



Looking after your senior pet

Just like people, pets need a little extra medical attention and care as they grow older. Given the right diet, exercise, and veterinary care, senior pets can live long and happy lives.

While all pets are different, most cats and dogs are considered to be geriatric at age seven. Find tips from the team at Paws, Whiskers & Wags below on how to keep your pet active and healthy during their senior years.

DOCTOR'S ORDERS: SCHEDULE REGULAR VET CHECK-UPS

Going to the vet might not be your pet's favorite activity, but regular check-ups are essential to a senior pet's health. Through regular check-ups, your veterinarian will be able to monitor your pet's condition and make note of any behavioral or physical changes that may occur. While some changes are normal signs of aging, other alterations (behavioral or physical) may indicate more serious health issues.

Some of the most common behavioral and physical changes seen in senior pets that should be monitored include:

- Weight loss or gain
- Changes in appetite or thirst
- Limping or favoring limbs
- Changes in bathroom habits
- Fatigue, listlessness, or other changes in mood or personality
- Signs of physical pain

AN ACTIVE PET IS A HEALTHY PET

For both people and pets, a lifetime of healthy eating and exercise makes us healthier in older age. Unless your pet shows signs of pain or discomfort (in which case you should have him or her examined by a vet), you should continue to keep your pet active.

For senior pets, mental exercise is just as vital as physical activity. Pets can become senile as they age, just like humans, and an active mind is the best defense. Pet owners should never stop challenging their pets to learn new skills to keep their minds active and engaged. Being physically and mentally active can also help ward off signs of depression in older pets.

MAKE NECESSARY DIET ADJUSTMENTS

Many senior cats and dogs begin to have difficulty in digesting food as they grow older. Consult with your vet about what, if any, changes you should make to your senior pet's diet.

Some senior pets put on weight, while others lose weight. Based on your pet's individual needs and your vet's instructions, make the necessary changes to your pet's food type, portion size, and caloric intake. Remember not to make any sudden or drastic changes in diet. Instead, slowly wean your pet onto their new food by gradually introducing it, along with their old food. Be sure to monitor any changes that may occur.