

Tips for the older dog

Keep Healthy - Keep Active

- Keep your dog active** and you'll help keep the heart, lungs, muscles and joints healthy. An active life helps control weight, and makes life more fun!
- Exercise your dog regularly** day to day, little and often, avoid overdoing it at weekends. Avoid stairs, many dogs are lame as a result of over-enthusiastic dashes down from the bedroom.
- Motivate your dog by power-walking with enthusiasm.** A good steady 20min. walk on a short lead. Keep moving - it doesn't need to be fast, just steady.
- Stimulate your dog by routine training just like a puppy.** Be upbeat and cheerful! Use basic Sit, Stay and Come commands and give rewards with enthusiasm. This keeps your dog's mind alert and happy. Leadership gives re-assurance to an older dog and reduces anxiety. Experiment with fetch or search games.

Keep your pet comfortable

- Grooming.** Daily grooming refreshes and re-vitalises the body. Wet-wipes are ideal for freshening the face, feet and bottom.
- A Comfortable Bed (and a good night's sleep)** becomes more important as the years go by. Bean bags make excellent beds for older dogs, and **Vet-Bed** or a similar type of washable bedding helps rest ageing limbs comfortably.
- Warmth** With advancing age, a coat may be useful for winter walks.
- Raised food and water bowls.** Some older dogs with aches and pains appreciate feeding from bowls raised off the floor.

Weight _____ Ideal weight _____ Date _____

Visit our website: www.vet-healthcentre.co.uk

Pet's Name

Improving Quality of Life for your older dog

*Don't put anything down to old age!
If there is a problem - there is usually a solution.*

Common Age-Related Problems

- **Dental problems** cause sore teeth, painful gums and bad breath. Infection in the mouth results in poor health. It can also cause kidney and heart disease. Dental treatment improves health and quality of life.
 - **Stiffness and Arthritis - slowing down, weak hindlegs** Effective pain relief will give an older dog a new lease of life and be a joy to see. It's often amazing how well the medication works. Weight reduction also helps a lot.
 - **Coughing or weakness - heart disease is common.** We have some very effective medicines for ageing hearts.
 - **Weight Loss** - lots of causes including organ failure, debilitating disease, digestion failure, tumour. Many of these problems are treatable.
- Other symptoms to look out for:** Thirst - can be a sign of diabetes or kidney problems. Lumps, bumps and swellings - many growths and tumours can be treated effectively. Breathing problems, reduced vision or hearing loss.

**Bring your older dog
for a Health Check every 3 months
for improved quality of life.**

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Making life better for the older dog

Older dogs may show signs of anxiety or confusion. We can improve quality of life in most cases by medication, diet adjustment and simple behaviour therapy. Sometimes the underlying problem is pain, and pain relief can help.

Medication for behaviour

A course of anabolic injections will improve stamina.

Anti-oxidants, vitamins, hormones and stimulants can improve mental alertness. (Aktivait, Vivitonin, Soloxine).

Anti-anxiety medications reduce confusion, improve understanding and produce calm contentment. (Selgian, Tardak).

Long-term pain relief from aches and pains. (Rimadyl/Loxicom)

Feeding (food enrichment) can help

Fish oils and Essential fatty Acids (EFA's)

Medium chain fatty acids coconut oil and olive oil. Fresh fruits, vegetables and nuts and cereals for their anti-oxidant properties.

Behavioural and Environmental Enrichment.

Treat an older dog as a puppy again. Sometimes using a house cage gives security and better rest. Make sure everything they need is in one room so they don't have to go far to find their food or bed.

Keep the furniture in the same places - moving things around can confuse older dogs.

Take them on different walks in new places (e.g. drive there).

Take them on walks with other dogs. Younger dogs stimulate older dogs. Behaviour therapy may be helpful.

Essential Health Care for the Older Dog

THREE MONTHLY HEALTH-CHECK with the vet.

TEETH CARE - Deal with dental problems early.
Modern anaesthetics are very safe and much less of a risk than leaving a bad mouth untreated.

A QUALITY SENIOR DIET tailored to your dog's needs.
Getting the diet right can make such a difference to health.

BOOSTER VACCINATION - older dogs need protection more as their immune system gets weaker with time.

WORM 3 monthly with Milbemax. Worms can cause anaemia especially in older dogs..

FLEA PREVENTION all year round.
- fleas suck blood, lots of it, and will weaken an older dog.
Be safe - use only licenced veterinary flea products.

WATCH THE WEIGHT
Overweight dogs need to slim down on a true low-calorie food.
Dogs losing bodyweight need to see the vet to find out why.

NEUTERING
Male and female dogs that are not neutered have a high risk of serious diseases including some forms of cancer as they get older.

PET HEALTH INSURANCE - do keep it up -
this is when you need it!

BLOOD TEST and THYROID CHECK
to detect problems early before they become a problem.
