



IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE



1. LET US HELP YOUR PET AGE GRACEFULLY

At Port Kennedy Veterinary Hospital, we know that the relationship between you and your beloved, life-long pet is a special one. That is why we offer special services for the senior pet in your life.

2. CANINE NUTRITION FOR A HEALTHY OLD AGE

As dogs become more like family members in many households, better quality of veterinary care and safer living environments have resulted in pets living longer. Veterinary professionals are responsible for ensuring that their clients receive the best care possible for their pets as they grow into mature, older dogs.

3. YOU CAN & YOU SHOULD TEACH YOUR OLD DOG NEW TRICKS

Most of you have heard, "you can't teach an old dog, new tricks" which is completely false and in direct conflict.

4. AGEING PET AWARENESS SEPARATING MYTHS FROM FACTS

Do you know how to prepare for and provide the best care during for your pet during its senior years?

LET US HELP YOUR PET AGE GRACEFULLY

Technical advances in veterinary medicine, improved diets, and regular visits to the veterinarian all add up to pets living longer than ever before. We consider pets to be "seniors" at the age of seven. Since dogs and cats age must faster than humans, the rate at which age-related illnesses occur is also much faster for our pets.

Older pets often face many of the same health problems that humans develop, including arthritis, diabetes, kidney and liver dysfunction, heart and lung problems, and so on. In addition, they may experience behavioral changes such as decreased physical activity, less interaction with family members, changes in sleeping patterns, and loss of house-training.

If you have a senior pet, we recommend the following to keep your pet healthy and comfortable:

- Schedule a checkup with your veterinarian twice a year. Early detection can minimise the impact and help prevent the progression of age-related diseases. More frequent checkups are an important part of catching problems before they become serious or uncomfortable for your pet. Be sure to tell your veterinarian about any physical or behavioral changes you have observed in your pet.
- Control your pet's weight — Keep your pet in good physical shape by avoiding feeding excessive snacks and treats. And remember that your senior pet is not as

active as he or she once was, so may not require as much food.

- Exercise — Provide moderate exercise, not letting your pet over-exert him- or herself.
- Prevent stress — Keep your daily routine consistent, making minimal changes to your normal household routine.
- Provide access to clean, fresh water — Help your pet stay hydrated with easy access to water at all times.

During the colder months of June and July, Port Kennedy Vet Hospital is offering discounted Senior Pet Health Checks. We offer full service, fully comprehensive care to help you get the best treatments for your pet.

Don't wait another day - contact us today and book your pet for a Senior Health Check!

When you bring your senior pet to our clinic for a checkup, your veterinarian will do the following:

- Provide a geriatric exam, including blood and urine tests that monitor organ functions
- Advise you on proper feeding and exercising as your pet ages
- Assist you with health care and end-of-life decisions for your aging pet





CANINE NUTRITION FOR A HEALTHY OLD AGE

As dogs become more like family members in many households, better quality of veterinary care and safer living environments have resulted in pets living longer. Veterinary professionals are responsible for ensuring that their clients receive the best care possible for their pets as they grow into mature, older dogs.

Ageing dogs are commonly seen in veterinary practices. Small breed dogs may be considered geriatric at 12-14 years whereas large and giant breed dogs would be geriatric at 7-9 years. When dogs begin to transition from adult to senior or geriatric, it is important that their nutrition is monitored by a veterinary professional so that they maintain health and high quality of life. The veterinary nurse plays an important role in monitoring patients from the time they are puppies through their senior years assuring that appropriate nutrition is maintained for a long, healthy life.



Mature dogs are more prone than younger dogs to certain disease processes such as obesity, degenerative joint disease, cognitive dysfunction, and cardiac, renal, liver, and metabolic diseases. A beneficial eating plan should be based on risk factors and any disease process affecting the individual dog with the aim of establishing a long, healthy old age for your pet.

For pets, much like for people, ageing brings with it physiologic changes. Some changes are obvious: whitening of hair, a general decline in body coat and condition, and failing senses such as sight or hearing. Changes that are less obvious may involve the digestive tract, immune system, kidneys, and other organs (Laflamme, 2005).

Ageing dogs are a common problem seen in veterinary practices in developed countries. In dogs, the ageing process is influenced not only by breed, genetics and the environment, but also by nutrition (Laflamme, 2005). When dogs begin to transition from adult to senior or geriatric, it is important that their nutrition is monitored to ensure they maintain health and a high quality of life.

Importance of nutrition in ageing dogs

Ageing is not a disease; however, morbidity increases due to normal changes, making the animal more vulnerable to disease. The three leading, non-accidental causes of death in dogs are cancer, kidney disease, and heart disease (Debraekeleer et al, 2010). However, other conditions that may shorten life expectancy are endocrine disorders, periodontal disease, cognitive dysfunction, and obesity. Nutrition is an important aspect of geriatric care, and the overall feeding goals for mature adult dogs are to optimise quality and longevity of life by minimising risk and severity of disease (Debraekeleer et al, 2010). Ageing is characterised by progressive and usually irreversible

change, and its rate is determined by intrinsic and extrinsic factors, one of which is nutrition. Nutritional interventions in combination with mental stimulation can halt and sometimes even reverse the ageing process.

Canine nutrition for a healthy old age can be a challenge; however, good nutrition must begin as a young pup and continue as the dog matures. Discuss your pet's nutritional needs with your veterinarian to help determine the most appropriate diet which will help meet your pet's nutrient requirements and help assure a long, healthy and high-quality life for your old-age friend.

Source: The Veterinary Nurse, October 2015, Vol 5 No 8

Key Points

- Nutritional assessment intervention and planning is a vital assessment for all animals; however, intervention may be more vital for mature dogs than for young adult dogs.
- Mature dogs are more prone than younger dogs to obesity; degenerative joint disease; cognitive dysfunction; and cardiac, renal, liver, and metabolic diseases.
- Older mature dogs are usually less active than young adults.
- A beneficial feeding plan should be based on risk factors and any disease process affecting the individual dog.

Love is Ageless

Is Your Pet 7 Years or Older?
It's time for a **SENIOR PET CHECK**
**10% OFF Senior Blood Tests with a
Consultation & Full Health Check!**



Offer valid until 30 June 2016





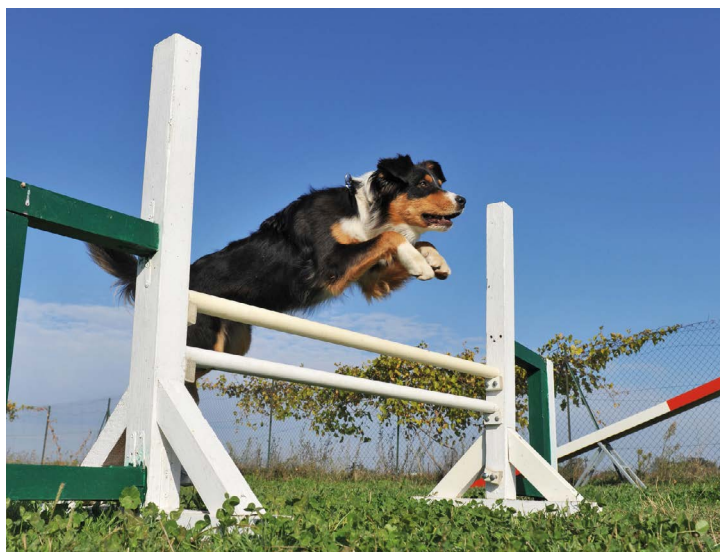
YOU CAN AND YOU SHOULD TEACH YOUR OLD DOG NEW TRICKS

By Michelle Mullins, Professional Trainer

I'm not a fan of most old adages. While "look before you leap" is pretty good advice, we also know "nothing ventured, nothing gained." Many adages promote negative ideals or overly cautious behavior disguised as wisdom. Most of you have heard, "you can't teach an old dog, new tricks" which is completely false. This old adage is in direct conflict with "you are never too old to learn." Some components of aging may slow learning, but continuing to learn new things can keep the mind sharp and greatly increase quality of life for any species.

Your loving pets enjoy a bond with you and there is no reason it should diminish as they age. We tend to do less with our pets as they get older – for example, fewer and shorter walks for our older dogs and less chase the wand play for our cats. Training new tricks can replace some of that and provide mental stimulation and appropriate physical activity. Teaching tricks is beneficial for pets of all ages. It doesn't matter if you have never trained your pet before and they are a senior, you should start today! You will want to consider both physical and mental issues of your older dog or cat when choosing what behaviors to teach. Also check with your veterinarian as many of these issues, that are associated with just getting old, can be treated.

Physical limitations: Arthritis and other joint and muscle disorders may make certain movements like lying down, jumping and even repetitive sitting uncomfortable for your pet. Choose behaviors that promote slower, less repetitive movement like speak, give a kiss, or heel. Some older pets have sight and hearing problems which necessitate an adjustment in your training but can certainly be overcome. For example you can change verbal cues to hand signals for a dog with hearing impairment.



Mental limitations: Cognitive problems can develop with age and can lead to changes in behavior. Older pets may forget some learned behaviors, anxiety may develop, and sleep patterns may be disrupted. Patience and compassion will help you and your pet deal with these changes. Ask your veterinarian how training can help. Your older pets will enjoy the time you spend training with them. It is a tremendous amount of fun for both of you. Training tricks allows you to work on your training skills and your dog's learning skills in a non-stressful situation.

You have nothing to lose if Spot doesn't learn to "do the twist" for example, but you will build a stronger bond working together. That bond promotes better behavior from your pet. Students in my manners class, train more often when one of the behaviors they are teaching is something cute or fun. More time training and keeping it fun leads to more reliable responses for basic behaviors like down and come when called. Tricks don't need to be complicated. It's the learning that is important. The following is by no means a complete trick list but just a few ideas to get you started. Remember, you can teach your dog anything that is physically possible and safe. Pick a fun new trick to teach your old dog and watch for that spark in their eye – I bet it is still there!

Tricks to consider:

- Run through your legs
- Speak
- High five or wave
- Dance – great for dogs with wiggly butts
- Shake
- Walk backwards
- Put away your toys
- Bow
- Kiss
- Crawl
- Drop
- Hold a sign, flag, etc. – great for photo ops
- Cover up with a blanket
- Get your leash
- Push a ball
- Rollover
- Jump into your arms



AGEING PET AWARENESS

Do you know how to prepare for and provide the best care for your pet during its senior years?

Knowing when a pet is a "senior" will help people make appropriate changes in diet, exercise and health examination schedules to ensure a long, healthy life of their pet.

As a general rule of thumb, dogs and cats are considered "senior" around age seven. Larger dogs sooner (age 5 or 6), and smaller dogs later (age 8 or 9).

Dogs have such a large variety of breeds and sizes that there isn't a single age that automatically translates to senior status.

The most accurate way to plan for your pet's senior years is to make an appointment with your veterinarian to discuss your pet's specific needs and age-related plan for optimal health.

Here are some age-related myths from an Aging Pet Care Awareness Survey:

MYTH: Pets and their owners age differently.

FACT: While the rate at which pets age is certainly different than humans, the changes seen with advancing age are very similar: changes in weight (gain or loss), dental problems, arthritic joints and heart troubles, to name a few. "Many of the same health and wellness strategies may be implemented in pets to increase longevity," notes Dr. Kelly Swanson, an assistant professor at the University of Illinois who formed part of the team that designed the survey.

A wellness/geriatric examination with your veterinarian is the perfect time to discuss an appropriate senior diet, supplements or medications to ease the pain of arthritis, and schedule a dental cleaning to keep teeth, gums, heart and liver healthy.

MYTH: As long as my pet isn't overweight, it isn't a major health concern.

FACT: While obesity is a huge health concern and one that actually "ages" animals faster, sudden weight loss or being chronically underweight is also a serious health concern. Diseases such as cancer, kidney failure, and Diabetes Mellitus can cause weight loss along with other symptoms, and must be addressed for optimum health.

At the other end of the body weight spectrum, two of the age-related symptoms most concerning to survey participants -- aching joints (55.7 percent) and lack of energy (36 percent), are common symptoms of obesity that can be managed with proper diet and exercise.

MYTH: Exercise and engaging toys are the best ways to prevent cognitive decline.

FACT: Cognitive decline, or geriatric dementia, is something that is most often associated with human seniors, but pets are prone to age-related dementia, too.

Dementia in pets may manifest in different ways, most commonly: inappropriate vocalisation (barking or meowing in the middle of the night), loss of house training (urinary accidents), getting "lost" in a corner or part of the house, and not interacting with family members as before.

The general confusion from dementia along with the above behavior changes may cause additional stress/fear/anxiety for the pet as well as for the human family members.

From the study: "maintaining proper levels of exercise can help maintain cognitive function, but Dr. Swanson explained that there is more evidence supporting dietary intervention, including the use of nutritional supplements. He suggests looking for products that include antioxidants (i.e. vitamins E, C and beta carotene) or those with omega-3 fatty acids."

Please check with your veterinarian to see what product(s) or medications may be able to help your senior pet.

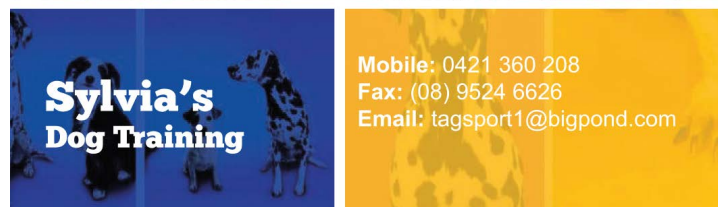


Sherwood Boarding Kennels
Nambeelup



Pete & Gerri Scott
19 D'Rayne Glade, Nambeelup
(off Lakes Rd) Mandurah

NOW TAKING BOOKINGS - Ph: 9583 4444
Email: sherwoodboarding@hotmail.com

Sylvia's
Dog Training

Mobile: 0421 360 208
Fax: (08) 9524 6626
Email: tagsport1@bigpond.com