

# Dress Your Dog Up for Halloween

By Steve Dale for *The Dog Daily*



Halloween is Peggy Moran's favorite holiday. Everyone in the family wears a costume. Even the dogs. Of course, the canines trick or treat too. In fact, Moran's dogs are trained to hold their own goodie bags. No wonder Moran is a renowned dog trainer (as well as a columnist for *The Dog Daily*). Still, when it comes to self control, her bag-holding,

obedience-trained dogs are still dogs. "People give us biscuits," she says. "Odd, though, that the dogs' bags never fill up with biscuits. Gee, I wonder how that happens?"

Moran says most dogs can be convinced wearing a costume is fun. Some dogs are laughed at because costumes can look mighty silly, or so darn cute people giggle. Control yourself. Tell your pooch she looks so good that she'll win the prize for the best costume. No one likes to be laughed at.

Moran says she understands some dogs appear to be totally humiliated when they're dressed up. "In a way, I don't blame them," she says. "But then, many dogs really do like the attention, or at least tolerate crazy ladies like me." For dogs who are not too sure about the idea, a little lunch meat can make up for poor taste in clothing. Moran

suggests you begin a few months before Halloween (sorry, too late for this year), and just drape a costume over your dog's back for a few seconds, then offer a treat. Soon your pup will drool with delight at the mere sight of the outfit.

When it's time to actually put the outfit on your dog, enlist a partner to offer treats. Now take the outfit off. When the costume goes away, so does the treat conveyer. Gradually, keep the costume on for longer periods of time. Just don't overdo the treats, or soon you'll need a larger size costume.

Most pet stores sell costumes for pets. But you can also create your own. They can be simple -- like the time Moran dressed up her one-eyed Dachshund, Mr. Winky, as a pirate. He wore a patch over his bad eye and had a toy parrot on his shoulder.

However, she generally prefers more elaborate presentations. In one, which she called the Red Hot Doggy Diner, Phoebe the Great Dane wore a harness that was attached to an embroidery hoop, which was covered with a checkered tablecloth. So it looked as if Phoebe was pulling a table. Moran created fake place-settings, including plastic hot dogs and catsup bottles. Her daughters dressed as diner waitresses Charlene and Darlene. Her Dachshund, who tagged along, was the punch line -- wearing a hot dog bun.

Think that's crazy? Well, they're no crazier across the ocean. From just outside London, England, Alison Jenkins says, "Halloween is catching on here, and people do go door to door (this is what she calls Trick or Treat) with dressed up dogs." Jenkins is the author of *Doggy Fashion:*

*Fancy Dress and Chic Costumes for the Dog in Your Life* (Barron's). "I believe our dogs deserve a bit of glamour. At the parties, it's the dressed-up dogs who get the most attention." Her book includes instructions on how to make homemade costumes, including the Fairy Dog Mother, Elvis: Ain't Nothing But a Hound Dog, Prince of Darkness, and Blues Brothers.

Moran says, "I realize I have a problem. Personally, I do tend to go overboard. Still, I believe if all of this enthusiasm enhances the bond you have with your dog, and means you're spending more time with your dog. What can be better than that?"

By the way, make sure your dog doesn't get into the children's candies. Chocolate, in particular, may make dogs very ill.