



Tails Are Wagging for Bark City Sitting

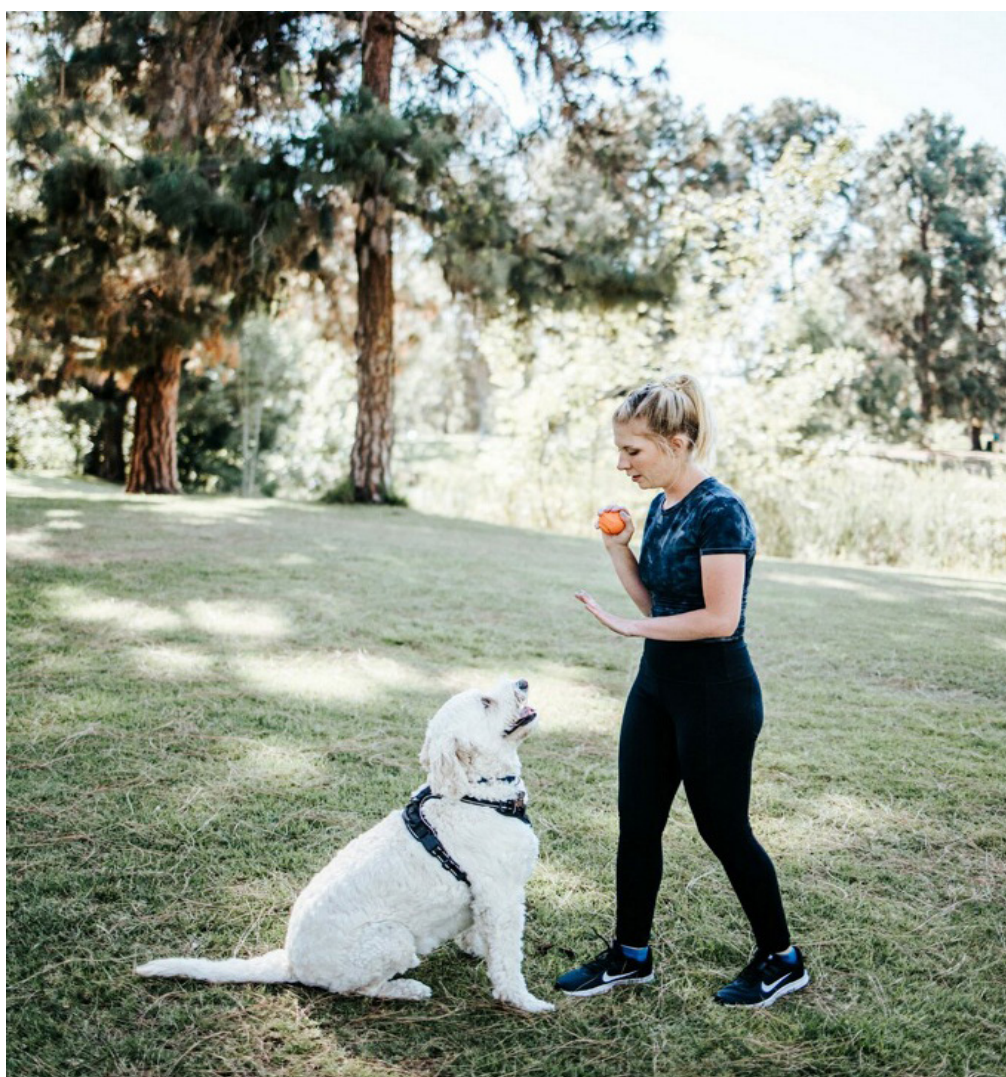
By Jill L. Ferguson

Madison Lyde may have just moved into the Bluff Heights neighborhood last October, but she's been a frequent guest and temporary resident for a number of years. She owns [Bark City Sitting](#) and is an in-demand dog walker and pet sitter who has worked with many of the area's cats and dogs. Before starting her own company in March 2020, Lyde worked as a contractor through Wag and Rover while she went to school.

"I started my business for a few reasons. First as a way to heal," Lyde said, explaining that she had some surgeries that required lifestyle changes, such as more exercise and a diet overhaul. She knew she wasn't a "gym person" but loved to walk and hike. At the time, she didn't have her own pet and missed that kind of love. She was going to college to be an animal-assisted therapist, and dog walking and pet sitting provided money for school and living experiences. But then she quickly realized that her "side hustle" was the love of her life, so Bark City Sitting was formed.

While cats and dogs make up most of her business, Lyde said, "I have experience in taking care of fish tanks, rodents, lizards, and birds." When it comes to dogs, her company doesn't have restrictions on size or breed, so you may see her in the neighborhood caring for Kona the Siberian Husky or Wilson the Shih-Poo.

Lyde said that the majority of her business has come from verbal referrals and that she "really values that because it's more personal." While it's a slower way to develop a business, it makes for "a more intimate relationship" with her clients and pets. Bark City Sitting's processes rule out many of the common fears that people have in letting someone they hardly know come into their home and handle their beloved pets (and sometimes their things). Lyde takes the time to get to know her human customers and their pets.



I personally know how much time she takes to get to know her clients, as she met with us for more than an hour a couple of times before caring for and living with our cattle dog Nacho while we were on vacation in 2019. She asked a lot of questions to understand where Nacho (who was ill) was at in his life, what his needs were, and what his behavior was like. And we could see that he clearly liked Maddie, so we were comfortable and felt there was mutual trust.

During any pet sitting job, Bark City Sitting sends photos to you of your pet, which adds value and quality to the service. Plus, there is clear and consistent communication so you never have to worry about how your pet is doing. (Lyde said she's planning on offering a new service of professional pet portrait greeting cards that can be used as your holiday cards.)

These things matter because your pet is a family member. There may be cheaper companies out there, but often you get what you pay for. I've had friends who have had pet sitters get drunk while caring for the pets, or have not shown up, or have been hours late to walk and potty their dogs.

Since Lyde is the primary person at her company (in addition to a few contractors), you always know who you're dealing with, as opposed to a bigger business with a more anonymous approach.

If you need someone to watch your home, care for your pets, or walk your dog, reach out to Bark City Sitting at www.barkcitysitting.com and submit the contact form on the home page to receive \$5 off your first booking. You'll be glad you did!

Jill Ferguson is an artist, best-selling author, coach, consultant, entrepreneur, and founder of Women's Wellness Weekends. She lives in Bluff Heights with her husband, Rick Hecht, and their very smart dog Coconut and very cute dog Casper.