

Puppy Love

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Goal Time

An intense international soccer game in Argentina between Chile and Venezuela was interrupted when a dog casually sauntered onto the field. All witnesses assumed the dog was obsessed with balls, as most dogs are, and wanted to join in on the game. But those assumptions were wrong. He was in search of some loving attention and those well known, and much loved, belly rubs. The players happily obliged and the crowd roared in approval for the dog's antics. He got what he was after, loving belly rubs from the players, and he even engaged a goalie and a referee. In pursuit of completing the game, the crowds and players calmed down and the dog was eventually picked up and carried off the field. Having accomplished his "goal," he left the field a very happy and content dog. It turns out, Roberto is well known around Unión De Santa Fe. The club's spokesperson explained that Roberto is the team's unofficial mascot, "He is a good dog and people love him. He's our team's dog. The members of the club attend to him as if he were their own."



Georgie is a beautiful black and tan dapple. He joined big sister Charli. Both are very loved by their family in South Carolina.



The Happy Test

Human reflexes are involuntary movements that allow the body to react to something before the thought has time to reach the brain, for example, blinking when a bug flies into your eye. Dogs have reflexes too, and one of them is responsible for the belly-rub-kick-leg, it's called the scratch reflex. Under your dog's soft belly skin is a network of complex nerves that send a message to activate uncontrolled leg movement. Researchers think belly-rubs trigger the scratch reflex to ward off pests that irritate the skin, suggesting a dog really hates this activity. However, some dogs actually love belly rubs. For some dogs the scratch reflex releases the feel-good hormone endorphin, increasing the rise of the bonding hormone oxytocin. The combination of feel-good, loving chemicals coursing through your dog will strengthen the bond between you and help your little doxie feel loved and secure. If you are not sure where your dog stands on belly rubs, try this simple test. Position yourself next to your dog on his level. Start with a gentle rub and work your way up to the accustomed strength you apply. Try different variations so you can find the way your dog loves it the most. After you have determined his favorite belly rub, proceed. After a short time remove your hand. If he reaches over and pulls your arm for more belly rubs ~ your good!



What Body Language Says

Not all dogs like belly rubs, so watch for signs that show your dog is enjoying this special bonding activity. This list will help.

- Their body is relaxed, not tense
- Their jaws are relaxed. Often their tongue will be visible or hanging out.
- Their tail will be relaxed or wagging
- They may pant slightly in excitement

The Trust Factor

When your dog shows you his delicate and vulnerable belly area it is a sign of great trust. So, as long as your dog's body language is saying all good things, there's no reason to stop doling out leg-kick-worthy belly rubs. But remember, dogs reserve the right to change their minds. They might have liked it yesterday, but that doesn't mean they will feel the same tomorrow.