

## 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 - ask reception for our Games Ideas leaflet - £2.00.

### 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](http://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 - bad breath, dirty teeth**  
Pain and infection in the mouth results in poor health. 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.
- **Heart disease and Hypertension - coughing or weakness**  
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 Common Problems:** Lumps, bumps, tumours and cancers, kidney and liver disorders, prostate disease, respiratory disease, thyroid problems and Cushings disease, reduced vision and hearing. All these problems can be helped.

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

**Daisy Street Veterinary Centre, Blackburn (01254) 53622**

Vets: John Davies MRCVS, David Higginson MRCVS, Sam Purcell MRCVS  
Practice Manager: Ruth Swan VN BSc(Hons) PhD

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## Age-related behavioural problems including anxiety and confusion.

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 solve the problem.

### 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

Hills B/D  
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.

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## Essential Health Care for the Older Dog

- ❑ **THREE MONTHLY HEALTH-CHECK with the vet.**
  - ❑ **A QUALITY SENIOR DIET** tailored to your dog's needs.  
Getting the diet right can make such a difference to health. We have a range of speciality diets for older dogs
  - ❑ **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 & TICK PREVENTION** - as with worms, fleas suck blood and will weaken an older dog.  
use **Effipro Spot-On** or **Stronghold Spot-On** monthly
  - ❑ **TEETH CARE** - Deal with dental problems early.  
Modern anaesthetics are very safe and much less risky than leaving a bad mouth untreated.
  - ❑ **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!
  - ❑ **ANNUAL BLOOD TEST and THYROID CHECK**  
to detect treatable problems early before they become unwell.
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