



# THE HAPPY HEELER

FEBRUARY 2021



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Membership:  
Nancy Asbury  
6826 Century St  
La Mesa, CA. 91942  
619 890-6826

Newsletter Editor:  
Barbara Scott  
441 Las Flores Terrace  
San Diego, CA. 92114

E-mail: [BarbaraScottOCSDC@aol.com](mailto:BarbaraScottOCSDC@aol.com)  
WEB SITE: [sandiegoobedienceclub.org](http://sandiegoobedienceclub.org)

*TRAINING DIRECTOR*  
Nancy Asbury - [nasbury@cox.net](mailto:nasbury@cox.net)

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Shameless Brag: CT Dragontails Black Irish Moon VCD1 BN RE PT FDC MXP MJP MFP T2BP SWE SCM SHDN RATN CGCA CGCU TKE ATT TDCH MVCX INT'L CH — AKA Oliver- earned his Trick Dog Elite performer title Dec. 20. It involves a story line including at least 5 performer level tricks and at least 5 tricks using props. He performed "Oliver goes to the Carnival" in front of an audience at Mission Bay Dec. 20. Tricks included Mexican Hat Dance, Ring Toss, Shell Game, Bowling, Shoot a Hoop, Ball-in-a-Cup, Trash in a Step Can and Dog in a Box. Thank you Debbie Vachal for evaluating. Cheers, Kay Hawthorne & Oliver.



From John Schwartz



Basset Hound, “Vinnie,” “GCH CH Legend’s Blazing Saddles of Wild West, BN, RM, RAE, TDX, CGCA, CGCU, TKA, ATT”, has passed back-to-back tracks! Vinnie earned the Tracking Dog Excellent Title (TDX) at the test held by Golden Retriever Club of San Diego County on January 13, 2021. Passing this test with Kay Hawthorne judging and with Alyson Deines-Schartz laying our track, made this day so incredibly perfect — thank you both for being part of this special day! Lastly, with his new title, Vinnie also met the eligibility requirements for the Versatility Certificate Excellent (VCX) from the Basset Hound Club of America!



From Aly Deines

Spica and I passed our very first tracking test on January 13th, held by the Golden retriever club. It was super dry, the field was barren, and the coyotes had had a party there the night before. But Spica found the glove! Extra thanks to Kay who got me into and taught me this sport and to John who's always willing to get up super early and stomp around in wet grass with me!

## How to Stop Your Dog From Jumping Up on People

Jumping up on people is a natural canine behavior. Dogs get to say hello face to face when they jump and even better, it's guaranteed to get attention. However, from a human point of view, jumping to greet is annoying and dangerous. Dressy clothes can get soiled by muddy paws and people can be knocked over, especially seniors and children. It's more polite and far safer to teach your dog to greet people appropriately.

### **Why Dogs Greet by Jumping**

Dogs repeat behaviors that earn them rewards. And few things are more rewarding to your pet than your attention. Similarly, other family members, visitors, and strangers can all reinforce the behavior too. Even negative reactions like yelling at your dog or grabbing their paws are still attention and can reinforce the behavior. For many dogs, pushing them away is simply part of a wrestling game.

To eliminate jumping from your dog's greeting repertoire, you need to eliminate the associated rewards. That means managing your dog so they don't get the chance to practice jumping while you teach them an alternative and more appropriate way to greet people.

### **How to Train an Alternative Greeting Behavior**

If you ignore your dog when they jump, theoretically their jumping behavior should eventually stop. After all, it's no longer being rewarded. However, every person you encounter in your home or on the street isn't going to know those rules. And even worse, that's incredibly frustrating for your dog. They need to be taught what to do instead.

How you want your dog to greet people is up to you. You might simply want all four paws on the floor, or you might want your dog to sit or lie down. But remember, you need to tell them what TO do, not just what NOT to do. For example, sit for greetings is an easier rule than don't jump.

### **How to Train Four on the Floor**

You can teach your dog to keep all four paws on the floor when they greet people by placing treats on the floor during greetings. The idea is to prevent your dog from jumping by rewarding them before they can even think about leaving the ground. The following steps will teach four on the floor:

With your dog on leash, have somebody approach your dog.

Before the person gets to your dog, toss several treats on the floor.

While your dog is eating off the floor, have the person pet and greet them.

Before your dog is finished eating, have the person back away again.

After several repetitions, repeat the steps above but this time extend the greeting, continuing to toss treats on the floor the entire time.

Once your dog can keep all four feet on the ground, let them greet the person before you place the first treat on the ground.

As your dog begins to understand the rules, you can feed fewer and fewer treats until the greeting is the only reward.

The trick to this technique is being fast with the treats. You need to anticipate your dog's jumping behavior and provide the goodies before it can occur. If you're too late and the dog jumps, have the person turn and walk away as you stop feeding the dog. In time, your dog will come to realize that four on the floor brings attention and treats while jumping brings nothing.

### **How to Train Sit for Greetings**

Another appropriate greeting behavior is sitting for pets and hellos. Like the training method above, your dog will learn that when their bum is on the floor, attention comes their way, but when they get up, it all stops. The following steps will teach sit for greetings:

Tether your dog to a doorknob or piece of furniture.

From several feet away, ask your dog to sit. When they do, calmly approach. If they stand up, turn and walk back to your starting point and ask for the sit again. If they stay sitting, go up to them and quietly praise and pet them. If they stand up, turn and walk away.

As your dog begins to understand they need to sit to get your greeting, you can make your approaches more and more exciting.

Once your dog has mastered sit for greetings with you, go back to step one using friends and family members.

Remember, the more your dog practices sit, the easier this exercise will be for them. There's no point in teaching sit for greetings if your dog is still struggling to sit without distractions. Sit should be your dog's way of saying please. Having them sit before going outside, getting their dinner, and so on makes sit for greetings easier to train.

### **How to Prevent Jumping While You Train**

While you're teaching your dog an appropriate greeting behavior, you need to manage their behavior so they don't get the chance to practice jumping. For example, if your dog has a strong "Go to Your Place" cue, you can send your dog to their mat or crate anytime the doorbell rings. Alternatively, you can place a baby gate at your entranceway so your dog can't get to visitors. Putting your dog on leash whenever guests arrive can also help you prevent jumping.

Another management trick is keeping toys and treats at the front door. You can throw the reward away from the doorway to occupy your dog's time while your visitor enters. Or your guest can use the treat or toy to reward your dog for greeting appropriately.

It can be particularly hard to prevent jumping when you're walking your dog. You can't expect strangers to know or abide by your rules. Until your dog understands appropriate greetings with friends and family, avoid greeting strangers. Instead, get your dog's attention with a "Watch Me" cue or by squeaking a toy and let the stranger walk past. When your dog is ready to try greeting people on the street, be sure to tell people the procedure. Ask them to ignore your dog if your dog doesn't follow the rules. In no time, your dog will understand how to say hello politely whether at your front door or out on the sidewalk.

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## **Dog Constipation: Causes, Diagnosis & Treatment**

**By Mara Bovsun**

Constipation refers to an inability to produce normal stools on a regular schedule, which, for a dog, is generally once or twice per day. Dogs who are suffering from constipation will not "go" at all, strain to defecate, or produce rock-hard stools.

In chronic cases, dogs may retain hard, dry fecal matter in their digestive tracts. This is known as obstipation, in which there is so much fecal matter that it becomes compacted and the dog cannot defecate at all.

### **What Are the Signs of Dog Constipation?**

The signs of constipation are pretty obvious, including:

Lack of defecation for a few days;

Hard, dry stools that feel like pebbles when you pick them up.

Two other signs of discomfort are associated with constipation, including:

Tenesmus, which includes straining to defecate with little or no result, or producing small amounts of liquid fecal matter mixed with blood;

Dyschezia, which is painful or difficult defecation.

### **What Causes Constipation?**

Under normal circumstances, fecal matter travels through the digestive tract, reaching the colon where water and electrolytes are absorbed from the mass. Water reabsorption is the colon's main function.

Fecal material in the colon is moved through a process known as "peristaltic waves." If this process becomes impaired or slowed, the fecal mass will stall in the colon and continue to lose moisture, becoming hard, dry, and, ultimately, impossible to pass.

Scientists have long used a term usually associated with geology—"concretion"—to describe stool that is as hard as a rock.

### **Most Common Causes**

Veterinary textbooks list scores of underlying causes, some as benign as lack of exercise, others much more serious problems, like cancer. Veterinarians categorize these causes, based upon where the problem occurs along the digestive tract. They use the words:

Interluminal (referring to blockages inside the colon)

Extraluminal (obstructions originating outside the colon, such as tumors or pelvic fractures)

Intrinsic (diseases and nerve injuries)

Some of the most common reasons dogs become constipated include:

**Diet**—As in humans, a diet lacking in fiber is often the problem. Also, unlike humans, dogs tend to eat things that are not food—like hair, toys, and kitty litter—and these may cause blockages and abnormal fecal transit. Bones, bone meal, and other sources of dietary calcium can contribute to constipation.

**Age**—Elderly dogs seem more prone to constipation.

**Activity level**—For reasons unknown, being sedentary often results in slower transit.

**Digestive tract tumors**

Tumors that narrow the pelvic region

Anal gland issues

Prostate enlargement

Dehydration or electrolyte imbalances

Drugs, including opiates, diuretics, antihistamines, some antacids, certain cancer drugs

Metabolic diseases, like hypothyroidism and renal (kidney) issues

Spinal diseases and injuries

Central nervous system disorders

**Stress and psychological problems**—Something in the environment that will lead a dog to hold it.

**Orthopedic disorders** that make it difficult for the dog to squat.

**Surgery**—Medical procedures, and the drugs administered during these procedures, may result in constipation. Call your vet for advice if you observe this in the post-surgical period.

### **What To Do If Your Dog Is Constipated**

If the problem has just started—no more than a day or two—a few home remedies might get things moving again. Call your veterinarian before adding any supplements and keep in mind that no one strategy works for all dogs. But some of the old-standbys for treating constipation include:

**Pumpkin**—Weirdly, this dietary fix works in some dogs for either constipation or diarrhea. It is high in both fiber and moisture, and many dogs like the taste, so they'll happily take this medicine. There are several recipes for tasty pumpkin treats that dogs love, although for regulating the digestive tract it's probably best to give it straight.

**Canned dog food**—Elevated moisture content of canned food may help regulate the system.

#### **Powdered fiber supplements**

**Food and herbs**, such as ginger, wheat bran, powdered psyllium seeds, and olive oil, may help. A 2011 study, exploring treatments for constipation in humans, showed that fig paste was effective for treatment of constipation in their research colony of Beagles. Foods that help humans with the problem are likely fine for dogs, but it always is prudent to check with your vet.

**Hydration** —Make sure your dog has access to fresh water and maybe electrolyte supplements.

#### **Exercise**

### **When To Take a Constipated Dog to the Vet**

It's a good idea to call the vet as soon as you become aware of the problem. Constipation can be a sign of some very serious diseases.

Long-term or chronic constipation may lead to a buildup of dried fecal matter that gets stuck in the colon, known as obstipation. This may contribute to another condition marked by an inability to defecate normally —megacolon. The colon becomes distended and loses its ability to move feces along. Chronic constipation is both a contributor and a sign of this disorder.

When you visit the vet, make sure you come armed with as much information as possible, including:

The last time your dog had a normal bowel movement

Stool color and consistency

Changes in the dog's diet or routine

Non-food items the dog may have eaten (this can include anything from bones to kitty litter)

Straining or pain while trying to go

Drug treatments

Injuries

Other signs of distress or discomfort, especially vomiting, lethargy, or a bloated appearance.

Depending upon the duration and severity of the symptoms, the veterinary exam may consist of:

Abdominal palpation

Rectal exam

Radiographs of the abdominal area

Barium enema

Ultrasound or colonoscopy

Complete Blood Count

Urinalysis

Neurological exam

Veterinary Treatment and prevention

Most cases will resolve with mild treatments, such as boosting liquids and dietary fiber or getting more exercise. Laxative suppositories and enemas may be helpful, but should only be used with guidance from a veterinarian, especially if they are needed for long periods.

More extreme cases will require such medical interventions as:

Manual removal of impacted feces

Drug to activate normal colon function or to block the production of certain enzymes.

Surgery may be needed in very rare, extreme cases, usually for megacolon. One surgical procedure is known as a colectomy, in which sections of the colon are removed.

For most dogs, constipation will be an infrequent problem, kept under control through a well-balanced diet, access to fresh water, and regular exercise.

The Regional Stay at Home Order has been lifted and the Zoo is opening again on Saturday! That means we are back as well! We are officially starting classes next Thursday, February 4th.

We have several classes of beginning obedience and rally starting up.

Additionally, we have the following drop in classes starting as well:

Conformation drop-in: Starts February 4th, 7-8:00 pm.

Obedience drop-in: Starts February 4th & Feb 18th, 7-8:00 pm (only offered on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays until further notice)

Rally drop-in: Starts February 4th, 7-8:00 pm.

Scent Work drop-in: Starts in March (only offered on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays,  
\*new time(6:30-7:30 pm)

Please check our private Facebook group for more information on the drop in classes:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/501686653582241>

For those of you who earned plaques last year, Betty will have your plaques at the Zoo on Thursday, February 4th, so come by and pick them up!

**Check the website and watch for email announcements**

**The premium list for our Rally Trial on  
Saturday, February 27, 2021 is available on the website.**