a given, specific situation.

Step #3: Generously reinforce the behavior you do want.
This is where you replace the unwanted behavior with the desired behavior you identified in Step #1. Figure out how to create an environment in which your dog is able to offer the behavior you want so that you have ample opportunity to reward him for it. Behaviors that are consistently reinforced increase, while those that are not reinforced extinguish.

In time, along with the good management you've implemented in Step #2, your dog will choose to offer the desired behavior instead of the unwanted one.

Now let's apply the three-step process to an inappropriate door-related behavior:

Excited Greeting of Arriving Humans

Step #1: Visualize/articulate the behavior you do want. Here are some possibilities:

- I would like my dog to greet me, other family members, and any visitors at the door (and anywhere else!) by sitting politely in front of them.
- I would like my dog to go lie down on his bed (or go get in his crate) when visitors come to the door.
- I would like my dog to sit for a toy that the visitor holds up and then fetch it when the visitor tosses it.

Step #2: Prevent your dog from being reinforced for the behavior you don't want. So, consider the following:

- Use tethers, leashes, crates, baby gates, etc. to restrain your dog and prevent him from happily jumping on people to greet them.
- Instruct family members and visitors to turn away and step away if your dog tries to jump on them.
- Put a note on your front door asking visitors to wait a moment while you put your dog away before answering the door.

Step #3: Generously reinforce the behavior you do want. So, in this case, you could try:

- **Teach your dog to "Sit politely for greetings."** This is a good-manners behavior best taught to young puppies so they don't have a strong reinforcement history for jumping up, but it's never too late to begin.

Baby gates, exercise pens, and tethers are simple and valuable management tools. Use them to prevent your dog from being reinforced for practicing an unwanted behavior during the period of time when you are working to promote his new, better behavior.

You can practice polite greetings with your dog on a tether or leash. Step toward him when he's restrained, and if he starts to jump up, step back. Pet or feed him a treat only if he stays in a polite sit. Don't ask him to sit; you want him to figure it out himself – otherwise he will sit only when someone asks him to.

If you consistently reward your dog for sitting anywhere and everywhere, sit will become his "default" behavior – he'll sit whenever he's not sure what else to do. That's a good thing!

If company is coming, tether your dog a safe distance from the door so you can greet your guests without worrying about him, and hand them each several treats. Tell them to walk over to greet your dog one at a time, and to pet or feed him only if he remains sitting.

When the initial excitement of the visitors' arrival subsides, you can remove him from his tether. If necessary, keep him on leash for a bit so he can walk around to greet your guests but you can restrain him if you see him gathering himself to jump up.

When he is settled enough, take him off leash and let him interact freely. Remember to remind your guests to turn their backs if he jumps up!

- **Teach your dog to "Lie down on your bed (or go in your crate) when visitors are at the door."** You can teach your dog that the sound of the doorbell, or a knock at the door, is his cue to go lie down on his bed, or run and jump into his crate. Once there you can tether him at his bed or close the crate door, if necessary, to prevent him from running to greet your guests.

Use the "Go to Your Spot" exercise mentioned earlier, only now, you can add a new cue – the knock and/or sound of the doorbell.

To install the new cue, start with your dog just a few feet from his crate or bed. Make a knocking sound or ring the bell and then give your dog the verbal cue to go to his bed/crate. If he seems confused, go ahead and prompt/lure as needed, until he's no longer distracted by the knock or bell and begins to realize that it means the same thing as your verbal cue. When he will go to his designated spot consistently from just a few feet away at the sound of the knock or bell, gradually increase distance until he will run there from anywhere in the house at the sound.

Now do setups with people actually coming to the door. Be prepared to follow the knock or doorbell with your verbal cue until he can get past his excitement over someone being at the door and respond promptly and consistently to the cue. Continue to practice with setups until he will run to his spot upon hearing the knock or bell, even with the exciting stimulus of a stranger at the door.

- **Teach your dog to "Sit for and fetch a toy."** This one is our favorite because it's fun for dog and guests alike. Keep a basket of toys outside your front door, with clear and simple instructions for your visitor to:

1. Take a toy out of the basket before you enter.
2. Hold the toy at your chest and wait for your dog to sit.
3. When he sits, toss the toy 10-15 feet into the house.
4. If he brings it back and drops it or hands it to you, you can wait for him to sit and toss it again, if you want.

Of course, you will have practiced this with your dog ahead of time so you are confident that he knows how to play the game. You may also have to eventually put the toy up so he will stop pestering your guest to throw it again. Unless, of course, your guests are enjoying the game as much as your dog, in which case you can just sit back and let them exercise him for you!

Excessive Arousal in Anticipation of Anouting

Okay, let's apply the three-step process to another door-related behavior commonly displayed by high-energy dogs. This time, we'll be brief, in order to streamline the logic of the three steps.

Let's say your dog gets highly aroused, leaping into the air and bouncing off of you or the door, when you pick up the leash to take him out for a walk. Here's what you do:

Step #1: Visualize/Articulate the behavior you do want: "I would like my dog to sit calmly and wait for me to attach the leash."

Step #2: Prevent reinforcement for the behavior you *don't* want: As soon as your dog starts acting silly, say, "Oops!" in a cheerful tone of voice and set the leash down. If necessary, turn your back or go sit down until he is calm. Then start the process again. Not only are you preventing reinforcement, you are also telling him that his wild behavior makes the opportunity for a walk go away.

Step #3: Generously reinforce the behavior you *do* want: When he stays calmly seated for you to attach the leash, reinforce the behavior by opening the door and taking him for that highly anticipated walk. You don't even need treats to reinforce him for this one – although, of course, you always can reinforce with treats as well.

Your Tun

Now it's your turn. If your hyper dog has any other undesirable door-related behaviors, take the "three-step process for changing a behavior you don't like" and give it a go.

But, heck, why limit it to door-related behaviors? You can try it out with any unwanted behaviors your wild child dog exhibits. Try to commit the "three-step process for changing a behavior" to memory so you have it at your fingertips when you need it. Make a list of your dog's unwanted behaviors in order of importance. Select one or two behaviors from your list and start applying the "three-step process." You will be amazed at how quickly those troublesome behaviors can just fly out the door, never to return!

Some Final Tips:

Here's a short recap illustrating what we think are the crucial elements involved in calming your high-energy dog:

• **Increase his exercise.** Whatever he gets now, give him more, and make it quality exercise. Tossing him out in the backyard is not quality exercise. Go out with him. Throw sticks, balls, play tug of war, get him to swim in the pond, take him to the dog park. And add structure to his exercise. Have him sit politely for you to throw the ball. Make sure he will "Give" you the tug toy when you ask him to. Have him sit before you open the gate into the park.

• **Increase his socialization time.** If you've been leaving him outside because he's too wild, grit your teeth and bring him in. Dogs don't learn to be calm by being banished to the backyard. Dogs are social creatures, and time spent in isolation causes stress, which frequently causes hyperactivity. Dogs learn to be calm by spending time with people and being rewarded for their calm behavior. Rewards can be attention, praise, petting, and yes, Clicks! and treats. Use leashes, tethers, crates, and baby gates as needed to preserve your sanity while integrating him into the family.

• **Increase his training time.** If you've already taken him to a basic training class, sign up for a Level 2. Or a tricks class, or agility – anything that will keep the two of you active and learning together. Keeping his brain occupied and busy is just as important as occupying his body.

If, after reading and doing all this you still think your dog suffers from clinical hyperactivity or ADHD, then it's time to visit a qualified behavior professional for help. More likely, though, increas-

ing his exercise and training time and combining that with some solid management will make for a well-behaved dog and a happy owner! You never know, with patience, in the right positive environment, your "hyper" pal may turn out to be a great agility, herding, tracking, or drug-sniffing dog!

The content of this ebook is based on articles by trainers Mardi Richmond, MA, CPDT-KA and Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA originally published in the Whole Dog Journal.

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