

THE PetPatrol POST



A LIFESTYLE GUIDE FOR THE PET LOVING OWNER ©

GOAL SETTING...

Goal Setting... "Involves the development of an action plan designed to motivate and guide a person or group towards a goal."

I prefer goal setting to New Year's resolutions as I'm far less likely to fail! To assist me, I am guided by the SMART criteria. SMART is an acronym for the 5 elements of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based goals.

To make myself accountable, I'll be giving you a sneaky peak over the coming months into what I've got planned for 2020.

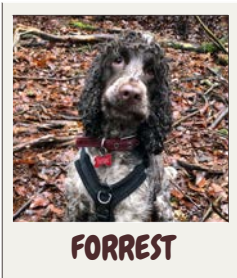
Goal #1 - Complimentary Health & Fitness coffee morning in partnership with Portland Vets.

Goal #2 - The launch of a **NEW** service, **ASHDOWN UNLEASHED**. This is a fun and friendly social walking group - please see **Page 5** for details!

I look forward to meeting you and your dog(s) on a walk soon.

Yours warmly, Zita x

"Forrest loves her days with Pet Patrol 365 and I have complete peace of mind knowing exactly what she's doing"...



"I've worked in the corporate world for over 30 years and I can honestly say I've never met anyone as professional as Zita. Pet Patrol 365 offers me the ultimate solution in terms of exercise, care and stimulation 3 days a week allowing me the opportunity to focus on my business. Forrest loves her time with Pet Patrol 365 and I have complete peace of mind knowing exactly what she's doing. I love the photos and videos that Zita sends to me about their adventures together. I would not hesitate to recommend Pet Patrol 365."

Julia Caldwell, East Grinstead

WELCOME











Welcome to your Spring edition of The Pet Patrol Post, where you can find out about all the latest and greatest things happening in the world of Pet Patrol 365 before anyone else!

This edition focusses on health and fitness for both owners and their pets and is jam-packed with informative and actionable advice.

So kick back and relax, we've got the accompaniment to your morning coffee right here!

**3 WORDS TO DESCRIBE ME...
SOCIABLE, COMMITTED, ENTHUSIASTIC!**

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ASK THE EXPERTS

EMMA TARRANT, VETERINARY SURGEON

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WHAT CAN YOU DO TO KEEP YOUR PETS AS HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE?

Diet

Giving your pet a 'complete' diet for their life stage will help provide all the nutrition needed for optimum health. Commercial diets for kittens and puppies are designed to support a healthy growth rate to ensure correct bone growth and develop a strong immune system. This is particularly important in large breeds of dog that are more prone to joint issues. We recommend puppies and kittens being on this diet until they are 1 year old, then they can be gradually transitioned to an adult diet. Likewise in senior patients (over 7 years old depending on breed), a senior diet is designed to provide them with the nutrition to decrease the signs of ageing.



Senior diets tend to have higher levels of omega fatty acids to support joints, and have higher levels of DHA designed to support brain function. The right diet is equally important in small furrries and more exotic pets. For rabbits, about 85-90% of their diet should be good quality hay, supplemented with dark leafy greens and rabbit nuggets (not muesli, which encourages picky eating).

Weight Management

Keeping your pet at their optimum body condition score is a key way to reduce the risk of a number of diseases. In dogs and cats you should be able to just feel their ribs, with only gentle pressure, and they should have a 'waist'. If you are unsure about whether your pet is the correct weight and condition, most veterinary practices will offer free of charge weight checks and body condition scoring. There is a long list of diseases that are more likely, made worse, or even caused by being overweight. These include arthritis (extra weight on the joints), diabetes, feline lower urinary tract disease and heart disease. Did you know that in some cases, diabetes in cats can be cured just with weight loss? Being overweight can also reduce your pets' quality of life, making dogs less able to enjoy their walks, and cats less able to get where they want to be, whether that's outside hunting, or perched on the windowsill watching the world go by. In cats, being overweight can also reduce their ability to groom themselves, leading to matted fur. If you are struggling to get the weight off your pet, contact your local veterinary practice where they can discuss exercise and diet and create a weight loss plan for your pet.

Supplements

There are a number of veterinary supplements that can help your pet, if given alongside a complete and balanced diet. This can include joint supplements for pets prone to joint disease, calming supplements for pets that are more anxious, probiotics for pets with sensitive tummies and many more. Please do ask your local veterinary practice about how these could benefit your pet. Often they come in handy sprinkle capsules, making them easier to give than tablets.

Parasite Prevention

Using regular veterinary parasite prevention can not only prevent itching and scratching but also life threatening conditions. Fleas and mites can cause scratching and over-grooming, and even anaemia in small pets. The itchiness can be extremely frustrating! Ticks can cause nasty local reactions and they also carry diseases, such as Lyme disease, which both people and animals can contract. Intestinal worms can deprive your pet of the nutrients it needs, causing diarrhoea and weight loss. And finally, lungworm can cause coughing and heart disease, as well as clotting issues, making routine surgeries potentially life threatening.

Dental Care

Ever wondered why your pet's breath smells so bad? Part of the reason could be dental plaque, which is essentially an accumulation of bacteria on the teeth. Have a look at your pets' teeth - if you can see brown-ish yellow deposits on the teeth, they have dental plaque. The bacteria cause gum inflammation, which can eventually lead to wobbly painful teeth and might stop your pet wanting to eat. The good news is that there are some things you can do to try to reduce the plaque build-up, the most useful of which is tooth brushing, as we do for our own pearly whites! Use a special cat/dog tooth paste and a tooth brush and gradually try to get your pet used to the idea - this tends to work best if started when your pet is a few months old, when they are most likely to accept it and even perhaps enjoy it! However, in cats this is often easier said than done, so other options include dental diets and things you can add to the food - please ask your veterinary practitioner for ideas.

Socialisation and Mental Health

As with people, mental health is just as important as physical health! Socialising your new puppy will set them up to be able to thrive in all sorts of environments when they are older. This can be said for cats as well, for example regular kitten socialisation visits to the vet can make them much calmer when they may need to go to the vet later in life. If you are concerned about your pet at all, please visit your vet - they may suggest referral to a member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors, who are qualified and experienced pet behaviourists who can work with you to help your pet.

ASK THE EXPERTS

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ARE YOU KILLING YOUR PET WITH KINDNESS?

Pets love the security of routine and consistency and this applies not only to their diet but also their daily exercise and leadership from you. We all love our pets and want to do the best for them, but sometimes in our efforts to show how much we love them, we may actually be inadvertently harming them. From over-feeding them or feeding them the wrong type of food to not giving them enough exercise, we could cause serious health problems for our beloved furry friends. Vets confirm that 51% of dogs and 44% of cats in the UK are now estimated to be overweight or obese and it is a problem that needs addressing. Unfortunately, weight gain is frequently overlooked, since it usually occurs gradually. The old adage that we are "killing with kindness" is often all too true.



Reasons for Pet Obesity:

- Excess dietary energy
- Inappropriate diet
- Inappropriate tit bits & treats
- Bad behaviour (begging, stealing)
- Inadequate exercise
- Breed susceptibility
- Neutering
- Underlying disease (very rare)

Pet Obesity Risks:

- Surgery
- Susceptible to injury
- Stress on the heart, lungs, liver, kidney's & joints
- Cardiac, digestive & circulatory problems
- Exercise & heat intolerance
- Diabetes
- Arthritis
- Fatigue

Is Your Pet Overweight?

Despite your feelings, you must try to resist giving in every time your pet demands food or attention from you. Statistics show that pets are facing an obesity crisis, with Britain's dogs and cats among the fattest and laziest in Europe as owners regularly 'lavish' them with highly calorific 'treats' and then fail to provide them with enough exercise. Remember, it is never too late to change, and you can start now with a few simple steps. Next time you want to show how much you love your pet, think about what THEY really need, as opposed to what would make YOU feel happy.

ROAD TO FITNESS ACTION PLAN

ADVICE

Work closely with your vet. Be honest about feeding habits.

POSITIVITY

Think positively! Weight loss requires common sense and commitment.

TARGETS

Set realistic targets. Weight loss should be gradual and healthy... but continuous!

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Employ the services of a professional dog walker/pet sitter to provide a challenging and fun fitness program for your pet.

DIARIES

Keep detailed food and exercise diaries.

FAMILY

Get the family involved. Educate them not to undo all your good work.

LIFESTYLE

Implement lifestyle changes gradually. Over-exercising can lead to injuries.

REGIME

Stick to your regime! Don't feel cruel by changing dietary habits, your pet's health is at stake.

RECONDITIONING

Recondition yourself! Feeding inappropriate treats to an overweight pet is not kind and will shorten their lifespan!

ASK THE EXPERTS

DR ANNA GARVEY MRCVS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH PORTLAND VETS

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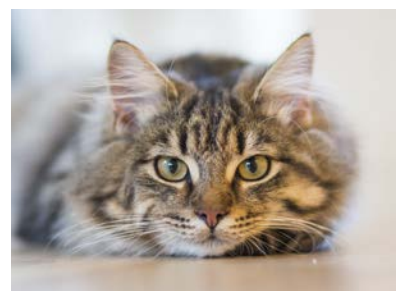


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UNDERSTANDING CATS

Understanding cats is no mean feat. The truth is we as owners have to work a bit harder to really speak 'cat', and this doesn't come naturally. Cat behaviour is so different to dogs because of their domestication, evolution and lifestyle.

Dogs and humans are obligate social mammals - essentially meaning that we require interaction with other living creatures. It is necessary to our survival and mental health, hence use of the word 'obligate'. Cats, on the other hand, are defined as solitary hunters. This makes a huge difference to why they behave the way they do and how their behaviour looks to us mere mortals trying to understand them.



It boils down to this: some cats like interaction or socialising, but none need this to survive. This is in stark contrast to dogs. Dogs have a very pressing need to ensure their behaviour is easily readable by other dogs. It will increase their chance of survival if they can indicate to a dog that they want to be friends, or that they're in pain, as dogs build social relationships in this way. They function better under these circumstances and avoid injuries through fighting. Dogs are also known to display altruism.

So how does this compare to cats?

Because our feline friends' function as solitary mammals, they have only themselves to rely on. The only guarantee of getting food for a cat is being well enough to hunt, so they must avoid conflict; it's too big a risk. If they get injured in a poorly judged fight, they may not be able to hunt and will not eat. Their odds of survival go way down in this circumstance, which is why, given the chance, a cat will run away or avoid conflict. All of this can explain why the status of cat friendships can go unnoticed if caregivers look only for actual conflict as a signal - fighting is a last resort. Before this stage can come many hours of staring at each other or other signs of disharmony may be displayed. This lack of social obligation also has another important implication - it is of little benefit to communicate to anyone that they're injured or in pain, as it's not likely another cat can or will help them. This is what makes cats so difficult to understand, as their body language is often silent or subtle. Who have they got to tell? And what good will it do other than advertising a weakness?

So, where does this leave us?

Ultimately, when we have a cat, we consider naughty or quick to anger, it is worth remembering that they may have been giving us signals all along that we have missed - such as a flick of the tail, ear inflection or facing away. They're trying their best to communicate, but we truly are speaking two different languages.



Here are some practical tips for interpreting cat behaviour:

1. A purr is not always positive - purring is a self-soothing action. It is heard mostly when cats are happy, but also sometimes when they are frightened or unwell. You have to interpret the rest of their body language to distinguish between these events - if they have a nice relaxed face and body, they are very likely to be a happy, cosy cat.
2. If you wait for a cat to show you outright pain, you'll be waiting a long time. You should instead look for subtle changes in their behaviour, such as not eating, eating differently; or a change in routine, unwillingness to jump to a favourite spot etc.
3. Just because you don't see fisticuffs, doesn't mean they're friends! Cats can live under a lot of tension with another cat they don't get on with in their house, even if you don't see much evidence of it. Cats who are friends' practice allogrooming (cleaning each other), may lie in contact with or rub up against the other. Cats who are not friends may leave the room or area when another cat enters, block the other from moving through doorways or up and down stairs and have staring contests.
4. A good way of showing a cat you are not a threat is by slowly blinking at them and avoiding prolonged eye contact. This is a good example of communicating using their language, as is not being loud or making sudden movements.

If you have any concerns about your cat's behaviour or interactions with another cat, then you can always speak to your local veterinary practitioner or behaviourist. And remember, your cat is almost certainly doing the best they can to talk to you. It's up to us to listen and learn.

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#WeSupportAshdownForest
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ASHDOWN UNLEASHED (Healthy, Happy Pets Social Walk)

WHAT WE'RE ABOUT

A fun and friendly social walking group. We aim to be inclusive, so welcome pet owners or individuals who don't currently own a pet but are considering it and who would benefit from mixing with like-minded individuals.

WHY WALK?

All walks take place on Ashdown Forest and will include a variety of woodland and open heathland. Taking a different route each month, it's a wonderful chance to socialise with the emphasis on both pet and owner getting fit and keeping fit, explore the forest, find out about the flora and fauna, see conservation work being carried out and discuss pet related issues.

WALKING BENEFITS

Walking can improve fitness and increase well-being. Walking is recognised for promoting better mental health, including self-perception, self-esteem, mood and sleep quality, and it reduces stress, anxiety and fatigue.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS WALKING GROUP?

- Expert problem-solving advice from pet professionals
- Learn to transform an everyday dog walk into a stimulating experience
- Develop games and practical solutions to help keep your dog focussed
- Improve your dog's recall with voice, hand and whistle techniques
- Master loose lead walking
- One to one discussions on pet related issues

COST

£7.50 per person, per walk. £2.50 of the fee will be donated to The Ashdown Forest Foundation.

WALKING WITH US FOR THE FIRST TIME?

If you are walking with us for the first time, please request an application form and email it to zita@petpatrol365.co.uk prior to joining the walk.

- Please make sure you wear suitable shoes (walking boots or comfortable wellingtons) and dress for the weather conditions on the day (waterproof and layers in case you get warm/cold).
- Walks will last no longer than 60 to 90 minutes but you may want to bring a small bottle of water or a flask. Please note there are no facilities at the meeting points.
- Unfortunately, these walks are not suitable for puppies under the age of 8 months due to the length of the walk and the terrain covered. If you have a puppy and would like to attend a shorter walk then please email zita@petpatrol365.co.uk where you can book an individual session.

WHERE DO WE WALK?

The walks take place on Ashdown Forest. The routes are generally easy although sometimes hilly, uneven terrain and mud cannot always be avoided.

The meeting point for each walk will be posted on the website and/or Facebook group.

I look forward to meeting you and your dog(s) on a walk soon.

Yours warmly, Zita x



ASK THE EXPERTS

ISABELLA (ISSY) KENDRICK, VETERINARY NURSE

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TOP TIPS TO OPTIMISE JOINT HEALTH

Osteoarthritis is unfortunately a common disease in dogs and cats, with up to 20% of dogs over the age of 1 year and 90% of cats over 12 years showing signs of arthritis. Arthritis can be incredibly painful and isn't always obvious as some pets may hide it well.



Signs of Pain/Arthritis in Cats:

- Decreased ability to jump up or down
- Slowness/stiffness getting up
- Crying or moving away from stroking
- Decreased grooming (greasy/flaky coat)
- Toileting outside the litter tray
- Overgrown nails
- Sleeping more



Signs of Pain/Arthritis in Dogs:

- Slowness/stiffness getting up
- Lagging behind on walks
- Reluctant to walk/play
- Sleeping more
- Lameness/limping
- Overgrown nails
- Licking affected joints



Signs of Pain/Arthritis in Rabbits:

- Decreased ability to jump high
- Decreased movement in general
- Decreased grooming (may develop a dirty bottom - will need checking daily, especially older bunnies)
- Overgrown nails
- Decreased appetite

There are some changes we can make to our pet's lifestyle to manage arthritis and to try and prevent it in our younger animals.

Weight Management

Carrying excess weight will put extra strain on joints. By keeping our pets at an ideal weight, we can reduce the risk of arthritis or improve mobility in those pets already affected. The first step would be to have a weight/mobility assessment at your local veterinary practice. Veterinary professionals can give your pet a 'body condition score' out of 9 and set a target weight if their body condition is above ideal. Weight loss is a slow steady process, regular weight checks will ensure they are losing weight effectively but not too quickly.

Exercise

Exercising little and often is far better for the ageing pet. Older dogs can benefit from reducing one big walk a day to 2-3 shorter walks.

Nutrition

Dependent on the breed, most dogs and cats over the age of 7 years are considered 'senior' and would benefit from a change in diet. Senior diets are designed to help delay renal ageing by containing lowered amounts of calcium and phosphorous. Reduced amounts of high-quality protein help to maintain muscle mass whilst supporting the kidneys. Most senior diets will contain some glucosamine and chondroitin to help support joints and L-carnitine to help with maintaining an ideal weight for those prone to weight gain.

Grooming & Nail Clipping

Pets that find it hard to mobilise may not groom as often as they used to. Brushing their coat can be beneficial to prevent mats and promote a healthy coat. Older cats are less able to retract their claws and they can get stuck in the carpet. Your local veterinary practice will be able to offer nail clipping for dogs, cats and rabbits.

Joint Supplements

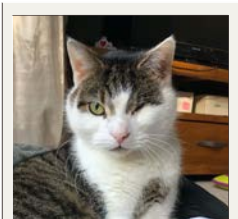
Osteoarthritis is a chronic degenerative disease that has no cure. Joint supplements can help to support the structure of the joints and have anti-inflammatory properties to decrease inflammation thereby reducing pain. They contain similar ingredients including glucosamine HCL, chondroitin, Omega 3, vitamin C, Green Lipped Mussel and Boswellia extract. Ask your veterinary practice for advice on choosing a supplement; some may have quality ingredients, some may be low in strength. Good quality supplements do not contain 'bulk'. Cats and dogs are not the only animals that can benefit from joint supplements - some are suitable for rabbits too!

Complementary Therapies

Therapies such as hydrotherapy and physiotherapy can be key to improving range of motion in the joints and slowing deterioration. Fully qualified animal physiotherapists and hydrotherapists require a referral from your veterinary surgeon. It is worth booking a mobility/senior health check with your veterinary practice to discuss how these therapies could help your pet.

Home Environment

There are many small changes we can make to our pet's home environment that can add up and make a big difference.



POPEYE

"The bond that Popeye and Zita have and his love for her is abundantly clear"...

"I rescued Popeye in October 2012. We don't know all the details, but his injuries showed just how badly he had been let down by people in his past. Needless to say he wasn't a great fan of humans and hid when anyone but I was in the house.

I tentatively looked at finding a pet sitter in 2015 as it took Popeye 8 months to venture into the garden, and weeks to get over a journey in the car, so a cattery was simply not an option.

I remember saying to Zita at that time, when she first came to look after Popeye, that she would be lucky to see him at all during her visits. Nothing prepared me for the photos of him chilling out and cuddling with her, looking so happy. There has been no one else in the seven years we have had him that Popeye has been more comfortable with.

The bond that Popeye and Zita have and his love for her is abundantly clear in the disgust he shows with me entering through the front door rather than Zita after I have been away!

The photos of her visits show just how in love and loved he is and I couldn't wish for more for this very special boy. He has a reason to trust people again and I have found someone who has patience, compassion and kindness in abundance. There is no one else that I have felt comfortable with in understanding what Popeye needs and giving him the attention and cuddles that he has come to adore."

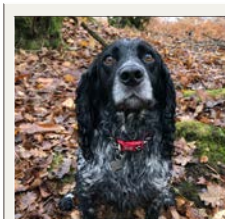
Hannah Franklin, East Grinstead

Paws for Thought...

"... he will be our friend for always and always and always."

Rudyard Kipling

New additions to the #PetPatrol365 Family!



JIM

Has your pet got what it takes to become an exclusive member of #TeamWoofers?

Registration to join the waiting list is now open!

Get in touch: zita@petpatrol365.co.uk

A Companion is Gone but the Memory Lives On...



HUDSON
You have left paw prints on our hearts that will last a lifetime 🐾

With heavy heart we said goodbye to our faithful friend Hudson who passed over to Rainbow Bridge.

Huds was an integral part of Pet Patrol 365, #TeamWoofers and the #DreamTeam and he is dearly missed by all.

Why Do Some Cats Loathe Catteries?

Find out with our FREE 'Happy Holiday Cat Guide'

This guide will give you an insight into the world from your cat's perspective because cats see and experience life around them in a very different way to humans.

Go to: <http://www.petpatrol365.co.uk/cat-care> to start your journey to a stress-free holiday.

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LIVESTOCK ON THE FOREST - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS...

During the year, the Forest is home to all sorts of livestock.

Why are there grazing animals on the Forest?

Lowland heathland in Britain only exists because large herds of herbivores - bison, wild cattle, deer, horse, and mammoth - that were present after the last ice age and their grazing maintained open habitats.

Just as today the great herds maintain the open grasslands of Africa and, the bison maintain the prairie in America.



Without the grazing herds, open grasslands or heathland rapidly change into woodlands through the process of succession. All the plant and animal species that have evolved in these open habitats need the effects of grazing animals. Grazing is essential for maintaining the richness and diversity of heathlands. The Conservators graze animals as part of our agreement with Natural England to improve the condition of the heathland.

Animals are also grazed by Commoners who have historical and legal rights to do so.



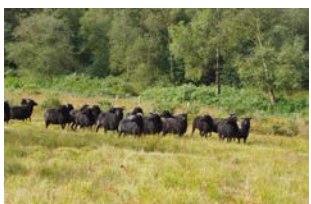
Picture 1 - Ponies maintain a complex structure and can suppress gorse.



Picture 2 - Hardy Galloways graze the tough grasses and their trampling produces ecological niches for rare bog plants.



Picture 3 - Sundews colonising the bare ground created by cattle footprints on Ashdown Forest.



Picture 4 - Some of our Hebridean flock.

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LIVESTOCK ON THE FOREST - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS...

Who do they belong to?

Some of the livestock belongs to Commoners with grazing rights and others belong to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest.

The Rights of Common go back far beyond Norman times. These common rights, pasturage being one of them, existed by tradition and ancient practice. It was the Normans who first recorded the Rights. To this day the 730 registered Commoners have rights to graze 20,000 sheep, 4,000 cattle and 300 Mill horses. Due to the repeated sale and division of Commonable land and apportionment of Rights, many Commoners may graze only one sheep.

Picture 5 - Free range cattle on Ashdown Forest



Why are some in small enclosures and others free to wander?

The Conservators have a duty to provide the Commoners with safe grazing and so an application was made to the Secretary of State for the Environment to fence Common land.

In 1998 road-side fences were erected on the South Chase of Ashdown Forest to allow 547 ha to be grazed by free ranging stock belonging to the Commoners. Today the South Chase is principally grazed by one Commoner, though any Commoner with Rights may turn out livestock.

The Conservators have permission to enclose another 100 acres (40.5 ha) at any one time. We do this by creating between 10 and 15 small enclosures around the Forest in which we graze our own livestock. These enclosures are temporary, remaining in situ for between 1 and 3 years before being taken down and put elsewhere on the Forest.

What breeds are they and are they dangerous?

The Conservators' livestock includes Hebridean sheep, Exmoor and Welsh ponies and Riggitt Galloway cattle. They are all primitive breeds and are chosen for being relatively good-tempered and placid. There are no young calves put out to graze on the Forest.

When are they on the Forest?

There is no fixed date for the animals to go out or be taken off the Forest - it depends entirely on the supply of grass. The Commoners' animals can go out onto the Forest in early April whereas the Conservators' animals will be put out to graze a little later, sometimes in early May. They are removed from the Forest when the purple moor grass is declining, usually after it has been frosted.

What should I do if I see an injured animal?

In the first instance, you should contact the Forest Office or Ranger on our emergency number 01342 822846. Please give your name and contact number and if possible, remain on site until a Ranger arrives. It can be very difficult locating injured or distressed animals from directions given on the telephone so it is helpful if you can stay nearby to help.

Should my dog be kept on a lead in the grazing area?

Dogs should be kept under control at all times, wherever you are on the Forest. If this means putting your dog on the lead, you must do so. We sometimes ask for dogs to be kept on leads if we are aware of nesting birds, etc., so please help us and do so when requested.

Dog owners and dog walkers should be aware that there is the risk of your dog being shot if it is caught in the act of livestock worrying.

What should I do with my dog's waste?

Please be responsible and always clean up after your dog. If you are within walking distance of the car parks, please bag it and take it away with you. Further out into the Forest, you can use the stick and flick method but please do not hang bags of waste in the bushes and trees. We would ideally prefer all dog waste to be removed since it increases nitrogen in the soil, which encourages unfavourable plant species and has a detrimental effect on heathland species. There is also the risk of transmitting diseases to livestock and humans.

ASK THE EXPERTS

DAWN ALLEN

FOUR POSITIVE PAWS - Teaching canine skills for real life, calm dogs and happy owners

07941 517571

dawn.allen@fourpositivepaws.co.uk

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ENRICHING THE LIVES OF OUR DOGS AND DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Enrichment is a positive opportunity for enhancing a dog's current environment using a range of senses and natural abilities.

Enrichment can be especially useful for dogs that may be anxious and fearful, that need additional support with life skills; for puppies, adolescence, dogs with health issues that may limit exercise, arthritis or who are on crate rest.



- Build trust and confidence
- Develop problem solving skills
- Provide gentle, effective exercise and stretches
- Positive interactions with novel items
- An enjoyable activity for dog and owner/carer
- Engagement in natural activities that are self-rewarding
- Alleviate boredom and frustration
- A social activity to do together
- A brain workout
- Fun and enjoyable learning experiences
- Engage all the senses

Getting the best from enrichment sessions

Enrichment is optimal when matched to the individual dog's needs to provide a positive, confidence giving experience, provide some gentle and natural exercise; teach skills such as coping with and processing frustration, problem solving and confidence building.

Guidance for enrichment activities

Keep activities choice-based so that the dog has the opportunity to approach, walk away from, engage or stop when they choose to, on their own or with support.

Dogs that are over excited and over stimulated are less likely to be able to choose to disengage. Excitement can be mistaken for a dog that wants to stop but they cannot self-regulate without a subtle intervention.

It can provide an opportunity for a positive and natural activity we can do with our dogs that could reduce stress and anxiety and support a dog that might struggle in a novel environment.

Enrichment can be a great way to provide our dogs with something satisfying and fulfilling and can be simple or complex depending on the individual dog.

The aim is calm engagement to maximise the benefits of enrichment.

Enrichment tools can be made from items around the home

- Empty toilet/kitchen roll, scrunch at one end, pop a treat inside and scrunch the other end closed. Start by setting your dog up for success. Avoid over stimulation and frustration, stress or fear. Let your dog sniff and explore. You can speak with them but try not to over fuss and let the dog work out how to get the treat inside. If your dog is calm and enjoying the activity you can place another roll on the floor.
- Egg boxes with a treat inside.
- Empty cardboard box with scrunched up balls of newspaper, some with and some without a treat.
- An empty shoe box filled with toilet roll tubes, standing on end some with treats and some without.
- Washing up bowl with soft play balls for a dog to nose through.

ASK THE EXPERTS

DAWN ALLEN

FOUR POSITIVE PAWS - Teaching canine skills for real life, calm dogs and happy owners

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#BetterTogether

ENRICHING THE LIVES OF OUR DOGS AND DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- Towel roll. Place an old towel on the floor, pop a treat or scrunched up newspaper on it, roll it and repeat until you have a towel roll. Your dog may need a little help to unroll the towel and find the treats. Showing your dog how to unroll the towel is a great way to enjoy this together and for your dog to learn how to use their nose to nudge the towel open gradually.
- Bringing the outdoors in to the garden - Seaweed, large pebbles, sea sponges, cuttle fish. Something that looks, smells and feels novel.
- Hang stuffed toilet rolls within reach of bushes or a washing line.
- Treat tree - a fallen tree trunk or lower part of a suitable tree. Squish a few items like cheese or sausage for searching out via scent.
- A hay bale can stimulate rolling, digging or something to jump up on to for elevation.
- Mats can offer different textures to experience under paw.
- A sheep fleece can be placed in a garden to discover and can evoke different responses from curiously checking it out to rolling.
- Wooden cubes can be sniffed, pawed, batted, sniffed or chewed but it is important that a dog does not swallow them so only use if you are sure you won't have to take one away from your dog.
- Snuffle mats can be a nice way for a dog to explore with their nose and use their sense of touch.



Safe enrichment

- Multi dog homes need extra care to avoid issues with potential bullying or protecting items.
- Pica. A condition where a dog is compelled to ingest items, so enrichment needs to be chosen carefully.
- Food and high value items. For dogs that guard or may nip consider avoiding food, treats and items the dog may protect.
- Young children. Supervision can prevent mishaps.
- Over asking, over doing it, over stimulating. Keeping within the individual dog's needs - coping levels will keep the experience positive.
- Give confidence, learn to cope with frustration and problem solving, promote learning.

All dogs are individual and one size does not fit all

A stuffed Kong for one dog may be satisfying but for another it can become a frustration and some dogs have been known to swallow a Kong (or similar stuffed items).

Enrichment must be supervised. It is a 'together' activity, not a solo activity. Consider your individual dog's needs before trying a new enrichment session or activity.

Allow the dog to walk away, stop, or do something else and avoid encouraging them to continue. They often know when they have had enough or need a break.

Sensory engagement is a complimentary part of our dogs' day to day well-being. There are lots of items to use that can be homemade or purchased.



#TeamWoofers taking part
in enrichment games...

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PASSION...

INTERVIEW WITH VALERIE POLLARD, PRACTICE MANAGER, PORTLAND VETS



Please describe your current role?

Practice Manager and relief Vet Nurse/Receptionist! Jack of all trades!

How do you keep your customers satisfied and build customer loyalty?

Communication is key. First and foremost, all our teams listen. This way we can always be sure we provide the service and care that the client expects and deserves. Hopefully this in itself builds loyalty, along with developing relationships with our clients and their pets. We want to work together with them to keep their 'family' members healthy.

Please tell us of at least one professional achievement

I have been published! I contributed chapters along with other authors in a Nursing manual; Nursing the Feline Patient.

What motivates you?

Job satisfaction. Whatever I do, I like to do to the best of my ability and know that I have done all I can.

How do you measure your professional success?

Ooh that's a difficult one. I'm not sure that I do. Perhaps that's something for others to judge!

What drives you towards professional excellence?

I think this ties in with motivation, but my colleagues consistently strive to improve themselves and the care they provide, which is infectious and I can't help but be driven forward with them.

What is the toughest decision you've had to make in the last few months?

Which dress to wear for our Christmas do! Two lovely dresses and I had difficulty deciding!

What is the most challenging aspect of your role?

Trying not to drift down to 'the shop floor' too much! Coming from a nursing background I do miss the hands-on side of the job, so often wander round the wards for a little 'fix'.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your role?

Knowing that I am aiding my teams to be the best they can be, either by arranging CPD, time to do their job well or equipment; or just being a sounding board. Seeing the services we can offer and expertise available in-house expand year on year is so rewarding. I'm like a proud Mum!

What do you feel are the critical success factors for your industry?

I think a lot of that has been covered but would say remaining independent to be able to make decisions on a case by case basis, flexing the care and treatment depending on the client and pet and providing as much of that care 'in house'. Also having the expertise to know when a specialist is required. But ultimately it is about caring: Caring about the pet, the family, the outcome and keeping them healthy.

What is the biggest story in your industry at the moment?

Mental Health. With one of the highest suicide rates of any profession this is a huge area that we are all focussed on. We have some of the country's most educated, most skilled and most intelligent people, but with that comes a high level of self-criticism and doubt. Add to that pressures from clients, often unintentional, it is a recipe for mental health issues. The profession loses many vets a year to burnout, and some may choose to stop practising altogether. At Portland Vets we try to put Mental Health at the forefront of our protocols, with shift patterns to aid work/life balance, lieu time, reducing our out of hours while maintaining good cover for our clients and enabling adequate down time for our team. We have regular team get-togethers, including comedy nights!

What advice would you give to a new Practice Manager?

It depends on the background they come from. If it is from finance/management, then spend plenty of time understanding the nuances of veterinary practice - it is a business like no other! If you come from a veterinary background, attend plenty of business focussed cpd, you'll need it! But ultimately understand your businesses aims and your team, and listen!

JUST FOR FUN...

- **The hobby that I could never give up is...** reading
- **I love...** my family and life
- **My favourite cuisine is...** Italian
- **I am afraid of...** spiders & rats (I know rats are lovely & intelligent, but I just can't get over the tail!)
- **I've always wanted to be...** able to sing!
- **My guilty pleasure is...** shoes!
- **An activity on my bucket list is...** travel more
- **I asked a friend to describe me and he/she said...** smart, professional with a hint of fun!
- **I once volunteered at...** youth football, cubs, various agricultural shows!
- **I find most attractive in a person is...** a smile and sense of humour, and a love for animals!