



AMSCOPE

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This Raises the Risk of Doggy Dementia Almost 6.5 Times

The study suggests that the risk of developing CCD is almost 6.5 times greater in inactive dogs, which further illustrates how important it is for canine companions to remain active throughout their lives

Frequent walks are an excellent way to keep your dog fit and fully mobile; done right, they can also keep her mind stimulated and her social skills sharp; regular hydrotherapy sessions are another great tool, especially for older dogs

Exercises specifically designed to maintain your dog's strength, flexibility and balance are essential, along with gentle stretching; also, don't overlook the benefits of massage to enhance your dog's comfort and mobility

In both humans and dogs, cognitive function declines with age. Canine Cognitive Dysfunction (CCD), aka doggy dementia, a neurodegenerative condition, is often characterized by memory deficits, loss of spatial awareness, altered social interactions, and sleep disruption. Estimates of CCD rates range from 28% in 11 to 12-year-old dogs up to 68% in 15 to 16-year-old dogs.¹

Generally speaking (because there are always exceptions to every rule concerning our canine companions), once a dog reaches age 10, each year lived beyond that increases the relative risk for CCD by more than 50%. Further, according to a new study, the risk of developing CCD is almost 6.5 times greater in inactive dogs vs. very active dogs.²

Do Active Dogs Experience Less Cognitive Decline?

For the study, a team of University of Washington epidemiologists and members of the Dog Aging Project Consortium evaluated the prevalence of CCD in a large population of dogs (over 15,000) participating in the Dog Aging Project.

Toward the end of 2019, the dogs' owners completed two surveys: the Health and Life Experience survey about health status and physical activity, as well as the Canine Social and Learned Behavior survey that tests for signs of CCD (e.g., failing to recognize familiar people). The dogs' lifespans were categorized as follows:

19.5% were in the last quartile of their life

**The deadline
for the March issue is
February 8**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CCD	3
Dementia	1
Lethal to Pets	3
NEW APPLICANTS	2

Analysis by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker

24.4% were in the third quartile

27% were in the second quartile

29.1% were in the first quartile

Of these dogs, 1.4% were classified as having CCD. According to the study results, when looking at age alone, for dogs over age 10, the likelihood of being diagnosed with CCD increased by 68% for each additional year of age.

When other factors were considered, such as breed, sterilization status, health problems, and activity levels, the odds of developing CCD dropped to 52% for each additional year of life. When controlling for age, breed type, activity level, and other comorbidities, dogs with a history of neurological, eye, or ear disorders had higher odds of CCD.

Interestingly, for dogs of the same age, breed, health, and sterilization status, the odds of CCD were 6.47 times higher in less active or inactive dogs (as reported by their owners) compared to dogs reported as very active.

However, the study co-authors caution that their results don't show a clearcut cause-and-effect relationship between inactivity and CCD, and that cognitive decline may in fact lead to reduced activity. They conclude that further research is needed to better understand CCD.

Defying Doggy Dementia Through Movement

Not that we needed one, but preventing cognitive dysfunction is certainly another excellent reason to ensure your canine companion gets all the physical activity she needs.

Dogs are designed for movement no matter their age. An active dog is a happy dog (and a tired dog is a better-behaved dog). One of the most impactful things you can do for your furry best friend is provide her with plenty of opportunities to stay physically active throughout her life.

It's important to realize that movement is just as important for older dogs as it is for their younger counterparts. Regular exercise keeps your pet's joints flexible and her muscles strong. It burns calories and provides mental stimulation. Daily physical activity slows the aging process and enhances quality of life. Dogs who remain active at every age tend to live longer, higher quality lives than pets who aren't given daily opportunities for physical movement.

The following are five ways you can help keep your dog active, mobile, comfortable, and mentally sharp to ensure her golden years are happy and healthy.

1. Walking — Walking is great lifelong exercise for both you and your older canine companion. Most dogs love to get out and about, and while seniors might not be able to do much power walking, several short walks each day and two or three 30 to 60 minute weekly sniffaris will go a long way to keep your aging dog's body and mind in healthy and fit.

You'll want to avoid longer walks when it's very cold or hot outside. In the warmer months, keep an eye on your dog for signs he's tiring out or overheating. Walking up gradual (not steep) hills will help strengthen his hips; taking a zigzag pattern on steep downhill stretches will prevent stress to his front legs.

Training walks with your older dog can help keep his mind sharp. These walks can be about refreshing his leash manners, teaching new obedience commands, or for ongoing socialization. Also consider change-of-scenery walks. Drive your dog a few blocks away or to a neighborhood park for a stroll. These outings will serve up new things for him to see, smell and experience.

If your dog is comfortable around other dogs, consider meeting up with neighbors or friends with dogs for group walks. Everyone on two legs and four gets to socialize and exercise simultaneously, and dog parents can also be valuable resources for one another.

2. Swimming — Since natural bodies of water can hold unpleasant and even toxic surprises for dogs, and the water in backyard swimming pools tends to be cold and not recommended for pets with arthritis, the ideal situation if you can arrange it is to bring your dog to a water therapy (hydrotherapy) center.

The water is warm in hydrotherapy tanks and pools, which is soothing to aging and sore joints and muscles. Hydrotherapy is a favorite of mine for many reasons:

Movement in water provides gentle resistance to help strengthen muscles. The water's buoyancy helps support the weight of animals who aren't as strong as they used to be.

The lack of gravity relieves stress on degenerating joints.

The pressure of water on the body improves circulation and helps decrease swelling.

In addition, walking on an underwater treadmill actually provides for better ex-

cont'd on p. 2 .DEMENTIA

LOOK

Please let me know if you make a change

* **DECALS & PINS.** You can get AMSC decals (\$1.00) and replacement pins (\$7.50) from

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.DEMENTIA...from p. 1

tension of limbs and joints than swimming, and it tends to be less fear-inducing for dogs who aren't used to being in water.

3.Exercises to Maintain Strength, Flexibility and Balance — In older dogs, the aging process can lead to a vicious cycle of decreased muscle strength, increased muscle stiffness and an overall decrease in balance. The inactivity resulting from this dynamic often leads to weight gain, which adds stress on joints that are no longer well supported by adequate muscle mass.

One way to help avoid this downward spiral is to ensure your dog engages in exercises specifically designed to maintain strength, flexibility and balance. There are three categories of these exercises:

Movements that target the big, body-supporting muscles like the quadriceps, hamstrings and gluteals

Movements that maintain balance and fluid movement

Passive range-of-motion (PROM) exercises for joint health

You can find a full description of these exercises here.

4.Stretching — Stretching helps your dog's body relax while promoting flexibility. You can enhance her stretching routine with some gentle hands-on movements of her front and rear legs, shoulders, spine, elbows, knees, wrists, ankles, chest and shoulders.

Stretches are best done after exercise. There are three areas of your dog's body for which stretching is especially beneficial — the hips, shoulders and back. The stretches shown and described here, done slowly and gently, are well-tolerated by most dogs.

Instructions for most of these stretches have your dog standing, but you can also do them with her lying on her side, or in the case of the chest stretch, on her back. Some dogs are very uncomfortable in this position, so if yours is, don't force the issue.

Needless to say, if she shows any sign of pain during stretching, discontinue the movement and have her seen by your veterinarian as soon as possible.

5.Massage — Canine therapeutic massage offers benefits such as increased muscle flexibility, reduced pain in stiff joints and muscles, stress relief, and improved circulation. Massage can even help alleviate problem behaviors such as sensitivity to touch, fear-biting, food or dog-related aggression, and separation anxiety.

Massage for pets, especially older dogs, involves slow, gentle strokes and stretches, combined with light, rhythmic tapping. Benefits of regular massage for your pet include:

Helps keep your senior dog's muscles toned and reduces the slackening that comes with aging

Massaged muscles are looser, which makes it much easier for your dog to move around comfortably

Massages improve circulation and encour-

age lymphatic drainage

Regular massage also eases the stiffness of arthritis, which can help your pet maintain his normal gait and active lifestyle. Massage loosens the muscles around joints, which also helps promote ease of movement

If you're interested in finding a professional canine massage therapist, it's important to note that some therapists will come into your home while others work out of veterinary clinics. Ask your integrative veterinarian for a recommendation.

You may also like the idea of massaging your pet yourself, and this can have additional calming and bonding benefits. If you'd like to go this route, consider taking a workshop or continuing education course to learn basic hands-on massage skills — programs are offered at all levels, for pet parents simply looking to massage their own pets to those interested in becoming licensed animal massage practitioners.

Whichever avenue you choose, offering the benefits of therapeutic massage to your dog is one of the greatest gifts you can give him to support his happiness and quality of life.

NEW APPLICANT

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Shantel would like to join AMSC to better represent the breed. She has read and agrees to abide by both the Breed Standard and the Code of Ethics. She owns three Standard Schnauzer, two are AKC and one is PAL registered. She also owns two AKC registered Miniature Schnauzers. She does not consider herself a breeder, but is involved in Conformation, Agility, Scent work, Rally and Barn Hunt. Shantel attends roughly twenty-four dog events per year. She is a member of Twin Cities Mini Schnauzer Club, Heartland Standard Schnauzer Club of Greater Twin Cities and Standard Schnauzer Club of America. As a veterinarian specializing in rehab, chiropractor, acupuncture she is very interested in the overall health of the dog and extending the quality of their lives as long as possible. She can offer assistance in education especially in sports medicine.

Sponsors:Naomi Houle, Donna Bonnicksen

How Dogs Contribute to Our Health and Happiness

There's a science behind why being with your dog brings so much joy. Here's how and why your pup makes life so much better.

Most pet parents already know the joy and positivity their dogs bring to their lives. But do you know the science behind why this is so? Your dog brings a smile to your face, encourages you to be more in the moment, and makes you feel loved. Here's precisely how he does it.

Dogs Improve Your Mood

Research shows that having an optimistic or pessimistic attitude is mostly under our control. Choosing to share your life with a dog can help you maintain a more positive perspective on life while lessening the symptoms of depression and anxiety. "The human-animal bond bypasses the intellect and goes straight to the heart," says author and animal expert Karen Winegar, nurturing us, she claims, in ways that nothing else can. We couldn't agree more.

Dogs Promote A Feeling Of Being Loved

When you spend time with your dog, especially petting and cuddling him, your oxytocin levels increase. A neurotransmitter often referred to as the "love hormone," oxytocin calms your nervous system, relaxes you, and increases your trust levels.

Pets Help Lower Stress

Petting your pooch not only ups your oxytocin level but also lowers your level of cortisol, aka the "stress hormone." Multiple studies show that stress-wise, everyone from students to employees benefits from having their pet with them. It's even thought that in times of extreme stress, a dog can be more beneficial than another

person in helping you recover from stressful challenges.

Dogs Encourage Social Interaction
People who are shy, introverted, or simply not confident in social situations gain two important benefits from sharing life with a dog. First, they feel less lonely. Secondly, a dog can make them feel more comfortable connecting with people, particularly other pet parents. Conversations are easier to start with fellow dog lovers, and these simple interactions go a long way in helping up a person's confidence quotient.

Dogs Support A Healthy And Fit Lifestyle

Studies have long shown that a dog can reduce your risk of premature death by up to a third. Simple lifestyle adjustments that come with being a pet parent, such as taking your dog for a walk and playing with him in the backyard, keep you active throughout the day. These activities can boost your physical health and improve your mood, both essential to lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels, which are associated with the risk of heart-related illnesses.

Your canine companion delights in being your company. That he also gives you instant "feel-good vibes" that help improve the quality of your life is a bonus to be appreciated every day. Give your pooch an extra cuddle today and let him know how grateful you are he's in your life. He—and you—will feel the better for it!

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF CCD

There's getting old ... and then there's canine cognitive dysfunction (CCD) or doggie dementia.

Dog owners often assume strange behaviors in senior dogs are just part of the normal aging process. Dementia can develop slowly, so you might not notice much of a difference day to day.

CCD is surprisingly common. One study found that about half of all dogs over 11 years old had at least one sign of CCD. It's a progressive disease, so if you start to notice signs in your dog, he may develop more CCD symptoms over the next year or so.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE CCD

Here are some things you might think are normal aging, but in fact they can mean your dog is experiencing some dementia.

DISHA is an acronym that's helpful in identifying signs of doggie dementia.

D for Disorientation

You may see your dog staring into space or getting lost in familiar places. He may not be able to find his way around the house, or he may get stuck in corners or behind furniture. He may wander around your yard and get lost, or trapped behind a bush. He may seem confused all the time.

Some dogs forget you've fed them and pester you for meals. Or they forget where their food and water dishes are.

Others become anxious for no particular reason, or they may start barking at nothing.

Continual pacing and aimless wandering are other common symptoms. You may also see obsessive-compulsive behaviors like licking the floors.

I for Interactions

Your old dog's relationships may decline. He may either show less affection than before, or he could become clingy and stick to a family member like glue.

Some dogs may get irritable or grumpy. This can sometimes be because of pain or illness so if you're not sure, a vet exam can be a good idea.

Your dog may stop responding to cues, or become unable to do tasks as he used to.



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CCD...from p. 3

S for Sleep-Wake Cycle

Dogs may show cognitive changes at night too, and the sleep-wake cycle can be disturbed. This is also called sundowners syndrome ... when your dog gets disoriented, restless or anxious at night. It may be worse in winter months when the days are shorter.

Your dog might seem unsettled in the evenings or through the whole night. Some dogs with dementia barely sleep at night and are up wanting your attention. Others bark in the night for no apparent reason.

H for House Soiling

Your dog may forget all his house-training and start peeing and pooping in the house. This can also happen because when he needs to go, he can't find his way outside in time ... if at all. Or he might just forget where he is and pee or poop wherever he happens to be.

A for Activity

Some old dogs don't want to go for walks any more ... or do much of anything. This could be due to pain or stiffness, but it can be a cognitive issue too.

Dogs may not be interested in their favorite toys or treats. In fact, some may even not want to eat ... or they'll drop a piece of food and then be unable to find it on the floor.

If you notice some of these changes, your dog isn't just a senior ... he likely has doggie dementia.

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