

DOG LIFE

My dog is a spaz

■ BY HARRY KALAJIAN

Why is my dog a spaz? Was he born that way? Did I as an owner cause that? Dogs are not domesticated animals; rather, we as owners domesticate them. If not taught or guided and simply left on their own, they would poop, pee, chew and destroy your home. They don't know better; it's their nature. Owners need to teach and guide their dogs to behave, and not allow them to act like wild animals. That is why obedience training is needed.

What you show or allow your dog to do from day one is what's going to be projected later. If you want a spaz of a dog that's hyper, then excite it whenever you're with it. If you wish to have a calmer dog, then do the reverse. After a few months a hyperactive dog's behavior becomes too much, and it's annoying. At that point the owner tries to calm the dog down, but that doesn't work, so the owner decides to burn the dog's energy off by taking it to the dog park. Big mistake. Why? All that is doing is increasing the dog's craziness for play and not addressing the issue.

After a few times at the dog park, your dog is whining, jumping and spazzing out all over the place when you head back there again. And when you just want to go for a walk, your dog will start pulling every time for any number of reasons, especially when it sees another dog. In Fido's mind its play, play, play. If you allow Fido to go say hello, you don't know how the other dog is going to react. What if the



other dog doesn't like Fido's jumping behavior and decides to bite? Now Fido will have two thoughts for the next encounter: either to be aggressive or very submissive. Any true professional will tell you dog parks are not good. In reality, people go there to mingle with other people, and not so much for the dog's benefit. Yes, the dogs run around, but most people aren't even paying attention to their dogs.

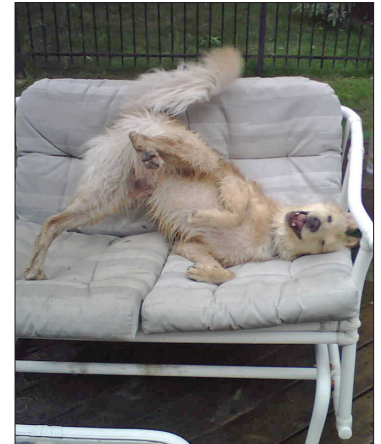
From day one, socialize your dog with other dogs and people. If you mentally challenge your dog through play or training, it will have a positive outcome – especially for the dog's spaziness. Constructive mental stimulation is better for your dog than a trip to the dog park. Take Fido for a walk,

spend time with him, and let him have an opportunity to sniff around. (Remember, you bought the dog to keep you company and for you to spend time with it.) When Fido gets home, he will be content and less spazzy. Take your dog to a training school, and you both will benefit. You will be happy to go for walks without having your dog drag you out the door. Those dogs that you see that are well behaved, happy and content are always spending time with the owner either in play, training or walks.

The same is true for police or military dogs that spend countless hours with their handlers for mental stimulation in working, playing, training and more. Many of them go home with their handlers, and those dogs enjoy their time in the home. Ask yourself this: Do you see those working dogs that are well behaved, happy and content at dog parks? No.

What you instill and allow from day one will be projected later on. Spend quality time with Penny. Train her, play with her, socialize her with people and other dogs, and always try to take her to different environments. Just as kids become hyper and unfocused when you take them to the playground, so too do dogs become hyper when you take them to the dog park.

Also, don't allow Fido or Penny to pull you when you are out walking together. That is a form of disrespect, just as it is if two people are walking together but one is always way ahead. Harmony is when you both are walk-



ing side by side.

Training isn't hard as long as you are willing to put in the time and follow my formula for success: patience, persistence, consistency & repetition. If you still fail, it's on you and not your dog. You didn't stick to the formula.

*Harry Kalajian M.D.T.,
behaviorist, ethologist
& psychologist,
has over 32 years of experience
in all aspects of training.
Executive Dog Training Inc.
941-447-8234
executivedogtraining.com*