



### **Tips for Taking Care of Your Aging Pets**

The life expectancy of your pet can depend on their size and breed and if they have any health conditions. As they age, though, there might be some things you have to do differently to keep them happy and healthy. Read on to learn more about how you can care for an aging pet.

#### **Schedule Check Ups More Often**

As your pet ages, you'll need to take them to the vet more often than before. According to this article by the South Boston Animal Hospital, dogs up to seven years old only need a wellness checkup every three years. But dogs and cats over seven years old should be checked as often as every six months. During these checkups, your vet will examine your pet's general well-being, administer any necessary vaccinations or booster shots, and conduct tests for the illnesses that older pets are at risk for. Some of these illnesses include arthritis, kidney disease, gum disease, and cancer. If you need help paying for checkups and any other health-related care, you may want to purchase pet insurance.

## **Help Them Keep Active**

Even though your pet may not have as much energy as they used to, it's still important for them to get exercise. Greencross Vets suggests taking short walks of no more than 20 minutes with your pet, preferably with a leash so they walk at a controlled pace. If your pet has health conditions like arthritis or heart disease, it's best for you to take it easy on them and cut down on strenuous exercise. You can also seek out mobility aids such as carriers, harnesses, and ramps that will make it easier for aging pets to move around.

## **Make Sure They Eat Well**

If your vet recommends that you change your pet's diet, which the World Animal Rescue Fund states is important to maintain their overall health, you have to consider their individual needs and not just their age. When choosing your pet's food, look for foods rich in protein and phosphorus and low in sodium. If your pet is overweight, then calorie content would be important as well. Pets with digestive issues, heart disease, or arthritis may need special food, so be sure to consult with your vet about what ingredients to look for. This information will make it easier for you to choose from the recommended lists of pet food for older dogs and cats.

## **Keep Them Comfortable**

You may need to make a few changes around your house to keep your senior pet comfortable. If it's getting chilly, older pets may feel the cold more than they used to because of hair loss or bouts with arthritis. Regular food and water bowls can stress out older pets because they have to bend their necks too far to feed, so consider switching to raised bowls. Cats with mobility issues will appreciate it if you make their litter boxes more accessible. If your pet is also having trouble with their memory, consider moving food and water bowls closer to them so they'll be able to eat without having to search for their food. For older pets, especially those dealing with arthritis, you should shop around for a supportive bed that's easily accessible. Also, many dog owners use supplements such as CBD oil to help with the symptoms of arthritis, such as pain and discomfort. However, it's very important to find a reliable, effective product.

You should also make sure their surroundings are healthy and clean, which could require you to address any stains or smells that are sticking around. While you can use DIY cleaners to take care of these problems, sometimes bringing in professional cleaners to handle these issues can give your carpet a brand new lease on life.

Your pets are well-loved members of your family, so you need to take care of them like family when they get older. Make sure to pay close attention to any changes in your pet's behavior so you can start making plans to ease their day-to-day activities.

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