



THE KENNEL CLUB  
*Making a difference for dogs*

## Information Guide

Do you know how to  
look after your dog in  
its senior years?



[www.thekennelclub.org.uk](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk)

## Do you know how to look after your dog in its senior years?

### Health

- Ensure you give your dog more regular health checks and keep a watchful eye for any problems, e.g. tummy upsets. Problems it may have shrugged off as a youngster can be more serious for older dogs unless treated early.
- Groom your dog regularly (especially dogs which have been neutered) as old coats may get thicker and more difficult to manage unless carefully looked after.
- **Think about the expense of lifelong care and ensure your pet is insured to cover any health problems that may occur later in life. Kennel Club Pet Insurance now offers owners a choice of benefits and levels of cover alongside robust, lifelong veterinary fees protection** (terms and conditions apply).



THE KENNEL CLUB  
PET INSURANCE



For further information please call  
**0800 369 90 90** or visit  
**[www.kcinsurance.co.uk](http://www.kcinsurance.co.uk)**

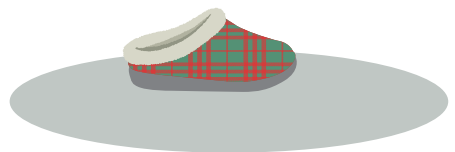
- Obesity is common among older dogs. It is important to get the right balance between feeding and exercise. If you cannot feel your dog's ribs, this is often a sign of obesity. Indicators that your dog may be obese are; less interest in exercise, difficulty in breathing and decreased stamina.
- Remember to be aware of what your older dog is going through – your commitment to their changing needs will help your dog to enjoy its senior years.
- Recognise when it is time to say goodbye to your dog and listen to advice your vet gives you. It is very difficult to see things clearly when you are close to the situation.

## Exercise

- Older dogs will not need as much exercise as before, but you should ensure that they still get enough. They stay fitter and 'younger' if they are kept suitably exercised.
- Mental exercise is important for an older dog – try to teach your dog new tricks to help keep their mind active.
- Ensure that the dog is dried when returned from a wet walk.
- Ensure that your dog has a warm bed away from draughts.
- Ensure you maintain a consistent daily routine.
- Ensure the dog is able to relieve itself more frequently – bladder control often reduces with age. Older dogs should not be left alone for long periods for this reason.
- Older dogs may need a suitable jacket to go outside in, as some coats get thinner and more porous with age and are therefore less able to withstand rain and cold.

## Feeding

- Feed older dogs smaller, more frequent meals.
- It is important to keep the dogs weight down. Dogs kept at the correct weight will live longer, healthier lives compared to overweight dogs. Overfeeding and resulting obesity do not do the dog any favours.
- Feed your dog a specific diet for elderly dogs. This does not necessarily mean a low protein diet – this is an often-quoted misapprehension and is not backed up by research, which actually points to a higher protein intake for older dogs.
- Make sure you use a food type to suit old teeth if your dog has lost its teeth with age.
- Your dog may need more palatable food as it gets older. It may also benefit from having tastier things added to its meals to keep it eating.



# Do you know how to look after your dog in its senior years?

## Home Life

- As dogs become older it becomes more and more important to provide a comfortable living context. A comfortable bed and warm surroundings go a long way to ensuring your senior dog is happy and content.
- It may become apparent your older dog has issues with its joints i.e. Arthritis. For smaller dogs, it may help to lift your dog in and out of transport or for larger dogs provide provisions which make transporting more accessible i.e. a ramp.
- Ageing dogs may be more susceptible to hearing and eyesight problems which can lead to them being startled more easily and becoming less responsive. Take care in recognising this, be patient and make allowances. If you are worried the problem is severe it is always best to take them to the vet to be checked.
- Senior dogs are less able to cope with extremes in weather and temperature. On a hot and sunny, day make sure your dog has some shade away from the sun and on cold, winter days ensure they are warm enough.

Dogs age at different rates according to their size. The table below gives an insight into the average age rates.

<b>Breed / Size</b>	<b>Old Age</b>
Toy / Small	8 years – 12+ years
Medium	7 years+
Large / Giant	5 years+



## **Top five reasons why a senior dog could be for you.**

- 1.** A senior dog needs a home as much as anybody. Senior dogs are usually the last to be adopted and first to be euthanized. Saving a dog will double the emotional reward you receive when you bring them home.
- 2.** You can teach old dogs new tricks. Dogs at a senior age can have a better attention span than younger dogs
- 3.** It takes less time to form a companionship with an older dog. They tend to have a much calmer persona when it comes to forming new relationships with owners as they already know what it takes to get along with others.
- 4.** Older dogs have an established demeanour and temperament, which gives you an immediate idea of how the dog will fit into your lifestyle.
- 5.** Senior dogs are less effort than a younger dog. This age group are happy just being within your company.



**A TRAINED DOG IS A HAPPY DOG WITH  
THE KENNEL CLUB GOOD CITIZEN DOG SCHEME  
TRAINING CLUBS CAN BE FOUND ALL ACROSS THE UK,  
FIND YOUR LOCAL CLUB AT [WWW.GCDS.ORG.UK](http://WWW.GCDS.ORG.UK)**

Just like you, your dog's needs will change as it gets older and this guide has been compiled to give you some guidance on how to adapt to your dog's changing lifestyle. Stages of aging may differ according to the breed. The average lifespan of a dog is in the region of 10 years, although this can be less in some larger breeds. It is advised that you ask the breeder of your dog or the relevant breed club for some guidance on the potential lifespan of your chosen breed.



**THE KENNEL CLUB**

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**[www.thekennelclub.org.uk](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk)**

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**THE KENNEL CLUB**

*Making a difference for dogs*

The Kennel Club works to protect and promote the health and welfare of all dogs in the UK. We want happy, healthy dogs living long lives with responsible owners. All profits from the organisation go straight into funding the many programmes run in the best interest of dogs and dog owners and to support the Kennel Club Charitable Trust to re-invest into a wide variety of welfare and health programmes.

Anyone can register their dog with the Kennel Club. By registering you will demonstrate your commitment to your dog's well-being and to the health and welfare of all dogs. You can register online today at [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/dogregistration](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/dogregistration).

Whatever your dog's needs, the Kennel Club is here to help and support you.

Find out more by contacting us on **01296 318540**, or visit our website at [www.thekennelclub.org.uk](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk) to find out more about the wonderful world of dogs.

**Additional guides on a wide range of subjects are also available to download from our website at [www.thekennelclub.org.uk](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk):**

- Breeding for health
- Breeding from your dogs
- Choosing and bringing home the right dog for you
- Common canine poisons in the house and garden
- Do you know dog law?
- How to get involved in fun activities and competitions with your dog
- How to get started with dog training
- How to register your dog with the Kennel Club
- Introducing dogs to children or babies
- Kennel Club endorsements
- Managing your dog's weight
- Moving house with your dog
- Pet Insurance Guide for dog owners
- Puppy Socialisation
- Road travel with your dog
- So you are thinking of working with dogs?
- Thinking of showing your dog in the UK?
- Travelling abroad with your dog
- Why should I Microchip my pet?