



# AMSCOPE

Newsletter of the AMERICAN MINIATURE SCHNAUZER CLUB  
January 2021 Volume 41 Issue 1

## What Do Dog Judges Expect of Exhibitors/Handlers?

by Narelle Hammond, Canine Construction and Conformation FB Group

A dog show is a competitive dog sport that involves the presentation of purebred dogs to be judged for conformity to their respective breed standards.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to present a good specimen of the breed, properly trained. After all, your dog is "On Show"! Bring your dog into the ring clean and groomed appropriately for the breed it represents. It is most displeasing to be presented with matted, smelly dogs with urine stains, dirty teeth, and long toenails.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to socialize the dog! Not at the dog show but at other training facilities before you get to the dog show. It is understandable that puppies might be jumpy, playful and/or nervous, and it is important that a judge always find the time to work with young dogs to make the show a positive experience for them. It is the adult dogs that shy or run from a judge that makes the day difficult and can be risky for a judge. Rarely will a puppy bite you, but scared adults are another story. Stop using Covid 19 as an excuse for baby puppies.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to make sure your dog goes to the toilet BEFORE you are to go into the ring. Baby Puppies excluded.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to be appropriately dressed to show the dog to its best. Be clean, neat, and presentable in the ring. Help your dog to not "blend in" to what you are wearing. Dress nicely but not as if it were a fashion show, wear comfortable, nice looking shoes appropriate for running. The dog should be the focal point, not you.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to be polite. You should be attentive to your dog and to the Judge. If you do not hear a judge's directions, politely ask that they be repeated. Do not just glare at the judge. Say "thank you" when you leave the ring. This can make a judge's day so much more pleasant.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to know the breed standard of the dog you are handling. If the Judge points out something you may or may not agree with about your dog, do not use social media to express your thoughts.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to be courteous to the stewards. An exhibitor should be ringside, WITH THEIR DOG, ready to walk in the ring when the steward calls them so that they are not wasting time waiting for you to run and get your dog, thus holding up the judging schedule. If you are late, accept that you may not be allowed to show. If you have a ring conflict, do not expect to be accommodated as if it were your right. You should know that it is up to the judge's discretion whether to hold up the class for you. Abide by what he/she says.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to not carry on a conversation about what the exhibit being examined has won recently, or why is it shy because it just came into the country. Save your breath, the dog judge will not be impressed.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to not sit outside the ring and make distracting noises or loud comments to try and sway the judge.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to not when in the ring, carry on a conversation with other exhibitors in or out of the ring.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to not crowd other exhibitors when gaiting as a group. Do not play with your dog when the judge is going over another dog! Keep other dogs, food, and screaming kids away from ringside.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to know the rules. It can be a very unpleasant experience to disqualify an exhibitor who claims, "no one told me that". A copy of the rules can be obtained from your controlling body at any time.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to be a sportsman, congratulate others when they win. If you win, do not be haughty or prideful, accept congratulations humbly.

Dog judges expect exhibitors/handlers to be mindful that the Dog judge is standing in the ring for up to 5 hours without a break, regardless of the weather conditions and whether the dog show is in

**The deadline  
for the February issue is  
January 8**

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Regular Classes: John P Wade  
Sweeps: Linda Drost

Montgomery County  
October 10, 2021

Regular Classes: Bruce Schwartz  
Sweeps: Tatiana Meyers

Roving – Northern Calif Terrier Assn  
April 16, 2022

Regular Classes: Marcia Feld  
Sweeps: Amy Gordon

Montgomery County  
October 9, 2022

Regular Classes: Bergit Coady-Kabel  
Sweeps: Cheryl Coffman

## Can Dogs Sniff Out COVID-19 in Humans?

Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

When it comes to scent detection, humans vs. canines, dogs win paws down. Science gauges the canine ability to detect smells at anywhere from 10,000 to 100,000 times greater than ours.

When you inhale through your nose, you use the same air passage to both breathe and smell. Your dog's superior nose, on the other hand, includes a fold of tissue that separates the two functions. Both human and dog noses contain bony turbinates, or plates, but inside a dog's nose is a microscopically small, spongy membrane containing the scent cells.

Like an accordion, if you could unfold all the crevices of this membrane, the total surface may be as large as 60 square inches.<sup>1</sup>

Dogs are such superior sniffers that they are trained to detect an incredible range of scents, including the odors of many disorders and diseases that afflict humans, the most recent of which is the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19.

In late September, the Helsinki Airport in Finland began a four-month trial program in which passengers are being tested for COVID-19 by coronavirus-sniffing dogs.

Operating on the theory that individuals who are ill smell differently than healthy people, researchers hope to prove that dogs are able to use their extraordinary sense of smell to identify people who've been exposed to SARS-CoV-2.

### Free, Noninvasive COVID Tests in Under a Minute

During the four-month trial, participation by travelers is voluntary and then remain anonymous. Each volunteer is given a swab that they wipe across their skin and then pass through an opening in a wall into a cup on the other side. A trained dog on the other side of the wall sniffs the sample and gives his handler a signal if he detects coronavirus. The wall-and-cup system is in place to keep passengers and dogs separated, as well as to protect handlers.

According to Anna Hielm-Björkman, a researcher at the University of Helsinki (who also happens to be a friend of mine), the dogs have been trained to sniff each sample

in under 10 seconds, and the test (which is free) takes less than a minute of a traveler's time.<sup>2</sup>

Passengers with positive sniff tests are directed to a health information point located at the airport, however, all passengers are encouraged to take a standard coronavirus test following the sniff test, not only to validate the dogs' findings, but also so the researchers can monitor their overall accuracy. The risk of infection to the dogs is almost nonexistent, since the swabs are passed through the hole in the wall and volunteers have no direct contact with the animals.

The dogs are also being trained to **detect odors** at a distance and will be monitored and tested for antibodies throughout the duration of the trial.

### COVID-Sniffing Dogs vs. Laboratory Test Equipment

Sixteen dogs were trained for the Helsinki program, with four of the 16 — all of different breeds — put to work initially. Of the remaining 12, six dogs were still in training when the program launched, and six others weren't determined unable to work in a noisy airport environment. The goal is to have four dogs onsite during each shift, with two dogs working and the other two resting.

The accuracy of the dogs' ability to detect COVID-19 is encouraging. Preliminary tests conducted by veterinary researchers at the University of Helsinki suggest dogs are able to detect the virus with nearly 100% certainty, days before symptoms appear.<sup>3</sup>

Existing lab tests can't detect the virus as early as the dogs are able to, and in addition, the dogs require a much smaller sample than PCR tests use. Incredibly, while the dogs need just 10 to 100 molecules to identify the virus, lab test equipment requires 18,000,000 molecules!

Almost all the Helsinki sniffer dogs have done scent detection work in the past; how long it takes each dog to learn to identify the virus depends on his or her background. Kössi, an 8-year-old

**COVID-19...cont'd on p.3**

## COVID-19...from p. 2

Greyhound mix with lots of previous experience identifying biological samples, learned to identify the scent in just seven minutes.

### Other Countries Testing COVID-Sniffing Canines

While the Helsinki trial is bigger and farther along, many other countries are also exploring the possibilities for canine coronavirus testing. According to Time.com:<sup>4</sup>

- In the U.K., scientists and other experts at Durham University, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and the nonprofit Medical Detection Dogs are working collaboratively on a government-funded study to test dogs' ability to [detect COVID-19](#). The goal is to train and deploy coronavirus-sniffing dogs at schools, airports and other public places to reinforce existing nasal swab testing programs.

- A similar pilot training program at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine was announced in May of this year.<sup>5</sup>

- A team of researchers in France collected a small number of samples from people who were positive for COVID-19 based on PCR tests and found that sniffer dogs could detect the virus using armpit sweat swabs.<sup>6</sup>

- In Germany, researchers conducted a small pilot study with trained coronavirus-sniffing dogs that showed the dogs were able to distinguish between coronavirus-positive samples and a control group with an average sensitivity rate of 83% and a specificity rate of 96% after just a week of training.<sup>7</sup>

While the dogs' rates aren't quite as accurate as rates for rapid antigen tests for COVID-19, the sniffer tests require no uncomfortable nasal swabbing and results are returned in seconds vs. about 15 minutes.

Australia and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) are also running coronavirus sniffer dog pilot programs.

# Puppy Cognition the Making of a Brilliant Canine Mind

By [Sharon Albright, DVM, CCRT](#)

Cognition is described as the ability to use perception, memory, attention, and reasoning to assimilate information into knowledge and understanding. Scientists now know that a single construct such as general intelligence does not adequately explain the variation seen in cognitive abilities within and between species such as humans and dogs.

The AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) and its donors have invested in ground-breaking research to explore the cognitive abilities of our canine companions – particularly those that work closely with us as detection dogs, service dogs, assistance dogs, and more.

With funding from [CHF Grant 1995: Understanding the Flexibility and Limitations of How Dogs Acquire Knowledge and Understanding: Application to Service Dog Emotional Health and Selection](#), investigators examined dogs' temperamental and cognitive traits and how they might be used to predict an individual dog's chance of success as a service or detection dog.<sup>1</sup> Successful service dogs were more likely to engage in eye contact with the human tester when faced with an unsolvable task or when social interaction was interrupted and scored higher on inferential reasoning tasks.

Successful detection dogs scored higher on tests of sensitivity to human gestures and short-term memory. Investigators also showed that existing cognitive and temperament tests can help predict success in these working roles.

This research is critical to improving the training and selection process for working dogs. Which cognitive traits predict success in various working roles? How can we use each dog's cognitive style to maximize their learning? At what age do these cognitive traits first appear and when are they fully developed? Are these traits stable over the dog's lifetime or do they change throughout puppyhood, adolescence, and maturity?

With funding from [CHF Grant 02518: The Effects of Early Life Experience on Working Dog Temperament and Cognition](#), investigators are collaborating with Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) to explore these issues in young puppies.

The latest research results published in *Animal Behaviour*<sup>2</sup> describe the cognitive characteristics of 8- to 10-week-old puppies whelped at the CCI headquarters in Santa Rosa, CA, or in volunteer breeder caretaker homes. The puppies stayed with their dam and littermates until approximately 8 weeks of age. At that age, they received veterinary care at the CCI headquarters before going to individual puppy raiser homes. It was at

this time that each puppy completed the Dog Cognitive Development Battery – a series of 14 tasks completed over three days in a 45-minute session each day. Results represent the first description of cognitive skills in such a large group of puppies at this young age.

*For a full description of the Dog Cognitive Development Battery, including task descriptions and detailed results, see Table 1.*

Results demonstrate that by 8 to 10 weeks of age, puppies show perceptual discrimination and memory after short delays. They exhibit social communicative skills, flexible thinking, and self-control, but all to lesser degrees than adult dogs. Investigators conclude that dogs appear to be biologically programmed for communication with humans and that these skills show up early in development. Since many of these traits are linked to success in various working dog roles, we can study the stability of these traits over time and how they correlate with ultimate success in a working role. The AKC Canine Health Foundation and its donors continue to support ground-breaking research like this to help us better understand and better care for our closest animal companions. Learn more at [www.akcchf.org](http://www.akcchf.org).

Table 1: Summary of the Dog Cognitive Development Battery and results published in *Animal Behaviour*<sup>2</sup>

### Task Description and Results

#### Retrieval

This task evaluated a puppy's willingness to cooperatively engage in fetch with a human partner. All puppies had a tendency to chase and pick up the ball, which matches results from previous studies, even those involving a non-retriever breed, the German Shepherd Dog.

#### Laterality

Investigators tracked paw preference when the puppy was stepping on or off of a platform. This left or right-handedness is believed to reflect lateralization within the brain and has been linked to temperamental reactivity in adult dogs. Half of the tested puppies showed a significant preference for one side, although left and right were not statistically different.

#### Human interest

This task tested a puppy's desire to attend to a human that spoke to them. Puppies spent approximately 6 seconds looking at the human's face during each 30 second trial and approximately 18 seconds looking at the human's face during each 30 second play break.

**Canine Mind..cont'd on p. 4**

## Canine Mind..from p. 3

### Cylinder

a. Inhibitory control: This task tested a puppy's ability to defer immediate reward and make a choice that would ultimately be more productive. A food reward was placed behind a plastic barrier. To be successful, puppies had to defer the natural choice of moving directly toward the treat and instead go around the barrier to reach the food reward. Both transparent and opaque barriers were tested. Puppies went directly around the barrier approximately half of the repetitions. They were more successful if the barrier was opaque. If the barrier was transparent, they would spend more time bumping into the barrier attempting to get the visible food reward before learning to go around.b. Cognitive flexibility: This task tested a puppy's response when a previously preferred solution was no longer available. The food reward was placed behind an opaque barrier and the side to which each puppy preferentially went around in the inhibitory control task was blocked with clear plastic. To be successful, the puppy had to go to the *other* side of the barrier. Most tested puppies demonstrated a strong preference to go left versus right. When that side was blocked, they went directly to the open side approximately 33% of the time. Puppies with the strongest side preference performed the worst when that side was blocked. For both of these tests, older puppies solved the problem faster than younger puppies. However, the tests did not discriminate if they were faster at problem solving or if they were simply able to move faster around the barrier once they did realize the solution.

### Unsolvable task

This task tested a puppy's inclination to persist at an unsolvable problem versus looking to a nearby human for help. Food reward was placed inside a clear, locked container. During each 30 second trial, tested puppies spent an average of only 1 second looking at the nearby human's face and an average of 13 seconds trying to manipulate the container. This agrees with results from previous studies demonstrating that young puppies do orient to humans for assistance, but not as much as adult dogs.

### Gesture use

These tasks tested a puppy's ability to use various communicative cues to find hidden reward. For each task, the examiner showed the puppy a food reward, but the puppy's view was blocked while the food was hidden in one of two possible containers. The puppy was then able to see both containers and was given one of the following cues.a. Communicative marker: The examiner obviously placed a yellow block next to the cup containing a hidden food reward. Tested puppies used this cue approximately 75% of the repetitions, performing better than expected by chance.b. Arm pointing: The examiner obviously looked at and pointed to the cup containing food. Tested puppies again performed better than expected by chance and used the arm pointing gesture in approximately 70% of the repetitions.c. Odor

control: No cue was given from the examiner. Tested puppies chose the cup containing food reward as expected by random chance. This indicated that smelling the food reward in the cup did not influence their response to the communicative marker or arm pointing.

### Novel object

This task tested a puppy's response to an unfamiliar object – in this case, a motion-activated, motorized stuffed cat. Puppy reactions varied along the spectrum of shy to bold.

### Working memory

This task tested a puppy's ability to recall the location of a hidden food reward after various periods of time. Tested puppies performed better than expected by chance at 5 and 10 second intervals. Only one third of the puppies did well enough at these time intervals to attempt 15 and 20 second delays. Again, the puppies tested at these longer intervals performed better than expected by chance.

### Discrimination

a. Visual: Puppies chose which of two hidden plates contained a food reward after watching the examiner place kibble on one of them.b. Auditory: Puppies chose which of two hidden metal bowls contained a food reward after hearing the examiner drop kibble into one of them.c. Odor: Puppies chose which of two rubber tubes contained a food reward after sniffing two similar tubes. The ends of the tubes were stuffed with cotton to prevent the kibble from being visible or moving around to create a sound. Tested puppies performed better than expected by chance in each of these tasks. Visual discrimination was the most successful, followed by olfactory, then auditory.

### Surprising events

This task evaluated a puppy's reaction to a series of unexpected and potentially startling events: a large trash bag stuffed with shredded paper was tossed in front of the puppy, an umbrella was opened toward the puppy, and a piece of sheet metal was shaken (making sound and pulses of air) near the puppy. Similar to the novel object task, individual responses and recovery rates varied.

### References:

1. MacLean EL and Hare BA. (2018) Enhanced Selection of Assistance and Explosive Detection Dogs Using Cognitive Measures. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*. 5:236. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2018.00236>
2. Bray, E. E., Gruen, M. E., Gnanadesikan, G. E., Horschler, D. J., Levy, K. M., Kennedy, B. S., Hare, B. A., & MacLean, E. L. (2020). Cognitive characteristics of 8- to 10-week-old assistance dog puppies. *Animal Behaviour*. 166, 193–206. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anbehav.2020.05.019>

## What Your Pet Needs Most During a Lockdown

Analysis by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker

Many experts believe — and volumes of emerging data are proving — that the multitude of problems caused by COVID-19-related lockdowns are resulting in far more human misery, both short- and long-term, than the virus itself. The following are just a few of Dr. Mercola's articles on the subject that reference a growing body of evidence of the devastating psychological effects of lockdowns:

• [Coping With COVID-19 Related Stress](#)

• [Survey Says One-Third Are Depressed or Anxious](#)

• [COVID Has Increased Cases of Broken Heart Syndrome](#)

• [Effects of COVID on Children](#)

Unfortunately, as of this writing there's little good news to share on this front, with one important exception for those of us with animal companions. According to the results of a recently published U.K. study, sharing a home with a pet appears to act as a buffer against psychological stress during lockdown.<sup>1</sup> In fact, most of the survey respondents believed their pets were a source of considerable support.

### Pets Help Their Humans Cope Emotionally With Lockdowns

The study was conducted by researchers at the University of York and the University of Lincoln. Estimates are that 40% of U.K. households include at least one pet. Around 90% of the 6,000 U.K. survey participants had at least one pet, including cats, dogs, small mammals and fish. The study results showed that the strength of the bond the people shared with their animal companions wasn't determined by the type of pet involved.

*"We ... discovered that in this study, the strength of the emotional bond with pets did not statistically differ by animal species, meaning that people in our sample felt on average as emotionally close to, for example, their guinea pig as they felt to their dog,"* said lead author Dr. Elena Ratschen from the University of York Department of Health Sciences.<sup>2</sup>

Over 90% of respondents reported that their pet helped them cope emotionally with the lockdown and 96% said their pet helped keep them fit and active. Interestingly, the study also showed that the most prevalent interaction with animals that were not pets was

cont'd on p. 5...**LOCKDOWN**

## LOCKDOWN...from p. 4

birdwatching. Almost 55% of those surveyed reported watching and feeding birds in their garden.

Not surprisingly, 68% of pet owners worried about their animals during lockdown due to lack of access to veterinary care or exercise, or because they were concerned about becoming ill and having no one to care for their pet.

*“Findings from this study also demonstrated potential links between people’s mental health and the emotional bonds they form with their pets: measures of the strength of the human-animal bond were higher among people who reported lower scores for mental health-related outcomes at baseline,”* said Ratschen.

Study co-author Professor Daniel Mills from the University of Lincoln School of Life Sciences made the very important point that while companion animals provide a buffer against some of the psychological stress associated with lockdowns, the needs of pets must also be considered. Not doing so, said Mills, “can have a detrimental effect for both people and their pets.”

Ratschen cautioned that while the study shows pet ownership may mitigate some of the negative psychological effects of lockdowns, these findings are “unlikely to be of clinical significance,” and further, should not be interpreted to suggest that people get a pet to protect their mental health during the pandemic.

### Caution: Your Stress Can Be Transmitted to Your Dog

While pets often function as little stress-relief valves for their humans, it’s important to recognize that our animal companions can pick up on our anxiety and suffer as a result. In fact, according to recently published research, long-term stress in dog parents can transfer to their canine companions.<sup>3</sup>

The study, conducted in Sweden, involved 58 owners of either Border Collies or Shetland Sheepdogs. Researchers analyzed **cortisol** levels in hair from both the owners and their dogs. Cortisol is a hormone released into the bloodstream in response to stressors and is ultimately absorbed by and can be measured in hair follicles.

The researchers discovered that the cortisol level patterns in the owners and their dogs closely matched in both winter and summer months, which suggests their stress levels were in synch.

The scientists haven’t yet determined exactly what causes the synching, however, the effect appears stronger between owners of **competitive dogs** than between

owners of regular family dogs. According to study co-author Lina Roth of Linköping University, the bond that develops between an owner and a competitive dog during training may intensify the dog’s emotional reliance on the owner, which in turn could increase the degree of cortisol synchronization.<sup>4</sup>

The study authors believe owners influence their dogs vs. the other way around, because certain human personality traits (e.g., neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness) appear to affect canine cortisol levels. In addition, it’s possible this mostly one-way influence is because dog owners are the proverbial “center of the universe” to their pets, whereas humans generally have broader social networks.

However, Alicia Buttner, the director of animal behavior with the Nebraska Humane Society, believes we don’t have enough evidence yet to assume the influence only goes one way.

*“It’s not just as simple as owner gets stressed, dog gets stressed,”* she told STAT News.<sup>5</sup>

There are multiple factors that affect both human and canine stress levels, some of which can actually alleviate stress rather than cause it. Cortisol levels aren’t always a measure of negative stress. In dogs, they can also be in response to positive stressors, such as a **ride in the car** or a hike in the mountains.

The Linköping University researchers hope to follow up this study with an investigation into how other dog breeds react to their owners as measured by their cortisol levels. In the meantime, since dogs who play more show fewer signs of stress, Roth suggests dog parents “just be with your dog and have fun.”

### Helping Your Dog Manage Stress

If you have your own fenced-in backyard, take advantage of it while you’re stuck at home by inviting your dog to join you in some interactive play. Throw a ball for her, or a Frisbee. Play a game of tug or chase her around the grass. Even feeding your dog outside can be a welcome change for both of you. Train your dog to enjoy interactive food toys; learn animal massage.

Also, long walks or a hike during which you let her sniff anything and everything can **dramatically reduce your dog’s heart rate** and stress level. Getting outside for some fresh air and exercise will be very beneficial for both of you, as long as you can do it safely.

Exercise really is one of the top ways you can naturally and effectively help manage your dog’s stress, and dogs need a lot of it, so daily walks, runs or outdoor play sessions will go a long way in helping

them cope with internal anxiety. A couple of indoor games and activities that can help keep your dog mentally stimulated:

•**Flirt stick** — Also called a **flirt pole**, it’s a simple pole or handle with a length of rope tied to one end, and a toy attached to the far end of the rope. You can buy one or make your own homemade version, just be sure to use regular rope and not flexible or bungee cord.

Flirt sticks appeal to the prey drive in dogs, and they’re a fun way to exercise your pet in your backyard (or in the house if you have the space or your dog is small) without overly exerting yourself. The game is simple — you drag the toy on the ground in a circle, and she chases and tugs at it.

The flirt stick can be a fun way to help your dog with basic commands like sit, down, look, wait, take it, leave it, and drop it. It’s also useful for helping her practice listening while in a state of high arousal and cooling down immediately on command.

•**Nose work with treats** — Your dog, like all dogs, has an incredible sense of smell, so teaching her to find treats using only her nose is wonderful stimulation for her. Place four or five boxes or opaque containers on the ground upside down and next to each other. Place a treat under one of the containers while she isn’t looking, then bring her to the boxes and encourage her to smell them.

When she (hopefully) stops at the one containing the treat, lift up the box, praise her enthusiastically, and let her eat the treat. Keep adding more boxes and place them farther apart to increase the challenge as your dog’s **nose work** abilities improve.





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