



Allie Chatelain
(385) 484-9443
acdogtraining.com

Simplified Guide to Dog Care

How to keep your dog happy and healthy



Nutrition

What should I feed my dog?

Fill him up with only the best! Nutrition has a direct effect on your dog's health and behavior so it is important to provide your dog with the right amount of high quality puppy or dog food. You can buy wet or canned, dry, or dog food rolls. Always read the list of ingredients before you buy it. Some ingredients to avoid are: artificial flavors, colors, and anonymous animal meat or fat sources. Look for food that is meat-based food with moderate amounts of grain. It's also important that your dog likes the taste of his food and the pieces are the appropriate size for the size of your dog. Homemade or raw diets are another option, but do your research to make sure your dog gets the nutrition he needs. Feel free to add moderate amounts of different kinds of dog food, meat, or healthy human food to your dog's regular food for flavor and variety. For a list of high quality dog foods, visit dogfoodadvisor.com

How much do I feed my dog?

Moderation is key. On packaged dog food, the chart on the back will give you a good idea of how much to feed your dog based on your dog's ideal weight, but your dog may need more or less depending on his body composition, age, and activity level. Maintaining a healthy weight in your dog will help them live longer and prevent health problems that reduce your dog's quality of life such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis. Generally dogs should have a narrow waistline when viewed from above and you should be able to feel his ribs fairly easily. When you gently pinch the skin over the rib cage just behind the armpit, you should feel just the skin, with only a thin layer of padding at most. If you are unsure how much to feed or whether or not your dog is at a healthy weight, ask your vet.

How often should I feed my dog?

Create a schedule and feed your dog around the same times every day. Measure the correct amount of food for each meal. Most dogs over the age of 6 months need to be fed 1-2 times per day. Working, or high energy dogs need 3 meals per day. Puppies under six months of age should be fed 3-4 times per day. Feeding more or less than this can leave your dog never feeling full. Always have fresh water available to your dog, except up to three hours before bed to help with potty training. Treats and human food can be fed in moderation, but make sure your dog doesn't gain too much weight. Also be careful what human food you share with your dog, some human food is toxic to dogs.

Here is starting point for foods your dog should avoid:

- alcohol
- avocado
- caffeine
- cooked bones
- chocolate
- garlic and onion
- grapes/raisins
- macadamia nuts
- sweetener xylitol
- snacks high in salt or sugar

Here is a list of healthy human foods that are healthy for your dog:

- cooked lean meats, organs, and eggs (chicken, liver, turkey, beef, fish, etc.)
- plain yogurt and cheese
- fruits (banana, apple, berries)
- vegetables (carrots, broccoli, sweet potatoes, squash, peas, etc)
- peanut butter (xylitol-free)

Exercise

How much exercise does my dog need?

Get your dog moving! All dogs need daily exercise to stay healthy, but how much exercise depends on the breed, health, and age of the dog. Generally young dogs and breeds in the sporting and herding category need more exercise than older dogs and breeds in the toy category. Very young puppies need exercise, but they may need to be reminded to take breaks to keep stress off of growing joints. If you're unsure that dog is getting enough exercise, ask your vet. When your dog gets enough exercise, he will be less prone to unwanted behaviors like chewing, digging, anxiety, and barking.

How do I exercise my dog?

Have fun! Exercise doesn't just have to be a walk around the block; running, biking, swimming, dog parks, agility, treadmill running, fetch, frisbee, carrying a backpack, pulling a cart, and hiking are all great ways to channel energy. In fact, many high energy dogs simply cannot burn enough energy they need to just by walking, even on long walks. They need to run long distances regularly. Try different activities until you find some that both you and your dog enjoy! Dogs that are still hyperactive, even with daily exercise, may need more structured leadership. While doing any activity, remember to keep him hydrated, watch for signs of overheating, and take precautions against injuries. Also, keep in mind that growing puppies should not do strenuous exercise or activities that require high jumping.

Sleep

How much sleep does my dog need?

Let sleeping dogs lie. Dogs need about 12-14 hours of sleep per 24 hour cycle, but older dogs and young puppies need 18-19 hours. When dogs don't get enough sleep, they will often become hyperactive or irritable. When your dog gets enough exercise, sleep should come naturally.

Veterinary Care

How do I choose a vet?

Choose a veterinarian that you can trust. Is the facility clean and organized? Does the vet answer all of your questions? What are their emergency hours? Yearly check-ups are a great way to ensure your dog is doing well. If your dog appears sick in any way, contact your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Here is a list of vets with after-hours services:

- Willow Creek Animal Hospital (208) 529-4081
- WestVet Idaho Falls (208) 552-0662
- Sunnyside Veterinary Clinic (208) 523-2513

What care does my dog need?

Vaccinations can help keep your dog from getting sick. Talk with your vet about what vaccinations your dog needs. Puppies will need a series of vaccines because their immune systems are not fully developed. Vaccinations include Rabies (which is required by law), Parvovirus, Hepatitis, and Distemper. Your vet may also give your dog a dewormer.

Should my dog be spayed or neutered?

Spaying or neutering your dog is another way to help keep your dog healthy. This operation will prevent accidental litters and several types of cancer. Neutering can also help prevent aggression and stress due to hormonal drives to mate, roaming in search of a mate, and marking. Spaying and neutering is also linked to reducing the number of pets euthanized in shelters. Talk to your vet about the best time to spay or neuter your dog.

Should I breed my dog?

Generally, it is best to leave breeding to professional dog breeders. If you plan to breed your dog consult your veterinarian about how to do so responsibly, taking into consideration whether or not your dog is a genetically sound candidate for breeding. Also, make sure you understand the costs, health screenings, time, and space required to care for parent(s) and raise a healthy new generation of dogs. Responsible breeders require each of their puppies to be spayed or neutered and they will take back any of their puppies if the new owner can no longer care for them.

Grooming

How often should I groom my dog?

Keep your dog looking and smelling nice. How often a dog should be brushed and bathed depends on the breed and coat type. Non-shedding breeds will need at least weekly brushing (depending on coat-length) and a haircut every 4-6 weeks. Double coated and long haired dogs like German Shepherds, Collies, and Golden Retrievers should be brushed every other day and trimmed (never shaved!) monthly if needed. Short coated and wirehaired breeds like Labs, Pointers, and Terriers only need brushing

a few times per month. During the molting seasons more brushing may be necessary. Most dogs need to be bathed every 4-6 weeks, but not more than this because too many baths will strip the natural oils from your dog's coat.

How do I groom my dog?

If you choose to do the grooming yourself, do some research to know how to groom your dog properly and what tools you'll need. If your dog has matted fur, it is best to take him to a professional groomer. When you bathe your dog, make sure that you use a shampoo and conditioner that are formulated just for dogs. Remember to thoroughly rinse your dog's coat so the skin does not get irritated from soap residue. You will also need to trim your dog's nails and clean his ears every 3-4 weeks. Don't forget to clean (and trim if needed) between the toe pads and under the tail area. Keep your dog's teeth clean by providing raw or smoked bones to chew. Never give cooked bones as they can cause intestinal damage.

What if my dog doesn't like being groomed?

You can do a lot to make grooming a positive experience for your dog whether you take him to a groomer or do it yourself. Get your dog comfortable with being handled by massaging him gently when he is calm. Touch his mouth, paws, ears, belly, and back. Each time you finish a grooming session, end with treats and praise. This is especially critical for young puppies. If your dog is not used to being groomed, start for grooming for only a few minutes each day, then gradually increase the time. Consistency is key when it comes to making your dog tolerant of grooming.

Environment

What kind of environment does my dog need?

Safety is key! Before you bring home a new puppy or dog, make sure you prepare your living space for the arrival of your new furry family member. Is your yard securely fenced? Where will your dog go to the bathroom? What parts of the house will he be allowed in? Who will be responsible for feeding, poop scooping, grooming, and exercising? Be prepared with a leash, crate, and/or baby gates to control what areas your dog has access to. Put expensive furniture, rugs, trash containers, and decorations out of your dog's reach until he understands and follows the house rules.

Here is a list of basic items your dog will need:

- crate or kennel
- playpen or baby gates
- leash
- flat collar
- training supplies (long line, treat pouch, training harness or collar, etc.)
- tags (name and contact info, rabies, license, also consider microchip)
- poop bags
- bedding
- grooming supplies (brush, shampoo & conditioner, nail clippers, etc.)
- yard containment (secure fence, dog run, tie down, invisible fence, etc.)
- food
- food and water dish
- treats (freeze dried liver, jerky, soft training bites, biscuits, etc.)
- edible chews (smoked bones, ears, dental chews, tendons, bully stick, etc.)
- toys (ropes, balls, plush toys, plastic chews, kong, food puzzles, etc.)

Mental Stimulation

How do I provide mental stimulation?

Give your dog a job! Dogs are intelligent creatures and they need to use their brains to be content. Puppies, young dogs, and dogs that were bred to work tend to need more mental stimulation than lap dogs and older dogs. When your dog has adequate mental stimulation, he will be less prone to destructive and nuisance behaviors. A few ways to get your dog to use his brain include providing him with plenty of toys, food games, puzzles, obedience training, dog sports, trick training, and exploring new parks, hikes, beaches, stores, and neighborhoods. You can purchase toys and puzzles appropriate for your dog's size or make toys yourself out of t-shirts, bottles, or boxes. Watch that your dog does not ingest his toys before leaving him unsupervised with them.

Socialization

Why is socialization important?

An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure. Some dogs by nature are quite friendly, but most need careful socialization to be a safe member of society. Dogs that are consistently and properly socialized will be more adaptable, relaxed, and confident. Without socialization many dogs will develop fear-based behavior problems or aggression. The most critical socialization window for puppies is 8-12 weeks, however any socialization that happens between 8 weeks and 6 months will have a lifelong impact on your dog's social skills. At a young age, puppies adjust easily to new situations so it is very important to introduce puppies to as many new sights, sounds, and smells as possible. However socialization must continue throughout your dog's life to help him remain comfortable around a variety of people, dogs, animals,

and environments. The best way to socialize your dog or puppy is to help them have as many calm and positive interactions with other people, dogs, other animals, and places as possible.

How do I socialize my dog with new people?

Set a goal to have your puppy meet 100 different people by the time they are 6 months old. Have your dog greet a wide variety of people; different ages, races, genders, sizes, and wearing a variety of clothing. This will prevent fear and aggression later in life. One of the best ways to teach your puppy how to greet people politely, is to only allow him to interact when he is calm. When guests come over, ask them to ignore your puppy (no speaking or touching) until he is laying down and relaxed. Once the puppy is calmly resting, call him over for pets and playtime. When you are out and about, let people pet your puppy only if he has all four paws on the floor. Teaching a sit cue can also help. Take special care to make positive associations with places that your dog will regularly visit, such as the vet clinic, grooming salon, pet store, and dog boarding facility. Visit these places often, even if it's just so the receptionist, vet, or groomer can give your puppy a treat.

How do I socialize my dog with other dogs?

Set a goal to have your puppy meet 100 different dogs by the time they are 6 months old. To teach your puppy to play nicely with other dogs, arrange him to interact with dogs of different ages, breeds, sizes, and personalities. Other dogs are the best teachers when it comes to teaching your puppy social skills with other dogs. It is generally best to let your puppy play off leash with them and stay out of it. However, if your puppy does become too boisterous or picks on another dog, calmly take him by the collar and hold it without speaking, until he calms himself down. Then let him go play again. While your puppy is not fully vaccinated, only allow him to play with friendly, vaccinated dogs you are familiar with. Carry your puppy or stay away from areas where there are many unknown dogs, especially where they use the bathroom.

After you have clearance from your vet, you can continue to socialize your puppy by hosting dog play-dates, taking him to dog parks, walking trails, pet stores, and doggy daycare.

If your dog or puppy is fearful around new people or dogs, do not pick him up, or try to soothe him, this will only encourage fearfulness. As long as the situation is safe, just give him space and time to work up the courage to interact. It may help to let him sit between your feet or under a chair until he's ready to come out on his own. If your dog is extremely fearful, overly excitable, or shows signs of aggression, seek guidance from a professional dog trainer.

What other socialization does my dog need?

Although it is essential for your puppy to learn how to interact with people, dogs, and other animals, it is just as important for your puppy to learn how to be in their presence and calmly ignore them. In real life, it is not safe to let your dog greet every person and dog and not everyone will want to play. This is especially true for other animals such as cats, squirrels, chickens, livestock, etc. Show your puppy how to ignore the distractions by ignoring them yourself. Keep him on a leash so he can't approach them. If he gets overexcited or fearful, move further away and gradually move closer when he calms down. You can bring treats and practice obedience cues to keep his attention on you.

You will also want your puppy to be comfortable in the car. Make sure he is well exercised, fed, and does not need to go to the bathroom before you take him for a ride. Start by going for short drives, give him an edible chew or kong to work on during the drive, and go somewhere fun. Although it takes a considerable amount of time and effort to properly socialize your puppy, it is well worth having a friendly, well-adjusted dog you feel comfortable taking anywhere.

Training

What does my dog need to know?

Training your dog is the key to communicating with your dog and keeping him safe. There are dozens of training methods available, but when choosing one, keep in mind that training should be a generally positive experience for both you and your dog. Every kind of training takes time, patience, and a lot of consistent practice.

Here is a list of basic obedience behaviors that your dog should know:

- "Sit" means bottom on the ground. Sit is a helpful way for your dog to politely communicate that he wants something. It can be used if you need your dog to settle down for a moment or be out of the way.
- "Down" means to lie down with elbows resting on the ground. It is useful if you need to examine your dog or see their belly. It can also be used to help your dog settle.
- "Stay" or wait means the dog holds the position he is in until you release him. Stay teaches excellent impulse control. If you need your dog to settle down, hold still for a while, or not wander around this is very helpful. It can be used to help them calm down before eating, and before entering and exiting buildings and vehicles safely.
- "Heel" means walk close by your side. In addition to heel, your dog should learn not to pull whenever he is on leash. This command makes it much easier to take your dog out and about with you.
- "Come" means come straight to you when you call. When your dog knows come, he can be given more freedom and off-leash time. It can also be a lifesaver if your dog happens to get loose or is going near something dangerous.

These are a few of the most essential obedience commands, but you may also benefit from teaching your dog to stand, show his belly, jump onto something, go to his kennel, fetch, don't cross the boundary, go to bed, back up, leave food or objects alone, and so much more. Consider crate training your dog as well, even if you don't use it regularly. If you ever take your dog to the vet for an operation, drop him off at the groomer or boarding facility, your dog will most likely be kenneled. You can reduce a lot of stress in your dog if he is already accustomed to being in a kennel or crate. All dogs should be potty-trained.

Leadership

Isn't obedience training enough?

Well-trained and well-behaved don't necessarily mean the same thing. Often it takes more than obedience training to have a dog who respects you and is generally calm. Dogs are pack animals and they instinctively understand that there are leaders and followers in the family. A dog who is in the follower role will be calm enough to take notice of you and be more receptive to additional training. Being a leader in your dog's eyes also resolves many behavior problems such as aggression, separation anxiety, and hyperactivity that are difficult to correct with only traditional training methods. Not only will behavior improve when you're the pack leader, but you will also be able to connect with your dog on a far deeper level.