

HELPING YOUR AGING DOG



The charities trustees have had a number of their own elderly spaniels to look after over the years so this is a subject close to our heart.

I had to chuckle slightly when researching it as a number of the articles I found mentioned dogs being classed as senior from around 7 years old. Not sure this applies to spaniels ☺

As with people, dogs slow down with age and many suffer from aching joints and arthritis. They may want to take less exercise and start to put on weight. Some dogs become friendlier, and

want to spend more time with their owners while others become grumpier. Some become more anxious because they may not see or hear as well as they used to and are slower at getting away from danger. Changes in personality can also be a sign of pain or illness so, if in doubt, contact your vet.

We can't stop our dogs getting old but we can help make it easier for them.

Do not let your dog put on too much weight. As your dog slows down you need to reduce the amount of calories they take in as any additional weight they are carrying will put added pressure on their joints and cause them more pain. Not to mention added pressure on **your** joints if/when it gets to the stage when you are having to lift them. You can either reduce the amount of food you feed or change to a senior dog food as most of these are lower calorie and remember treats contain calories too!

Make your house and garden old dog friendly. Hard floors are great for muddy paws but as your dog gets older they may find them harder to walk on. Keeping their paws trimmed so their pads are not covered in hair will help but you may get to the stage where you need to put down rugs/runners so that they can walk without slipping. If your dog's eyesight is failing keeping furniture etc in the same place and keeping walkways clear will help them. Again in the garden try to keep things in the same place and also ensure that your dog cannot fall down steps etc.

Consult your vet. Don't just assume that your dog's little accidents, lumps, bumps, stiffness etc are age related and that there is nothing you can do. There are a number of medications and treatments available which can help your dog as it ages. These include pain relief, anti-inflammatories and medication to help with bladder control and brain function. If you have noticed your dog aging why not book an appointment with your vet for a check up and see if there is anything they can give you to help him/her.

Consider supplements. There are a number of natural products you can give to help with aging joints, skin and general wellbeing. It is best to get a vet check up first to ensure that anything you give your dog is compatible with both their health conditions and any medication they are on. Some of the things you can give are coconut oil, green lipped mussel powder, cod liver oil, glucosamine, chondroitin and turmeric, there are also a number of branded supplements that include a number of these, Yumove, No Ake, Get Over etc (just love the names!). Make sure you read up on any supplement before giving it to your dog.

Consider types of and how much exercise you give. Spaniels aren't known for having an off switch and even though they slow down as they get older they will still do more than they are able to and suffer the consequences later. If you notice your dog is especially stiff after long walks it might be worth shortening them a little. It may also help to consider the terrain you are walking on, uneven ground and steep slopes can be harder on a dog with either joint issues or poor eyesight so try and choose walks for them that have more even paths. If your dog enjoys swimming, hydrotherapy is a great way of exercising them without putting pressure on their joints and if your dog is insured you may be able to get them to pay for it.





There are also a number of aids you can buy to make getting around easier.

Harnesses with handles on the back so you can give your dog a helping hand.

Dog ramps to help your dog in/out the car or up/down steps in the garden.

Dog pushchairs are becoming more and more popular, this was Jack in his, he loved it and it gave us the peace of mind that we wouldn't be in a position that he got too tired to make it home. They can be pushed or attached to a bike meaning your dog can still join you on walks.