

Newfie News



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Behavior Training for Your Rescued Newf

Behavior training is much more than teaching a dog commands like sit, stay, and heal. The better animal trainers understand that developing a relationship between owner and pet will organically lead to a better “trained” pet.

“Training is a working relationship,” said Justin Bonn of Justin’s Canine Campus Daycare and Obedience Training in Liverpool, NY. “The bond increases faster than it would with just playing and spending time with the dog.”

Laney Nee, Animal Behavior Manager at Animal Rescue League of Boston, added, “Training is being proactive, not reactive to behavior. We train the people, not the dogs.”

“When we see unwanted behavior in dogs, they are reacting to environment,” continued Laney, who has 15 years of animal behavior experience.

To change behaviors in their dog, owners need to look beyond the behavior to the problem,
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Pet Behavior Resources at Animal Rescue League

Animal Behavior Manager Laney Nee oversees five programs at the Animal Rescue League (ARL) of Boston, including the dog training program and the free Pet Behavior Helpline. “Our programs are based on keeping people and pets together,” Laney said.

The dog training program is designed to accommodate owners with busy schedules. Basic and advanced level courses are offered in evenings and weekends at ARL Boston and Dedham locations. Private lessons are also available as well as virtual classes. View the full course schedule and pricing, and enroll at: arlboston.org/services/dog-training or call 617-426-9170.

The free Pet Behavior Helpline is offered as a reliable resource to help owners provide the best behavioral care for their pets. ARL will answer basic behavioral questions about your pet—whether it be a dog, cat, or small animal (rabbit, guinea pig, ferret, etc.). Call 617-226-5666 or email behaviorhelpline@arlboston.org. An ARL representative will get back to you within 48 hours.

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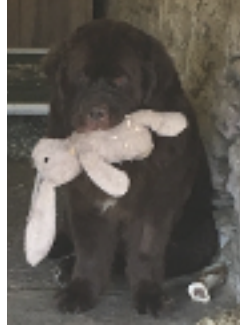
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Who's at TNP?

Olivia, A 7-year-old female Newf, has been spayed and is now in her new home with long time Newf owners in Vermont. Check back in the August newsletter for an update.



Recently Adopted

Moose – now Macaroni or “Mac” – was adopted on May 23 by Kevin and Kayla Mitchell. Mac, who will turn 2 in September, is the Mitchell’s first Newfoundland.

Kevin has always wanted a Newf and he and Kayla have been in contact with breeder Nancy Weaver (whom Kevin has known since he was a child) of Paragon Newfoundlands for about 2 years. Nancy did not have any puppies available but fostered Mac after he was rescued from a hoarding situation. It was an easy decision for the Mitchells to adopt Mac. “He’s been a great fit so far,” Kayla said. “We are very happy with him.”

Mac shares a large property in Pittstown, New Jersey with 9-month-old Pit Bull mix Clementine. Kevin said that the dogs “seem to enjoy each other.”

Being a new Newf owner can be challenging but Kevin said so far “it’s been better than I thought. We’re still getting used to the hair and drool.” It’s still an adjustment period for all, but is already a happy home.



Macaroni



Mac & Clementine enjoy their pool

Where Do Rescued Newfs Come From?

Dogs end up in rescue for many reasons. Sometimes the dog has been in a bad situation and is a victim of neglect or worse.

Other times people realize they are not prepared for the work it takes to care for a Newfoundland dog. They make a responsible decision to surrender the dog to a rescue that can find a suitable home.

Additionally, family situations often change, causing owners who love their Newfs to give them up. Divorce, illness, aging, and schedule changes are all reasons a Newf may end up in a rescue like TNP.

Each dog TNP receives has a unique situation and story. Each dog reacts differently to their situation. A full assessment is provided for each dog - as well as a full medical exam by a veterinarian - to decide the home in which the Newf will not just survive, but THRIVE. Re-homing is a disruptive experience. It is critical to find a home environment most conducive to the comfort and adjustment of the dog.

TNP is More Than Adoptions

The mission of That Newfoundland Place is to assist in the rescue, rehabilitation, and re-homing of dogs in need, with a focus on Newfoundland dogs.

TNP is also interested in keeping dogs and other pets in their own home when appropriate. Toward that end, TNP provides assistance with medical care and food for dogs and cats. The need has increased over the past year and is ongoing.

If you need assistance contact TNP at cathy@thatnewfoundlandplace.org

Expert Excerpts

*With Dr. Lauren Flanagan of
Pepperell (MA) Veterinary Hospital*

What is distemper?

Very few of us ever had a pet contract the virus called distemper. Despite vaccine availability, distemper still exists in certain populations today. Rescued dogs, unvaccinated dogs, particularly puppies, and wildlife can still contract distemper, so it's worth a discussion.

Distemper is an infectious disease caused by a virus that can be spread from dog to dog, typically through coughing, but the virus is present in all bodily secretions. Therefore, while coughing is the primary means of spread, the virus, in theory, can be spread through feces, urine, and even blood. [Note: Newf owners should be aware that saliva is another transmitter. The virus can be contracted by sharing a food bowl with an infected dog. The good news is that distemper cannot be spread to humans.] By day eight after exposure the infected dog has hopefully begun to develop an immune response to the virus. A dog with strong immunity is able to clear the virus and show no traces of the illness by day 14. If the dog has a weak immune system, response to the virus is allowed to go on and infect tissues throughout the body.

Symptoms usually begin like a common cold. Goopy eyes, runny nose, and a mild fever are often present. Most dogs have a poor appetite and some will eventually develop pneumonia so you may see coughing. As the virus moves through the body, you may see vomiting and diarrhea. Eventually the virus enters the central nervous system. In this situation it appears as though the dog may have recovered from the initial infection, but

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TNP Alumni

Sometimes it seems that the animals in your life are the friends and companions you are meant to have. This has been true for Lisa Medici and her family from the Riverside/Barrington area of Rhode Island.

Lisa's first dog was Schultz, a German Shepherd- Husky mix that was adored by the entire family for 17 years. The loss took a toll on the whole family and it was a few years before the family would adopt another dog, who was also Lisa's first Newf. Clyde was an abandoned puppy her family took in "temporarily" for 12 years during Lisa's mid-teen years.

Lisa's father, John, was a policeman in a small town with no animal control officer. He got a call that a dog was tied to a tree. On arrival, he saw a 4-week-old Newfoundland puppy that he brought to the shelter. It turns out Clyde had been poisoned. A friend and fellow civil servant sponsored Clyde's operation and asked John if he could take the dog temporarily to heal from surgery. John had a soft spot for dogs, but his wife, Maryann, remembered the heartache of losing Shultz and needed convincing. In order for Clyde to stay, John continued telling his wife that Clyde was 'only temporary' and part poodle and would remain small. Despite growing to a large size – and not having a bit of poodle DNA – Clyde stayed with the family for 12 years. He also became a great comfort and companion to Maryann who suffered the unexpected loss of John, after Lisa and her siblings had moved out of the house.

Lisa married and got a dog of her own - a Shih Tzu - but still yearned for a Newf. Research on



Oreo & Winston

rescue organizations led her to TNP. In 1999, Lisa adopted Oreo at 10 months, who was available due to a divorce

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which is usually fear. "Most behavior in adult dogs from rescues are fear-based behavior issues – noises, places, situational fears, travel or car rides due to transports," Justin said. "A dog may have no understanding of how to behave in a house [because they've never been inside] or never been on a leash." Laney noted that "the biggest problem we see with rescues is undersocialized dogs (which they see mainly from dogs transported from the South). They haven't experienced traffic, a leash, living indoors, people, or being the only dog." High fear behaviors include not wanting to walk, barking, jumping and grabbing, moving away from people, and aggressive behaviors such as biting and growling. Laney added that general anxiety due to change can also lead to fearful behaviors.

Justin points out that for new pet adopters the first couple of weeks can be a honeymoon phase. "The dog may not show behaviors right away," he said, calling on his 24 years of training experience and work in a San Diego dog shelter. "Then they realize they aren't going anywhere. It can take time for rescued dogs to realize what home means. The timing is different with each dog. Give them time to feel like they belong."

Training Helps All Rescued Dog

Even if your new pooch does have excellent manners and knows many commands, Justin still recommends training. "The dog should look to you as leader," he said. "Classes help with that. They strengthen the dog's focus on the owner. There are distractions of other people and dogs but in a controlled environment."

The lack of background information for rescue dogs also supports professional training. "We don't know the consistency in the last home, the rules, tones, environments, etc.," Justin said. "Classes give the dog a reason to look at the owner as someone to follow and listen to." In the case of Newfs, size alone can be a reason for training. It's important that Newfs do what you want them to do. "If you're walking you don't want them taking off after a squirrel," Justin said. Anyone who has ever been pulled by a 120 pound dog can attest to that.



A Three Step Approach to Training

Of course, if your newly rescued dog does need some behavior training, Laney offers this 3 step approach.

1. Pair the wanted behavior with delicious, nutritious food (boiled chicken, cheese, hot dog) and distance. Keep the dog far enough away from the reactive experience.

For example if your dog starts jumping when people approach while walking, give treats to your dog when the person is far enough away and the dog is not jumping to avoid the behavior. "The dog will learn it pays better to not jump," Laney said. "The correct action pays better. You're not giving the dog the opportunity to do unwanted behavior."

2. Create a solid routine. "If dogs know what to expect, it can alleviate some anxiety," she said.

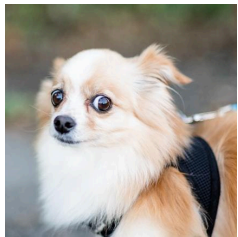
3. Understand the animal has gone through a transition to be in your home. "Don't test limits of what the dog can handle, advised Laney. "Keep interactions small." Resist the urge to invite visitors to meet the dog until your pet has time to adjust to the environment and the people in your home first.

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Laney also suggests using the behaviors of the dog to your advantage. "Behavior is a form of communication," she said. "Watch body language. Understand the problem so you can correct the reactive behavior." (Search "body language" at the ASPCA pro website <https://www.aspcapro.org/> for videos on canine body language and communication.) Dogs understand people in the same way. "An environmental cue is used, not a command," she said. "Dogs understand tone and body language but not actual words."

Justin approaches training in a similar way. "I help owners understand how dogs think and how to communicate," he said. "It's more about concepts than commands."

Justin believes structure is also a component of training. "It's the teaching of the commands that gets dog to respect the owner. They are communicating with dog to get them to do what they want." He also starts with food based rewards to shape behavior and then randomizes reward with what the dog wants – petting, wrestling, playing with a toy. "The dog should work for you, not treats," Justin said. "Find what motivates them, make it fun, and they'll work for you."



Facing Fears

Behavior change in dogs occurs when fear is diminished. "I recommend owners let go of the dog's back story and help them get over the fears instead of using it as an excuse, even if unintentional," Justin said. "When I first work with client, we discuss fears and I make people aware they might be doing this."

Photo credit below

Desensitization helps dog overcome fear. By making the fear visible in a controlled way, owners can teach wanted behavior. Justin uses this technique in class when he brings out a vacuum. The same effect can be achieved at home. "Put a trail of high value treats up to vacuum," Justin said. "Bring the dog into the room and let the dog approach on their time. Don't point out the vacuum. Let the dog creep up and get treats, as many as they feel comfortable getting. Praise the dog for getting close. You want the end to be taking the treat off the vacuum when it's on. Dogs learn through repetition and behavior. The dog will see it wasn't harmed from the vacuum and over time will get closer."

Not all fears can be completely removed or controlled. In the case of fireworks or thunder, Justin suggests doing what you can to help the dog through it. "The challenge is they may be so stressed or upset that treats won't work," he said. "Close windows, and put on music. If you can get to a place where you can work with the dog – they look in your eyes, and play game or with toy – you can distract them from the fear. It depends on dogs stress level." In severe cases, you may need to talk to your veterinarian about medication to get your dog through the event.

No matter the fear, developing trust and a bond is the ultimate goal for you and your Newf. Justin's goal for training is for owners to "understand how to make a lifelong relationship that's good for the owner and good for the dog."

More information/resources:

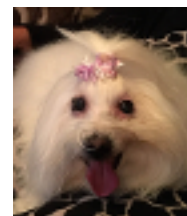
- Justin offers group & private lessons: <https://www.justinscaninecampus.com/>
- Animal Rescue League of Boston offers a dog training program: arlboston.org/services/dog-training and a free Pet Behavior Helpline: behaviorhelpline@arlboston.org / 617-226-5666
- Maureen Ross at Dog Talk is a Pet Behavior instructor with many years of experience and known to TNP staff: www.dogtalk.com 603-635-3647

Photo by Michelle Tresemer on Unsplash

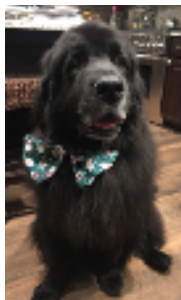
"TNP Alumni" Continued from page 3

in the family. Oreo was raised with a small dog and fit seamlessly with Lisa's family. Lisa went through a divorce a few years later and found Oreo to be a great consolation for herself and her daughter, Lucianna.

Around 2001, Lisa added GiGi, a Coton de Tulear to the family, adopted from her boss. Although the breed was not recognized by the American Kennel Club at the time, her boss found a breeder in Rome and bought a male and female. He had the dogs for about 10 months, but his family did not invest enough time in the dogs, so he gave GiGi to Lisa.



GiGi

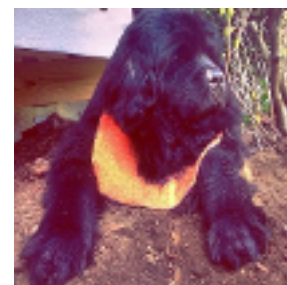


Winston

Lisa began dating her boyfriend (now husband) Michael DeToro, who fell in love with Oreo. In 2007, Michael gave Lisa the gift of a Newfoundland puppy, Winston, from Binghamton, NY. "I refer to Winston as my prince," Lisa said. "He had a very regal and proud soul."

Oreo passed at age 11 and Winston became the only Newf in the family for about 2 years. Lisa saw a photo of a female, Bo, on the TNP Facebook page. She was between 2 and 3 years old at the time. "She was really a beauty. Had big, floppy lips, and that face," Lisa said. "She was a gem."

"Bo came from a horrible situation but was my most lovable Newf," Lisa said. "I was sitting in the living room one day and I happened to say the word 'hug' and Bo jumped up and put her paws on my shoulders and gave me a hug."



Bo

A couple years after adopting her, Lisa and Michael noticed some loss of muscle on the right side of Bo's skull, which progressed over time. They brought her to a neurologist in Boston where she was diagnosed with a 5th cranial nerve tumor. The specialist assured the family that Bo was not in any pain. They were informed of what the tumor progression would look like for Bo. During the final stage, Bo would be unsteady on her feet. One day she was walking in circles and flopping down. She was about 5 years old.



Otis & Baci

English Mastiff, Baci, was adopted in 2014 at 6 months old. Winston remained the lone Newf until Lisa saw Otis available for adoption at TNP in the fall of 2016. She brought Winston to meet Otis, 11 months, at TNP. At 12, Winston was not very spry but played for an hour and a half with Otis. Winston also established that he was the boss of Otis' future pack.

Lisa lost Winston and Gigi on the same day about a year after adopting Otis, who immediately became "top dog." Lisa's daughter Lucianna, 26, moved back home about 2 years ago and added a cattle dog named Springsteen and Thumbelina, a 3-legged kitten that she brought home from work after someone found the kitten dragging her leg. Lucianna is a surgical vet tech in the Tufts ER.



Lucianna & Springsteen

It was clear from the start that Otis is water dog, so he has access to the family pool and regular visits to a local beach. Lisa also noticed his natural lifesaving instinct and has worked with him to improve it. She brings him to the beach for rescue/retrieval work regularly.

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Otis is known with the moms and their children at the beach. "He will not take his eyes off a child in the water," Lisa said. "I give the command 'count the kids.' He looks at the water and nods as if he's counting. He'll sit in the sand and watch until I say that it's time to leave. If a child splashes too vigorously, Otis will swim out to him or her. We tell the children to either inform Otis that they are 'ok' or they can grab his harness and Otis then swims them to safer water."

Otis is also a bit of a celebrity around town. He is the main attraction of a local little league organization. For the past two years, COVID has prevented him from leading the town parade which kicks off the season. The league president is determined to make it happen as soon as the parade tradition returns. Otis attends little league games, Michael brings him to the bank, and he rides in Lisa's convertible in the back seat. Otis is bringing joy not only to his family, but the entire community that surrounds him. Otis is exactly where he is supposed to be.

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one to three weeks later may develop central nervous system signs. A classic sign of central nervous system involvement is something called "chewing gum fit," which is a type of seizure causing tremors of the jaw. Younger puppies or dogs with weak immunity often die during the first phase of illness while the stronger ones may have relatively mild signs during the first phase and not appear ill until the neurological phase. Recovery is possible in both phases although some dogs have permanent neurological deficits if they recover.

The distemper virus is able to hide out for long periods of time in the central nervous system and skin. Therefore, seizures may occur long after the infection was thought to be cleared. It is also the reason for the old name of the disease "hard pad disease," because the virus hangs out in the skin causing callusing on foot pads and the nose.

Next month: How veterinarians detect distemper and treatment.

Remember to Keep Your Newf (and all animals) Cool in the Hot Summer Temperatures

- *Limit exercise and go for walks very early or late in the day
- *Keep your Newf inside with air conditioning or fans
- *If your Newf must be outside make sure there is plenty of shade
- *Provide lots of cool drinking water
- *Check pavement & sand temps with your own bare feet; too hot for you is too hot for them
- *Never leave your dog in the car alone, even with windows cracked

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