

Down Dog Digest

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How to harness your dog's superpower And fire them out!

What on earth? Gus was sniffing around my feet in a very focused concentrated way. He lay down, nose beside my feet and pushed up against the settee.



I struggled up and peered under the settee beside Gus. Near the back was a small dot of something. After some heaving and pushing, I managed to move the settee away to find one, lone piece of kibble, which Gus then gobbled.

What an amazing thing your dog's nose is. Our noses are pretty good. Smells evoke all sorts of memories, both good and bad. We smell gas from a leak or smoke from a fire, so escape from danger. We feel pleasure from smells such as new-mown grass, blossom, chocolate, or that gorgeous puppy smell.

Smells are important to us, but for dogs they are the centre of their lives. Smell is the most important sense for our dogs, followed by hearing and vision a poor second. For us, vision

is our main sense, then hearing, with smell near the bottom. All dogs have sniffing abilities that totally exceed our puny nasal detection systems. It's like comparing COVID vaccine scientists to cavemen.

Recently I sent a parcel of my books to the south of Ireland to a client and friend. She has a lovely collie called Laoise who I am very fond of. I handled the books to write in them, then parcel them up and post them. Ten days later they arrived. Here's Sandra to take up the story:

"The envelope with your books arrived, yesterday afternoon. I placed it onto my desk to re-pack the next day, add some things for the puppy and the family and then take the re-packed goodies to the post office.



Before closing my office, I took the books out of the envelope, left them amongst other work stuff on the desk and closed the door as we sat in the living room with the fire for the rest of the evening.

How to harness your dog's superpower

When we came into the office this morning, Laoise stopped in the doorway and immediately started air-scenting, she walked straight to my desk, nose in the air, put both paws on the table top and sniffed every pile of paper I had there. She found the books and tried to pull them off the table, tail wagging, happily jumping about like a loony.

She then checked all rooms downstairs, nose in the air.

She thought you came to visit, I am sure.

How good is this, considering through how many hands the envelope has gone and in how many places it has been since you posted it!?

Wow, wow and wow!!!!"

On walks, your dog continually sniffs the air, the ground, and nearby objects to learn what is happening around it. Sometimes your dog will take their time, at others they'll be dashing about and whirling around like tornados. Spaniel owners will know exactly what I'm talking about, but all dogs do it to a greater or lesser extent.

Dogs sniff to find out what messages other dogs have left – they spend walks reading their 'pee-mail'.



But your dog doesn't need to go online to find out what's happening locally. As soon as he walks out of the door and takes that first big sniff, he knows your next-door neighbour burned their dinner last night, that the boy three houses down has abandoned a half-eaten sandwich under his bed which is going mouldy, that a cat is hiding under a bush across the road, and that the postman is currently

three streets away.

Here at Down Dog we love teaching scent work games and recommend simple scent games to our clients all the time. I've put four simple games on the back page of this newsletter for you to try.

Scent games tire dogs out far more thoroughly and quickly than physical exercise and are far more satisfying (and safer) than repeatedly chasing a ball or walking for miles. They can be used to increase excitement in lazy couch potatoes. Scent games will also calm overaroused, excited hounds.

That's why we started a new, different type of training - our Nose Nerds membership. This training will help you uncover the untapped potential in your dog's abilities - and you and your dog will have immense fun together. Turn to the back page to find out more.

Teaching the dog to use his nose is easy. Observe your dog to become familiar with their sniffing technique. Watch their head movements, changes in body posture, tail position, wag speed, their signs of focus, and changes in sniffing intensity and pattern.

Here's some simple scent games you can play:

1. Make your own scent box by filling a cardboard box with scrunpled up waste paper and scatter treats in for your dog to snuffle out.
2. Play hide and seek with your dog's favourite toy, by hiding it around the house, or dropping it into long grass when out on walks.
3. Lay out a few towels around the room and have a Kong hunt by hiding a Kong under one of them for your dog to find.
4. Drag a piece of yummy food (ham, chicken, sausage) along the ground for around 5-10 paces then let your dog track to find and eat the food at the end.

You can learn more about your dogs superpower and about Nose Nerds through a free webinar here: <https://www.downdog.co.uk/Nosework>

How does your dog smell?

Some fascinating facts

“My dog has no nose”

“How does he smell?”

“Awful.”

Couldn't resist that old joke! But dogs noses are truly incredible. Did you know:

- Dogs can wiggle their nostrils separately, we can't (bet you're now trying!)
- The dog's brain is mainly dedicated to smell with up to 300 million scent receptors
- Your dog's scent processing hub in the brain is 40x larger than yours

Your dog's nose is their scent detection machine. Every dog's nose print is individual and unique (like our fingerprints).

Just like us, dogs detect smells from breathing in – but did you know that dogs actually breathe in and out at the same time? As they inhale air through their nostrils, they expel stale air through the slits at the side of their nose.

A dog's sense of smell is between 10,000 and 100,000x more sensitive than yours and often more powerful than the best scientific instruments. Dogs can detect odours at concentrations nearly 100 million times lower than we humans can.

Dogs can detect one dirty sock in a pile of two million clean ones, or one drop of blood in five quarts of water, or a teaspoon of sugar in two Olympic sized swimming pools.

They can detect tobacco wrapped in 27 layers of polythene, or locate termites demolishing the foundations of a house, or pinpoint gas leaks in pipes buried deep underground.

They can track escaped criminals or lost children and save lives by finding people buried deep under avalanches, or lost on mountains.

Dogs' olfactory systems responded most positively to scents associated with their people. Dogs react differentially to the smells of people according to their emotional states and health.

Dogs are used to detect psychosis in children and adults, predict epileptic fits, in alerting diabetics and in detecting cancer.

Medical Detection dogs are currently working for people with:

- Type 1 diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (PoTS)
- Addisons Disease
- Severe allergies
- Other endocrine disorders

Medical Detection dogs also work in cancer detection and early detection of neurological diseases such as Parkinsons disease. There's some early work on malaria detection, showing promising results with a 73% detection rate, and on bacterial infection as well as more recently dogs being trained to detect COVID in passengers entering the UK.

The cancer work is based on the fact that cancer cells emit different metabolic waste products than normal cells. The differences between these metabolic products can be detected by a dog's keen sense of smell, even in the early stages of disease.



A trained dog's ability to correctly identify or rule-out lung, breast, prostate and colorectal cancer, at both early and late stages, is over 90%, often 98%.

With my medical background, as The Doggy Doctor, it's obvious why this is the charity Down Dog has chosen to support – and you can help! More on this overleaf...

Carol's Challenge

Each month I'm going to set you a challenge. This month your challenge, should you wish to accept it, is: to have fun with scent work.

- Watch your dog sniffing and marvel at their amazing superpower
- Play the scent games described on page 2

If you and your dog enjoy those, why not become a Down Dog Nose Nerd?

Our Nose Nerds programme takes you and your dog from novice newbies to become special scent agents.

You'll learn about different types of nose work activities through a wide range of fun games and training exercises, all with downloadable PDFs for you to keep and build your own library.

You can work at your own pace through the skill levels with your dog, solving many mysteries and crimes together as you go.

You'll learn how to teach your dog to find different items in all sorts of locations, indoor, outdoor, cars searches, and building searches, train them to find particular scents, and coach your dog to track and find people.

There are monthly webinars to increase your theoretical and practical knowledge and answer questions, and private Whats App and Facebook groups where you can meet up with other Nose Nerds and share the fun.

You'll have a lot of fun and you'll gain:

- A better relationship with your dog

- Respect for your dog's amazing superpower
- An optimistic, enthusiastic dog and
- A tired, happy dog

Here's what one owner says:

"Phoebe is a BIG fan of anything nose work related so we have so much fun working through the activities. They've also been a great reminder of how beneficial nose work is for everyday training, especially when we're out and about on our walk.

And the best part? I have a very satisfied and content pupper afterwards!"



You can find all the details, together with some free games and PDFs, and sign up for Nose Nerds membership in our online Training Academy, at <https://online.downdog.co.uk>

It costs just a small monthly fee and, best of all, 10% of all Nose Nerds profits go to support Medical Detection Dogs in their wonderful work.

Come and join us. Your dog will thank you!

We hope you've enjoyed this Down Dog Digest.

Please feel free to share it with any friends, neighbours or family members you think might find it interesting.

To get more information, tips, and advice about owning, training, caring for and enjoying your dog more, become a Down Dog Devotee. You'll get these regular newsletters sent to your home. You'll also get access to our huge range of training tips, videos, information sheets, webinars and podcasts as well as access to our Discussion Forum where you can ask any doggy related questions you need answers to. You get big discounts off all of our online and in-person classes too.

Go to the website, www.downdog.co.uk, to find out more.