



Rehoming an older dog from Dogs Trust

- Older dogs often find themselves looking for a new home in their twilight years and are sometimes overlooked. This is a great shame as dogs make lovely companions at any age!
- You may think that older dogs are more likely to have been diagnosed with health problems and worry about the cost implications of rehoming an older dog. In some circumstances we may offer financial support for identified conditions, so don't let this put you off!
- You can teach an old dog new tricks! Older dogs still enjoy mental stimulation and training as long as it is not too physically strenuous. They tend to have better manners, come housetrained and are not as destructive as a puppy.

- Older dogs are often calmer and more relaxing to be around. They also need less exercise leaving more time for yourself.
- When rehoming an older dog what you see is what you get. His personality has already been shaped, so there should be no surprises in the future.
- Pop along to your nearest Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre and meet all our lovely dogs that are waiting for a new home.
- If you would like to sponsor our Oakfield Oldies who are living at our old dogs home please visit www.dogstrust.org.uk

If you are interested in rehoming a dog, supporting Dogs Trust or for more information and factsheets about all aspects of dog ownership, please visit www.dogstrust.org.uk or contact:

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**Reg. Charity Numbers: 227523
and SC037843**



Looking After Your Older Dog



Dogs over the age of 7 are considered by some to be old, but this depends a lot on the breed. The 'average' life expectancy of a dog is 13 years, however smaller breeds tend to live longer than larger breeds.

Old age brings many changes; some sudden, others gradual, and you will need to be on the lookout for those that signal problems and be prepared to make allowances for those little inconveniences that come with caring for an elderly dog. By preparing for their later years, we can all enhance the quality of life that they deserve.

Feeding

- As they become less active, older dogs can be prone to putting on weight. Switching to a complete senior diet that may be lower in protein or fat will help keep extra weight off.
- Feeding smaller meals 2 or 3 times a day can be good but watch out for those in-between meal snacks or scraps.
- If your dog suffers from neck or back pain raising the food and water bowl will reduce discomfort.

Exercise

- Older dogs can become less energetic and sleep more. On walks let your dog set the pace. Try to go for frequent short walks instead of one long one.

- Your dog may not want to go on long hikes as he gets older but it is still important to exercise him enough so that he stays fit. His daily walks will give him mental stimulation and keep his joints mobile.
- He may show signs joint stiffness in the morning or after strenuous exercise so ensure he has a comfy bed to sleep on.
- You may want to provide ramps to help them navigate stairs or a car to ease the difficulties they may face.

Health

- Older dogs may struggle with their sight and hearing.
- Your dog's eyes may appear cloudy, which could mean that he has old age changes or cataracts. Seek veterinary advice on this.
- Most dogs adjust to failing sight, since it is usually a gradual process. Try to avoid moving the furniture in your house and leaving objects in his way. Keep him on the lead during exercise, especially near roads.
- Your dog may lose the ability to hear certain sounds. He may for example be able to hear a whistle, but not his owner's voice. Be creative in developing new forms of communication with your dog.
- You will need to pay particular attention to the condition of his teeth and the length of his nails. His nails will be less worn as his walks get shorter.

- If your dog hasn't been neutered already, there may still be benefits in doing so at an older age. Seek veterinary advice on this.
- Your dog's coat may change in condition. Daily grooming will be good for his coat and is a great opportunity for you to check him over for any new lumps or bumps that may indicate a problem.
- Twice yearly veterinary check-ups are essential for an ageing dog.

Behaviour

- To help your dog remain mentally active try to provide new and interesting aspects into his routine. Make plenty of time for games and interaction with him.
- Older dogs may start to exhibit symptoms of senility including compulsive behaviours. Seek advice from your vet at the first sign of behavioural changes.
- Your dog may begin to bark more often; this may be because something is troubling him, or because he is going deaf. Seek veterinary advice on this.
- As dogs get older they can become less tolerant. It is important to respect your dog's space.

