

Creature Companion™

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A Pet Care Magazine

**RESPONSIBLE
PET OWNERSHIP**

**THINGS TO
KNOW WHILE
TRAVELLING
WITH YOUR PET
IN INDIA**

NGO

**CHARLIE'S ANIMAL
RESCUE CENTRE – CARE
THE VOICE OF
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Varindra Sewak

Contributors

Dr. Suranjan Sarkar

Greeshma Vijayan

Priya Poduval

Anja Reimann

Dr. Irfan Ahmed

Sharmistha Deb

Siddharth Darbha

Sudha Narayanan

Rajiv Sharma

Dr. A C Beynen

Desk Editor

Priyanka Tanwar

creaturecompanion@lbassociates.com

Director Marketing & Content

Binoy Sahee

info@iipf.com

Yash Malhotra

yash@lbassociates.com

Mobile: +91 9911787926

subscription@lbassociates.com

Legal Consultant

Roopa Somasundaran

Design & Layout

Atul Kumar

DISCLAIMER: The views and opinions expressed in Creature Companion are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors or publisher. Although all efforts have been made to ensure the complete accuracy of text, neither the editors nor publisher can accept responsibility for consequences arising from errors or omissions or any opinions or advice given.

Publisher's Note

Dear Readers,

The month of love — February is here. This is the time when most of us want to spend a little extra time with our furry bundles, the ones who enrich our daily existence with their pure unconditional love. Planning a surprise trip to a serene retreat amidst picturesque surroundings is a sure shot way to pamper these bosom friends as it gives them a chance to safely explore new surroundings. Previous disastrous travel experiences and worries about inducing anxiety in our pooches hold us back from giving in to the urge of traversing unexplored roads with our creature companions. Our columnist Priya Poduval hands out some time-tested tips and shares personal experiences to help you plan a hassle-free excursion by train, road or airplane in her article 'Pets On Board.'

February is the time when we want to capture our furry friends in a memorable photograph through which we can cherish the beautiful moments spent with them for a lifetime. Keeping this in mind, we have incorporated an analytical article on professional pet photography where we list out the recent trends and most popular names in the high-end pet portraiture segment. Business readers can go through the reasons for popularity and unique set of challenges faced by this niche industry sector.

Transporting and purchasing fish is always an arduous task. Our aqua columnist Rajiv Sharma shares some practical advice to make the transit comfortable for our aquatic pals for suppliers, wholesalers and retailers. The piece also provides essential points to keep in mind while looking for new additions to your miniature aquatic display and making them feel at home in unfamiliar waters.

Just like humans, animals also have some fundamental requirements which need to be fulfilled for them to flourish, and felines are no exception. The responsibility for creating a feline haven falls upon the cat parent. We persuaded renowned feline behaviourist Dr. Irfan Ahmed to share some minor changes that every cat owner can incorporate to make sure their accommodation offers everyday essentials that their cat requires to lead a meaningful existence.

We also feature engaging reads on providing emergency care in case your pets get burned, exceptional work by Charlie's Animal Rescue Centre (CARE) for streeties in Bengaluru, and the entrepreneurial journey of the founders of Wagr — Wearable Tracker for Dogs in this edition

Happy Reading!

Linda Brady Hawke



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**“A PUPPY IS A
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They tug at the strings of your heart, these young ones of canines are a sight to behold. Those tiny paws and croons tracing your footsteps all day, looking at you with crystal washed eyes, the warmth that a puppy brings to the house and life is beyond words!

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Binoy Sahee
+91-98910 13797
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First Aid for Pets

BURNS

By Dr. Suranjan Sarkar*

Burn injuries in dogs are more common than we think. When we say “burn” we think of fire, but that’s not all. Burns in pets can occur by many other agents as well. You may not be aware that walking your dog on hot streets during the summer months can burn your dog’s paws. This is a very common condition in hot, tropical countries like India.

Another common cause of burns in pets is hot water. Suppose you have kept a bucketful of hot water for bath and your pet laid its paws on it! This causes immediate blisters on your pet’s body.

Caustic chemicals and grease are other causes of burns in pets.



HOW TO KNOW YOUR PET IS BURNED

Except in severe cases, you have to notice the symptoms to tell that your dog is burned. Your dog or cat may be limping and/or constantly licking the area. Watch out for blisters, redness, and swelling.

FIRST AID TO HELP YOUR PET IN CASE OF BURNS

In case of a recent fire, even though you may notice that there is no fire on the pet’s body but the area beneath the skin continues to burn or scald for hours. Therefore, it becomes necessary to cool down the affected area of your pet’s body.

If you notice burns on your pet, there is a certain step-by-step procedure

to contain infection and thereby prevent death. The process is as follows:

- If your pet is outside take it indoors to a cooler, cleaner place. In case of fire, there might be harmful smoke around. Make sure you take your pet away from the site of the blaze.
- Muzzle the animal immediately and try to keep it calm. Remove the collar or harness as it becomes tighter in case of burns due to fire.
- Skin is the slowest to cool down. For this reason, place the affected area under running water for 10 minutes or immerse in water (Except in burns caused by caustic chemicals).



If veterinary help is far or not available, clip and wash the area and apply Silver Sulphadiazine ointment (commonly known as Burnol in India).

- Apply a moist towel or bandage to the affected area.
- Don't pour cold water or apply an ice pack as it cools the affected area too quickly causing vasoconstriction, and thereby making the wounds deeper. Sometimes applying ice pack brings down the body temperature below normal, which could be fatal.
- Don't apply ointment at this stage. This may hinder the assessment process by the vet.
- Transport the pet to the

veterinarian's clinic. If the place is too far away, make sure to cover your pet's body with several blankets to prevent hypothermia. This also helps in preventing secondary infection and sepsis.

- If veterinary help is far or not available, clip and wash the area and apply Silver Sulphadiazine ointment (commonly known as Burnol in India).
- Some pets might experience bronchospasm due to smoke. I have come across such cases in my career. In such circumstances,

oxygen therapy becomes inevitable to save life.

- In case of burns caused by a caustic chemical, it is necessary to remove the source first. Don't apply water as the chemical may spread to other areas. Prevent the pet from licking the area, because the caustic chemical may cause damage to internal organs if ingested.

* Author is a practising veterinarian at Pluto Pet Clinic, Ranchi. He has done his PGDECM from Madras Veterinary College, Chennai. He has also served as a government veterinarian for the last 21 years.

USING LEASHES, TOYS & TREATS SENSIBLY

By **Ketan Panchal***

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT LEASH FOR YOUR DOG?

Whether you're buying your new dog a leash for the first time or replacing an older one with something more up to date, the options can seem overwhelming. There are different types of leashes available in the market, many of which claim to deal with specific issues or situations. So how do you know which leash is best for your dog?

A fixed-length leash should be your dog's go-to leash for outings. Fixed-length leashes vary on average from four to eight feet in length. A fixed-length leash gives you the option to pull your dog closer or steer him in a different direction, and the loop handle makes it possible to hook the leash over your wrist while juggling another task.

A traffic leash has a second handle set closer to the dog's neck, typically six to twelve inches from the leash's attachment clip. Traffic leashes increase your ability to control your dog's movements in crowded or high-distraction spaces such as elevators. A short traffic leash is not appropriate for walks, though, as it may restrict your dog's airway and impede his ability to explore. Instead,

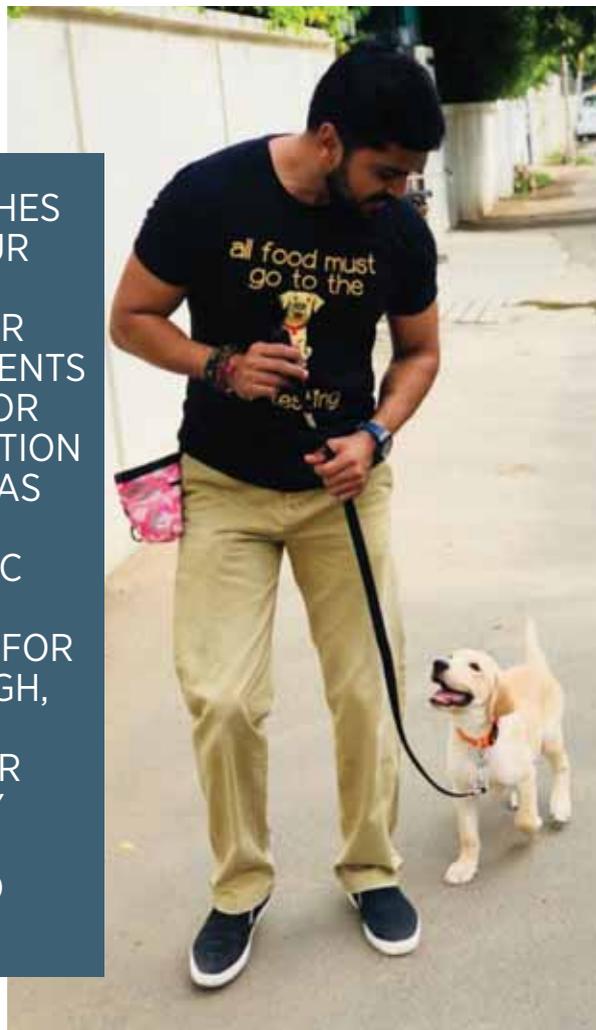
TRAFFIC LEASHES INCREASE YOUR ABILITY TO CONTROL YOUR DOG'S MOVEMENTS IN CROWDED OR HIGH-DISTRACTION SPACES SUCH AS ELEVATORS. A SHORT TRAFFIC LEASH IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR WALKS, THOUGH, AS IT MAY RESTRICT YOUR DOG'S AIRWAY AND IMPEDE HIS ABILITY TO EXPLORE.

opt for a longer leash with a built-in traffic handle and use it only when absolutely necessary.

A double dog walking leash is designed to assist with walking multiple dogs at the same time. It is made up of two leashes with one shared handle. Choose one with

a rotating attachment that helps prevent the leashes from tangling.

A waist-clip leash has a mechanism that can secure it around your waist instead of holding it in your hand. This frees your hands, which can be useful if you're pushing a stroller or carrying packages, or if you are a



runner who trains with your dog. A waist-clip leash can also be helpful for training, as it allows you to focus on proper timing and treat delivery without having to juggle the leash and the treat pouch. However, this type of leash does create the potential for injury. If your dog tends to zigzag in front of you or changes sides while walking, you may be at risk for tripping and falling. Make sure that

the waist-clip leash you select has a quick release mechanism as this can save your pooch from injuries in case of accidents or emergencies.

A long line leash can be beneficial for training or for dogs who do not have access to a fenced yard. The leash's longer length, which can vary from 8 to 10 feet or upward of 15 to 30 feet, allows dogs to practice commands,

like come when called, or just explore safely.

A chain leash may be effective for dogs who are inclined to chew and tug. The metal links discourage chewing and tugging. However, a chain leash can pinch hands and skin if grabbed. Chain leashes are also heavy, loud and more difficult to manage than leather or nylon equivalents.

HOW TO CHOOSE RIGHT TOYS FOR YOUR DOG?

Playing and chewing are natural canine behaviours. Though some dogs will play or chew more than others, dog toys are essential items for all dogs. In fact, behaviour problems can develop when canines do not have the proper outlets to follow their instincts.

Dog toy options are nearly endless, so choosing toys for your dog can be overwhelming. Some owners end up with a heap of toys gathering dust because the toys they chose simply do not interest their dogs. How do you choose toys that your dog will actually like?

If you seem to end up with too many toys, try putting several of them away for a while, then reintroduce them in the future. Months later, your dog will think they are brand new.

1. BALL

A ball is a must-have toy for any dog that loves to play fetch. Ball toys for dogs come in many varieties, from the basic tennis ball or rubber ball to glow-in-the-dark and flashing-light balls. Many balls contain squeakers. Others have openings to fill with



treats. Some balls are basic bouncers meant for retrieving.

2. PLUSH TOYS

Many dogs adore plush toys. They will carry them around like babies or tear them apart like prey. Stuffed dog toys usually contain squeakers and some kind of stuffing. Dogs

often rip into them and the stuffing goes everywhere. Supervise your dog when playing with plush toys to keep him from swallowing the stuffing or squeakers, which can lead to gastrointestinal or bowel obstruction. Plush toys will not last long with aggressive chewers, but can still be plenty of fun (with supervision).

3. SQUEAKIES

Squeaky toys come in many shapes and sizes. Typically, they are made out of vinyl, rubber, or plastic. Durability varies, so choose wisely according to your dog's chewing habits. In general, thick rubber is best for aggressive chewers. Thinner vinyl or plastic toys are better for mild chewers or if you will be supervising play at all times. The benefit of thinner squeaky toys is that they are often very inexpensive. The downside is that they don't usually last very long.

4. TUG TOYS

Many dogs enjoy playing tug-of-war. It's a healthy display of a dog's predatory nature, plus it's great mental and physical exercise. There are many varieties of tug toys available in the market in various shapes, sizes, and materials. Often seen are tug toys made of rope and/or rubber. Choose a

tug toy that is comfortable for you to hold in your hand and pull on, as well as easy for your dog to bite and drag. In addition, tug toys should be durable enough to hold up to the strength of your dog's tugging. Replace worn or fraying tug toys so they do not break in the middle of a game of tug-of-war and hurt someone.

5. FOOD DISPENSING & PUZZLE TOYS

Food and treat dispensing dog toys should be in every canine's household. They offer fun with mental stimulation, and are a great way for dogs to funnel their excess energy. Food dispensing dog toys come in diverse shapes and sizes and are usually made of rubber or plastic. Perhaps the most popular of all food dispensing dog toys is the Kong, which can be filled with treats, kibble, peanut butter, and other foods. These toys can provide hours of fun for your best friend.

DOG TREATS ARE ALSO A GREAT WAY TO REWARD YOUR DOG TO RECOGNISE IT HAS DONE SOMETHING RIGHT. IF YOU LURE YOUR DOG INTO A SIT, GIVE IT THE TREAT THE SECOND ITS REAR END HITS THE FLOOR.

Interactive dog toys and puzzles are a great way to keep your dog mentally stimulated and to teach him some cognitive skills. The built-in reward system of puzzles really makes learning fun and easy.



HOW TO USE TREATS IN YOUR DOG'S DAILY ROUTINE?

Some dog owners are unsure about whether to use dog treats when training a dog to learn a new trick or behaviour. But treats simply help you to get the behaviour you want from your dog, and then let your dog know that it performed the behaviour correctly. Dogs tend to learn faster and have more fun when they get rewarded for good behaviour.

Dog treats are also a great way to reward your dog to recognise it has done something right. If you lure your dog into a sit, give it the treat the second its rear end hits the floor.

This works for all behaviours: you have to give the treat immediately so your dog associates the action with the reward. You can encourage your dog to repeat behaviours you like, such as lying quietly on the floor during dinner or sitting when guests enter through the door, by rewarding it with a treat to reinforce the desired behaviour.

Treat is a reward not a bribe.

* Author is a Certified Professional Dog Trainer and Behaviourist (CPDT) USA. You can connect with him on Instagram @k9certifiedtrainer.



CAT TALES OF MISKI & SIMBA

By **Greeshma Vijayan***

Three years ago we thought of getting a pet but in our apartment dogs were not allowed, so we considered Persian Cats as our option as they are a very silent feline breed. Cats are independent yet endearingly affectionate. My sister went ahead and got this cute little black ball of fur with bright yellow eyes and christened her Miski meaning beautiful or exotic. She was a 3-month-old kitten when she came to our home. My parents were a bit apprehensive and against the whole

notion - the social stigma associated with black cats is a well-known fact but they had to relent for our sake. Miski was very scared during the initial days and stayed under the bed the whole day. She would venture out only for her meals. Before long Miski started coming out of her shell and started getting attached with everyone. Within a few days, she stole our hearts one by one with her antics, her colour and associated omens, all well forgotten quickly. She shares a very special bond with my mother. Miski quickly became the

queen of the family or baby of the family, she is practically royalty.

One year passed with Miski's fun and frolic, we felt it would be best if she had a companion or friend, and in came our little lion – Simba. He was also a 3-month-old kitten – the same age as Miski when she joined our family. Cats don't take to new cats instantly, they are territorial. We had to tread through the initial days carefully, keeping them separate was a necessity that could not be dispensed with. Miski used to hiss a

Pet of the Month

lot whenever she encountered Simba - a natural reaction to a new cat entering her domain. It took about ten days for her to get used to him and for the hissing to stop and then they were inseparable. Nevertheless, they are as different as chalk and cheese.

Simba, who is one among the Top 10 cats at the International Cat Championship Show held at Bangalore, has also won the Petfed Mascot Award 2019 for Bangalore from Dino Morea. He is more playful but cautious and timid at the same time. Give him a ball, and he will put the Ronaldos and Messis of this



SIMBA DEMANDS ATTENTION AND OFTEN WE WONDER IF HE IS A DOG TRAPPED IN A CAT'S BODY. HE IS POSSESSIVE OF HIS HUMAN, AND IS A NON-STOP PURR MACHINE. MISKI, ON THE OTHER HAND BEING A FEMALE CAT, OOZES MATURITY.

world to shame. He just loves playing football and he can be at it until he is completely exhausted. He, unlike Miski, is very vocal. If he is hungry he ensures he gets food and that too of his choice only not what human wants to feed, and the look on his face makes humans' heart melt in seconds.

Simba demands attention and often we wonder if he is a dog trapped in a cat's body. He is possessive of his human, and is a non-stop purr machine. Miski, on the other hand being a female cat, oozes maturity. She is a bit proud and maintains a certain poise at all times. Gazing



Every moment spent with them is cure to all the stress & frustration of the day and I definitely look forward to go home as soon as possible to pamper these fur babies. They also wait for their hoomans at the door eagerly, to welcome them home. Cats do not respond to pressure and seldom get intimidated into obedience. That's one reason I love them, they have a mind of their own. Many people think that cats seem aloof, but it's not true they merely have different ways of showing their affection. We seem to understand each other and often the bond is reflected through their silent communication, body language

out from her high perched vantage point is a favourite pastime of Miski, it should be intriguing to know what goes on in her mind when she is staring out into the world beyond, while Simba contrarily uses the high perched vantage point for his afternoon siesta. Both of them playing with each other and gambolling about is a refreshing sight any time of the day.



and meows that only their humans understand. They rub against our legs, insisting that we lavish them with our attention and love. We have an exclusive Instagram account for them which is @miski_and_simba, started in August 2019, now with over 1200 followers they have become Instagram famous too.

* Greeshma Vijayan is an avid pet lover. In her spare moments she spends time with her pets and envisions to make Miski and Simba famous through their Instagram account (@miski_and_simba)



PETS ON BOARD TRAVELLING WITH PETS IN INDIA

Planning a trip with your furry friend? It can be a lot of fun, and you no longer have to fret about how they are doing at home without you being around. But public transport system was not built while also keeping our pets in mind. Depending on how prepared you are, you could have a memorable trip or a disastrous nightmare. Here are a few important things to keep in mind while travelling with pets in India:

TRAIN JOURNEYS

Train travel is a more economical and healthier option for pets, but it comes with its own share of hassles. Though the Indian Railways has specified rules only for dogs, you can travel with other animals and birds as well. With trains, you have the option of keeping your dog with you provided

you are travelling First Class or Air Conditioned First Class and that you reserve either the two- or four-berth area entirely. Alternatively, dogs can be carried in the luggage/brake van in specially designed boxes. Unfortunately, with trains, even if you reserve the full berth, if someone in that compartment objects to the dog, your poor pooch will have to travel in the luggage van anyway. This can be really difficult, especially because it is your responsibility to provide your dog with food and water throughout the journey. Large dogs too cannot travel in the compartment — they will be transported in a separate coach that is usually used for horses.

INDIAN AIRWAYS

Indian air transport providers Jet Airways, Air India, Spice Jet and

Vistara allow pets on board, while IndiGo and Air Costa only service animals which are required for people with disabilities. While some regulations and policies vary across these, most of the rules are common to all. Pets that are below 8 weeks of age, and in some cases 12 weeks, are not allowed to fly. The same goes for pregnant animals and females with unweaned offspring(s). Certain animal breeds and their cross breeds are not allowed on board, such as aggressive dog breeds (for obvious reasons), short-muzzled dog breeds (for health reasons), and a few cat breeds. In most cases, only guide dogs are allowed into the cabin with passengers. Other pets, such as dogs, cats, rabbits and on some airlines birds, usually have to travel either as excess baggage or as part



Priya Poduval - Co-Founder
Petz House - Pet Boarding and Pet Old Age Home

She can be reached at 7827855912 and
petzhousedelhi@gmail.com



MY EXPERIENCE TRAVELLING WITH PETS BY INDIAN RAILWAYS

I personally had a fantastic experience recently while travelling with my two English Retrievers – Laila and Mithi from Guwahati to Delhi by railroad. We had reserved a First Class coupe in advance. A day prior to our journey, we had to submit an application of travel with pets to the CRO (Chief Reservation Officer) of Guwahati Railway Station. It was a little cumbersome to locate the office of the CRO. However, the officer was extremely cooperative which somehow made up for the trouble. Next morning we had to reach the station with our pets at least an hour prior to departure. We had to purchase a luggage ticket for each four-legged friend. The only thing we needed to keep in mind while booking the coupe was to secure a two berth coupe in advance because you can get the whole place to yourself and your pet can travel peacefully.

I have also travelled by air with my pets. However, I lately discovered that train travel was more comfortable and economical and your furry companions are safe with you in the same cabin. You can walk them in between stations when the train halts for ten minutes or more. You can feed them according to their meal time and place a water bowl in the vicinity so they can quench their thirst with ease. With you always within sight, pets also feel safe and secure during the travel.

of the cargo. The latter is the cheaper option, but it could mean that your pet may not travel on the same flight as you, so the former is definitely preferable. Only Air India allows pets in the cabin, if the combined weight of the pet and the carrier are less than 5 kilos. Call in to make the reservation for your pet because it cannot be done on the phone. There is a limit to how many pets the airline can take on each flight, so find out in advance if there is space for your pet. You may be charged a flat fee by the airline, or it could vary according to your pet's weight.

CRATING YOUR PET

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has laid down guidelines, keeping your pet's safety and comfort in mind. For any air travel, you need to crate your pet in an IATA-approved cage and ensure it has enough space to lie down, stand and turn around comfortably. The crate should be well ventilated, made of a non-chewable material and have smooth edges and a way to shut it properly. It should be escape- and leakproof. Buying the crate in advance will give you a chance to get your pet used to it so that it is less nervous on the day of your journey. Putting a label with few important details on it is a good idea, marking it as containing a live animal, as well as listing all of your pet's information, including name, owner, address, flight itinerary, nature and owner's emergency contact details. Paperwork should be in place before the travel for hassle free travel—health certificates from the vet, along with a letter from them stating that your pet is ready to fly, are a must, in addition to all the vaccinations. Other requirements may vary according to the airline, so make sure you start on all the documentation at least a month in advance.

Most carriers will not take animals that have been sedated, as it poses a tremendous risk to their health. If they are agitated, you can give them a natural pet calmer instead. Some pets also tend to face motion sickness. You can prepare them for this by taking them for long drives so that they can start getting used to it. If they are prone to motion sickness, do not feed them before the flight, but give them a lot of water so that they are well hydrated. Think carefully about whether or not your pet is ready to fly. If necessary, ask your vet for an objective opinion. The trip will be that much harder if you have an animal with behavioural issues, and you certainly won't gain any sympathy from fellow passengers or airline staff if you have a howling or growling animal.

ROAD TRIPS

Here are few practical suggestions to ensure you and your pet have a safe and comfortable journey whenever you plan to take your furry companion with you for an outing by road.

Ensure you have packed everything on your dog travel packing list, it could be their water bowls, feeding bowls, wet wipes, leashes, collars, pet towels, dog food, poop bags, a mat for them to relax when you stop over somewhere, the pet vaccination passport, a first aid box in case of emergency like diarrhea, vomit, minor scrapes or wounds and lots of tissues and old newspapers.

Before you plan on a longer journey make the pets used to shorter road trips. Some of the pets I have noticed are car sick or are scared and anxious. So getting them used to sitting in the car, being calm is important since puppyhood. Use sunshades on the back window too in case you are travelling in the summer. Also the most important thing is never leave your pet unattended in a closed car on a hot sunny day. The car will heat up in few minutes and it will be extremely hot for your pets. Always leave windows down little bit and have someone sitting with them if in case you have to quickly do a round of the store. While on a long trip try to take few breaks for their nature's call and feed. Try to watch for signs if you feel your pet is uncomfortable. You can get their favourite chewsticks, snacks or toy for them to be busy during the journey. On hot summer days always have the AC on while travelling during the day. Lookout for pet friendly cafes and restaurants on the way so you don't have to leave them in the car. With these few things in mind you can have a comfortable and safe journey with your furry companion.



PET FRIENDLY TRAVEL ACCOMMODATION

Once you reach make sure you have booked a pet-friendly hotel and that you've informed them in advance of your arrival. Resorts with lawns or beaches are the best idea, giving your pet the freedom to roam around.

Plan your itinerary in advance so that you and your pet don't have to face any rude surprises, but always have a back-up plan in case you do. Be calm and firm with your pet, and if you manage to get through the first trip okay, you'll find that they can make really good travel companions.

Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport has a helpdesk by Pet Fly, a pet-relocation service, to assist passengers travelling with animals. The important thing to remember is that while you want to have a great time with your pet at your chosen holiday destination, you are solely responsible for its health and well-being. If you're not certain about being able to care for your pet while on holiday, it is always a better option to leave it in the care of friends, or good dog boarding centres. But if you exercise these tips while in transit, you'll get to have the time of your life with your four-legged friend for company!



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HOW TO WALK YOUR DOG RIGHT

By **Anja Reimann**

There are some basic things you can consider to make the walking experience a great one. Dedicate time, love, and patience to walk your dog daily. As a rule of thumb regarding exercise duration, walking in the fresh air for 30 minutes to up to two hours a day can do wonders to your canine's health. The temperature will often determine the best time to take your dog walking. Earlier in the day or later in the evening are suitable times to walk your dog.

GIVE YOUR DOG EXERCISE

Walking your dog is important to provide him mental stimulation and physical exercise. Through walks, the entire musculoskeletal system of the dog is trained and strengthened, the circulation and the metabolism stimulated. The immune system can work better and the

dog is less susceptible to disease. Without sufficient exercise, muscle mass is reduced, and fat mass is built up which often leads to a strain on joints and bones. Excess weight also causes cardiovascular diseases and diabetes in dogs. Daily walks will also help with socialisation and reinforcement of the bond between you and your four-legged friend.

LET YOUR DOG EXPLORE

Most dogs are like most humans, they love to explore... variety is happiness! For an ideal exploring walk with your dog, variation and stimulation for the brain are important parts, so be sure to offer your canine a balanced mix of concentration exercises, search games and sniffing while walking. Once outside, make your walk enjoyable: take a different route if you have time. Bathroom break walks instead are best over the same routes. Dogs seem to appreciate a lack of ambiguity and know which place to poop at. If you are in a rush to go to work - learn your dog's favourite spots and walk directly there. It will help them develop conditional reflex and both of you will be better off at the end.

MEETING OTHER DOGS ALONG THE WALK

As a basic principle, you should not let your dog make contact with other dogs while wearing a leash. Or if you want your dog to make contact, ask before you let your dog approach another dog. That way you avoid any unnecessary risk. As just because your dog is friendly doesn't mean every dog to dog meeting will be pleasant. Dogs cannot communicate in the same way when they are leashed as when they are off the leash. It's all too easy for a critical situation to arise.

THINGS TO BRING WITH YOU

Don't forget to bring treats with you. A dog will listen to you when you have treats in your hand, so make sure that you only give them out when they've done something right. And last but not least, bring water (especially if you are going to be walking for more than a half hour, it is even more important on hot days).



WALK YOUR DOG SAFELY ON A FLEXI LEASH

On a Flexi leash, a dog can walk three times as long in the same time as on a conventional leash. In addition, Flexi leashes give space to the dog's natural urge to move and explore, and allow him to run out even where it is not possible for the dog to run freely.

Whether classic, trendy, fashionable or elegant, all flexi leads are designed to excite every dog and their owner. Flexi is "Made in Germany," simply at its best. Learn more at www.flexi.de/en, follow us @flexi_theoriginal and enjoy your walks!



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Creating a Feline Haven

Tips to Make Your Home Cat-friendly

By **Dr. Irfan Ahmed***

When a cat is introduced in a human house, the residents should make sure that it will be happy and safe. The human parent should think of the cat's/kitten's needs to be physically and mentally healthy. However, as cat parents, it is your responsibility to make sure that your feline friend does not come into contact with hazards that could be easily avoided. Overall, if you want to make your home cat-friendly, look at the space from your cat's perspective and make changes that will improve and enrich its life in the future.

A cat needs a space of its own. If you want to make your home cat-friendly, then you need to give your cat some special area to call its own. This includes a cat bed or cat house, where the cat can head when it just needs to relax on its own.

A cat house can be especially helpful for a cat that is adjusting to a new home and is afraid and anxious. When you bring a new cat home, allow it to hide away in its cat house until it comes out on its own. Providing this safe space will be an important part of its adjustment to new surroundings.

If you have multiple cats, or other pets, it's very important to have a variety of spaces where your cat or cats can get alone time. In a house with both cats and dogs, there should be some spaces provided which allow the cat(s) to get physical distance from the dog(s).



In order to keep your feline occupied, you need to stimulate your cat's mind. Provide toys that are exciting and fun for your cat to play with. Interactive toys of various types can give your cat something to explore and enjoy while you are away or otherwise engaged.

Part of stimulating your cat's mind is giving it new and exciting things to do on a regular basis. Don't assume that your cat will be happy with the same old toys forever. Introduce new ones every now and then to get rid of monotony and boredom.

Cats are also reinvigorated by watching the outside world. Attract birds and wild animals to your windows by placing bird feeders outside. Your cat will enjoy the "Live Cat TV."



Provide your cat ample opportunities for exercise within the confines of the house. This could be long, clear halls where the cat can chase toys. It could also be areas where the cat can climb. Many cat owners provide specific climbing areas for their cats, whether it is a cat tree or shelves on their walls that the cat can walk along.

A scratching post offers your cat the ability to stretch and scratch at the same time. In addition, providing a scratching post will minimise the chances of your cat choosing to stretch and scratch on your furniture.

Cats love to bask in the warm sun. You can try putting up shelves so that your cat can climb up to a sunny window perch. This gives the cat the opportunity to do a little climbing, while providing a little private spot to get some alone time.

Provide for your cat's basic needs. Your cat requires food, water, and a clean litter box to meet its basic physical needs. Feed your cat on a regular basis and in a place where it can eat undisturbed by other pets

CATS LOVE TO BASK IN THE WARM SUN. YOU CAN TRY PUTTING UP SHELVES SO THAT YOUR CAT CAN CLIMB UP TO A SUNNY WINDOW PERCH. THIS GIVES THE CAT THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO A LITTLE CLIMBING.

in the house. Access to clean water should be provided at all times. Many cats enjoy a cat drinking fountain that provides water in a running stream.

Cats, in general, tend to be finicky about their bathroom habits. Giving your cat a clean and accessible litter box is a basic requirement for having a happy feline in your home. Litter boxes should be placed in a private place and should be cleaned on a very regular basis, preferably every day.

There are many chemicals and products in most houses that are toxic to cats. Common household chemicals that are dangerous to cats include antifreeze, garden chemicals, insect control products, potpourri, and human medications. In order to make sure your home is safe for a cat, look at the labels of all chemicals and assess whether they could pose a risk to your feline's health. Keep these toxic products out of reach of your kitty by putting all chemicals and products that could pose a danger in closed cabinets that your cat cannot access.

Most cats are naturally inquisitive and will investigate every inch of a new place. Because of this, don't assume that a product on a high ledge or in a distant corner will be out of reach of your cat. Keep an eye on your cat and lock any cabinets they may open with child-proof locks.

There are many common household plants that are extremely toxic to cats. These include Azalea, Lily, Mistletoe, Philodendron, Poinsettia,



Caladium and Elephant's ear. Make sure to remove these plants from your house before you welcome your feline friend inside.

Many human food items are very toxic to cats. These include avocados, chocolate, garlic, raisins, grapes, macadamia nuts, onions, potatoes and alcohol. You need to keep these foods out of reach of your feline at all times. Also, keep leftovers and table scraps away from cats, as these can be dangerous to their health. For example, leftover bones can prove to be a choking hazard for an unsuspecting kitty.

A cat that is freely roaming around its home can come into contact with physical hazards that can injure or even kill it. Common household dangers include lit candles, rodent traps, strangulation hazards (such as blinds and cords), and open toilet lids. In order to make your home cat-friendly you need to eliminate as many of these hazards as possible.

If you want a happy and healthy cat, it is best to keep it indoors. Keeping your cat inside minimises its chances of getting a variety of diseases and infections, eliminates its odds of getting hit by a car or getting lost, and protects birds and other wildlife outside.

Make sure all window and door screens are secure. A loose screen could allow your cat to escape the house, but it could also cause your cat to fall out a window if it leans against a screen it thinks is secure.

It is absolutely essential to create a cat-friendly environment in your home if you want your cat to lead a happy and fulfilling life inside. These simple tips will go a long way to fulfill the basic needs and requirements of your pet cat.

* Dr. Irfan Ahmed is a Cat Behaviour Consultant. He also runs Mallika's Cattery - a Cat Boarding Service in Bangalore.



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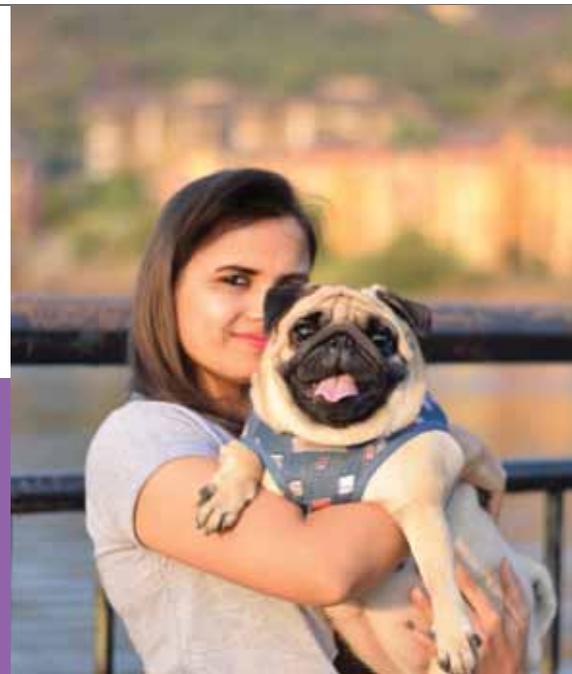


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Fur Villa

TAILOR-MADE OUTFITS AND ACCESSORIES FOR FURRY BABIES



Ms. Sharmista Deb, Founder of Fur Villa recently sat down with Ms. Priyanka Tanwar, Editor of Creature Companion Magazine to discuss about Fur Villa's products and ideology, demands of pet parents, her pets, pet blogging experiences and future plans. Excerpts . . .

GIVE US A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF YOUR START-UP.

Fur Villa was started with the aim of designing modern as well as traditional pet dresses which suit all types of pet breeds, at pocket-friendly prices without compromising the quality of the product.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PETS. WHAT ROLE HAVE THEY PLAYED IN YOUR LIFE?

We have just one pet – our adorable pug, Mili. As we all know, earth is not just for humans rather we have to co-exist with all living creatures. Mili taught us that animals also have feelings, emotions, needs of belongingness and, last but not the least, love for other creatures including humans.

YOUR PET MILI IS ALSO A PET INFLUENCER. SHARE SOME INTERESTING EXPERIENCES THAT YOU HAD WHILE BLOGGING FOR HER.

Just like us, Mili is also a travel buff. The way she reacts when we get



ready for a long trip just brings a smile on our faces. This begins from the moment we start packing, getting dressed and concludes when the car engine is ignited.

Again, Mili has travelled with us in most of Maharashtra and Mumbai.

SHARE THE IDEA BEHIND YOUR START-UP FUR VILLA.

The basic idea was just a passion for creating dresses for Mili, after which we received numerous queries about the ensembles from pet parents. This made us realise that there is a demand in the market for pet garments. Thus something that started as a passion paved way for my profession and the very idea of Fur Villa.

WHAT IS YOUR VENTURE'S MISSION, VISION AND IDEOLOGY?

Mission: To produce high quality pet products, at a reasonable price, deliver the same promptly on time and adding a pinch of innovation in each new product.

Vision: Fur Villa shall strive for 100 percent customer satisfaction, zero percent errors and creating a benchmark for pet products in the market.

Ideology: Fur Villa aims to be a key player in the Pet Industry with a priority to Social Responsibility which we achieve through tie-ups with Non-profit Organisations that support stray and/or destitute animals.

WHAT KIND OF PET CLOTHING AND ACCESSORY OPTIONS DOES FUR VILLA OFFER?

Fur Villa provides a wide range of Pet Clothing options ranging from traditional to modern.

NOWADAYS, PET PARENTS EMPHASISE A LOT ON QUALITY, CRAFTSMANSHIP AND DESIGN. HOW DO YOU MEET THESE DEMANDS?

These demands are met with using quality raw materials, untiring hard work and prompt delivery of the finished products.

YOU HAVE ALSO DRESSED UP MANY PETFLUENCERS. HOW IS THE EXPERIENCE OF DRESSING UP CELEBRITY PETS DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF REGULAR CUSTOMERS?

We treat all our shoppers as special customers be it celebrity pets or regular pets. Fur Villa aims to provide a celebrity feel to each pet after being clothed in our outfits.

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE A WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR?

I really feel proud looking back from where I stand today. During the

recent years, there is a paradigm shift in the entrepreneurial sector in India, women have a strong role to play and views of women are also valued.

WHAT DIFFICULTIES DID YOU FACE AS AN ENTREPRENEUR?

Difficulty rather I would say challenge would be the amount of competition that is being faced today. With growing number of players in the market and growing number of innovative products being introduced, staying abreast with time has become a major challenge.

WHAT ARE YOUR INITIATIVES FOR THE BENEFIT OF COMMUNITY ANIMALS?

Fur Villa has tie-ups with many Non-profit Organisations which support unfortunate and/or destitute animals. A portion of our profits are always donated in cash or kind to such charitable institutions.



HOW DO YOU KEEP YOURSELF UPDATED WITH THE LATEST TRENDS IN THE PET CLOTHING SECTOR?

Fur Villa has collaborations with many pet brands which help us to get a taste of what's new in the industry, and our strong online presence assists us to stay updated with current happenings in the market.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS TO INTRODUCE YOUR CREATIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET?

We do have plans of creating an impact in the international market, may be slowly but steadily. Presently we are in the penetration stage in the Indian market and aim to create a strong hold in the Indian pet care industry.

IN YOUR OPINION, IS THE INDIAN PET INDUSTRY SET TO BE A GLOBAL PLAYER IN THE COMING YEARS?

India has a strong participation in the international market now. Sooner or later our country is bound to be a strong player in the Global Pet Industry.

WE DO HAVE PLANS OF CREATING AN IMPACT IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET, MAY BE SLOWLY BUT STEADILY.



WE WANT TO KEEP EVERY DOG SAFE AND FIT, SO WE DESIGNED WAGR – INDIA'S FIRST SMART DOG TRACKER



By **Siddharth Darbha***

A dvaith, Ajith and I go way back and we've always loved dogs. As co-founders, we also share a keen interest in technology and products.

Growing up, Advaith lost his pet dog to whom he was very attached to. With his dog missing, we realised that just like him, there are plenty of dog parents across India who're in the same boat – if you lose your dog, you're lucky if you see him or her ever again.

In fact, if you're a part of pet communities on Facebook, Instagram or any other social media platform, you'll notice posts on missing dogs going up on a daily basis. Among these, you'll also find stories of pet dogs afflicted with several health conditions, which could have been prevented.

When we adopted Jambi, our brand mascot, a few years ago we knew that we needed a solid solution to keep our adorable Indie safe and fit. That's how Wagr came into being.

WHAT'S WAGR?

A happy dog will always give you happy tail wags! With Wagr, your dog will always be fit, healthy and happy! That was our idea behind Wagr.

Wagr is India's first GPS & Fitness Tracker for Dogs. It's the extra pair



of eyes every dog parent has always wanted to take care of their pets. Being a full-time dog parent can be hectic, and our survey with over 200 dog moms and dads showed that their primary concerns were their dog's safety, followed closely by health.

A dog's safety is always at risk, as there are plenty of ways he or she can get lost – an open door or window, an urge to find a mate, slipping out of the leash during walks, getting startled by sounds etc. When it comes to health, a lot of dog owners tend to miscalculate the amount of exercise and rest their dogs need, which in turn can lead to long-term health issues.

With these two major problem areas in mind, we designed Wagr for the

modern dog parent. It is a tracker and a companion mobile app and provides holistic pet care solutions.

WHAT CAN IT DO?

Location Tracking:

With Wagr, you know where your dog is at all times. So whether you're at home or on the other side of the world, you can track your dog's location anywhere within India. Wagr allows you to create Safe Zones for your home, office, park or anywhere you feel your dog is safe. If your dog ever leaves a Safe Zone, you'll be instantly notified and then you can track him.

This is quite different from microchipping, which is a passive way of finding lost dogs. Microchipping only works if

the lost dog is taken to a facility which has a microchip reader, which is rare. With Wagr you can actively track your dog, just like how you track an Uber cab or a Zomato order, but with a microchip you have to wait for whoever's found your dog to find you.

Activity Monitoring:

Wagr lets you set activity goals for your dog (after you consult your vet). It classifies activity types like sleeping, walking, running and more into low, medium and high activity. You also get to see daily, weekly and monthly health reports of your dog.

We are working on adding several new features here. These include advanced algorithms that detect shaking or shivering, personalised health plans and recommendations, customised exercise routines etc.

Pack Tracking:

With Wagr you can take care of more than one dog. Not just that, it allows other people to take care of your dog

or dogs. We are rolling out our Walk Tracking feature. This is especially helpful when other people are taking your dog out for a walk. It gives you a detailed view of route, time and distance of every walk.

Apart from this, Wagr has a four-day battery

life and fits on collar sizes of all dog breeds. It's extremely sturdy, waterproof, dustproof and also comes with a military grade velcro attachment accessory. Lastly,

Wagr gets continuous over-the-air firmware updates, meaning it stays updated and improves with time just like a mobile app.

OUR JOURNEY

Wagr is headquartered in Bangalore. Our team comprises of 7 talented individuals including Advait Mohan and Ajith Kochery, the other co-founders. I handle Business, Strategy & Finances while Advait and Ajith lead UX, Marketing & Data, and Strategy, Engineering & Operations respectively.

We launched our first batch of Wagr in September 2019 and sold out the entire bunch by January 2020 (last Wagr was sold at PetFed Mumbai). We're ecstatic to share that Wagr is currently being used by 500 dog parents across India! We've received so many enquiries and pre-order requests since then and we're looking forward to launch our new batch in 2020.

This wouldn't have been possible without the team of veterinarians, designers and engineers who helped us design and build Wagr since our inception. We also partnered with Cessna, Therpup, Precise Pet Clinic, Stepsetgo among others for our launch.

We have crossed many major milestones along our entrepreneurial journey. To start with, we won the Best Product Debut Award at PetFed 2016. We were also a part of prestigious programmes such as Axilor and Revvx hardware accelerator 2016. On top of that, we secured the 2nd position at Qualcomm Design in India Challenge 2019 out of 300 startups in India, and shifted to Qualcomm's platform. Recently, we were one of the six startups to represent India at

CES 2020, Las Vegas, which is widely considered as the world's largest tech show for consumer electronics. Up until now, we've raised 130k USD (including grants).

LEARNINGS AND CHALLENGES

Wagr comprises a wearable tracker and an app. So one of the biggest challenges we faced was making the transition for the tracker from a prototype to a market-ready product. It was a capital intensive process and Qualcomm was our biggest support system for the same.

Also, there are a lot of Chinese GPS trackers out there, but they are not designed specifically for dogs. They come with a host of problems such as lack of location accuracy, no integration of activity feature, low battery life, bad user experience on app, bulky size among others. After multiple iterations, we have been able to design a compact, light, sturdy high-tech product that works seamlessly with the app.

Lastly, this is the first-of-its-kind product in India and driving product adoption for new and existing customers took a while. But with a growing customer base, people are taking to Wagr easily.

FUTURE PLANS

Receiving exposure on a global level at CES 2020 has broadened our horizons. We're looking forward to launching on Amazon after rolling out new features and improving existing ones, based on feedback from our current customers..

* Siddharth Darbha is the Co-founder of Wagr. He is an alumnus of IIITDM Kancheepuram and has also served as VP of NGO Becoming I Foundation and Consultant at Thorogood Associates. He loves poetry, music and nature.

Track favourite walks



CHARLIE'S ANIMAL RESCUE CENTRE – CARE

THE VOICE OF STREET ANIMALS IN BENGALURU

By **Sudha Narayanan***

Charlie's Animal Rescue Centre – CARE, established in January 2013, is a haven for stray animals in Bangalore. The inspiration behind the trust is 15-year-old Charlie - a differently abled three-legged Indian Dog, who was an established figure in the field of Canine Therapy since 2005. Charlie passed away in March 2017 but has left behind a rich legacy that the CARE shelter aims to live up to through rescue and rehabilitation.

The CARE Shelter is home to animals of all kinds including dogs, cats, guinea pigs, rabbits, pigs, ducks and calves. These animals are permanent residents of CARE due to their varying needs and special conditions such as blindness, physical or mental disabilities, paraplegia, serious ailments, and advanced age. They require constant care, medical attention and love. These animals will reside at CARE for the remainder of their lives.

The rescue facility is headed by the Founder Trustee Ms. Sudha Narayanan, who comes with over two decades of immense expertise and prowess in the fields of domestic as well as wild animal welfare. Pure compassion for helpless animals is the key belief that strings together the core team of CARE, which comprises of builders, engineers, leading veterinarians, artists, retired



CARE BELIEVES THAT THERE MUST BE CONSTANT INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE SHELTER AND OUR SOCIETY & COMMUNITY, AS IT CAN BE A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL EXERCISE.

defence personnel, marketers and dentists.

CORE ACTIVITIES OF CARE

Rescue

CARE is equipped with 2 ambulances which assist the NGO in picking up animals in distress off the streets and bringing them to the Rescue Centre for immediate medical attention.

CARE also accepts individual rescue cases of ill, injured and abandoned animals which are brought directly to the shelter, and admits them for further treatment.

Rehabilitation

Once the animal is diagnosed and provided with immediate emergency treatment, which includes surgery, amputation and other life saving procedures as required, the animal is housed in the treatment section where he/she is allowed to recuperate and recover with constant monitoring by our team of vets. Healing and restoring of functionality is the prime mission of our rehabilitation efforts, where physiotherapy and laser therapy are employed when necessary to speed up the healing operation. The admitted animal patients are also provided with wholesome food along with protein supplements to hasten the recovery process.

Rehoming & Release

Following the completion of treatment and recovery, community animals are dropped back in the area where they were picked up from. Abandoned pet dogs are moved to the adoption unit, where they are socialised to recuperate from the trauma of desertion and provided with mental stimulation along with physical and emotional support so that they are ready for adoption to a good home. New pet parents are screened, counselled and matched with a pet that is right for them and their family. Follow-up checks with strict protocol are followed so the adopted animal is ensured of a good life.

HUMANE EDUCATION & AWARENESS

At the heart of any welfare activity lies education and awareness.



While rehabilitation and rescue efforts are ongoing and necessary, it can be equated to mopping up after an open tap. Education efforts can be likened to closing the tap. With more awareness and sensitisation of the citizens of tomorrow, there can be far-reaching, long term and positive consequences for both animals and



mankind. To achieve this end we have the following 2 programs:

1. The Young Angels Program sponsored by Mars International Pvt Ltd. Under this initiative, our education officer visits schools and engages with children introducing the seed of animal welfare, safe coexistence with community animals and other simple concepts related to animals in their young minds. A minimum of 20 sessions of such enlightening activities are conducted every month by the CARE shelter.

2. Charlie's Pack

This is an intensive, specially designed curriculum program where interested school children visit the shelter on a weekly/monthly basis and are introduced to concepts in animal welfare in a simple, comprehensible form including practical and hands-on activities that inculcate the values of compassion, empathy and responsibility towards animals and towards each other.

CANINE THERAPY

Charlie, our mascot and inspiration, himself was a therapy dog who had

worked as a therapist with the children of Vishwas, a school for differently abled children run by the Indian Air Force, Srishti Special Academy and Kara For Kids. His vocation lasted for about 8 years and during this time period he helped 300 special children gain confidence at social interactions, which made a significant difference to their overall outlook towards life.

His legacy is being carried forward by other therapy dogs from the CARE shelter, who are carefully selected for their gentle demeanour and then trained as canine therapists.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS

CARE believes that there must be constant interplay between the shelter and our society & community, as it can be a mutually beneficial exercise. Hence, we have several events both at the shelter premises and at many other locations across the city. The participants and contributors of these events include children, adults, corporate companies, art connoisseurs, music lovers, and pet parents.

CARE community outreach events include summer camps, storytelling



sessions, corporate day outs, art exhibitions, book sales, music concerts, garage sales, flea markets and other such activities.

The CARE shelter provides a plethora of services and amenities to its inhabitants, community animals in distress and humans. These include:

- Helpline and Ambulance service for animals in distress from 9am to 5pm
- Inpatient facility for sick and injured animals
- A fully equipped medical unit with OPD, Operation Theatre, X-ray facility and Laser Machine
- Housing, rehabilitation and re-homing of abandoned pets
- Adoption of pups, kittens, dogs, cats, rabbits and guinea pigs
- An exclusive Cattery with a separate Cat Treatment Unit and Kitten Nursery
- Holiday Boarding facility for canines
- Hydrotherapy for paraplegic and accident cases
- Animal Assisted Therapy

CARE also has set up a home for 70 rescued cats in Whitefield.

CARE CAMPAIGNS

The nature of the work undertaken by CARE requires us to constantly expand and undertake new challenges to ensure that we make a difference to the thousands of animals that pass through our doors.

Depending on the requirement, CARE sets up different fund raising campaigns from time to time to gather the necessary financial resources required for its functioning.

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

You, as a responsible citizen, can do a number of things in order to help us achieve our goal of positively impacting the lives of as many innocent animals as possible. The simplest way to contribute is to visit our premises, take a tour of the shelter and spend some quality time with our permanent residents.

Volunteering is scientifically proven to increase your lifespan by providing multitudinous benefits such as improving self esteem, increasing socialisation, developing emotional stability and coping with stress. You can sign up on our website to touch the lives of needy stray animals.

You can fulfill a streetie's dream of finding their furrever home by choosing to adopt a pet from our shelter. This noble cause changes two lives – yours and that of the animal that you bring home. CARE shelter keeps organising events like the Indie Puppy Adoption Drive in December 2019 to encourage bangaloreans to adopt indigenous canine breeds.

If you don't have the bandwidth to adopt a stray, you can passively adopt an animal of your choice

by contributing towards its food, medicine and shelter requirements on a monthly/annual basis. CARE centre will provide regular updates about your passively adopted pet and you are free to visit our facility when you have the time and spend some precious moments with your chosen pet. Indian Cricket Team Captain Virat Kohli has also passively adopted 15 canines suffering from blindness, chronic illnesses and paraplegia from the organisation.

You can mark a special occasion in your life or that of a loved one by sponsoring a day's feed of all shelter inhabitants. CARE also retails a range of aesthetically designed merchandise including sweatshirts, T-shirts, coffee mugs, planners, badges, fridge magnets, tote bags, caps, and calendars to collect monetary resources for their noble pursuits.

In addition, you can donate to the CARE shelter to enable us to rescue more innocent lives. Every contribution counts, whether big or small. Donations made to CARE are exempt U/s 80G of the Income Tax Act. CARE is also authorised to accept Foreign Donations under the FCRA Act.

CARE was also felicitated with the Champions of Bengaluru honour at the Namma Bengaluru Awards 2019 for its exemplary work in rescue and rehabilitation of street animals and abandoned pets. You can learn more about our NGO through our website www.charlies-care.com.

* Sudha Narayanan is the Founder Trustee of Charlie's Animal Rescue Centre - CARE.

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WHAT TO KEEP IN MIND WHILE TRANSPORTING & PURCHASING FISH?



By **Rajiv Sharma***

Aquarium keeping is a popular hobby nowadays. Most people want to keep pets but it is not always possible to care for animals such as dogs and cats due to the pressures of hectic urban life. Such people can easily maintain fish as pets. Gazing at their vibrant colours and locomotive activities are known to help in reducing stress and tiredness. Fishes need less care in comparison to other pets. They don't occupy too much space in homes either. Their relative ease of maintenance has encouraged many people to keep them as pets. They need less care but it does not mean that we forget about the aquarium. Let's understand how we can care for fishes in the best possible manner.

The journey of fishes begins from fish farms and culminates in the local fish shop. This passage is very

uncomfortable. Proper packing of fishes is the guarantee of survival during transit. But sellers sometimes group too many fishes together in small packets to reduce the transportation cost. Due to low oxygen and stress, many fishes die. Wholesaler is always responsible for providing the ideal conditions so that fishes can reach safely to their destination.

It is very easy to save the precious life of fishes. This can be done by following these simple steps:

a. Most of the sellers pack expensive fishes properly but the low-priced ones such as molly are packed in inhuman conditions. Sellers and buyers, both ignore the death of these poor fishes due to their low price. But life should always be respected. Fishes should be packed properly



without considering their cost. Fishes can survive for more than 48 hours with proper packing.

b. Fishes should not be provided with any food prior to packing. They should remain hungry for at least 24 hours before packing. This is because fish waste releases ammonia into the water, which is highly toxic for them. Packing hungry fish aids in keeping the level of ammonia low during transportation. Fish consume oxygen and produce carbon dioxide. So, the packet should be filled with enough medical grade oxygen to last throughout the journey. Lack of oxygen may bring about the death of all the fishes in the packet.

c. Loaded fish bags should be accommodated in sturdy containers. Most of the sellers use cardboard containers for packing the fish bags.

Strong carriage vessels reduce the chances for any physical damage to the fishes. A fine carrier also helps in maintaining temperature during transportation. It is a good practice to insert thermocol sheets between the packets and container walls.

d. Containers should not swing or vibrate during transit. Too much vibration and swinging may result in stress in fishes. Later, this may emerge as mass death of fishes.

e. After completion of the movement, the container must never be unloaded in direct sunlight, excessively cold or hot environment. A sudden change in the temperature creates risks for the life of fishes.

f. Some fish shopkeepers open the packet and directly release the fishes into the tanks. This is a very bad practice. First of all, fish packets should be inserted into the tank and allowed to remain there till the temperature of the packet and the aquarium reaches the same level. Some water from the aquarium

should then be poured into the fish bag. This process must be repeated several times. This activity will help fishes to settle in their new environment.

g. After releasing fishes into the aquarium, observe them carefully. You may notice the following symptoms:

1. Some fishes may be physically injured. If the wounds are big or serious, keep them isolated otherwise other fishes will attack and kill the injured ones.
2. Check for white spot disease. In case any of the fishes are found infected, treat with high temperature and/or salt therapy without losing time.
3. Some fishes may remain in a corner of the aquarium, breathing rapidly or gasping near the water surface. This may be due to bad health or stress. Keeping these fishes in a dark room helps improve these signs.



4. Inspect for cloudy or bulging eyes. Such fishes may be infested with eye diseases. Provide them with appropriate medications.

h. Healthy fishes should be shifted to other aquariums after proper quarantine process is completed. They should be kept in dark for several hours as it helps them normalise and recover from the stress. Also provide them with nourishing food and extra care.



i. Treat the sick fishes promptly. Improve the water quality and provide them with suitable medicines. Quarantine time can be extended up to 15 days.

j. Quarantined fishes may be transferred to display tanks.

k. Never offer the dead fishes as food to the remaining fishes. After consuming dead fishes, the healthy ones may get infected with their diseases.

Healthy fishes look more vibrant and beautiful. The buyer will happily buy robust fishes.

The buyer also has to take several precautions to house the fishes in his/her aquarium. These are listed below:

a. First of all, study the fishes you intend to purchase attentively. Every living organism requires some specific conditions to

flourish. Particular fishes may have some special requirements. If the needs meet your existing set-up, go ahead and grab the fishes.

b. Check the compatibility with your existing fishes. Invest in the fishes you desire only if they are accordant with the ones you already have.

c. Study the activities of the fish. Never buy dull, damaged or sick

fishes. A sick fish can lead to the death of all the others or may spread infection in the aquarium. Make sure you buy healthy specimens.

d. Always try to keep the fishes in a fully cycled aquarium. A cycled aquarium provides favourable conditions for growth and development of fishes.

e. Once you get the desired fishes home, float the polythene bag in the aquarium till the temperature of the aquarium and polythene bag reaches the same level.

f. Check the water parameters of your aquarium. If everything is under control, release some water in the fish bag several times. Let out the fishes in your aquarium only after you have done this.

g. If the fishes get infected or injured, heal them in a spare or medical aquarium. Never mix an injured or sick fish with healthy ones.

h. If it seems that the newly introduced fishes are in stress, switch off the lights. They will feel secure and gradually adjust themselves in their new environment.

Choosing suitable fishes for your aquarium is very essential to be a successful aquarist. Educate yourself as much as possible. Wait for second part of this article, where I share more essential tips.

* Rajiv Sharma is the Founder of online aquarium forum www.aquapetz.com. He is also an aquarium hobbyist and planted aquarium designer. He can be reached at rsrajivji@gmail.com and 9958075234.



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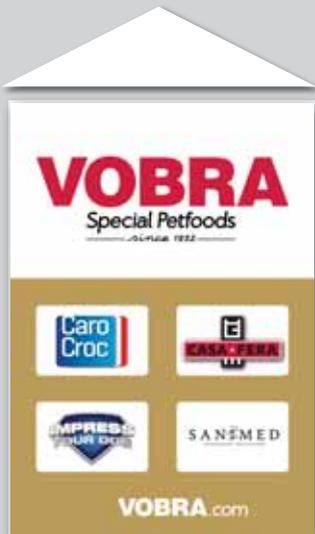
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Dr A C Beynen was professor of Veterinary Nutrition at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University, The Netherlands in the period of 1993-2007.



Coenzyme Q10 in petfood

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) has two interconverting forms: its yellow, oxidized state (ubiquinone) and milky-white, reduced counterpart (ubiquinol). CoQ10 is ubiquitously present in mammalian tissues; origins are synthesis in the body and intestinal uptake from ingested foods. CoQ10 plays a significant role in energy production by the mitochondria, the powerhouses of body cells. Some supplements, treats and complete foods for dogs and cats feature CoQ10 as health-promoting ingredient.

Among the various claimed effects of CoQ10, antioxidant capacity and support of heart and gum health are most common. As heart muscle has a high energy requirement, it is believed that extra CoQ10 enhances the organ's function. Because reduced CoQ10 can donate electrons, it is seen as neutralizer/scavenger of free radicals, thus fighting oxidative DNA damage and aging. As antioxidant and bioenergizer, CoQ10 is thought to suppress bacterial gum inflammation.

For the claimed health effects of supplemental CoQ10 there is no scientific substantiation in the form of controlled experiments with dogs or cats. Moreover, there is no indirect evidence from which the health claims may be inferred. Admittedly, demonstrating that supplemental CoQ10 increases life span of dogs and cats is practically hardly possible, not least due to long duration, but studies in mice (1-3) do not support the anti-aging claim.

CoQ10 is not recognized as an essential nutrient for dogs and cats (4), implying that body synthesis in normal animals is adequate. In addition to their own supply, dogs and cats also ingest CoQ10 with their regular food, but the actual quantities are unknown. In a dog study, supplemental CoQ10 did not increase antioxidant capacity of blood. CoQ10 might enhance canine and feline mitochondrial energy production under specific conditions (cf. 5, 6), but this remains to be shown.

FUNCTION AND METABOLISM

CoQ10 is a lipophilic electron carrier, consisting of a quinone/quinol group and 10 isoprene units in the side chain. Successive uptake and release of two reducing equivalents (2 H+ + 2 e-) transfers the quinone portion into quinol and back again. As such, CoQ10 is part of the mitochondrial electron transport chain of redox couples, producing a high energy state that powers ATP synthesis.

All body cells may synthesize CoQ10 (7), inclusive of attaching the side

chain to 4-hydroxybenzoate derived from tyrosine. The adjunct consists of isoprene units made from mevalonate as precursor. Inhibition of mevalonate production by statin drugs lowered both myocardial (8) and serum CoQ10 (9) in dogs. CoQ10 disposal likely involves glucuronidation and excretion with bile and urine (10-12).

In mitochondrial electron transport, the CoQ10 redox couple acts as conduit for electrons, not as net electron donor or acceptor. For CoQ10 as free radical scavenger, the

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FOUR WAYS PURE BREED DOGS ARE UNIQUE

1. FACIAL AND JAW STRUCTURES



A dog's muzzle type can affect how it picks up kibble.

- **MESOCEPHALIC**

Muzzle longer than it is wide

Beagle, Cocker Spaniel, Labrador Retriever, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever

- **BRACHYCEPHALIC**

Short muzzle broad head

Beagle, Cocker Spaniel, Labrador Retriever, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever

2. BONES AND JOINTS



Pure breed dogs' bones and joints are affected in different ways.

- **DOGS WITH SHORTER LEGS**

Dachshunds put mechanical stress on the spine

- **POWERFUL AND ACTIVE DOGS**

Boxers put pressure on their bones and joints

3. SKIN TYPES



It is necessary to take an individualized approach to healthy skin care.

- **SENSITIVE SKIN**

German Shepherd and West Highland White Terrier's skin need greater care

- **WRINKLED AND FOLDED SKIN**

Pug and English Bulldog's skin traps more moisture and heat than other breeds

4. DISTINCTIVE COATS



From colour to texture, there's more to a coat than meets the eye.

- **CURLY COATS**

Poodle

- **CONTINUOUSLY GROWING COATS**

Shih Tzu

- **WATER-RESISTANT COATS**

Labrador Retriever

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- **SIZE**

Optimally designed for each breed's jaw and tongue size

- **TEXTURE**

Designed to break at different times as per breed's jaw strength

- **DENSITY**

Adapted to each breed's rate of ingestion

11 UNIQUE BREED FORMULAS, AND A REASON FOR EVERY ONE.

quinol form should donate electrons and the quinone generated should be disposed of by conjugation and excretion.

COQ10 SOURCES

For dog and cats, the CoQ10 sources are body synthesis and ingestion. Daily whole-body synthesis cannot be estimated. Concentrations of CoQ10 in finished petfood are unknown. Complete petfoods featuring CoQ10 do not declare the added amounts. Thus, supplemental CoQ10 cannot be played off quantitatively against endogenous synthesis and supply by the base petfood. In addition, absorption efficiencies of ingested CoQ10 sources may vary.

Food based on 50% corn and 30% poultry meal may contain 30 mg CoQ10/kg (14-16). For commercially manufactured crystalline CoQ10, the recommended maximum inclusion level is 100 mg/kg petfood (17). That dietary CoQ10 level roughly equals the dosage for a dog supplement (18), while some dogs with heart disease are prescribed twice as much (19).

SERUM COQ10

Oral administration of CoQ10 (equivalent to 600 and 90 mg/kg dry food) increased group-mean concentration of CoQ10 in



dogs' serum, but left the amounts in myocard (20) and gingiva (21) unchanged. Via daily oral gavage, dogs received capsules with crystalline ubiquinol dissolved in warmed corn oil (22). Administration of 150 mg/kg body weight.day (kg/ bw.d), or 898 mg/kg dry food, raised pre-dosing serum CoQ10 concentration into a new steady state within 7 weeks. No further increase was observed with higher doses of either dissolved (22) or undissolved CoQ10 (23). Ubiquinol and ubiquinone (600 mg/kg bw.d) produced similar serum CoQ10 concentrations (22).

Following single-gavage dosing of dissolved CoQ10, maximum serum concentration responded dose dependently (22). Higher, undissolved amounts provoked a dose-independent response (23). CoQ10 has low water solubility, implying limited intestinal absorption. After

oral administration of CoQ10, the area under the plasma concentration time curve was similar for a powder and oil-based preparation (24), but greater when applying an emulsifying carrier (25) or complexation with a cyclodextrin (26).

CARDIAC AND ANTIOXIDANT STATUS

In dogs with experimentally-induced congestive heart failure (CHF) or periodontitis, oral CoQ10 therapy did not (meaningfully) reduce end-diastolic volume (20) and gingivitis (21). Dogs with untreated CHF did not have lower serum CoQ10 concentrations and total antioxidant capacity (TAC) than healthy controls (27). A morning meal with CoQ10-cyclodextrin complex raised dogs' plasma CoQ10 during the day, but did not increase plasma TAC (28).

SAFETY

A 13-week toxicity study in dogs showed that the no-observed adverse-effect level for ubiquinol was more than 600 mg/kg bw.d (22). A follow-up study lasting 39 weeks showed that 1800 mg CoQ10/kg bw.d was safe also (23).

* List of references is available on request from the author (beynen@freeler.nl)



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