

# **Festivities with the Furies**

A simple guide to help prepare your pup for  
the festive season

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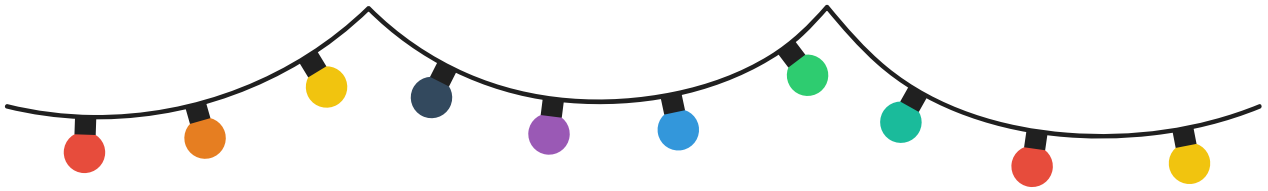
# Introduction

The festive period seems to start earlier and earlier each year, so the least we can do is ensure that for the duration of the celebrations our precious pooches are kept safe from harm.

There are many things to consider at Christmas, but knowing a few helpful hints, tips and useful information will ensure that you don't have to worry about what your pup is getting up to – you only have to worry about everything else! This leaves you with more time to wonder what the kids are up to, where the hubby has “disappeared” to and where you can hide your secret stash of chocolate or gin for when your mother-in-law turns up!

Grab a hot chocolate or a mulled wine, settle down with your woofer at your side and take some time to read on to ensure your festive season runs smoothly.





## When does it start for you?

When do the festivities start for you? It seems that decorations are going up at Halloween and Guy Fawkes night. Although I must admit that I do love a twinkly light, especially the colourful ones.

Everyone will have their own traditions that determines when they begin and end their festivities, so I've tried to keep things in a logical order. However, if there's a section that doesn't apply to you, then by all means move on.



# Presents

Do you start your shopping nice and early, or do you leave it until the last minute?

Maybe you buy bits and bobs throughout the year?

Generally, we will put these gifts somewhere safe so they are not found by their intended recipient...this particularly applies to your crafty canine, as they can sniff out things we can't!

Just because you think your pooches' presents are tucked away at the back of a cupboard, doesn't mean that they can't figure out how to get to them if they really want to!

Make sure that wherever you store gifts for your dog, family and friends, that they are safe; especially if any of the items are toxic to your dog.

I'll go through toxic items a little further on in the guide, but it's a good idea to double-check even if you think it's safe - better safe than sorry.

# Learn from my mistakes #1

I lost some money once to Cassi.

I thought it was safe on a high window ledge, but Cassi decided that my "safely stashed" cash was just too good not to be nibbled, and ripped to pieces!

F.Y.I: the bank was very good as it replaced most of the notes, as some serial numbers were intact...but that is just an added faff at an already busy time of year that you could do without.



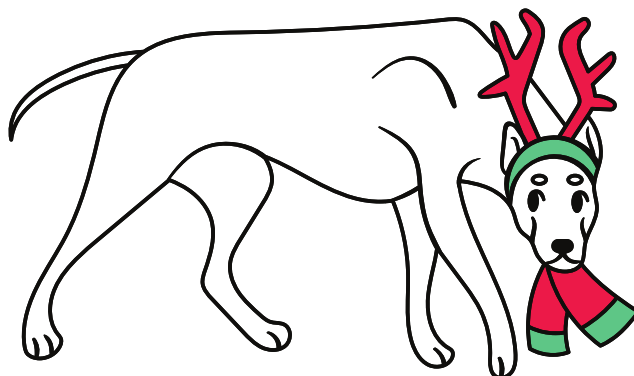
# Wrapping presents

How do you like to present your presents?

Do you add bows, tags and fancy flourishes or are you a plain brown paper and string fan (which I am as I love to make my own paper when I have time) or maybe you just like to hand something over in the carrier bag it came in!

No matter how you like to give your gifts, you need to be aware that it is best to keep your dog away while you get your wrapping frenzy going.

It's best to keep your dog away from some types of wrapping papers, especially any with glitter - this is bad enough when it gets into our eyes, but if it gets up our dog's nose or in their eyes, that's not nice for them and could result in a costly vet trip.



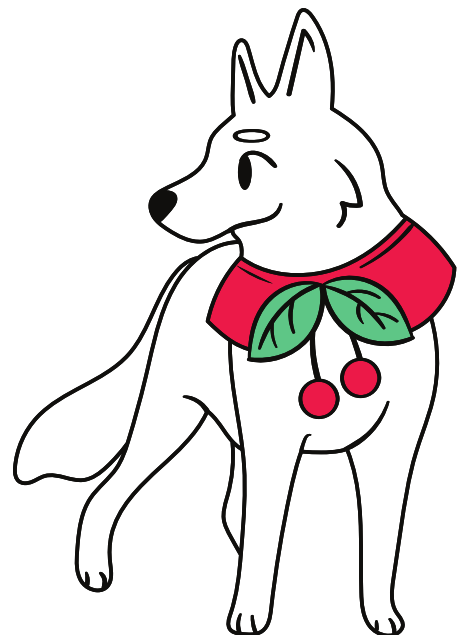
# Wrapping presents

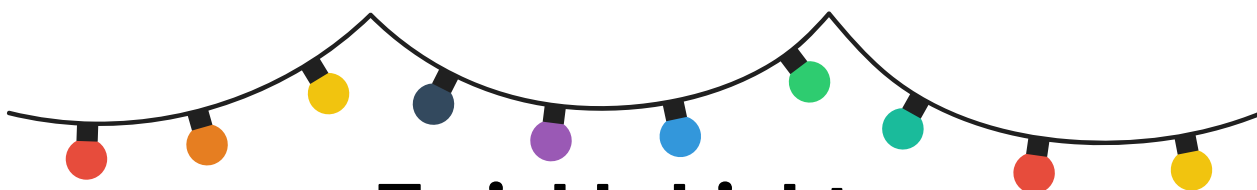
String, twine and ribbons can easily be ingested and cause internal difficulties, while sticky tape caught in fur is not nice for either of you- just think of the pain when we take a plaster off!

What about the plastic that items are packaged in or even the bags? You don't want your pup running off with a bag unnoticed and chewing it or suffocating because they can smell the remains of some cheese straws at the bottom!

Play it safe and keep your pup out of the way.

I'll give you some more ideas later on about how to entertain your dog while you're busy playing with paper and tape!





## Twinkly Lights

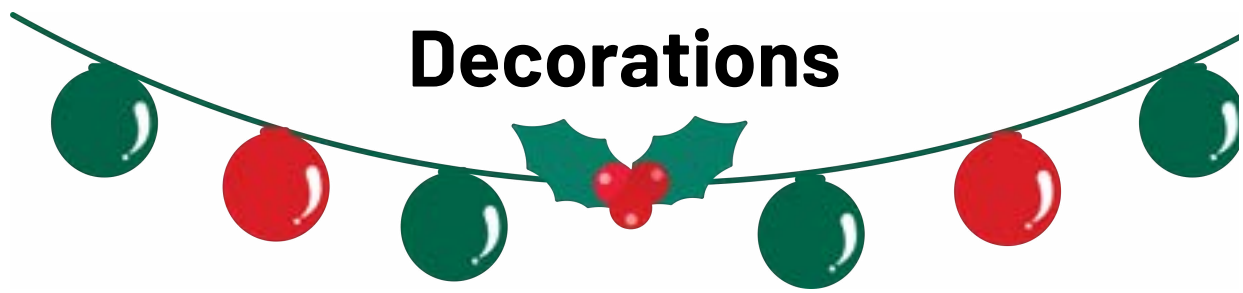
Without a doubt, these are my favourite part of the festive season, the more the merrier in my case, but I always ensure that everything is safe for my pups.

Place lights high up to avoid chewing and any loose wires should be kept tidied with cable ties and tucked away. Alan decided to chew on my laptop cable and got a bit of a surprise, so make sure that no electrical cables are within reach of your dog.

If you are worried about cables, it may even be worth considering a circuit breaker or battery-powered lights to ensure that your dog's hair is not left standing on end!

Never leave your dog unattended while your lights are switched on, it only takes a moment for them to suddenly realise that your back is turned and they can go and get up to some mischief.





# Decorations

This is where things get a little more tricky. We all love different types of decorations, from ones on trees, elves on shelves, foil and paper hanging from the ceiling and doorways...we can literally put decorations anywhere!

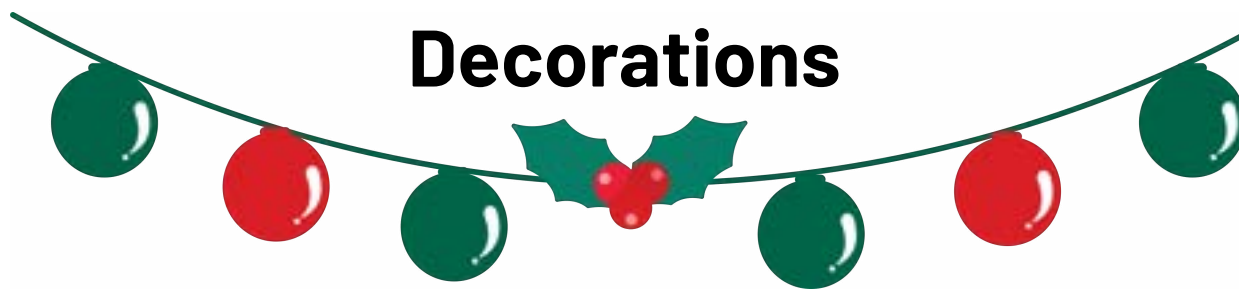
What do you need to think about when it comes to all these wonderful new chew toys that suddenly arrive in your dog's home?

Well keeping them out of reach is a good start!

If you're looking to buy some new decorations this year, then it's advisable to opt for non-toxic decorations to get off on the right paw.

Of course, lots of us have older decorations - even some that have been passed down the generations - so what are the dangers?





## Decorations

Some of the biggest dangers are tinsel and angel hair.

Dogs can easily get hold of these and ingest them like blades of grass, but they can cause a stomach blockage. If you must have tinsel on a garland or tree, then keep it well out of reach and my personal suggestion is to avoid angel hair entirely!

I'm going to bang on about crackers now – see what I did there?! Let's face it...the hats never fit, there are cheap and tacky bits of plastic in them and the jokes are the worst.

Let alone the fact they let off a bang that can startle our pups so, if your pup is sensitive to noises, then leave the crackers at the shop and spend the money on something for yourself...just keep it hidden from everyone else (and out of reach of your dog)!

Remember, it's probably best to ensure that your dog is not left alone in areas where you have any easily reachable decorations.

# Christmas tree

Who doesn't love a Christmas tree? If you don't love a Christmas tree, then it's not likely that you'd even be reading this guide. I must admit though, some years I've not bothered with a tree and just done the twinkly lights, this has usually been because I've had a cheeky puppy around and sometimes you just need to make things a bit easier for yourself so you can relax and put your feet up.

If you cannot live without your tree, whether it is real or artificial, then the biggest thing to remember is that in your dog's eyes...there is a great big stick, many new chew toys and pee post right indoors for them to enjoy!



# Christmas tree

If you are opting for a real tree then you must ensure again that this is a non-toxic variety, as some real trees can produce oils that are mildly toxic and can cause vomiting and internal damage.

Also ensure that you purchase a non-drop variety, as needles will inevitably end up stuck into paws.

Once you have decided on what tree you are having and where it is being placed, make sure that your tree is sufficiently anchored to a weighted base or even your wall to ensure that it's not likely to be pulled over.





## Christmas tree decorations



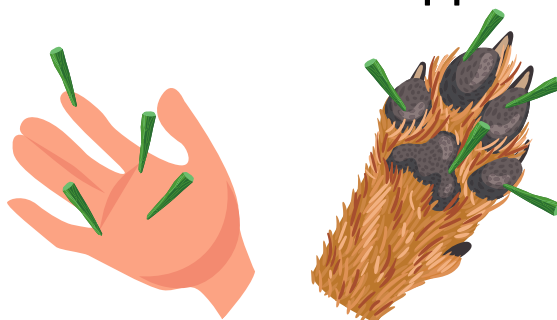
If you have any dangerous or toxic decorations, such as sharp plastic or glass, then ensure that these decorations are kept at the top of the tree and well out of reach of your pup. This includes edible decorations, chocolate, candy canes and salt dough decorations - these are potentially harmful to your hound so keep them right at the top or hidden in a kitchen cupboard so you don't keep snacking on them!



Remember, never leave your dog unattended around the tree.

## Learn from my mistakes #2

When I was little we had a tree that dropped needles and I can remember cleaning them up one day and getting one stuck in my hand...I had a nasty reaction to this and my skin peeled off the palm of my hand...it was gross, you don't want this happening to your pups paws!



# Gifts under the tree

It can feel nice to display your gifts under the tree to create that idyllic scene...but do it once for the perfect snapshot for social media and then put the gifts away. Not only (as already mentioned) can some of the wrapping items be harmful, but so can the contents, so keep these fun looking items out of your dog's reach. If you leave gifts out you may find them damaged on Christmas morning, whose fault is that?

Never leave your dog's gifts under the tree, they can smell the treats and new toys and, while they may believe in Santa Paws, your dog doesn't know that they should wait for him to officially visit before they can open their goodies!

If you must have your gifts under the tree then NEVER leave your dog unattended around the tree.



# Opening gifts

When you open the presents pick up the wrapping paper as you go, you don't want it being ingested, this includes tissue paper and crepe paper.

Watch out for packets of Silica Gel in gifts that are ripped open, these little packets are meant to keep moisture at bay and if ingested can cause an upset stomach.

## **It really is THAT easy!**

Keep your dog safe and secure, if it's not nailed down then it's fair game as far as your pooch is concerned, so never scold them for destroying something...it's your fault for leaving it somewhere accessible to your pooch!

If you need to leave your dog alone, do they need to be in the same room as the tree?

Could they be in another room?

Could they be in a crate or pen?

A little bit of management can go a long way.

Remember, it is NEVER your dog's fault and ALWAYS your fault!

# Winter florals to watch out for

As lovely as all the festive plants are to have around, you must consider how they can affect your dog.

These plants could be seen in a bouquet, table centrepiece, gift, wreath etc. so if you have any floral additions to your home, check them to see if they are pet safe.

Some of the main culprits to avoid:

Poinsettia

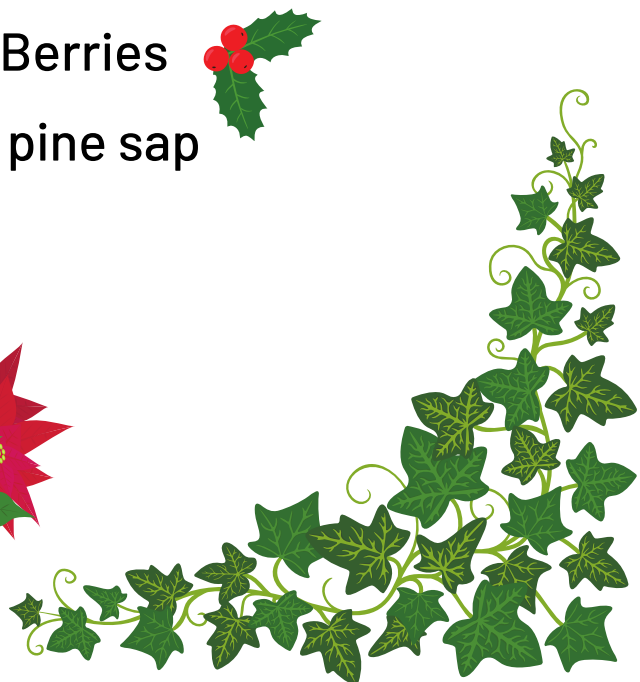
Amaryllis

Ivy

Mistletoe berries

Holly Berries

Fern & pine sap



# From the table

It is not unusual for us to overindulge at this time of year, and while we have the option of whether to reach for the chocolate again or not, if we offer something to our dogs, they're likely to take it.

Therefore, it is our responsibility to ensure that our dogs are not overfed on yummy goodies.

What items should you NEVER let your pup get hold of?

Chocolate

Grapes, Sultanas & Raisins (found in Christmas cake and mince pies)

Cooked bones from your roasts

Stuffing as it contains onions (avoid anything from the onion family)

Pigs in blankets and gravy are very salty

Macadamia nuts

Artificial sweeteners



# From the table

What if you have some leftovers?

Can your woofers have some? YES!

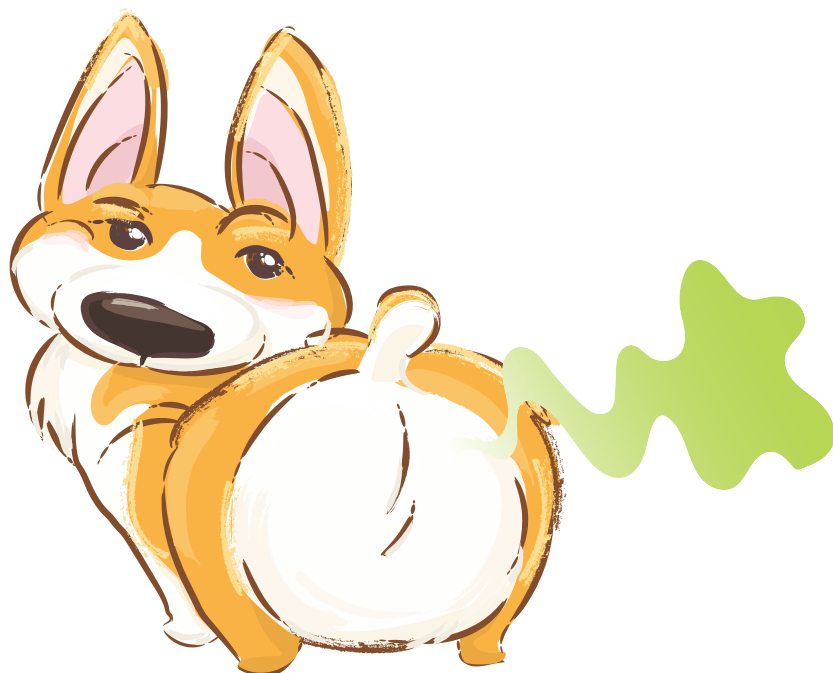
Veggies – Green beans, peas, brussel sprouts, swede, parsnips, sweet potato

Mashed/boiled potatoes

Egg

Natural yogurt

Remember to watch out for hidden natural and artificial sweeteners and keep everything in moderation to avoid a pumpy bum and runny tum!



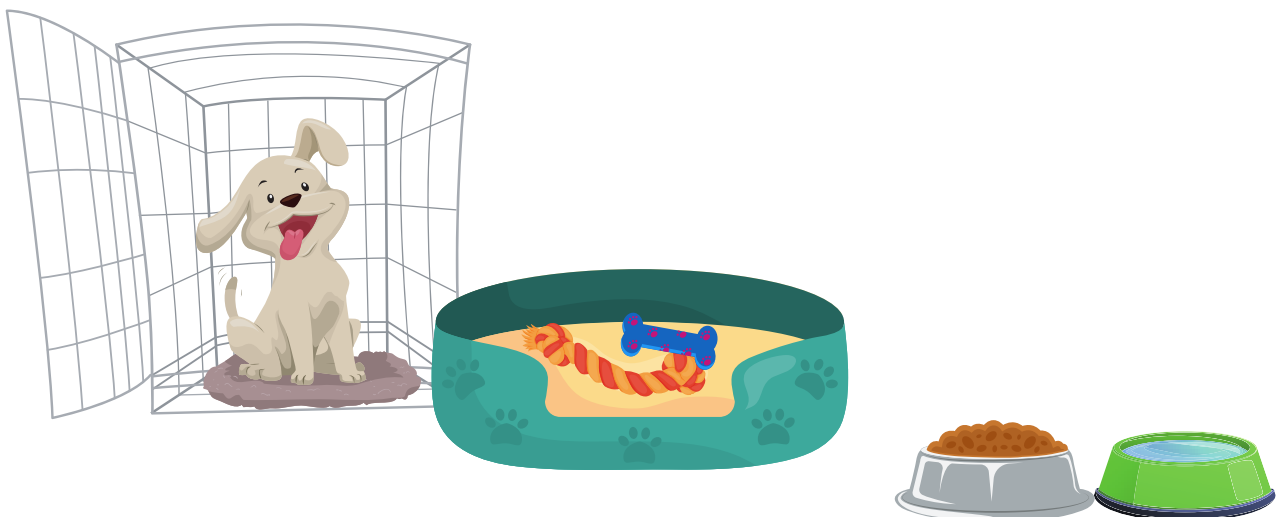
# Guests

If you're likely to have a lot of visitors over the holidays, make sure that your dog has a safe space to escape to.

Whether a quiet corner, room or crate this area should be comfortable and have suitable food and water available.

If your dog doesn't want to be part of the festivities then never force them into a situation they do not want to be in, as they may be overwhelmed by the comings and goings.

If your dog is overwhelmed or has taken themselves off to their safe, quiet place, ensure your guests leave your dog alone and never leave your dog unattended with children.

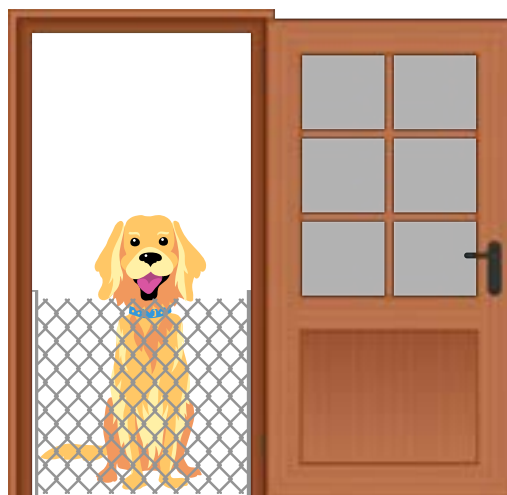


# Guests

Make sure that as people are coming and going that your dog is safe from escape - have a door/gate protocol in place.

Ensure that your dog is away from open doors and windows - it's a good idea to leave their collar and ID tag on while the house is busier than usual, just in case they do go for a wander - they can easily be returned home.

Of course, your dog should be microchipped by law, but always check that you've updated your details if you have moved or changed your phone number. That way if your dog is found, you can be contacted quickly and easily and your pup can be back home with you in no time.

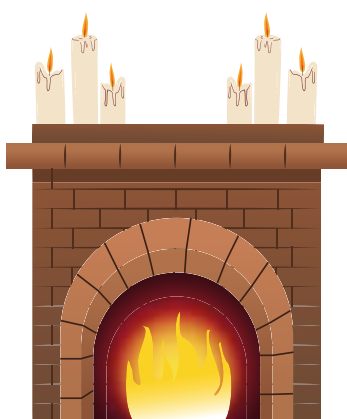


## Other areas to be aware of

Antifreeze – Not only is this highly toxic to our dogs but, unhelpfully, it has an alluring smell (for our pups) so keep this out of reach and clean up any spills.

Fancy Dress – Does your dog really enjoy wearing that matching sweater you've all got on? Some dogs do enjoy an extra layer and some really don't enjoy it. It should be clear to you which camp your dog sits in, so don't make them sulk in a Santa suit just for your amusement.

Open fires and candles – The risk here is pretty obvious but your dog doesn't know that they can get burnt. Could the fire throw out a spark, could a candle be knocked over? Make sure that if you do like to enjoy the ambience of flickering candles and the comfort of a fire, you have suitable precautions in place such as a fireguard and that candles are out of reach.



# Keep your best friend busy

One of the easiest things to give your dog to keep them entertained is a stuffed Kong. The great thing about Kong's is you can put anything in them that your dog likes and you can even freeze them to make the treat last longer.

Why not make the Kong festive flavoured with some turkey, veggies and some unsweetened cranberry sauce?

You can also get mats that can be smeared with yummys for your dog to lick, which will keep them busy, again, you can freeze these to make them last longer.



## **Keep your best friend busy**

If you have a bit more time, then why not do some scentwork games with your dog. Scentwork games with your dog, getting them to find some snacks or toys for 20 minutes, are very tiring for them, so if you want to do a little something together then this is a great choice.

If you're feeling super nice, do some scentwork and then give your pooch a Kong: they'll be nice and content which will give you some time to wrap their presents without them noticing or interfering! They'll be tired and full and busy dreaming of toys dancing around in their heads.

I have plenty of enrichment ideas on my YouTube channel, if you're stuck for ideas head on over there and see what you can find to suit you and your dog.



**Mojo Dogs**

# About the author

From a young age, Jo has been passionate about animals. As a child, she kept a wide range of pets including, hamsters, guinea pigs, rabbits and even stick insects.

When she was older, her focus turned to dogs and horses, but following a nasty riding accident in her early 20s, she decided to focus solely on dogs and began helping at local puppy training classes.

During this time she spent many hours roaming the countryside with her faithful Labrador, Max. After realising that there was no other job that she would rather do, Jo began her own business based in the heart of West Sussex.

Over the years, she has worked with hundreds of dogs and trained their owners using her positive reinforcement training methods in a fun and engaging way.

Jo is accredited by the Institute of Modern Dog Trainers (IMDT) and the Kennel Club (KCAI). She is qualified to teach all levels of agility from foundations to high-level competition. In addition, she is an IMDT examiner assessing future canine professionals, an approved Kennel Club agility judge, a podcast host and a published author.

Jo currently has four dogs, which are all trained in agility, scentwork and trick training. Jo has competed at the highest level in agility across the country and even at Crufts.