

# Almost Home Foundation

# PAW PRINTS

ALMOST HOME  
FOUNDATION 

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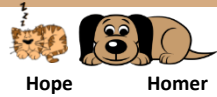
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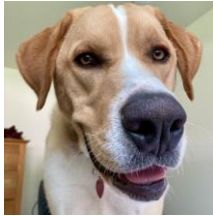
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## Our featured pets



### Meet Dazzle!



It's me, Dazzle and I am here to tell you about myself! I am a charming companion looking for my forever home! I am the perfect blend of playful energy and calm demeanor. I am around 73 pounds of pure beauty and have a luscious soft coat.

One of my standout qualities is my excellent leash manners! Some dogs may set me off, but I am redirected easily as I am extremely food motivated. Don't worry, you will get a few private training sessions with me to learn my walking ways! Other than that, taking a leisurely stroll with me is a joy and a testament to my intelligence and eagerness to please! I am fully potty trained and will be sure to finish all my business outside.

I am a social dog who loves human interaction. I am a little shy at first but once comfortable I will love your affection. My ideal home would be one where I can receive your undivided attention and be the only dog in the house. However, with proper introduction and supervision, I can enjoy playdates with other dogs. I would do well in a home with older children.

Once I open up, I am a total goof! I LOVE playing with pumpkin slices, and I have a weird fetish of playing with bugs! But it just completes my silly self! I can assure you I will be a loyal and affectionate family member. Please consider giving me my forever home!

### Meet Tilly!



Hi, my name's Tilly, but I also answer to Tilly Mae, Tillster, Princess and Girly. I'm a petite kitty who is looking for a

family to call my own! I'm honored to be the featured kitty and I think I was picked because I'm a girl with many interests.

When thinking about what to share about myself, I couldn't pick just one thing, I want to share it all! I like to spend my days playing with my favorite toy- pom poms, sunbathing on the carpet, watching the squirrels and bunnies through the patio door, cuddling on the couch next to my foster mom, chasing my foster brother around the house and then snuggling with him on the couch, sharing my inner thoughts (mostly in the morning and when I'm playing), playing with my laser pointer and wand toys, getting belly rubs, eating snacks, and being silly. I'd love to find a family with another kitty. I also get along with calm dogs, so a dog friendly family would be good too.

I still have kitten energy and need lots of play time everyday. I love play time with my foster mom, but I also enjoy playing with my foster brother, Cirrus, who is also available for adoption. We get along great! Maybe I can find a family with kids that I can play with too? That would be a dream! I get along with everyone and I'm very easy going. Please help me find my purrfect family!



## Ask Homer and Hope



### *Homer, why do dogs dig in their beds?*

Most people have bedtime rituals. They may smooth the sheet, straighten the blanket, fluff the pillow, or adjust the bedroom temperature. Such behaviors offer feelings of comfort, security, and privacy. Similarly, dogs prepare their beds (or their owners' beds) by pawing or scratching the bedding and circling the spot they have selected. Why?

The answer to this canine bedtime ritual lies in their survival instinct. Before they were domesticated, wild dogs roamed in packs much like wolves still do. Digging a hole in the ground protected them from climate extremes. If the temperature was hot, the further down they dug a hole, the cooler it would be. Conversely, a deep hole filled with soft earth and leaves would shelter them from the damp and cold as well as provide them with a soft, comfortable bottom. It also left a scent to warn away predators. As dogs were bred for various tasks, some developed into diggers like the terrier while others became tunnelers like the dachshund, but all were genetically programmed to dig and scratch.

Modern dogs continue to dig in their beds because their behavior is predisposed. Tossing their blanket or burrowing under it allows them to adjust their body temperature. They also mark territory using the pheromones from the scent glands on the bottom of their paws to ward off intruders like another family pet. By digging, they may find that special treat or toy they buried in the pile. Sadly, they may be feeling anxious, lonely, or scared; they may be experiencing separation anxiety, and digging helps to relieve the bad feelings.

Bed digging is perfectly normal unless it becomes excessive. To avoid damage, owners should trim nails and provide durable bedding. Other solutions include tiring them out by walking or stimulating play, reducing anxiety, and rewarding positive behavior. Chances are that, in the end, bed digging may be reduced but not eliminated.

### *Hope, how often should I play with my cat(s)?*

The simple answer is incorporate playtime with your feline friends every day. It's a wonderful way to build close bonds, keep your cats healthy and secure a happy household. Cat experts agree: If you toss a toy to a cat to play with on its own, he's likely to lose interest very soon. Interactive play is essential to avoid destructive behavior or a bored, or even depressed, cat.

Cats display several "play with me" signs. If they're full of energy, this is a perfect time to join in—roll a ball or play hide and seek. Ever notice your cat following you around? This might be the best time to pick up a favorite toy and engage her in a fun activity. While your cat may be hungry when she is "talking" with you, she may be saying "play with me." When our cats reach out and extend a paw, they want our attention. They may need cuddle time, but very often they want a playmate.

The more you know your cat, the more you'll learn what he likes to do, and what toys he gravitates to when he plays on his own. Here are a few playtime ideas.

Play hide and seek. Introduce a new toy—cats get bored with "the same old things." Make an obstacle course with boxes. Use treat-dispensing toys. Watch a bird video together. After playtime, always put away any toys that could be unsafe for your cat if left unsupervised.

Cat experts suggest two 10–15-minute play sessions a day—early in the day and mid evening is best for most cats. Learn their sleep schedules and work around them. Every cat's time clock is different.

Encouraging daily exercise for your feline friends can prevent excess weight gain, illness and keep your cat in good physical condition. Playtime is also an effective way for your feline companions to get mental stimulation and entertainment. And most of all, you'll have loads of fun together!

## *Bringing back puppylike joy in an older dog*

What could be more fun than seeing the face of an aging dog light up with puppyish enthusiasm? Let's call it "joie de vivre" (love of life). Bringing that fun-loving energy back to an aging dog requires a combination of attention to his physical needs and enthusiastic verbal encouragement.

First take stock of his physical situation. Are there any symptoms suggesting physical pains are dimming his willingness to participate in learning new tricks or to even perform his old tricks? Dogs do not always show they are experiencing pain. Look for subtle signs such as favoring a leg or other body part, sensitivity to touch anywhere, vocal cues such as whimpering or crying, aggressive behavior, panting, shivering, loss of appetite, coughing, etc. These signs could be clues to physical ailments such as osteoarthritis in his joints, digestive problems, or heart ailments to name a few. His veterinarian can help diagnose and offer treatments and advice.

Other things to watch for are vision and hearing loss. If you notice him bumbling around, bumping into things, have his eyesight checked by his veterinarian. Hearing loss will be evident when a dog doesn't react to the doorbell or you can sneak up behind him and he is startled when you catch up to him because he didn't know you were there. Have his ears checked.

Meantime, some adjustments should be made to the type and amount of exercise he gets. Take him for shorter and slower, but more frequent, walks. Do less running and chasing, and play no games that require jumping. Provide pet ramps, and comfortable bedding made specially to support his body evenly to allay pressure on sensitive spots. Elevated dishes for food and water will give relief to his neck. Swimming is good exercise. Gentle massages will give him some relief but pay attention to any sign that he is uncomfortable. And VERY important, watch his weight and diet. They can very much affect how he feels

Now that we've addressed the possible causes of his lack of interest in fun, let's work on getting back that energetic puppy enthusiasm for life and willingness to exercise.

When giving him orders and teaching him what he is expected to do, reward him with exuberant verbal acknowledgement that he is a "GOOD BOY" coupled with a joyful smile and exaggerated clapping to show how happy he has made us.

Give him lots of affectionate attention. Be a cheerleader whenever he does even the most ordinary thing. For example, if he's not been eating his meals, (yes, as they age, they may become very picky about when and what they eat) get all excited when he does eat every speck of food in his bowl. Point to the empty bowl while exclaiming how excited you are that he ate everything and what a good boy he is.

Be sure to enthusiastically praise him and hug him when any physical activity you want him to learn is complete.

And there you are. Pretty soon he'll be showing that puppy enthusiasm you want to see in his face.



## Why do dogs have whiskers?

Whiskers have two functions: helping dogs understand and sense their environment and conveying emotions.

Whiskers help dogs tell where their bodies are as well as how they can navigate through, under, over, and around spaces. The sensory organ at the tip of a whisker called a proprioceptor helps them make these spatial decisions. Dog whiskers are present at birth. It is thought they play a necessary role in helping newborn pups find their mother's nipples and nurse before their eyes are fully open.

Dog whisker follicles contain clusters of tactile receptor cells (Merkel cells) that are vital for sending signals to the brain. If a whisker is touched by another object, or air currents move a whisker, that vibration transmits nerve impulses from a dog's whisker follicles to their brain. Whiskers can detect the size, shape, and speed of nearby objects based on the movement of air currents.

Dog whiskers are specialized hairs that grow above a dog's eyes and on their cheeks, muzzle, and chin. Whiskers and dog hair are both made of keratin, but whiskers have a tapered tip and are much thicker and more flexible than regular dog hair.

Whiskers in different areas give a dog specific information about their environment.

**Muzzle and cheek whiskers** extend toward an approaching object to help determine the shape, proximity, and texture of nearby surfaces as a dog moves their head back and forth. These whiskers help dogs detect food and water and measure distances.

**Eye whiskers** detect potential threats by responding to physical stimuli or air currents. When the whiskers are moved, they send signals to a dog's brain that trigger the blink reflex to close their eyelids.

**Chin whiskers** grow from a mole under a dog's chin. These moles contain clusters of cells that provide sensory and physical information to the brain. They are incredibly useful in detecting food, water, and other objects that are out of the normal field of vision.

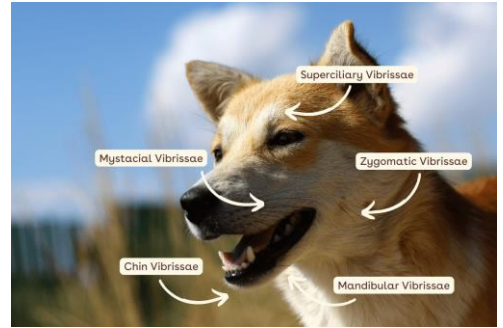
Dog whiskers really do communicate emotions. If the dog is relaxed, they often have their whiskers resting flat against their face. Happy dogs will often raise their whiskers and if they are scared or perceive a threat, they will often flare or twitch the muzzle whiskers out and downward.

## Fun dog facts

A dog can locate the source of a sound in 1/600 of a second and can hear sounds four times farther away than a human can.

## Fun cat facts

Cats have the largest eyes relative to their head size of any mammal.



*Adopt, don't shop! Let's keep spreading the word!*