



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Canine Master on Pet Life Radio - Episode #24  
**One Dog, Two Dogs, Three Dogs or More?**  
What to consider when adding multiple dogs to your family.

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Chris:

Welcome to the Canine Master radio show. I'm your host, Chris Onthank. And today I'm joined by Jaimee Kelsey, the director of Dog Gone Smart, my canine center. Hi Jaimee, how are you?

Jaimee :

I'm wonderful. How are you doing today, Chris?

Chris :

I'm doing great. You know, we're going to have a really interesting show today discussing what happens when we add dogs to our family union or to our pack. We all know that dogs are such great companions and there's almost nothing like that love and that loyalty and that joy that comes with companionship. But what's better than a dog? How about two dogs or three dogs or even more dogs?

At some point, every pet parent begins to ask themselves, hey, should we get another dog? You know, should I get one? So in today's topic of the show, Jaimee and I are going to talk about what the thought process should be for you about getting a second dog or a third dog, whatever that may be. And what comes with that decision? What sort of questions should you be asking yourself? What kind of questions should we be thinking and considering? Is it the right move for us and for you and your family? So Jaimee and I are going to dive into this topic from several different perspectives.

So Jaimee, is having more than one dog better?

Jaimee :

Well, it really depends. I have to tell you, as the training director, doing phone consults, a lot of my families are calling me, asking me, should they get another dog? What kind of other dog? And there is so much to consider. Another thing is when I'm doing training behavioral consults, one of the first

questions I ask is, "Do you have another pet in the family?" Because the pack dynamic really contributes to the behavior of all of the dogs in the family. So there's a lot to consider. It depends on the breed, the savvy, the experience of the family and what the reasons are for getting that second or third dog.

Chris :

It's such a huge consideration, and we have to take a look at what kind of dog do you have? What size dog do you have? What energy level does your dog have? A lot of people will do a big mistake. I mean, Jaimee and I recently had a client that got two puppies at once. Jaimee, you remember that case recently?

Jaimee :

Yeah. Yep.

Chris :

And it was a disaster.

Jaimee :

Well, I think it's being informed to make an educated decision. What's right for someone may not be right for someone else. But there's a lot of clients who get litter mates and they call me and say, we've just gotten two puppies, two litter mates. And that really changes the training dynamic. And you really need to go in with your eyes wide open, knowing that relationship between litter mates, how it's going to affect your family and why you're choosing to get litter mates. I think we have to get to why are they choosing that? And is there a better option?

Chris :

Yeah. I think that a lot of people, Jaimee, are thinking, getting two dogs, two litter mates, they're going to keep each other company, when they go off to work.

Jaimee :

Right. And exercise each other.

Chris :

Yeah, and exercise each other and you know, they're going to exhaust each other out. But the problem that we see with that is that basically the dogs end up bonding to each other. And that becomes the strongest bond. You know, when we get a dog, one of the great things about getting a dog is that the dog becomes bonded with us. So if you get two dogs at one time, chances are, you're not going to have that intimate relationship that you would have with just getting one puppy at a time.

Jaimee :

Well, yeah. And we see that a lot. The dogs bond with each other, and then the humans get frustrated that they're not listening to them or being responsive to them. Because the bond is so strong with the other puppy, it can compromise the relationship with the humans if you're not prepared, and if you don't know how to set yourself up for success.

Chris :

Yeah. I mean, I think that there are situations where getting two dogs at once can be okay. In direct relation to livestock guardian dogs, a lot of breeders will recommend that you just can't get one livestock guardian dog. You have to get two, so that they can sort of help each other, figure things out and keep each other active. But those dogs literally live outside. So these are not companion dogs.

Jaimee :

Right. And that gets back to the why. You know? So that's the reason.

Chris :

Yeah, exactly. So, I think that the other thing is that when you get two puppies out of the same litter at one time, good luck with how much work that will be. It is going to drive you nuts is what I've seen. I mean, it just becomes overwhelming. Training two dogs. Working with two dogs. Taking two dogs on a walk. Feeding two dogs. It can be overwhelming. So what do we think, Jaimee? We think getting one dog at a time?

Jaimee :

Yes. Again, so people said, "Well, I'm up. I'm feeding. I'm house training. I want two puppies. I might as well get two." Some recommendations are okay. If you want two puppies, maybe get them from a different litter. Litter mates present their own challenges. But even if you do have your heart set on the same litter, then you have to look at do I get two of the same gender? Do I get opposite genders? There's just a lot you have to consider. And I think it depends on your family or situation. You want to consult with the reputable trainer and your vet, but we can go through and troubleshoot pros and cons of these scenarios.

Chris :

Yeah. Well, let's talk about this. So we're going to highly recommend in most pet situations that you get one puppy at a time and raise that puppy to an adulthood, bond with that puppy, train that puppy, make that puppy really bonded with you. Now, if you choose to get another dog, that older dog that you have can really help that new puppy learn new behaviors. Through living with an older dog, they take that dog's cue.

Jaimee :

Right. It makes it easier on us.

Chris :

Yeah. It makes it so much easier. They actually observe the older dog and it helps in the training process. It helps with the housebreaking. We all go outside to go to the bathroom. Things like this.

Jaimee :

Yeah. It helps with establishing boundaries and structure. It's amazing how quickly a young pup will respect the boundaries of the older dog just by that instinctual body language. And so we try to replicate that with our actions with the puppy to establish those same boundaries.

Chris :

Yeah. It actually can help. But let's just talk about that for a second. So let's say you have an older dog and that older dog is not used to puppies. And you've raised that older dog. It could be a year old. It could be five years old. And you raise that older dog and he never really plays with other dogs. He's the only dog around. You guys don't go to the dog park. You don't have play dates. You don't go to a daycare center. And that dog hasn't really socialized with other dogs.

Well, now you get a young puppy. This is where we can start to see problems. And I had that situation recently when I got my new dog Mystic. He's an Italian Maremma. You can follow that whole story on Instagram and on Facebook. On Instagram, it's @caninemaster. But check that out.

I'm sort of talking about how I've introduced this new dog, this puppy, to my older pack. And we do this whole thing with my dog, Eloise, my Doberman. The Doberman did not get along with Mystic in the very beginning. It took me a tremendous amount of work to get them to get along. The Doberman was grouchy. The Maremma, Mystic, is unpredictable. Well, all puppies are unpredictable. So many times dogs that are not socialized with puppies see them as threatening and we can get into bad situations.

Jaimee :

Yeah. And you have to make sure that you introduce them properly and you supervise and separate. You don't just cross your fingers and hope for the best. If you do have a plan to introduce them properly, and I know that we say neutral territory is best. You want to introduce them on neutral territory. Maybe you could go into some steps for the best and safest introduction.

Chris :

Yeah, what we typically do is we take them on walks together in a neutral territory, not at the house. And so I have a great segment on Facebook or at caninemaster.com where I talk and I show how I introduced Mystic to my other dogs in my pack. So it's really kind of a neat segment. And I show you how you do it. But basically you really want to make sure that your older dog has been used to puppies. If he's not used to puppies, he may attack this new puppy. And then we get into another host of problems where that puppy will start to have fear issues. And usually a puppy that's attacked at a younger age before the age of 16 weeks-

Jaimee :

The imprint period.

Chris :

... and has not had a lot of supervision, that puppy will become aggressive later in life. So really recommend that you check out your older dog. See how it is around puppies. And if it's not good, there's another option. We can always maybe adopt an older dog and see that situation.

Jaimee :

Yeah. And I think that people who have older dogs and get a puppy will call me and say, "Oh my puppy's so socialized. They play with our older dog." And I said, "No, it is really important for puppies to socialize with other puppies because older dogs don't tolerate that nippy kind of hyper behavior that a puppy has, and they may be getting a lot of harsh corrections from the older dog." And it's so important that they learn appropriate play and how to use their mouth with a like-minded puppy. So it's definitely not

enough just to socialize your puppy with your older dog. You'll want to make sure that you have that individual opportunity for them to have puppy playtime.

Chris :

Yeah. You know, I want to talk about also, Jaimee, energy level. So if I have a dog that is an English Mastiff. English Mastiffs can be big, but they're also kind of laid back. They're not-

Jaimee :

Calm.

Chris :

They're not high energy dogs. So if I were to take an English Mastiff and I was to pair that with a very active puppy... Let's say the English Mastiff was an older dog. Let's say I was to get a Jack Russell Terrier. And although they're different sizes and you would think, oh gosh, you can't have a huge with a small dog. That's not necessarily true. Energy level and temperament is something you really want to look at when you're getting a second dog. You want similar energy levels. Similar size is not... I used to have a Doberman that played with my Dachshund Johnny and the Doberman would get on his elbows and play on the ground, and they had the same energy level. So they were great companions for each other. But you do want to have the same energy level. It's really important.

Jaimee :

Yeah. Energy level. And you want to consider size as it would pertain to any safety issues. But we have clients who, one dog's a Frenchie, one dog's a Bullmastiff, and they are perfectly matched, and they couldn't be more different in size, but they play together so well and respectfully, and they have a similar energy. So it's not just size. You really want to do your research and make sure you're pairing a good match.

Chris :

Yeah, exactly. And you know, that's why at Dog Gone Smart, our canine center, in doggy daycare and for boarding, we actually group by what? By temperament.

Jaimee :

By temperament and you see the Frenchies or some of the smaller breeds are in with the larger dogs and the clients say, "Oh, no no. I want them in the small dog group." I'm like, "Yeah, but your dog is better suited for the larger group. They're running the group. They're happier. They're more like-minded with the larger dogs." So it really is about temperament even more so than size.

Chris :

Yeah. I mean, even a fearful dog, you want to pair that dog with a confident dog.

Jaimee :

With a confident dog. Something else I was going to say about litter mates. If you do have two litter mates that are both fearful, they're going to really feed off each other. And even from the same breeder, the same litter, you can have totally different dispositions.

Chris :

Yeah. Oh exactly. It's really interesting. When I go to add a dog to a pack, I look at the existing pack and I sort of do a dog character analysis and I look at it and I say, well, if my existing dog is a fearful dog, let's say, and he is very timid, very barksy, but he gets along with other dogs. The dog that I'm going to pair him with is going to be a confident puppy. But then when I get that puppy, I'm going to make sure that I socialize that puppy an awful lot. So that that puppy can keep that sort of confidence. That's really, really important.

Jaimee :

It is really important. We see in the puppy play times that the fearful dogs group together, they feed off each other, and that fear builds. Where if you pair them with a more confident, calm puppy, they start to say, hey, what am I so worried about? This dog is okay with it. Let me give it a try.

Chris :

Yeah. So definitely you got to look at, while size can be a factor, it's more about energy level. It's about confidence. It's about temperament. Make sure you have a complimentary temperament.

Okay. So one, another factor is sex. You know, what sex should I get? If I'm picking out a new puppy and I have a male, what sex should I get?

We're talking about adding a second or third dog to our family and what that should look like. And if that's a good idea for our particular pack. You know, one final factor, when you consider adding a new dog to the set pack, is the sex. What sex should I get? If I have a male, should I get another male? If I have a female, should I get another female? Or should I get it a male? It's really an important decision and one that people don't always understand. So let's talk about, I have a female dog, she's older, and I want to get a second dog. So I would tell you this, getting another female could be a little bit risky, especially if my female is spayed. Or not. Two females have a propensity to fight as they get older. Not always. I've seen it work great. But sometimes that happens. And when two females start to fight, it can get really messy. Two females may build a grudge towards each other. We've seen this Jaimee at the center and in our behavioral sessions.

Jaimee :

Absolutely. And it doesn't even have to be a history of them not getting along. It can just happen. When you're going to gender combinations, there's really pros and cons to every combination. So you just want to be well-informed. I tell clients, all things being equal, if you have a male, I would recommend getting a female. If you have a female, I recommend getting a male, then let's dig deeper. And then you're avoiding that initial competition between the two.

Chris :

Yeah. I mean, that's always the best combination. Male female is your safest bet going forward. The least amount of fighting. Two males that are together, if they start to fight, sometimes you can work with a behaviorist and get them to start getting along. If they're two intact males, meaning they have not been neutered, you have a bigger chance of them fighting. If you have one intact male and one neutered male, that means that the neutered male may attack the intact male. We just saw that recently with my own dog.

On Canine Master, I talk about that too, with Mystic, where I bring him to my canine center over Thanksgiving and I turned to my general manager, Debbie, and I think I even turned to you Jaimee and said, "Oh, he'll be fine. He's going to be fine out on the floor. He's only a puppy." And Debbie was like, "I'm telling you, Chris, your policy is not to allow an intact male after the age of six months out on the daycare floor." So I said, "No, no, no, no. He's such a goofball. He's such a puppy. He doesn't know." Well, I get in my car. Before I even arrive home, and I'm only seven minutes away from the center-

Jaimee :

Yes. No, yes. It was minutes.

Chris :

You guys are calling me up and saying, "Hey, Chris"-

Jaimee :

Moments.

Chris :

Moments. Within the first moments, my dog Mystic was attacked by a Labradoodle. Bit him right in the face. And I was like, "Oh, my gosh." And Debbie goes, "I told you." I hated that. You know, I didn't even listen to my own advice, my own rules. So it just goes to show you, I remind-

Jaimee :

Yeah, it's not even about Mystic's temperament.

Chris :

Right.

Jaimee :

It's just the hormones. He becomes a target. He becomes a threat. And while intact males, they may not start something, they're more likely to finish it. So we just have to be aware of that now.

Chris :

Yeah. And they're more likely to be attacked as well because the neutered male sees the intact male as a threat. But if Mystic was neutered at that time, which I'm not going to do because his growth plates haven't grown in, he's a large dog, he's probably going to weigh in at about 150 when he's all done. He isn't mature until he is about 18 months old, and his growth plates are all grown and the hormones have done what they're supposed to do. But when I have a dog that is neutered, two males, they tend to get along better than two females. So it goes like this. The best combination is male female. That's the safest, I'd say. The next best combination is two neutered males. And the next best combination after that would be your two females, which is, if they start to fight, it can be a little bit nasty. They hold grudges, I find.

Jaimee :

I just want to put a little asterisk on the male female, because this is exactly the advice I had given a client. And they did go ahead and get litter mates. And they got a male and they got a female and we

were doing training and kind of out a touch for a month or so, and then we reconnect and their adolescents and neither one of them has been neutered or spayed. So now you have two litter mates, the female's going into heat, the male hasn't been neutered. So you have to consider that as well. If you have a male and a female.

Chris :

Yeah, exactly. Well, Jaimee, is there anything else that maybe we should talk about on this segment? Because there is so many different things to consider.

Jaimee :

Yeah. Let me go here. I have a bunch of topics that come up frequently in our calls and I know how I answer them. I'd be curious to see your thoughts on this. So one of the things I get: "Jaimee, we got a puppy. How do I let the puppy know that my older dog is the boss?" So what do you say to that?

Chris :

So, pack order is not determined by, my older dog is the leader. Pack order is determined by the dog's temperament. Dogs that are more secure, dogs that can take you or leave you, dogs that are more independent, dogs that aren't reactive as much tend to be the more dominant dog. Dogs that are fearful, dogs that are more submissive, meaning they're tentative, they submit easier when they're playing with other dogs. Those dogs are not leaders. So many times we see the biggest mistake is I get another dog and my dog that I have is going to be the leader. Well, we really don't know that. You can't do it just because he was the first dog. You've got to look at the dog's temperament. Who and what is the leader in that pack or between the two of them? And then, and this is really, really hard, you need to support the more dominant dog to have a sort of tranquility in your pack.

Jaimee :

Yeah, the harmony. And the older dog may be perfectly happy to say, "You know what? You take over. That's fine with me." And so we don't want to force the reverse order that they are comfortable with. So we do have to support the harmony that they create, but also ultimately they're both accountable to the humans for how they treat each other. So you're the boss in that respect.

Chris :

We've had customers over the years, Jaimee, as you remember, where the owners supported the wrong dog. And it can create dog fights, because what happens is the dog that's the most dominant sees you favoring the one that is not as dominant and he wants to be the most dominant. So things like, who goes out the door first? You know, when you open up the door, the dog that races outdoor first is usually the dog that thinks he in charge. The dog that greets first, runs up to the door and is confident. The dog that stays back is usually the one that's not the more dominant. The one that is racing to the door, being pushy with that stranger at the door, that one is the confident dog.

Trying to think of any other things. So let's say I have my older dog and I like to sleep with my older dog on the bed and keep them on the couch. But the new dog, which is more confident, I keep him off the furniture. So I keep him off the furniture, and I keep my older dog on the furniture. Well, elevation is status to canines. The higher up they are, the more dominant they are. We see this all the time. So if you



keep your older dog up on the furniture, and then you keep the more dominant dog on the ground, you are going to create a possible issue in that household. I find-

Jaimee :

You're going to create a tension. Yep. On that note, another thing that comes up a lot is when I'm coaching on house training, and I say, "So where's your puppy's crate?" "Oh, well, I don't use a crate." "Why not?" "Well, because my older dog doesn't have a crate and I feel bad that the puppy has to be in a crate when the older dog doesn't." And it's different kids, different rules. They've got to earn their freedom. So really no guilt when it comes to that. You have to do right by the puppy and they will understand, and they will not feel sad or bad that the older dog has the privileges and freedoms. They don't. It's most important to set them up for success.

Chris :

Yeah, exactly. Well, let's talk about that a little bit. So, I have an older dog and I'm bringing home my puppy, or I'm bringing home an older, adopted dog. If I'm bringing home an older adopted dog, the first thing I'm going to do is I'm going to introduce them in a neutral territory, over several days, if possible. I may be taking them on walks. And the first place I let them free is going to be in the dog park, on a baseball, fenced-in area, I don't know.

Jaimee :

Tennis court.

Chris :

A field. Tennis court. I'm going to introduce them off-leash in a neutral territory. I probably also got to leave a short sort of leash attached to them. I may cut like a two-foot section of a leash, clip it onto both their collars so that I can control them, if something happens. I'm also going to bring another person with me. That's important.

So, introducing older dogs that have not been around or met each other, never let the new dog come into the house and have that be their first meeting. That's a good way to start a dog fight. Go ahead and take them on a walk. Even if your dog is great with other dogs, introduce them in neutral territories. Feed them in separate bowls. I'd even put them in separate rooms. Don't have them eat out of the same bowl. And also pick up the food, whether they've finished it or not, after 15 minutes. Because leaving food down, one goes over to the other bowl, and a dog fight starts. I would have their own toys. I'd have their own beds. They may eventually share a bed, but I would definitely let them have their own spaces. I think that's really important.

Jaimee :

Yeah. Designated areas. And then they can share as they're comfortable, but not forced sharing.

Chris :

Yeah, exactly. So then let's say I bring home a puppy. If I'm going to bring home a puppy to an older dog, the first thing I need to do is, A, I've got to make sure that that older dog gets along with puppies, and B, be sure of that. I am going to use an X pen, which is almost like a child's play pen. You can get those at your Pet Smarts and Petcos or order those online from Chewy. What you're going to do is you're going

to use the X pen with the puppy and put the puppy in the X pen first and then let the older dog sort of go over and sniff and get to know him. Again, introduce them outside in a neutral area and watch your puppy. Your puppy needs to have manners, and a lot of older dogs get really fearful of the unpredictability of puppies.

And as I said, you can watch that on [caninemaster.com](http://caninemaster.com) and check out on Instagram, my posts on @caninemaster and see how I introduce Mystic and Eloise and the challenging time I had, but very rewarding. Getting two or more dogs, I've got to be honest with you, is very rewarding. It was worth the extra work I had to do with Mystic and Eloise, my Doberman. And of course, Dave gets along with almost every dog, so that was fine. But you know, the thing is, I think that you need to consider all the things we were just talking about and really, really do your homework.

Jaimee :

Yeah. I think that we all want to do what's best for our dogs and very emotional about it. And I get questions. A lot of, my dog is getting older, do you think it's a good idea to bring in a puppy to keep them youthful and keep them more agile and active, or is my older dog going to feel like they're being replaced and you know, so can you give some guidance to that question?

Chris :

Yeah. I mean, I think that in answer to that, I do see sometimes an older dog that likes other dogs, gets a younger dog, he does give him a little bit more energy and a little bit more life. And maybe it does make that older dog more playful. So I think that can be a good thing. Again, you need to look at energy level. So if I have an older dog and then I bring in a young puppy that is more of a hyperactive breed or let's call it a high energy breed, that may not be the best mix. So I'm going to look for maybe a calmer breed.

Then of course, if I have an older dog, I will look at size here. If I have an older dog, who's a little bit shaky on its legs, and then I go and I adopt a Great Pyrenees or a Bullmastiff, and that one has high energy, that's going to be not a good mix because your older dog is going to get maybe scared of that younger dog as it grows into his body.

So again, size, temperament, breeds, sex. When you're getting a new dog, the age of the dog, with an older dog, I definitely would be very careful. You might, with an older dog, consider a little bit of an older dog, adopt a dog that's a little bit older with the right temperament. See how they do in a neutral territory. Take your older dog to a dog park or somewhere, a canine center like ours, where we sometimes do that at Dog Gone Smart. And we're going to introduce an older dog with an adopted older dog and see if their temperaments mesh. If they get along there, chances are, they'll probably get along when you get them home. So those are the kinds of things I would do.

Jaimee :

Yeah. And you know what? I do see a lot. Thankfully, we have so many rescued dogs and we are seeing so many of those rescued dogs successful in their transition to their new homes with other dogs, because they tend to feel more comfortable and secure around other dogs. And so that can be a real positive in bringing a rescue dog home. We find that they really, really feel comfortable around other dogs when getting to know their human family.

Chris :

Yeah. Well, I think we've covered most of the bases here today, Jaimee. I do want to thank you on your great insight and I'm hoping to get you back soon on to the show?

Jaimee :

Yeah, sure. My pleasure.

Chris :

Yeah, it was good. And this is such a really important topic. So, let us know if you have any questions. You can join the conversation as well. You can always email me at [chris@caninemaster.com](mailto:chris@caninemaster.com). Make sure to visit our website at [caninemaster.com](http://caninemaster.com). That's [caninemaster.com](http://caninemaster.com). That's C-A-N-I-N-E master.com. You can always click on ask the canine master a question. You can always leave your questions for me and I'll do my best to get back to you. I might even get you on the show with your questions. So send me some of your videos and your photos so I can see what's going on and I can help you with your dog and help you fix your problem.

Jaimee :

Send those photos of your multiple dog families or pet families and your odd couple so we can see them. We love to see multiple dog households and how they live and interact with each other.

Chris :

Yeah, that'd be great. That would be great. Yeah. So send us those pictures. Okay, you guys. Bye for now.

Jaimee :

Bye.

Chris :

I'll see you next time on Canine Master on Pet Life Radio, where I will continue to help you master the relationship with your dog. Take care.

*Master* the relationship with your dog!