

Rowe Referrals

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Referrals

Living with a blind pet



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Living with a blind pet



Why did my pet become blind?

There are many reasons why dogs and cats can become blind including birth defects, eye injury, systemic diseases, breed related disorders and complications after surgery. Although we always strive to preserve vision, when all other options have been exhausted, it is in our pet's best interest to remove a blind, painful eye (this is called enucleation).

Do I need to put my pet to sleep because it's blind?

Most definitely NOT! Both dogs and cats have an extremely well-developed sense of smell and hearing, getting by with poor or no vision at all. Blindness is much harder on you than on your pet, since dogs and cats live "in the moment", without overthinking what is happening to them. However, animals tend to react very sensitively to their owners' emotional state, so it is therefore important for you to keep up a positive mental attitude in the interest of your pets' welfare.

What can I do to make it easy on my pet to adjust to losing their sight?

Toys and play

Being blind will improve your pets' remaining senses (smell and hearing). Using squeaky toys or toys containing treats works well to help your pet follow and locate them, and will keep your pet busy and entertained. It will strengthen your relationship which your pet and create an unbreakable bond.

Changes for indoors

We generally recommend keeping your furniture in dedicated areas and not making any great changes, so your pet can make a mental map of where things are.

Outlining a dedicated play area using a carpeted runner will enable your dog to quickly learn where the edge of the runner is and improve traction.

A "base-camp" made of a box or rug will give them the opportunity to re-orient themselves if they become confused.

Using scented diffusers at landmarks such as doorways may be helpful in helping your pet orientate themselves.

We recommend placing a plastic mat with a rough surface where your pet consumes its food and water. This will make it easier to identify its location and the unique scent of the plastic mat will help guide your pet to the area. Water fountains work well for cats and dogs, since the bubbling sound of flowing water will help locate the water source.

Changes for outdoors

The most important changes to be made outside the house is fencing off ponds or swimming pools, to avoid the risk of drowning.

Wood shavings or tree bark scattered around trees and other obstacles will prevent your dog from accidentally bumping their head and avoid trauma and injury.

Wind chimes positioned close to the front and back door of the house will help them access the house without help.

Changes in daily routines and habits

Consistent daily routines are key to giving your pet the necessary stability and confidence to adapt to this new chapter of their life. Any changes in daily routines should be performed gradually, one step at a time. Rearranging the furniture in the living room without giving your pet the chance to get to know the newly arranged environment can easily shake their confidence and cause anxiety.

Are my kids in danger of my blind pet?

There is no simple answer to this question as there are several factors involved, including your pets' temperament and relationship to your children before becoming blind. It is important for your children to understand your pet's condition in order to avoid any potential problems. You can simply do this by blindfolding your toddler or explaining the situation to more grown-up children, in order for them to get an idea how it feels to be unable to see. This will improve their understanding of what to do and what not to do to your blind pet.

If you have any further questions regarding this or any other condition feel free to contact us.