



AMSCOPE

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Do Dogs and Cats Have Long-Term Memories?

By Nicole Pajer

We often hear the expression that “pets live in the moment,” but anyone who owns a dog or cat will tell you that they’ve experienced incidents that challenge that statement. Have you ever put your dog in his crate, opened the door several hours later, and watched him make a beeline to where he was last chewing his rawhide? What about those stories of cats getting lost and finding their way back home years later? Or the dogs who bury their bones in the backyard being able to dig them up months down the road? These types of incidents suggest that pets are capable of forming memories, and not just short-term ones.

Like Humans, Dogs and Cats Can Store an Array of Memories

“Dogs and cats have different types of memories, just like we do. They have spatial memory, remembering where things are located, short-term memories, and long-term memories,” says Dr. Brian Hare, associate professor of evolutionary anthropology at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Los Angeles-based veterinarian Dr. Jeff Werber adds that pets are capable of storing many different types of memories—“from the little things like knowing where their food or litter box is, to recognizing people and places they haven’t seen in years.”

Short-Term vs. Long-Term Memories
According to Hare, short-term memory, or “working memory,” is a kind of memory that allows people to keep information—like a phone number—in mind for a few minutes and mentally manipulate it. “This may sound simple, but working memory is crucial for any kind of problem solving,” he explains. “Working memory

has been found to correlate with skills in learning, math, reading, and language. Researchers have even found some evidence that in children, working memory is more predictive of academic success than IQ.”

Long-term memories, on the other hand, are stored in your brain and can be retrieved at will, like childhood memories, or what you did last week or last year. “Long-term memories do not fade in order. You might remember something that happened to you years ago better than you remember what you did yesterday,” he explains.

To distill it down, Dr. Bruce Kornreich, associate director at the Cornell Feline Health Center in Ithaca, New York, says that “short-term memory is anywhere between 5 and 30 seconds and long-term memory can remain almost indefinitely.”

Long-Term Memories in Pets

“There are many examples of cats and dogs having long-term memory in both studies and in real-life events,” says Dr. Jenna Sansolo, associate veterinarian at Ardsley Veterinary Associates in Ardsley, New York. “For instance, when pet owners go on vacations and come home to dogs that show the same excitement a human child would show after not seeing their family for the same amount of time, or the countless videos of dogs whose owners come home from military deployments that are all over the internet.” Sansolo also points out that pets who have been abused or in less than ideal living situations can also show proof of long-term memory. “I have seen many patients who are scared of tall men, hats, certain noises, etc., which they can relate to a negative memory or event that has happened in the distant past,” she explains.

Laurie Santos, director of the Comparative Cognition Laboratory and the Canine Cognition Center at Yale in New Haven, Connecticut, notes that when we think of long-term memories in pets, we are often referring to “episodic memories—remembering particular episodes from long ago.” She adds that while the topic hasn’t been extensively studied, she and her colleagues have seen evidence that pets have some episodic memory abilities. “For example, dogs can remember where and what kinds of food were hidden over longer time horizons, suggesting they’re tracking some information about how and where food

was hidden,” she explains. “There’s also evidence that dogs behave differently when owners leave for long versus short periods of time, suggesting that pets might remember something about how long ago their companion left.”

What Triggers the Formation of Memories in Pets?

While pets can form memories about a variety of instances, experts suspect that extremely positive and/or negative experiences are what stick with them the most. “Important events, such as those related to food and survival, and events that have an emotional impact are more likely to be stored in the long-term memory,” says Claudia Fugazza, department of ethology at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest.

“These memories have the power to affect your pet’s behavior for a lifetime,” Weber says. Dr. Veronica Cruz Balsler, a veterinarian at the Metropolitan Veterinary Center in Chicago, agrees, adding that it sometimes takes only one impactful moment to cause a memory to stick with a pet for a long period of time. “My dog, Tony, was near a campfire once when someone decided to add excessive amounts of lighter fluid. The fireball that came towards us was very frightening for him, as he was not expecting it. He no longer will get near campfires,” she says.

How Far Back Can Dogs and Cats Recall?

According to Cruz Balsler, that’s tricky. The subject hasn’t been extensively studied, however, many experts have their own theories. The general consensus is that this is largely based on what level of impact the incident that initially formed the memory had on the dog or cat. “It depends on the type of event and emotions/reward/consequence of the event,” Cruz Balsler says. Fugazza agrees. “Memory decay depends on many variables, such as the type of memory used for storing the information, its importance, and its emotional valence [the strength of a positive or

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**The deadline
for the December issue is
November 10**

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Nosework Training



Dog Training your dog is a never-ending feat. From basic obedience to tricks, and even some specialized work, there is always more for your dog to learn. One great exercise that you can teach your dog is nosework. The great thing about nosework is that you can literally do it anywhere! Dogs naturally want to put their noses to work so teaching them the basics can be fun for both of you.

Did you know that your dog has an incredible sense of smell much more powerful than yours? Helping them use this power for good can give them confidence as well as keep them busy both physically and mentally. As you know, a tired dog is a happy dog. Finding new ways to keep them entertained is important.

Dogs loving having a job to do. Even the laziest of dogs get excited by having a task to complete. Dogs of all shapes and sizes can benefit from nosework and it's never too early or too late to begin teaching them.

The first thing to do is pick out a high-value treat for your dog to find. If there is a special treat that you give your dog on occasion, you can start by using this. Try to use something that has a unique smell and something that they just won't be able to resist.

Next, pick a command that you are going to use when it is time for your dog to hunt for their special treat. Commands like "find it" are good words to use. However, make sure that you do not use this command or any words that sound like it in other training practices with your dog. To begin, have your dog stay at a given location. While she is watching you, place the treat at the other end of the room. When you say "find it" your dog knows that they can go retrieve their treat. Repeat this a few times and get your dog used to waiting for the command and then taking the treat.

Once your dog seems to understand the game, hide the treat in a different place where your dog cannot see it. Gradually you can increase the distance and start placing the treat in the next room. The whole idea is that at the end you should be able to hide things around the house and have your dog sniff them out when you use the command.

Another fun nosework game is called "Which Hand?" Dogs love this because it has an instant gratification effect when they choose the correct hand. All you have to do is have your dog sit, and place a treat in one of your hands. Next, close your fists and ask your dog "which hand?" Let

your dog sniff and choose which hand they suspect the treat is in. Then, open your hand up and give them the treat. If they choose the wrong hand, no problem! Open up both hands to show them the treat, shut your hands, and ask them "which hand?" again.

There are some great YouTube tutorials to help you learn the basics of nosework, as well as giving you some tips and tricks. This video even teaches you how to make a nosework toy that can help your dog learn the basics even easier.

It can take time for your dog to learn nose work so don't be discouraged if they don't pick it up right away. With some practice, and some enticing treats, your dog will become an expert in 'nose' time!

2018 AMSC Pin Recipients

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Memories...from p. 1

negative emotion]. Important information and memories with emotional content tend to be remembered for longer times."

Do Dogs or Cats Have Better Memories?

Studies show that dogs outperform cats when it comes to their short-term memory abilities. This leads experts, like Kornreich, to believe that the same would hold true when it comes to long-term memories. "You would extrapolate from the fact that dogs do better on short-term memory studies than cats do—that they perhaps have better long-term memories," he explains. "We have to be careful about coming to that conclusion without it being tested. But it makes perfect sense to me to say, 'Well, if a cat forgets where something is in 30 seconds and a dog remembers where it is for a minute, then you would think that the dog not only has better short-term memory but perhaps it has better long-term memory.' But that is presuming that the mechanisms behind short-term and long-term memory are the same and they may not be."

Monique Udell, assistant professor of animal and rangeland sciences at Oregon State University, points out that new research is looking specifically at fading memories in pets. "While cats and dogs do have long term-memory, the precision and accuracy of these memories can decline over time, just as it does for humans," she explains. "We still have a lot to learn about the types of information that animals retain for long periods of time, but recent research into age-related memory decline and dementia in dogs may shed light on some of these questions, for both healthy dogs and those suffering from memory loss."

Kornreich points out an interesting fact: Certain studies suggest that cats don't seem to have as much of an issue with memory decline as dogs do. "In humans, special learning tasks can be inhibited with aging. That appears not to significantly occur in cats," he explains. "Cats don't seem to have the same decline in terms of special learning tasks. That doesn't say that there may not be components of their cognitive function that don't deteriorate from time to time, but in terms of special learning tasks, at least based upon this study, they don't decline in that regard."

Your Role in Your Pet's Memories

While pets learn continuously throughout their lifetime, they form the most important impressions in their early days. "Puppies and kittens both have periods early in their lives where they learn rapidly about many things in their world. The memories that are formed during this period influence how they behave for the rest of their lives," says Dr. Kersti Seksel, a

registered veterinary specialist of behavioral medicine at Sydney Animal Behaviour Service in Australia. So it's extra important to expose them to the socialization and proper training and conditioning that they need during this time.

Pet parents can help their dog or cat turn a potential negative long-term memory into a positive one, Cruz Balsler adds. "Our behavior influences our pet's behavior and memories more than people realize," she says. "The one that impacts me daily as a vet is client's behavior at the vet clinic and how they respond to their pet's stress. If they're scared and you are anxious, then the memory of the building, the smell, and the people in that building will forever be scary."

For this reason, Cruz Balsler encourages people to swing by the vet clinic periodically for "happy visits" where pets get a treat and some love or just come in and then leave. "That way, the pet can have experiences in the vet clinic that aren't scary or bad and it doesn't become engrained in them that the clinic is bad," she says.

NEW APPLICANTS

Kristi and Eric Riley

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Kristi and Eric have been involved with dogs for at least 9 years...

Giant Schnauzer – 4 years

Miniature Schnauzer – 1 year, 9 months

Maltese – 9 years

They are not breeders... They participate in Conformation, Agility, Obedience, Tracking, Rally, Barn Hunt and Coursing...

They attend 48 – 50 events per year... Their Giant Schnauzer was Rally Giant Schnauzer of the year... They belong to the Giant Schnauzer Club of America where Eric is current Performance Chair, the Kennel Club of the Bluegrass, where Eric is Vice President 2017-2018... Kristi is a homemaker, and Eric is CEO of the Lexington Clinic... They are interested in Healthcare... They would like to assist the AMSC with Obedience, Agility and Conformation... Their special skills include organization, computers and data management, event planning and co-ordination...

Eric and Kristi's sponsors are Robyn Elliott and Pam Opanowitz

LINDA REINHOLD

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Linda has been involved with miniature schnauzers for 10 years, and has a new miniature schnauzer puppy...

She is not a breeder... She has participated in conformation events for one (1) year...

To date she has been involved in about 2 events a year, but that will increase with showing her new puppy

In conformation events... Linda does not belong to any dog clubs... She is a Registered Dental Hygienist...

She would like to help the club with Newsletter and Health...

Linda's sponsors are: Carma Ewer and Tania Kidd...

Marianne Kitchell

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Marianne has been involved with Miniature Schnauzers for four (4) years... She currently has two (2) Mini Schnauzers, Steampunk Bearded Lady (4 years), and Von Ruhr's Tiberius on the Prowl, which she has owned for 4 months... Marianne is not a breeder. She competes in Agility and attends about 20 plus events each year.

She does not currently belong to any Dog Clubs. She is retired and would like to assist the AMSC with Rescue, and Agility.

Her current goals are to compete Tiberius and get a Versatility Award with him...

Marianne's sponsors are Kathy Miller Rager and Marjorie Sue Phillips.

Brinda O'Neill-Hall

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623-680-6071

Brinda has been involved with Miniature Schnauzers since 2014... She is a breeder and is a participant with the AKC Bred With Heart Program... Brinda is interested in Conformation, Tracking and Breeding and participates in about 3 events a year...

She belongs to the Cactus State Miniature Schnauzer Club, has done Ring Stewarding and Newsletter Editor for her local club...

Brinda is a Nurse Practitioner... She would like to help the AMSC out with Newsletter, Awards/Trophies, Education, and Health...

Brinda's special skills are developing policy/procedures for charities and also newsletter development, social media and marketing, and fundraising...

Brinda's Sponsors are: Julie Cooper and Ginny Fagan

Why It's a Mistake to Try to Stop Growling

By Dr. Becker

The researchers at the Family Dog Project at Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary recently conducted a study to determine how well humans understand different types of dog growls.¹ Past studies have focused on how well people interpret dog barks, but this is one of the first to examine growling.

It surprises many dog parents to learn that dog growls, which are typically associated with aggression, are not always threatening. For example, dogs frequently growl during play. I have a friend with a tiny little dog who loves it when she throws a certain toy down the stairs for him to retrieve. As he zooms down the staircase after his toy, he often gives a little growl as he bounces off each step on his way down!

Volunteers Correctly Guessed the Context of Dog Growls 63 Percent of the Time

For the study, the researchers made audio recordings of 18 dogs growling in three different scenarios: when they encountered an unfamiliar dog or human, when they were defending their dinner and during play. The recordings were then played for 40 human volunteers, who were asked to match each growl to the specific activity they felt the dog was engaged in.

In total, the volunteers correctly matched the growl with the right activity 63 percent of the time, which indicates that humans are doing more than simply guessing about the nature of dog growls.

The researchers also observed that women, at a 65 percent success rate, are better at interpreting growls than men, who guessed correctly only 45 percent of the time. Not surprisingly, the team also found that people who had a dog at home or worked with dogs regularly were 20 percent better at understanding the growls than people who aren't around dogs.

The volunteers most often correctly recognized growls during play, but had trouble distinguishing between food guarding and "stranger danger" growls.

Dogs Defer to the Food-Guarding Growls of Other Dogs

A few years ago, the same research team studied how dogs respond to the growls of other dogs.² The researchers recorded a series of play growls, threatening growls and food-guarding growls. Next, they put a hard-to-resist meaty bone in a room along with a recorder set to play the three different types of growls. One by one, the dogs were brought into the room with the bone and allowed free access to it.

In each 90 second experiment, as a dog approached the bone, he heard a recorded play growl, threatening growl or food guarding growl. The researchers observed that neither

the play nor threatening growls deterred most of the dogs from helping themselves to the bone.

Only the food-guarding growl kept the majority of dogs from grabbing it up. Eleven of 12 dogs backed away from the bone immediately upon hearing the food-guarding growl, and only 7 of the 12 returned to it within 90 seconds. Four out of 12 dogs who heard the play growl backed off the bone, as did only 2 out of 12 who heard the threatening growl. And only one dog in each of these groups continued to stay away from the bone for the duration of the experiment.

Why You Shouldn't Try to Stop Your Dog From Growling

When your dog growls, depending on the situation your first reaction may be to tell him to stop. But what many people don't realize is that stopping the growling can lead to bigger problems down the road. When your dog growls he's trying to tell you something, typically that he's feeling uncomfortable or afraid. He's giving you a wordless warning because he can't talk, and as such, you should view his growling as not only acceptable, but desirable.

Punishing your dog for growling may teach him not to do it, but that means he may not give any warning in situations that stress him out. The end result could be that he suddenly freezes in fear or even bites someone unexpectedly. It can catch you completely off guard because you've taught him not to communicate with you through growling.

Punishment may suppress your dog's growl but it won't change his emotional state. He'll still be fearful or uncomfortable, and those feelings can trigger aggression in many dogs. Punishing an already fearful dog will only increase his anxiety and encourage aggression and other fear-based behaviors. Punishing your dog for growling can also hinder communication between the two of you, and can damage the bond you share.

So while you probably don't want your dog to growl (especially at you), punishing this normal form of canine communication will very likely backfire and make your dog even more fearful and potentially more aggressive.

It will also decrease the likelihood that he'll growl the next time he's feeling uncomfortable, which means you'll lose out on this valuable form of canine-human communication. And again, if your dog stops growling, you may not receive a warning before he's pushed past his limit and potentially acts out aggressively.

What to Do When Your Dog Growls Stop what you're doing.

If you know your dog may growl but is unlikely to bite, stop what you're doing but stay where you are. dog may bite soon after a growl, immediately stop, back away and get to a safe place (you should also move away from any unfamiliar dog that's growling). If you know your dog may growl but is unlikely to bite, stop what you're doing but stay where you are.

When your dog relaxes, move away (which rewards her for relaxing, not for growling). If necessary (and you know you can do so without a risk of being bitten), remove her from the situation.

Figure out why she growled. What caused your dog to feel uncomfortable or fearful? Were you trying to cut her nails? Taking her food away? Trying to get her to go outside (or come inside)? It's important to know what situation caused your dog's response.

Create a plan to make the situation less stressful. You may need to get creative here or even seek the help of a professional positive reinforcement trainer. For instance, if your dog growls when you try to groom her, distract her with treats while someone else does the grooming. You can also try to redirect her by offering a more positive experience, such as playtime, or direct her to go to her bed and then reward the behavior.

Try to eliminate stressors. Dogs get stressed out too, and just like in people, the stress can add up. If you've had houseguests, for instance, a dog that's used to a quiet household may be on edge. If you then take her to the groomer or a storm rolls in and she's afraid of thunder, she's likely to be even more anxious than normal.

Overall, the more you can reduce stressors in your dog's environment, the better, and in cases where stress can't be eliminated, at least be sure she has a safe, quiet place to retreat to (such as a cozy crate).

To address the growling, address the fear. Growling is a symptom of larger issue; a sign that your dog is afraid and unable to tolerate a given situation. There's no point in punishing the "symptom" of growling, as it's simply your dog's way of telling you that something's wrong.

Instead, figure out what's making her uncomfortable and then come up with a plan to address it. In cases where the fear-triggering scenario cannot be changed (such as visits to the vet or groomer), use techniques such as distraction to diffuse the tension. You can also seek the help of a behaviorist or other trainer to help your dog become less fearful.

It's important to recognize that growling among puppies or dogs who are playing is typically perfectly normal and needs no intervention. As long as your dog is showing no other signs of aggression, you can assume that occasional growling during play is just part of the fun.

Urgent Brain Function Alert for Beloved Pets

By Dr. Becker

As dogs age, most pet parents and veterinarians have traditionally focused only on keeping them healthy from the neck down, with things like weight control, management of arthritis and other mobility issues and support of major organ systems.

In fact, it wasn't all that long ago that many people accepted euthanasia as the only option for an elderly animal showing signs of mental decline. Thankfully, today's pet parents want to care for their animal's physical and mental health into old age, just as they would a parent or other elderly family member. We want to help our companion animals maintain good brain function throughout their senior and geriatric years.

Causes of Geriatric Dementia

Cognitive dysfunction looks a lot like a mental or behavioral problem, but the root cause is actually physical, due to age-related changes within your dog's brain. There are three main contributors to changes in an aging brain that cause gradual impairment in cognitive functioning:

Oxidative stress from free radical damage

Formation of lesions on the brain

Alterations in oxygen and energy availability

Oxidative stress is physiological stress on the body caused by the cumulative damage of free radicals associated with aging. The brain is thought to be more sensitive to the effects of oxidation than other tissues of the body.

The damage to your dog's brain caused by oxidative stress can result in decreased cognitive function as well as degenerative nerve disease similar to, for example, Alzheimer's disease in humans. The aging process also involves the accumulation of beta amyloid deposits in the brain. These deposits consist of nerve-damaging proteins that form plaque. This "senile plaque" buildup interferes with the transmission of signals from the brain.

Brain energy availability can also decline over time due to environmental stressors and toxins, including diet. It can negatively alter cellular metabolism in the brain,

leading to cognitive decline.

Symptoms of Geriatric Dementia

Dementia or senility in dogs is referred to as canine cognitive dysfunction syndrome, cognitive decline or simply CD. Signs of CD are seen in about half of dogs over the age of 11. By the age of 15, almost 70 percent of dogs have at least one sign of an aging brain.

Because large and giant breed dogs age more rapidly than smaller breeds, dogs as young as 6 can begin to experience mental decline. If your pet is around that age, is a large or giant breed and is showing one or more symptoms of CD, don't rule out an age-related problem.

However, in a relatively young dog, it's important to investigate for an underlying illness or diseases before making an assumption that he or she has an age-related cognitive issue. There are five classic signs of cognitive decline in dogs, including:

Increased total amount of sleep during a 24-hour period

Decreased attention to surroundings, disinterest, apathy

Decreased purposeful activity

Loss of formerly acquired knowledge, which includes housetraining

Intermittent anxiety expressed through apprehension, panting, moaning or shivering

Other signs of mental decline include failure to respond to commands and/or difficulty hearing, inability to recognize familiar people and difficulty navigating the environment. Additional physical manifestations of CD can include excessive licking, lack of grooming, fecal and urinary incontinence and loss of appetite.

Diagnosing Dementia

Diagnosis of canine cognitive dysfunction is a diagnosis of exclusion. There are many conditions older dogs acquire that can mimic the signs of cognitive decline, so it's important to rule out all other physical reasons for a change in behavior. For example, a small seizure can cause a pet to stand

still and stare.

If your dog seems detached, he could be in pain. Inappropriate elimination can be due to kidney disease. These disorders and many others can result in a change in behavior unrelated to cognitive decline. That's why it's so important to rule out all possible alternative reasons, especially in aging pets.

It's also important for your veterinarian to review any medications your dog is taking. Older animals metabolize drugs differently than younger pets, and if a dog has been on a certain medication for years, it's possible it is having a different effect as he gets older.

Helping Dogs Maintain Cognitive Function as They Age

Several studies have been conducted with older Beagles to test various methods of preventing, slowing or even reversing age-related cognitive decline. One study showed that mental decline can be improved by offering an antioxidant-fortified diet, plus a program of cognitive and environmental enrichment, plus extra exercise.

Fortunately, there are many things you can do to help your aging canine companion maintain good cognitive health for as long as possible, and delay the onset and progression of geriatric dementia.

Diet

Feed a species-appropriate, balanced diet that is rich in healthy fats, including omega-3 fatty acids such as krill oil. Krill oil and other healthy fats, including MCT oil, are very important for cognitive health.

The perfect fuel for an aging dog is a variety of living, whole foods suitable for a carnivore. Eliminate all refined carbohydrates, which are just unnecessary sugar. No grains, potatoes or legumes. Replace those unnecessary carbs with extra high-quality protein. Eliminate extruded diets (kibble) to avoid the toxic byproducts of the manufacturing process.

cont'd on p. 6..**BRAIN**

BRAIN....FROM P. 5

Dog foods are manufactured in a way that creates byproducts that can affect cognitive health, including heterocyclic amines, acrylamides and advanced glycation end products, or AGEs. Fresh, biologically appropriate foods provide the whole food nutrients an aging brain requires. The right diet will also enhance the microbiome, which has been linked to improved cognitive health in humans, and I've seen an improvement in dogs as well.

Supplements

Studies of nutraceuticals show that memory is significantly improved in supplemented dogs, and the effects are long-lasting. Studies of medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs) such as coconut oil show they can significantly improve cognitive function in older dogs.

MCTs provide an alternative energy source for the brain in the form of ketone bodies versus glucose, which can dramatically improve brain metabolism and cellular energy within the central nervous system. Supplementing with MCTs is a great way to offer an instant fuel source for your pet's brain.

Ketone bodies cross the blood brain barrier to efficiently nourish aging brains. I recommend 1/4 teaspoon per every 10 pounds of your pet's body weight, added daily to his food. Your dog's brain is about 60 percent fat, and that fat needs to be appropriately fueled as he ages.

I also recommend providing a source of SAME (S-adenosylmethionine). Other supplements to consider are jellyfish extracts and resveratrol, which is Japanese knotweed. Japanese knotweed has been proven to help reduce free radical damage and beta-amyloid deposits.

Ginkgo biloba may improve blood flow to the brain. Phosphatidylserine and ubiquinol, which is the reduced form of CoQ10, feeds your pet's mitochondria and improves cellular energy.

Vaccines

Stop them. Over-vaccinating is something older animals do not need. You can replace the vaccines with titers. A titer is a blood test that measures protective immunity. Chances are your dog is very well-protected. Switch to titrating to help reduce her toxic load.

Exercise

Keep your dog's body and mind active with regular exercise appropriate for her age and physical condition, and mental stimulation (puzzles and treat-release toys can be beneficial). Provide her with regular opportunities

to socialize with other pets and people. Also keep your dog at a healthy size. Overweight pets are at significantly higher risk for developing age-related diseases.

Senior wellness exams

I recommend twice-yearly veterinary visits for pets no matter the age, but this becomes even more important for dogs getting up in years. Keeping abreast of your animal companion's physical and mental changes as he ages is the best way to catch any disease process early.

Ask your vet to perform a blood test to check your pet's internal organ health to make sure you are identifying possible issues early on. Keeping abreast of your pet's physical and mental changes as he ages is really the very best way to catch any disease process early.

When your dog begins to respond to therapy designed to improve cognitive function, if necessary, you can begin re-training him using the same techniques you used when he was a puppy — positive reinforcement behavior training involving lots of treats and praise.

Unfortunately, these recommendations won't be tremendously helpful for a dog already in the advanced stages of cognitive decline, which is why it's so important to diagnose and begin treating the problem as early as possible. Cognitive dysfunction is a progressive disease that can't be cured, but early diagnosis and intervention can slow mental decline and offer your aging dog good quality of life.



10 Pet Safety Tips For When Your Dog is Home Alone

By Teresa Traverse

Pet parents always tend to worry about something happening to their dog while they are away. Dog safety is at the forefront of every pet parent's mind when they have to leave their best friend at home.

A dog home alone can be a recipe for disaster—but not to worry. There are certain precautions you can take to ensure your pet's safety when you're not at home.

Be Sure to Put Things Away

"The most common thing we see is dogs getting into the garbage or eating something on the counter that they shouldn't," says Dr. Carly Fox, DVM, emergency and critical care staff doctor at the Animal Medical Center in New York City.

To prevent your dog from accidentally ingesting something harmful, be sure to keep your place picked up, and put away any hazardous objects or food that's dangerous to pets.

Be sure your garbage bin has a lid with a latch so that your pup cannot dig around inside for snacks while you are away. The garbage bin should also be stored in a cupboard or in a place with restricted access.

Dr. Fox says she'll occasionally see dogs who have chewed up electrical wires, so be sure to create barriers or covers for your electrical wires that prevent your dog from being able to get to them while you are away.

Dogs also can rip up [dog plush toys](#) or [dog beds and mats](#) and ingest the fluff or pieces of fabric, so it is important to pay attention to your dog's chewing habits. If you know your dog shreds toys or shreds beds when nervous, it is best to put those items away while you are out of the house.

Keeping cabinets closed and latched is also a smart idea. It will limit your dog's access to cleaning supplies, garbage and other products or items that could make them ill. A great way to ensure your pup cannot get into your cabinets is to use child-proof cabinet locks that require agile hands to open.

Hire a Dog Sitter

If you're going to be leaving your dog home alone for longer periods of time during the day, it is worth considering hiring a dog sitter or dog walker. "These days under most circumstances, that's probably what I'd recommend for most of my clients," says Dr.

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Kwane Stewart, DVM, chief veterinary officer of American Humane.

Dr. Stewart advises trying to maintain your dog's routine even when your schedule changes. Your dog's routine is an important part of their overall health and happiness. Routines help dogs thrive.

If you are going to be changing your schedule around or are going to have to spend longer periods of time out of the house, it is important to find a way to keep your dog's schedule as close to what he's used to as possible, or to gradually adjust them to your new schedule. Hiring a dog sitter is a great way to help make sure your dog stays in a healthy routine or can get slowly adjusted to a new one in a way that minimizes their stress.

Use Technology

Technology has come a long way when it comes to pets, and there are a variety of options out there that allow pet parents to stay more connected to their pets, no matter where they are.

So, if you are a pet parent that worries about having your dog home alone, even if it is just for a few hours, dog cameras and monitors are a great option. Pet cameras like the Pawbo+ Wi-Fi interactive pet camera and treat dispenser and the Petcube Bites Wi-Fi pet camera and treat dispenser allow you to check in on your canine companion throughout the day from your phone. You can even provide them with dog treats just to show you are thinking of them. Both Dr. Fox and Dr. Stewart recommended using pet cameras as a way to monitor your pet while you are not home.

Dr. Stewart also recommends using a dog GPS collar or even alarm systems that go off if your dog escapes the house. This way you can keep tabs on your dog and their activities while you are out and be notified if your dog has escaped from your home.

Crate Your Dog

"If you want to be 100 percent safe, the best thing to do is crate them," says Dr. Fox. "Most dogs actually like being in their crate. It's a very safe space."

Dog crates are the best way to prevent your dog from getting into trouble when leaving your dog home alone. They are especially helpful if you have a dog with destructive tendencies.

If your dog isn't used to being in a crate, make sure to gradually ease him into the routine and create positive associations with the

crate so that he sees it as a safe spot and not a punishment.

Consider feeding your dog in his crate at least until he looks forward to his time there. You can even set aside a small amount of his dog food to use as a reward for willingly entering his crate.

Dr. Stewart advises leaving your dog crated while you head to work in the morning and then letting him out when you return for a lunch break. Or having a dog sitter or dog walker take your pet out around lunchtime.

You also could consider confining them to one area of your house—like the kitchen or a bathroom—using dog gates. If you do this, be sure you dog-proof your cabinets with child locks and keep dangerous or toxic items out of reach. Dr. Fox recommends leaving your dog with rubber dog toys since they're harder to rip up than plush ones to ensure he doesn't get bored.

If you're confining your pet to a specific area, be sure to leave water in an accessible place, says Dr. Stewart.

Separating Multiple Dogs

If you have multiple dogs in your home and know that sometimes disagreements can break out, it might be best to keep them separate while you are not home. Dr. Fox says that keeping the dogs separate can prevent potential injuries.

You can use a dog gate to keep them in separate rooms, or you can keep them in dog crates. No matter how you choose to separate the dogs while you are out, it will help to ease any anxiety about possible injuries while leaving your dogs home alone.

Provide Your Dog With Entertainment

When you are not home, your dog may start to search for alternative forms of entertainment to keep himself busy while he waits for you to come home. As Dr. Stewart explains, "There are things in your pet's reach that normally in your presence they wouldn't get to." He continues, "You're away... Boredom sets in. And they start trying to go after things or chew things."

To help deter your dog from chewing on household items or furniture, it is a good idea to provide them with dog-friendly items to chew on as a safe alternative. You can try using dog interactive toys or dog chew toys. These dog toys are designed to keep your dog occupied and mentally stimulated, so they are ideal for a dog home alone. Both vets also recommended treat balls.

Dr. Fox says that she always leaves her dog with a KONG Classic dog toy when she is not home. She says, "It really keeps him super active. I think it prevents him from getting into trouble because he's so focused on getting the treats out."

You can also consider providing your dog with some background noise by leaving the TV on. Or you can try calming sounds and music by using the radio or a speaker, like the Pet Acoustics pet tunes speaker.

"It's helpful to try to step into the mind of your pet for a moment," says Dr. Stewart. "And then act accordingly."

Close Your Windows

Another pet safety concern when leaving pets home alone is their access to open windows. "We see a lot of cats and dogs falling out of windows," says Dr. Fox.

It is important that you make sure that the windows in your home are securely closed and locked before you head out. This will prevent your dog from being able to escape through an open window or jump through a screen. If you must leave your windows open for ventilation, secure them so they can only be opened a few inches wide while you are gone.

Don't Leave Your Pet in the Yard Unsupervised

"You shouldn't leave your dog outside when you're not at home," says Dr. Fox.

If you're not at home, the risk of your dog escaping from your yard and running away are too high. In the hot summer sun, leaving your dog outside exposed to the elements can lead to issues like sunburn, *dehydration*, burnt paw pads and heatstroke, just to name a few.

Put a Decal on Your Window Specifying That You Have Pets

If you have pets at home, it is also a great idea to put an emergency decal, like the Imagine This Company "Rescue Our Pets" decal, on your door or at the entrances of your home. This will help emergency responders know to rescue your pets if you ever have an emergency at your house while you are not home.

"It can only help. And it could very potentially help save one of your pet's lives," says Dr. Fox. "It could be a deterrent to someone who wants to rob your house."

It is also smart to let your neighbors know how many animals you have in your home, too.



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Sweepstakes: Ms. Anne M. Beckwith
Portland MSC Jan 16, 2019
Judge - Betsy Dale
Sweeps - Manuel Itriago
Gateway MSC April 5th, 2019
Judge: Lydia Coleman Hutchinson
Sweepstakes: Janet L. Taylor
Obedience: Mrs. Virginia Kinion
Rally: Mr. James Comunale

AMSC SPECIALTIES

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Sweepstakes Classes - Patricia O'Brien
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Sweepstakes Classes - Cheryl Coffman
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