



Dog Tales

When he's not playing a gay, stay-at-home father with a wicked sense of humor, *Modern Family's* Eric Stonestreet takes on the role of a straight, working dad to his 13-year-old pup

By *Melanie D.G. Kaplan*

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What to know before you adopt



EXPERT TIP

"Dogs need a lot more attention and companionship than cats. Make sure you're getting the proper pet for the way you live."—*Douglas Aspros, DVM*

PET HEALTH

Pup Tense

“I have full-on conversations with him. I talk to him because he looks at you and listens like a person.”

● Coleman Hawkins is your 13-year-old half beagle, half Jack Russell terrier mix. Where did the name come from?

He was already named on the rescue website when I got him in 2001. Coleman Hawkins is a famous tenor saxophonist. And I like the idea that he has a first and last name.

How did you go about training him?

I followed *The Art of Raising a Puppy* by the Monks of New Skete, and I was really strict with him the first six months, so he knows I'm the alpha in the relationship. But if an emergency comes up and I don't get home in time to let him out, and he absolutely has to go No. 2, he always does this in the guest bathroom. We recently moved into a new house, and he's already figured out where the guest bathroom is.

Do you ever give him people food?

If I'm having beef or something he can eat, I'll throw some on the patio when he's not looking and let him scavenge for it. But I never give him anything from the table or hand it to him.

What's your routine when you come home from work?

Typically Coleman meets me at the door, I drop off my keys, he does his business, and he runs around a bit. In the old house, when I'd go on big auditions before *Modern Family*, I'd tell Coleman that I was going off to find work so I could get him a bigger yard. So when we left that house for the last time, I had an emotional moment. I told him I made good on my promise to him. I'm happy I could do that.

ABC's Modern Family, now in its fourth season, airs on Wednesdays.

Read the full Q&A with Stonestreet in our free iPad app!

Reviewed by **William Draper, DVM**
WebMD Pet Health Expert