



Wags and Purrs Comfort Corner

New Year Resolutions for Pets



New Year, new you, as the saying goes. This is the time of year when people set their New Year's resolutions, hoping to take advantage of a fresh start but have you considered adding resolutions for your pet?

There are many ways to incorporate good habits for your pet and give them the best start to the new year.

A healthy diet and optimal weight are the best foundation for overall wellness. Start this year by accessing your pet's weight and diet. Be sure you are giving your pet a high quality, balanced diet for the proper stage of the pet's life. If your pet is putting on a few extra pounds, adding an extra walk or exercise can help keep them in tiptop shape. As much as we love to spoil our pets, overindulging in treats isn't good for a pet's health or waistline. Our articles on pet diets include [The Truth about Veterinarian Prescription Diets](#), [Grain Free Pet Foods](#), and [Nutritional Wellness for Cats](#).

A bored pet can be a destructive pet and continuous boredom may lead to possible behavior problems. If you notice your pet is starting to get into things, destroy the toilet paper roll or bark

Health Tip for the Season

Those cute little eyes staring up at you as you take a bite of your food really pulls on the heart strings, and wow, do our pets know how to use those eyes.

As much as it pains us, we shouldn't be sharing every bite we put in our mouths with our pets and doing so can cause our pets to pack on the pounds.

If you've fallen victim to those eyes one too many times and you notice your pet has put on some extra weight, now is the time to act. To help a pet lose weight, watch their calorie intake and even measure a certain amount of food per meal. Treats are great training tools but should be used sparingly.

Training Tip for the Season

Start the new year off right with a basic obedience training refresher course for your pet.

obsessively, they may be bored. Try incorporating mental stimulation into your pet's routine. Our article [Mental Stimulation for Pets](#) is chock full of a fun ideas for all types and ages of pets!

Pets love to get outside, explore and learn new things. Walks are a great way to exercise and get mental stimulation from sniffing and interacting with their environment. However, if you want to add a new zing to your pet's exercise routine, you could always try agility training. You may think agility training requires a ton of money, but that's not true. In our article [At Home Agility Fun](#) we show you how you can build your very own course with things already around your home.

Start the year out right with a wellness exam for your pet. Adult dogs should get a wellness check once a year and senior dogs need their exam twice a year. A wellness exam includes an overall health assessment, blood tests, urinalysis, and parasite screening. Also take the time to ask your veterinarian any questions you may have on your mind. If your pet doesn't have a regular veterinarian, our article [Is Your Vet the Best for You and Your Pet?](#) gives tips on how to go about choosing the best vet for you and your pet.

Speaking of pet wellness, did you know dental health is the most often overlooked form of preventive care for our pets? Neglected dental health could lead to much bigger health problems like diabetes and heart disease. To get information on pet dental care and even a few pointers, our article [Pet Dental Health](#) is a good place to start!

The new year is the best time to start new routines and habits and including our best friends gives the whole family a head start to health and happiness in the new year!

For their own safety, all pets should know the basic commands of sit, stay, come and leave it. The more often a command is given the more likely a pet will remember, and it's always good to make a point to refresh your pet's memory with commands they may not use as frequently.

[Pet Sitter Tip for the Season](#)

In our last newsletter we reminded all of our readers to update your pet's license in the county of your residence and to update any changed information. Now that the beginning of the year is here, you should have all new tags. Make sure replace all old tags with the new ones before the beginning of the year. All pets being taken out for a walk must have a current license and rabies tag on them. A pet found to be outside without proper licensing and rabies tags could result in hefty fines for the pet parent.

Featured Organization of the Month



C.A.R.T

The Westmoreland/Fayette/Allegheny County Animal Response Team (CART) is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to helping animals in times of disaster or emergency. Every County has a CART, which operates under the guidance of the State Animal Response Team (SART). CART Members come from all walks of life but share a love for animals, and are trained, credentialed emergency response officials. CART has two primary missions. The first is temporary sheltering for animals displaced by emergencies or disasters, such as fires, floods, extreme weather, etc. Like the Red Cross, which opens temporary shelters for people who have had to evacuate their home, CART can quickly set up a temporary animal shelter for animals displaced as a result of a disaster or emergency. It is critically important that when people must evacuate their home that they take their pets with them, and CART can give them peace of mind knowing that there is a safe place for their pets to go while they are in a temporary shelter for people. CART does not just deal with small animals like dogs, cats, reptiles, birds, etc., but can also, if need be during a disaster, arrange temporary sheltering for large animals such as horses as well as livestock. CART can also provide "Pet Care Comfort Kits" of supplies for people who may have lost everything in a disaster.

CART's other main mission is technical rescue, and that generally involves the use of specialized equipment to rescue animals that have somehow gotten themselves "stuck." Just a few of the technical rescues CART has conducted include the rescue of horses stuck in mud or cast in a trailer or stall, the extrication of a calf that had fallen into an abandoned mine shaft, a cat in a wall, and a dog in a sewer line. While all CART Members have completed extensive training, those serving on the Large Animal Team are required to complete specialized large animal technical rescue training due to the dangers involved when dealing with large animals such as horses or livestock, as well as the need to be proficient in the use of specialized rescue equipment.

CART is generally called out through 911 or by other First Responders or the Red Cross. While CART is not authorized to enforce animal cruelty laws, it can be called out to assist Humane Officers or Police for such things as animal hoarding situations. Also, while CART does not normally deal with wildlife, it can provide assistance to the Game Commission or Wildlife Centers by transporting injured wildlife.

CART is especially proud of its Pet Oxygen Mask Program. Program Sponsors provide funding for the purchase of special pet oxygen masks, and CART then distributes the masks to fire departments and other first responders, and also provides them with training on the masks as well as pet first aid and CPR. To date

CART has been able to provide over 370 sets of pet oxygen masks to over 125 fire departments or other emergency response organizations.

More information about CART, including how to become a CART Member, sponsor pet oxygen masks, make a monetary donation, or donate items for our Pet Care Comfort Kits, can be found on CART's website: <http://westmorelandcart.weebly.com/>

You can also find information about recent incidents, activities, etc. on CART's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WFACART.PA/>

During the month of July, Comfort at Home Pet Services will be collecting donations of blankets, beds, toys, food bowls, cat litter, crates and blankets for CART's Pet Care & Comfort Kits. If you have a donation, please mark it CART and leave it out during your Comfort at Home Pet Services visit. If you need to schedule a pick up of items, contact Jen Sybol.

January Birthdays



These pets will be celebrating a birthday in the month of January!

Multiple Karelitz
Penelope_Katz
Lucy Kirby
Tucker Griffith
Louie Howard
Basil Fitchwell
Butterfly Fitchwell
Phoebe Smith
Bella Favocci
Truman Kearns
Maya Delaney

Happy Birthday, all! Paw-ty hard!

Healthy Homemade Treats for the Season

Ginger Snaps Dog Treats

Ingredients:

- 4 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup freshly shredded ginger
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup molasses
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

In a large bowl, combine flour, ginger, cinnamon and honey. Stir until combined.

Add water, olive oil and molasses. Knead dough until stiff. Roll out on a floured surface to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut with cookie cutter and place on non-stick cookie sheets.

Bake for 20-25 minutes.



Cheese Cookies for Cats

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup cheddar cheese
- 5 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup plain yogurt
- 3/4 cup white flour
- 1/4 cup cornmeal

Directions:

Combine all ingredients. Add a small amount of water as needed to form dough. Knead into a ball. Roll to 1/4 inch. Cut into small cookies using a small cutter or just cut into small squares.

Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes on greased baking sheet.



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