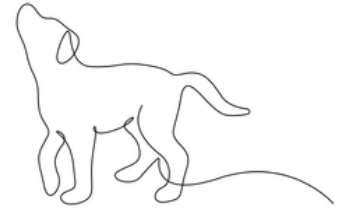


# THE Vets @ DRONFIELD

## Supporting our Seniors



### ENRICHMENT

Mental stimulation and environmental enrichment are essential for our seniors. As dogs become older, they need less energy for exercise and can suffer from Arthritis and Cognitive dysfunction. This can lead to reduced mobility and obesity. Using interactive feeding toys can promote exercise as they search for the food as well as promote confidence, help them to relax and mentally tire them out.

Dogs naturally forage for food. Instead of feeding from the bowl, for at least one of their meals per day, use food toys and foraging games. Be creative and use different foods unless your dog is on a specific diet - this will help keep your dog's interest. If you are concerned about your dogs' weight, adjust their daily food allowance. Remember to weigh their food according to the weight they should be, rather than the weight they are.



### FLOORING

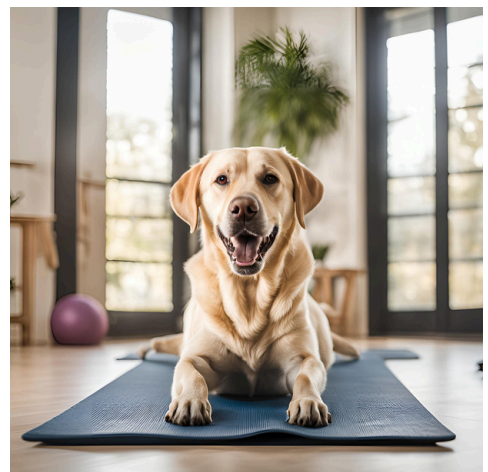
As your dog ages they may find it difficult to navigate certain surfaces. Laminate, wood or tile floors can be very slippery for our older patients. Placing non slip mats in high traffic areas and ensuring that your dogs claws and pad hair are trimmed short will help with grip, making your pet feel more comfortable. Keeping things in a similar position will help our pets with cognitive dysfunction feel less anxious.

### BEDDING

Seniors need supportive comfortable beds. Try to ensure that the bed isn't too high or too soft as dogs with arthritis often struggle to get up. Orthopaedic, memory foam beds or raised beds such as the HiK9 beds are more supportive, easier to get in/ out of and relieve any pressure on the joints.

Beds should be placed away from draughts and be set away in a safe space where they won't be disturbed or startled by the everyday house hold activities.

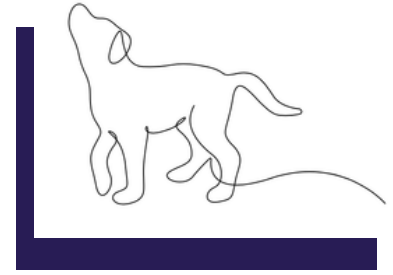
Rest and sleep are essential to maintain brain health in our elderly pets.



# Supporting our seniors

## RAISED FOOD BOWLS

Raising food bowls for older dogs and those with mobility issues will eliminate the need for them to bend down to floor level. This can often be difficult or uncomfortable on creaky joints. Raising bowls reduces the strain on their joints, making them much more comfortable at meal times. You may also find that dogs that have been a little off their food recently, may be much happier to eat again. It doesn't need to be anything fancy, a food bowl on top of a step stool will be just as effective.



## RAMPS

Dogs may also struggle going up stairs or jumping in and out of the car. Using ramps makes it easier for them to remain independent and reduces the strain on joints and muscles.

When buying a ramp, look out for quality. Some of the cheaper plastic ramps may be ok for smaller dogs, but will often be unstable for larger breeds.

Training is required to build confidence in using ramps. Lots of treats and starting on the ground may help. A harness for support will also be useful.

## EXERCISE

Old dogs still need their exercise. It helps keep their joints mobile, muscles strong and their brain engaged. However, they may not be able to do the long weekend hikes they used to. Or, if they do, it may take them much longer to recover.

Smaller more frequent walks in their favourite place, with lots of sniffing will keep them active and prevent too much strain on their joints.

Wearing coats on cold days will help keep joints warm and mobile.

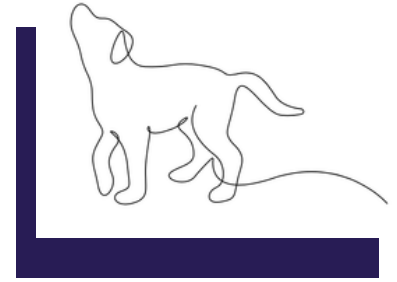


# Supporting our seniors

## DIET

Switching your dog to a balanced senior diet may help keep their waistline trim, their joints lubricated and the brain protected. Many senior diets have a lower calorie content, with nutrients that are much more accessible for our dog's slower metabolism.

If your dog is a little overweight a weight loss diet will be beneficial as they are specifically designed for your dog to get all the micronutrients that they need whilst keeping calories low for weight loss. Losing weight will reduce the amount of pressure on the joints and reduce inflammation and pain.



## SUPPLEMENTS



There are several supplements that are on the market. There is no licensing for joint supplements and not all of them are equal. Many supplements don't contain what it says on the tin. Do your research and look for a brand that uses science to back up their claim, or go for a veterinary recommended brand.

Supplements with glucosamine, chondroitin, Hyaluronic acid, Magnesium, Vitamins and Omega 3 fatty acids can help with joint function, skin and coat health and brain function.



Our **whole team** on your pet's side