

# A HEALTHY DOG

## SEY's dog care guide



**SEY**  
SUOMEN ELÄINSUOJELU

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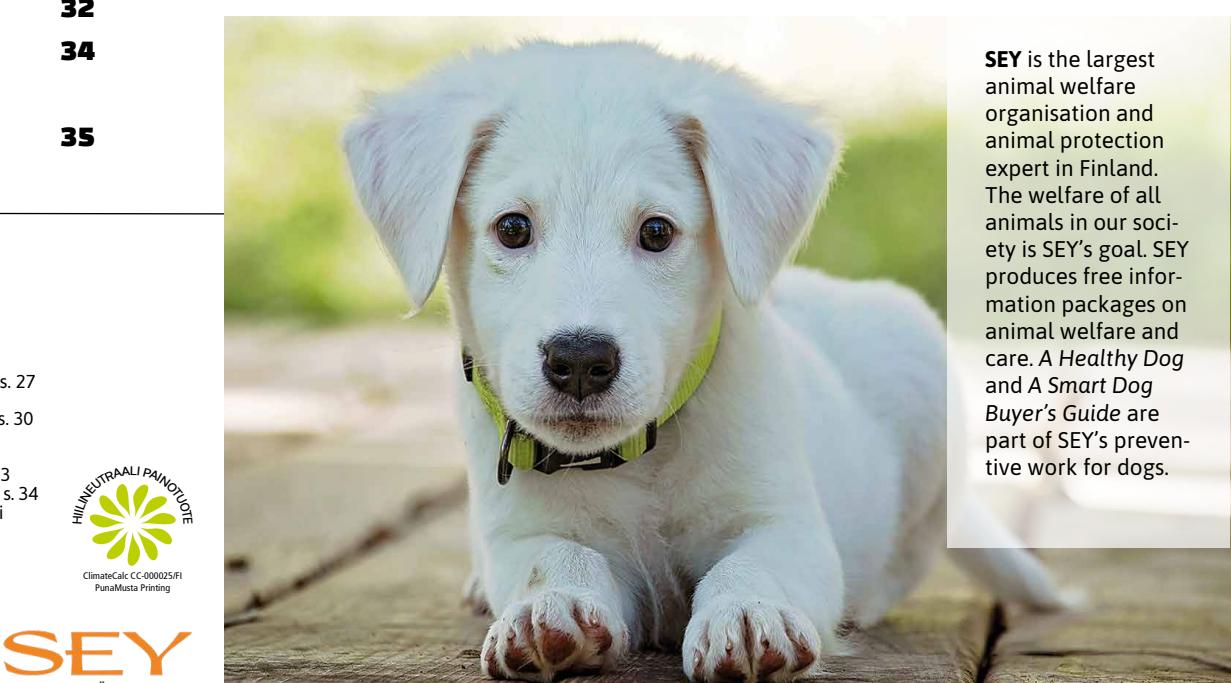
# Foreword

**A**re you thinking about getting a dog? Do you already have a dog or dogs? Are you just interested in dogs and would like to know more about them? If the answer is yes, the *Healthy Dog - SEY's dog care guide* is meant for you.

In order to be healthy, every dog needs an owner who is familiar with the behavioural needs of dogs. The more familiar the owner is with her dog's behaviour and feelings, the better chance she has to create a comfortable everyday life for her dog and a harmonious coexistence for them both. This is why this brochure focuses on the factors that affect dogs' behaviour and ways of experiencing things. We will also take a look at their feeding, healthcare and grooming.

There are still many out-of-date dog-related beliefs thriving on Internet forums and in the advice of some well-intentioned friends. A dog does not need to be submissive in order to obey. Considerably better results are achieved with reward-based training and good knowledge of dogs.

The information in this guide is based on up-to-date research information on dogs and their hands-on care. Such a thin brochure can naturally only contain a short summary of the main issues. Additional information on feeding, health, training, solving behavioural problems and many other areas of a dog's life is available in books and from expert trainers. You can find good additional information sources on page 35. You can also find further information in Finnish at [Halpakoira.fi](http://Halpakoira.fi).



**SEY** is the largest animal welfare organisation and animal protection expert in Finland. The welfare of all animals in our society is SEY's goal. SEY produces free information packages on animal welfare and care. A *Healthy Dog* and *A Smart Dog Buyer's Guide* are part of SEY's preventive work for dogs.



**D**ogs do not have feelings that require the ability to try to imagine someone else's feelings. Thus, dogs are not able to retaliate, protest or be ashamed. Whenever a dog's behaviour is interpreted as one of these, a simpler explanation is always behind the behaviour.



## Senses

**D**ogs experience the world in a somewhat different way from humans for many reasons. One of these reasons is their different sensory worlds. The sense of smell and hearing are a central part of how a dog experiences his surroundings.

A dog's hearing is about four times sharper than that of humans. This is why dogs often notice approaching steps before we do. For this same reason loud music feels more painful to dogs.

Their sense of touch is similar to ours. Thus, pain, cold and heat are genuine sensations for dogs.

**D**ogs do not have as sharp sight as humans. This is why dogs are sometimes unable to recognise familiar people from a distance. Dogs are also unable to distinguish between red and green. They still distinguish yellow, blue and purple, among others, roughly the same way as we do. Contrary to what is sometimes believed, the colour of a dog's eyes does not affect his sight. Light-eyed dogs see as well as the others.

## Feelings and intelligence

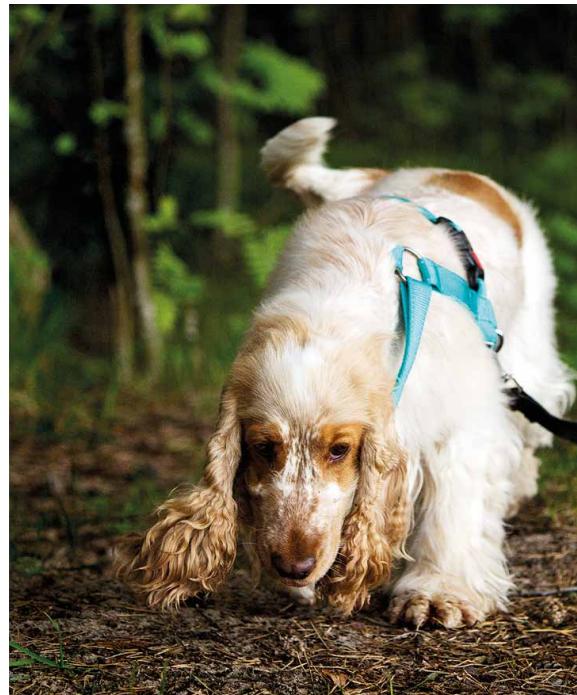
**T**hese days there is a wide range of research data about animals' emotions available. Dogs, as well as other mammals and birds, have the same basic feelings as humans. These include joy, sadness, fear, anger, playfulness and nurturing.

Current information shows us that the emotions animals experience are just as powerful as the ones people experience. The difference between dogs and people ultimately lies in intelligence, not feelings.

Despite the capacity dogs have to learn, their intelligence is very limited compared to ours. For instance, dogs are able to learn some words, but not entire clauses. A dog's

ability to plan ahead is also restricted to a few moments in the future.

If a dog has, for instance, urinated on the floor while the owner was away, he is not protesting being left alone. He has just had difficulties holding his urine for the whole time. If a dog is panicked by being left alone, his need to urinate becomes more frequent. There are also many cases, where a dog has defecated in the owner's bed, but the explanation is simpler than revenge. Being left alone, the dog has not had the courage to leave the spot, where the owner's safe smell is the strongest.



**A**dog's sense of smell is very sharp. Dogs are able to follow footsteps in the right direction because each step smells slightly stronger than the previous, which means that it is more recent. Dogs are also able to smell fear and many diseases in both humans and other dogs. This is because fear and many diseases affect the amount of hormones and other substances in the circulation, thus affecting the odour released from the pores.



**A**wagging tail means different things in different situations. The emotional state of this dog can be interpreted by the forward-facing ears, as much as this lop-eared dog can move them: the dog is filled with optimistic anticipation, which makes the dog wag his tail. However, dogs wag their tails also when feeling afraid or when trying to calm a human or a dog that seems threatening. The cautious expression on their face reveals the real feeling in these situations.

## Body language and expressions

Dogs have a wide range of possible gestures and expressions. These express a dog's emotional state and his intentions.

The ability to use gestures and expressions is mostly inherent. However, understanding the gestures and expressions of other dogs is mostly based on learning. If a puppy is allowed to spend a long time with his mother

and siblings, and if he is allowed to socialise with friendly dogs often, he can become proficient in canine communication. This helps a dog a dog in interactions with other dogs later in his life.

Smelling another dog's rear is a part of friendly greeting and should be allowed. By smelling, dogs receive information about each other's gender, age, and health, among other

things, thus making it a part of their meeting ritual.

Dogs invite one another to play by quickly lowering the front of their body, keeping their posterior standing, and their tail wagging at the top. This gesture shows other dogs that the playful dog is in a friendly and harmless state of mind.

If a dog feels threatened, he starts send-

ing warning signs. If these do not help, the dog sends even more of them, intensifying them gradually. For instance, raising hackles may be followed by showing canines, then by growling. Punishing a dog for this behaviour will just make it worse. Instead, the dog's message about his need for more distance to the supposed threat should be taken seriously.



**A**worried expression. The ears are facing backward, eyes are wide open, and the dog is panting with the corners of his mouth pulled back. The slightly stooped posture is also a sign of the dog's anxiety. The fear felt by a dog is real. If a dog refuses to move while looking like this, it does not mean that he just "wants to be difficult."

**H**armonious coexistence between a human and a dog consists of two parts: the trust the dog feels for the human, and competent, reward-based training. Out-of-date, unfounded beliefs have luckily begun to disappear, such as the belief that training a dog requires the dog's submission.



## The relationship between human and dog

A dog's relationship with his human family has many characteristics inherited from his wolf ancestors. Research on the behaviour of wild wolves has demonstrated that a pack of wolves is a family unit that holds amicable relationships. The alpha couple, the alpha female and alpha male, are the mother and father of most members of the pack. A few maturing offspring stay in the pack and participate in taking care of new cubs. The mutual trust between the members of the pack is based on these relationships. This is also one reason why the usual lupine behaviour does not include conflicts inside the pack.

As alphas are the most experienced wolves in the pack, their initiative at hunting is more successful than those of the others. The others are used to following suit because this has

had positive consequences in the past. This is also the reason why the relationship between a human and a dog improves when the human takes the initiative at things that the dog likes.

There are also differences between dogs and wolves, the biggest one being that dogs mentally remain puppies to some extent even as adults. This is the reason why dogs need care from their pack-leaders even more than wolves.

When living in human society, a dog has to learn a multitude of things, even new things that have no equivalent in wolves' lives. Thus, walking past approaching people, walking on a leash and not pulling, and many other phenomena of everyday life have to be taught to dogs. Further information about training a dog is available on pages 26–27.

## Need for activities

Dogs are active animals that need lots of activities and variation to feel comfortable. One way to activate a dog's mind is to teach him new things by rewarding as well as training familiar things in new surroundings. Further information about training is available on pages 26–27.

Dogs also have to be given the opportunity to realise at least some parts of hunting, an important behavioural need. A dog does not have to be able to chase real animals to be happy, but he does need certain actions that correspond with the phases of hunting. For some dogs, especially the initial and final stages of hunting are important: on one hand, searching for hidden treats by using the sense of

smell, and on the other hand, chewing on such things as bones. Further information about these is available on pages 28–29 and 34.

One crucial part of a dog's happiness is that the dog is given the opportunity to realise his species-specific behavioural needs often enough. These include moving in various surroundings, exploring places by smelling, and running free. The outdoors and related safety issues are discussed further on pages 24–25.

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**H**ealth is one of the factors to keep in mind when choosing a breed. As a consequence of appearance-centred breeding, some breeds have health issues that complicate their lives. Some very short-snouted breeds, such as the French bulldog as seen in the picture, often experience breathing difficulties. Other examples include short-legged and long-backed breeds, which have more back problems than is normal.



## Mixed-breed dogs

**M**ixed-breed dogs are sometimes considered inferior to pedigrees. In reality, they are just as docile, sociable and genuine as other dogs.

Instead, the idea that mixed-breed dogs are more intelligent and healthier than pure-bred dogs is not completely unrealistic. When an animal's parents are distant relatives, meaning that the animal has inherited relatively diverse genetics, the animal is slightly more viable on average than if its parents were close relatives.

When getting a mixed-breed puppy, you should keep in mind that a crossbreed of two pure-bred dogs is not necessarily an exact hybrid of his parents. A litter often has a huge variety of different characteristics, and some puppies resemble one parent more than the other one. If a dog's parents are of highly different breeds, the size, appearance and personality of their adult offspring may be surprisingly different from that of the parents.

## Choosing a breed

**T**here are many big differences between dog breeds besides their appearance.

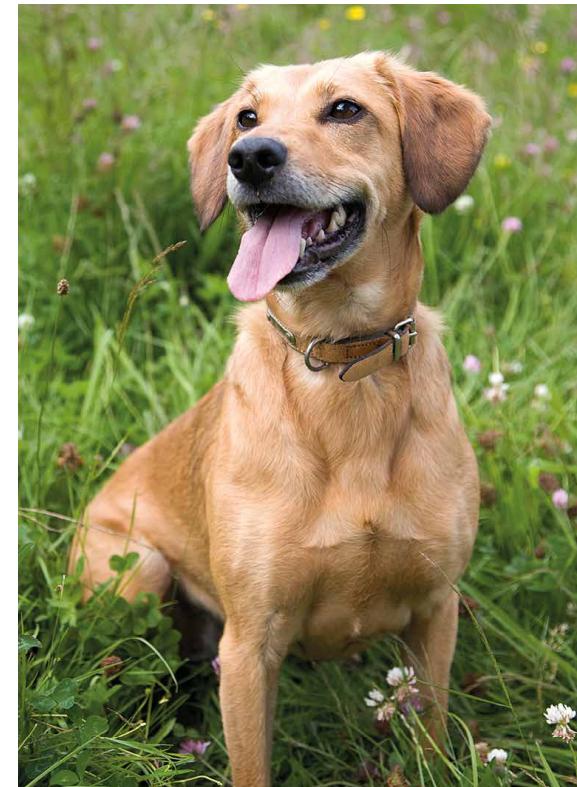
When considering getting a dog and choosing the breed it is important to search for a great deal of information on the characteristics, activity-needs, and other behavioural aspects of different breeds. There are also individual differences between dogs that are likewise important to consider.

Characteristics are affected by the kinds of tasks for which different breeds have been bred over the centuries. Some breeds have been bred so they have evolved to be as bark-prone as possible. Some breeds are considerably more active

than others, and need extra activities. Some are especially dependent on company. These kinds of dogs must be accustomed to being alone gradually and extra carefully.

Information based on long experience can be found from different breed associations.

Read more about the consequences of overbreeding from the Smart Dog Owner's Guide at [sey.fi](http://sey.fi)



**W**hen a dog's build is close to the original basic dog, he is usually able to live without back, joint, respiratory or other problems. Contrary to what is often believed, mixed-breed dogs are not automatically healthy. If either one of a mix-breed dog's parents belongs to a breed with hereditary health issues, the offspring's situation should be monitored.

# Where should I get a dog?

**W**hen considering getting a puppy, it is a good idea to visit different breeders when the puppies are young or even before their birth, whether considering a pure-bred puppy or a mixed-breed. This way you get an opportunity to compare breeders and see that the puppies are treated appropriately.

The dogs of a good breeder are trusting and clean, and they live in a versatile, stimulating environment. If the dog is pure-bred, the puppies of a good breeder have usually been registered. If pure-bred puppies are not registered, it is possible that the breeder has bred the new litter with the mother too soon after

the previous one.

If a person considering getting a puppy is not allowed to see the puppy's mother or home, some doubts should arise. Unfortunately, Finland has puppy mills as well, and these produce puppies in poor conditions for no other purpose than profit. These puppies are often sickly and timid even when grown up. You should never buy a puppy raised in questionable conditions even out of pity because the paid money will likely enable the seller to continue his activities. Instead, you should inform the nearest animal welfare association about every suspicious puppy seller.



**A**t the age of five weeks, a puppy is still living in his birth home, at the breeder's, with his mother and siblings. A good breeder gives the puppy opportunities to get safe stimulation and contacts with the outside world already at this age. Puppies that have grown in stimulating environments will grow up to be calmer and less timid on average than ones who have grown in stimuli-lacking environments.

Read more about getting a dog from the *Smart Dog Owner's Guide* at [sey.fi](http://sey.fi)



## A puppy or an adult dog?

**P**uppies often require more work than adult dogs. A puppy has to be trained to be house-broken, not to chew on the objects of the household, and other everyday skills. You can read more detailed information on the effective and animal-friendly ways of teaching these from the instructions and reading tips on page 35.

Puppies are usually given to their new owner at the age of 8 weeks. From the point of view of the dog's natural behaviour, this is a very early age. If the new household has no other dogs and if the puppy has to spend much time alone from the very start, you can always ask the breeder if he or she would be able to keep the puppy for a little bit longer. This way the puppy will get better conditions for the development of its mental balance and will learn more skills related to canine interaction.

The situation is completely different if the

**T**here are dogs of all ages looking for new homes. Even though puppies and young dogs are popular, adult and even elderly dogs are also able to become as strongly attached to their new families and homes. An adult dog is often able to get accustomed to his new home better than the former owner dares to hope.

puppy would have to live mostly indoors with little to no stimulation - and if the new owner in turn is able to spend time, play, and meet new, healthy, vaccinated and puppy-friendly adult dog acquaintances with the puppy. In this case, it is best for the puppy to move into the new household already at the age of 8 weeks. The puppy is still going through a development period, where he needs lots of interaction with other dogs and to be able to explore new places. This is how he will be able to get along with other dogs and to react calmly to new places.

If the family already has a cat, then the only possibility is usually either getting a puppy (ideally 8 weeks or slightly older) or an adult dog who already gets along with cats. Most adult dogs who are not accustomed to cats only see cats as prey to be chased, which is scary for the cat.



## Rescue dogs

**R**escue dogs refers to dogs that have formerly lived in poor conditions and have since then been taken to appropriate care or a new home. Some of them are of Finnish origin, while others are homeless dogs that have been brought to Finland.

Rescue dogs are often more demanding than home-changing dogs that are originally from an ordinary household. Rescue dogs might have faced traumatic experiences that have caused anxiety, which might cause surprising reactions to everyday situations. Their state of health might also be poorer than the average. When considering getting a rescue dog, especially if he has been brought from abroad, you should always contact an expert first and discuss whether the idea is a realistic one in your life situation.

**T**he idea of saving a dog might seem tempting, but it is not a sufficient reason to take a rescue dog. Taking such a dog might result in many challenges in the following years. This is why managing such a situation requires experience in working with dogs' feelings, habits, and ways of experiencing their surroundings. If you want to help homeless dogs abroad, you can always donate to the organisations that take care of these dogs in their home countries and pay for the sterilisation and vaccination of homeless dogs.

Rescue dogs are often best suited for experienced dog people who are interested in the project of adopting a rescue dog and adapting him to the life of a pet dog step by step. In many cases, it is possible sooner or later to lead a completely normal Finnish everyday canine life with a rescue dog. However, you should be aware right from the start that the dog might require special arrangements, sometimes permanently, because of his possible anxiety.

## One dog or more?

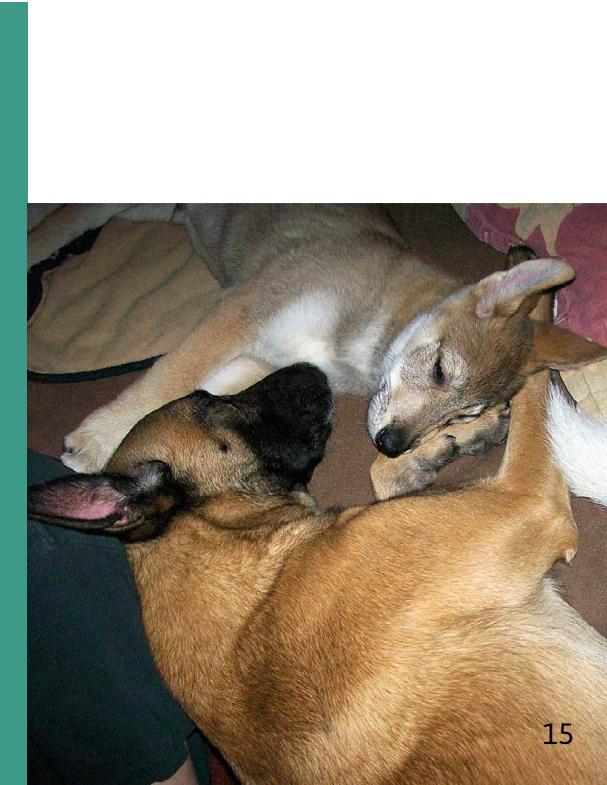
**E**ven though a dog is allowed to spend plenty of time with people, his life will be richer if he has dog companions. It is possible to do many things in canine company that are not possible with a human, such as smelling the ground together or playing running games. Dogs may also appreciate the company of fellow dogs when left without human company for a workday.

Becoming attached to a human does not depend on whether the dog has other dogs for company or not. However, there are some lim-

its to the suitable number of dogs in everyday life. In most households, the situation may be challenging for both humans and dogs if there are more than 3 or 4 dogs.

All dogs do not get along with others automatically. This is mostly affected by how many opportunities the dog has had to be in contact with friendly dogs and to learn the nuances of canine communication as a puppy. Many dogs that are wary of other dogs are still able to become friends with new dog acquaintances, if the familiarisation is carried out skilfully and gradually.

**S**leeping together demonstrates that the dogs in a family trust each other and enjoy each other's company instead of just tolerating one another. You can sometimes also notice that dogs who trust each other are in contact with one another also when awake by resting their hips against each other or in other similar ways. Another good sign of trust is that the dogs are able to relax in the same room together.





**C**omfortable sleeping spots are also important for dogs. A cushioned bed in a draft-free place is a good place to sleep so that the dog knows that he can be safe there but not too far from humans.

## Feeling safe

The younger a dog changing his household, the more confused he will be when entering his new home. While the family is excited about the new puppy, the puppy himself might miss his mother, siblings and the world he used to know. Moving to a new place is usually easier for an adult dog because he is already used to seeing all kinds of new places. Still, he feels that he has lost his familiar people and places. This is why it is recommended that a new puppy or adult dog not be left alone during the first days. When the new household starts getting more familiar, being alone is easier.

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When the dog is left alone in the house at the beginning, being alone should be prac-

ticed gradually. If the dog is a puppy or if he has shown signs of separation anxiety earlier, the training should be started by leaving the dog alone for a moment. You should walk out of the door and come instantly back before the dog starts panicking. This is repeated many times a day and day after day. The absence is gradually stretched to minutes, tens of minutes and so forth. The idea is to come back before the dog starts whimpering or barking. This is how the dog learns to associate leaving with coming back and to consider the situation a safe one.

A dog's anxiety can be prevented by gradually getting him used to the surrounding world

that he will meet, while he is still a puppy. The sound of fireworks is available as recordings that can be played at home at a low volume at first, and then gradually raising the volume. This is how it will be easier for the dog to react calmly to real New Year Eve's fireworks that terrify so many unprepared dogs. Correspondingly, it is a good idea to get a dog used to the sounds of traffic, travelling in a car, using the elevator, and other phenomena of the human society already as a puppy. If a dog enters a new household as an adult and has never been in an elevator, training can be started by feeding him treats in an unmoving elevator before it is used for moving between floors.

**F**or many dogs the company of familiar humans is an important part of feeling secure. This dependence on company is one of the key reasons why the species is so popular. A good dog owner arranges his or her everyday life so that their dog does not have to be away from his human pack longer than necessary.



**T**here are many differences between individual dogs on when they become housebroken. While some dogs are already house-trained when they are 3 months old, some might have accidents still at the age of 12 months. Some of these differences are caused by growing conditions. If the dog has already been able to go outside in his birthplace and if he has not had to spend long periods of time alone in his new household as a puppy, house-training is quicker.



## House-training

**H**ouse-training a puppy is quicker if the puppy is let outside every time after eating or waking up. At the age of moving to a new household, puppies are barely able to hold their urine, and the ability develops gradually.

House-training is based on arranging situations where the puppy is at a spot that humans want him to use, such as lawn, already when he needs to relieve himself. When the puppy has used a certain kind of place enough times, he starts feeling that it is the normal place to use.

Dogs are naturally inclined to keep their sleeping spot and its surroundings clean. However, dogs do not know that humans want

the entire floor of the apartment to stay clean. This is why humans have to get the puppy used to going outside to relieve himself.

Nowadays, the fallacy that a puppy's muzzle should be pressed to the puddle or poop, if he has relieved himself indoors is fortunately disappearing. Doing this will only decrease the puppy's trust in people and will not help house-training. Puppies live in the moment and they are not able to see the connection between their earlier actions and the following frightening experience. The dogs of these kinds of owners might eventually turn out house-trained, but in these cases, the learning happens for other reasons and regardless of these punishments.

## Getting to know other animals

**A**t the age of a couple of weeks, the development of puppies has reached the point where the so-called sensitive development period, the critical socialisation period, starts. During this period, the puppy forms a permanent idea about which animal species can be befriended and which ones not.

It is the pleasant experiences of being together in this period that the dog's trust in other dogs and people is built on. During this period, if the puppy is allowed to socialise with a cat that is used to dogs, the puppy will include cats in the list of animal species that can be befriended.

The sensitive socialisation period goes on

until the age of 6 or so weeks. After this, the period begins to fade and comes to a full end at the age of a couple of months. For instance, the peaceful coexistence of a dog and a cat is usually possible only when the two of them have already met animals of the other species before the end of this period. Few individual animals are truly able to create interspecies friendships without these experiences in the early stages of their lives.

**A** good way to see if animals of different species trust one another is to note if they use the social body language of their own species in their communication. Here, both the dog and the horse act as if they were meeting an animal of their own species. This shows that the dog has already got used to being peacefully in contact with horses - and vice versa.



# Feeding

The convenience food products sold in stores are the most common and easiest alternative for feeding dogs. The appropriate food is chosen according to the dog's age, size and activity.

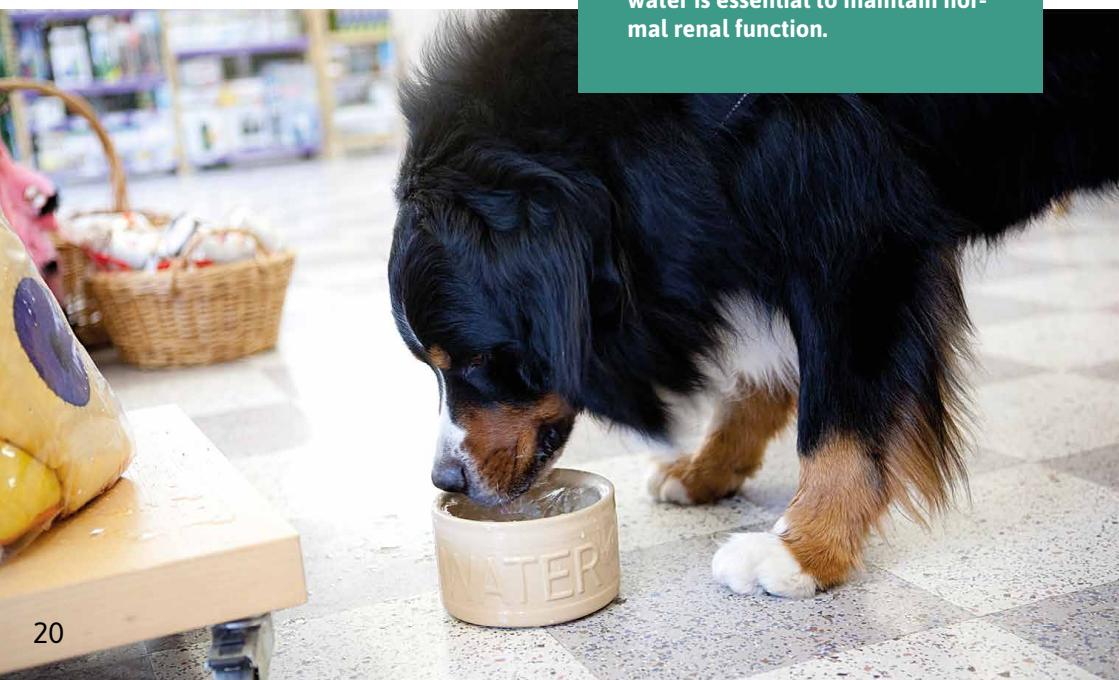
Self-made dog food requires more expertise so that the food includes enough vitamins, amino acids and everything else that the dog needs. Homemade dog food particularly refers to food that has been cooked with the dog's nutritional needs in mind. Nutrition that only consists of table scraps is not healthy as such.

Rawfeeding, or a BARF diet, is another type of feeding that requires a higher level of expertise. Raw bones are safe for dogs, but food that contains too many bones can easily

cause constipation. On all counts, rawfeeding can only be beneficial to health, if the owner has sufficiently detailed knowledge of the dog's nutritional needs.

At times, dogs can be given tiny amounts of some human foods, such as cooked rice, meat or fish without any strong spices. These should not be given from the dining table or other places that should not be taught to the dog for begging food.

Dogs must always have access to drinking water. The water must be changed at least once a day. The sufficient supply of water is essential to maintain normal renal function.



Allowing a dog to chew in bones made of dried skin is a good and safe way to satisfy a dog's chewing needs. They also decrease the buildup of tartar. If a dog is given real animal bones, they should not be cooked (leftovers of human food, for instance) because heat brittles bones and makes them crack. Cracked bone fragments can be life-threatening when they reach the dog's intestines.

Some human foods are so detrimental to a dog's health that they should not be given to dogs even in the tiniest portions. These include chocolate, xylitol, onion, alcohol and coffee. Dogs themselves are not aware of these dangers and they are not able to avoid unsafe foods instinctively.

Many dogs are lactose-intolerant so ordinary milk is not suitable for them. Even though many dogs like the taste of milk, they

do not understand that it is connected to the following stomach problems. Fruits that have big seeds or stones are such as avocado or peach are also risky. Some dogs like the taste of these fruits, but the seed or stone can easily get stuck in a dog's throat.

Besides quality, the quantity of food given to a dog is also essential. Being overweight is one of the most common causes of canine health issues. If a dog has started gaining weight, the easiest solution for everyone is to take action before the situation gets worse. Gradually reducing portion sizes, changing to convenience foods that are meant for less active dogs, changing treats to low-fat foods and increasing physical activities are all effective ways to manage overweight.

**A**Puppy's first vet visit for vaccinations is scheduled so that it takes place when the puppy is 12 weeks old. A booster vaccination is needed at the age of 16 weeks and later either every 12 months or 3 years, depending on the vaccination. During every visit, the dog's general health is checked, including eye checks.



## Vaccination and health

Dogs have contagious diseases, not all of which are curable. This is why all dogs need vaccinations. In order to vaccinate a dog, the owner must book an appointment with their vet. The vaccination costs are the responsibility of the owner. Before vaccinating, the dog needs worming pills that are available at pharmacies without a prescription.

All dogs should be vaccinated against canine distemper, infectious hepatitis and parvovirus. In addition, a rabies vaccination is essential for dogs, who might be in contact with wild mammals or who may travel abroad. The kennel cough vaccination is crucial for dogs who meet an abundance of other dogs at dog

parks, hobbies, or dog shows, etc.

If a dog is not intended for breeding, the owner should consider castration or sterilisation. In addition to preventing unwanted pregnancies, it is also beneficial for the dog's health. Castrated males have less prostatism at an advanced age than non-castrated dogs. Sterilisation prevents bitches from contracting pyometra, which can be fatal. In addition, the risk of mammary tumours decreases if the bitch is sterilised when young, especially if this is done before her first heat. In some cases, the cons of the operation might go beyond its pros so this should be discussed with a vet.



**T**hick-furred dogs, such as the Finnish Lapphund, need regular grooming in order to avoid matting. Even if the fur seems well-kept, matting must also be prevented from forming in the root fur, i.e. the undercoat. Big knots cause pain to the dog as the skin tightens.

## Nails, teeth and fur

**C**lipping nails prevents their overgrowth and painful bending. Cleaning teeth decreases tartar and gingivitis and improves the smell of a dog's breath. All dogs, except breeds with very short fur, need grooming so that the fur does not become matted.

Dogs should be accustomed to grooming already as puppies. The situation should be relaxed and comfortable, and you can also give treats to the dog. The entire body, even the tail, should be groomed with a comb or a brush. A puppy can be accustomed to dental care by gently opening his mouth and putting tasty toothpaste specifically intended for dogs on his teeth. You can start training nail clip-

ping with a puppy by touching his nails with the nail scissors and giving him a tiny treat simultaneously. You can gradually move on to clipping a tiny piece from the tip of the nail with the scissors.

During grooming, you should keep in mind that pain is as genuine a feeling for dogs as it is for us. You should be extra careful when grooming thick or matted fur so that you do not pull painfully at the root fur. When clipping nails, you should avoid hitting the blood vessel inside the nail because its injury will cause severe pain. You can see the location of the blood vessel easily from a light-coloured nail.

**A** harness is a healthier and safer piece of outdoors equipment than a collar, especially if the dog tries to pull on his leash. Also, if the owner slips or falls, a harness distributes the sudden pull more evenly on different muscle groups than a collar, which focuses the pull mainly on the neck muscles. A harness must be chosen carefully according to the dog's build so that a belt hanging too low across the chest area does not limit the motion of the front legs or hinder motion in any other way.



## The outdoors and walks

**E**xploring new places and walking in new environments increases a dog's comfort. Walking outdoors is more interesting, if different routes are taken each day.

The best kind of outdoor activity for a dog is not just walking next to the owner on a leash. If it is not possible to keep the dog safely unleashed, it is possible to give the dog more freedom of movement by using a longer leash or a retractable leash. When doing so, you'll have to keep an eye on passers-by so that no

incidents arise. A line or a long leash is usually safer than a retractable leash that requires more attention and skills especially if the dog is prone to suddenly darting.

Walking outdoors is the only opportunity for some dogs to relieve themselves. This is why it is recommended that, apart from nights, dogs are let outside at least every six hours. It is not safe to leave a dog alone in the company of strangers, for example outside a shop. Dogs may disappear in these kinds of

situations.

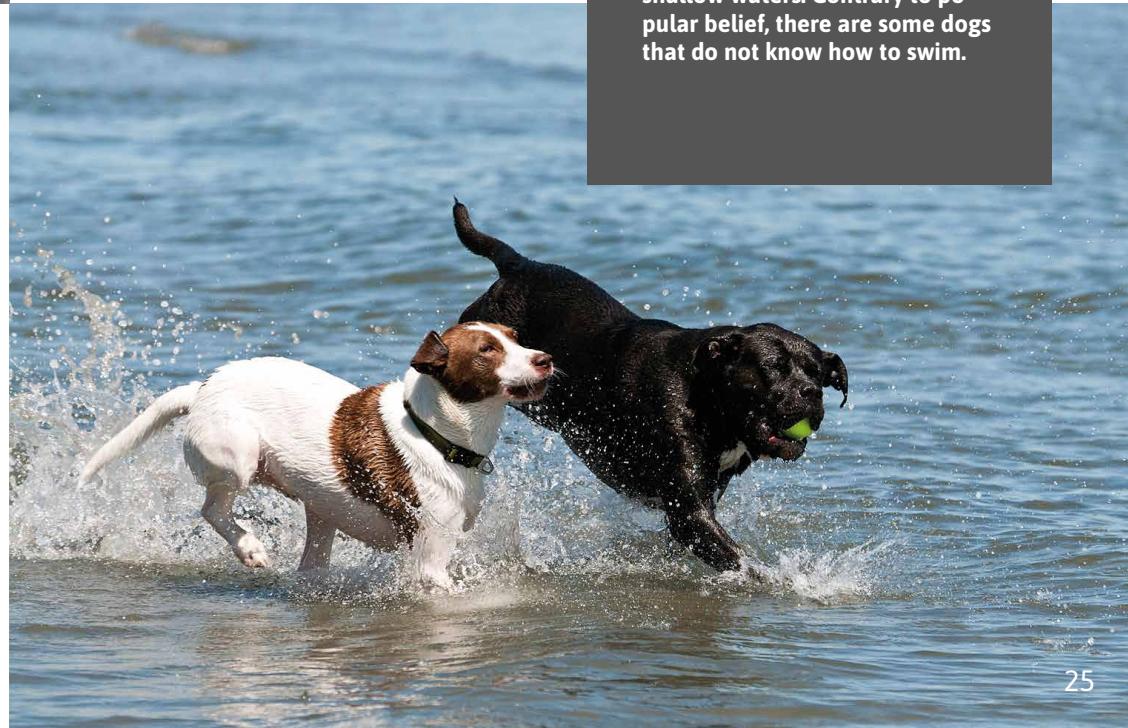
Dogs should be made familiar with travelling in cars and public transportation already as puppies. This way, it will also be easier to travel with them in the future. However, never leave a dog alone in the car in hot weather. Even if you leave the window open, the temperature will rise to surprisingly high numbers inside a car in summer and cause heatstroke very quickly.

Dogs are not as adaptable to heat as humans as they have no sweat glands. Dogs evaporate extra heat from their system mainly through their tongue, which is not especially effective even when panting. Dogs that are overweight, have short-snouts and have thick-fur experience discomfort more easily in sum-

mer than other dogs. If the temperature inside an apartment is very high in summer, an air-conditioner is a more effective way to cool the air than a fan.

In freezing winter temperatures, short-furred dogs can easily feel cold. There are many kinds of short furs. Some rather short-haired-looking breeds have a thick and warm undercoat, others do not. If a dog shivers when outside, it is a good idea to visit a pet shop to purchase a suitable dog coat.

**M**any dogs like water. Water is a nice way to cool down in the heat during summer. Still, dogs have to be able to choose if and how deep they want to go when in water. Some dogs just like wading in shallow waters. Contrary to popular belief, there are some dogs that do not know how to swim.



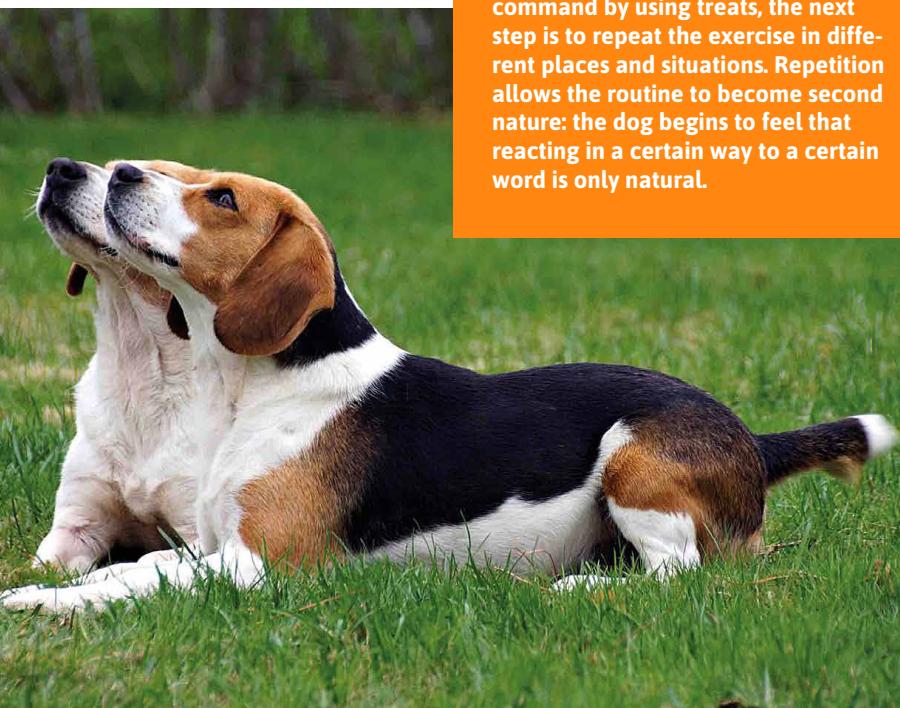
# Training

There are many things in the human world that dogs are not able to do naturally. For instance, dogs do not know that humans want dogs to make sure that the leash is loose when walking outside. Dogs are unable to understand speech, and the meaning of individual words has to be taught to them separately.

Training a dog in a manner that will be make everyday life as easy as possible involves steering a dog towards desirable habits. Rewarding is the most effective way to achieve this. For example, when training a dog to walk on a leash without pulling rewarding the dog whenever the leash is loose leads to the best results. The reward does not have to be a treat but instead, fulfilling the

thing that the dog wants the most at that moment. In this particular case, the dog wants to walk forward. So, the owner rewards the dog by walking forward at the moment when the leash becomes loose. If the leash becomes taut, the owner stops. This is how the dog learns that he is only able to walk forward when he keeps the leash loose.

The result of training is often called obedience. However, this term is misleading to some extent. Dogs do not consider these activities as obeying but routines. When a dog has been taught to associate lying down with the "down" command by using treats, the next step is to repeat the exercise in different places and situations. Repetition allows the routine to become second nature: the dog begins to feel that reacting in a certain way to a certain word is only natural.



meaning of the word stays the same despite the situation. The places are chosen so that the distractions and attractions in the surrounding area increase gradually, but so that the dog is still able to focus on the owner and the exercise.

Successful training requires skill even when it is done by rewarding. The owner has to choose the right time for the reward and must understand how association and routines are formed in the dog's mind. Sources for additional information on training are listed on page 35.

Greeting the members of the family by jumping against them is a part of wolves' and dogs' natural behaviour. Dogs do not know by nature that most people do not like this way of greeting. Still, it is possible to train dogs to use other ways of greeting. Whenever a dog jumps against a human lifting his front paws, you should wait until the moment when all four legs are on the ground and respond to the greeting then. Correspondingly, you can also ignore a dog by turning your back on him and walking away whenever he jumps.

You can also teach the word "no" to a dog by using rewards at the right moment. This means teaching the word to the dog as a stop sign. The dog is rewarded when he hears the word "no" and immediately stops whatever he is doing at that moment.

"Come" is the command that should be trained extensively in order to ensure that the dog approaches a command giver reliably. Just like all the other words taught to a dog, the words "come" and "here" should be trained in many different places so that the dog knows that the

**D**ogs need toys for more than playing. Tearing objects apart, mangling, and carrying them are a part of most dogs' behavioural needs. They originate from the final phase of wolves' hunting behaviour where the prey is dismembered and the pieces are carried away to be eaten in peace. Behavioural needs refer to the species-specific behaviour that animals must realise so that their brain receives a normal amount of comfortable experiences.



thinly spread line of small treats that leads to a bigger treat.

Chewing is also important for most dogs. Chewing has a calming effect on dogs, which is why chewing bones and such should always be an option for them.

In addition, some breeds have reacquired some of the wolf's natural hunting and prey-handling behaviour more strongly than other breeds. Sighthounds get especially strong sat-

isfaction out of running and terriers out of ripping things apart for this reason. You can seal treats in empty cartons so they can tear these apart. Some dogs also need opportunities to dig the ground.

**E**xploring the environment by sniffing is one of a dog's behavioural needs. Dogs enjoy forests and other natural surroundings partly because they offer a different and richer world of smells than an urban environment. There is always more to be sniffed in familiar places too, when smells of other dogs or animals have appeared there.

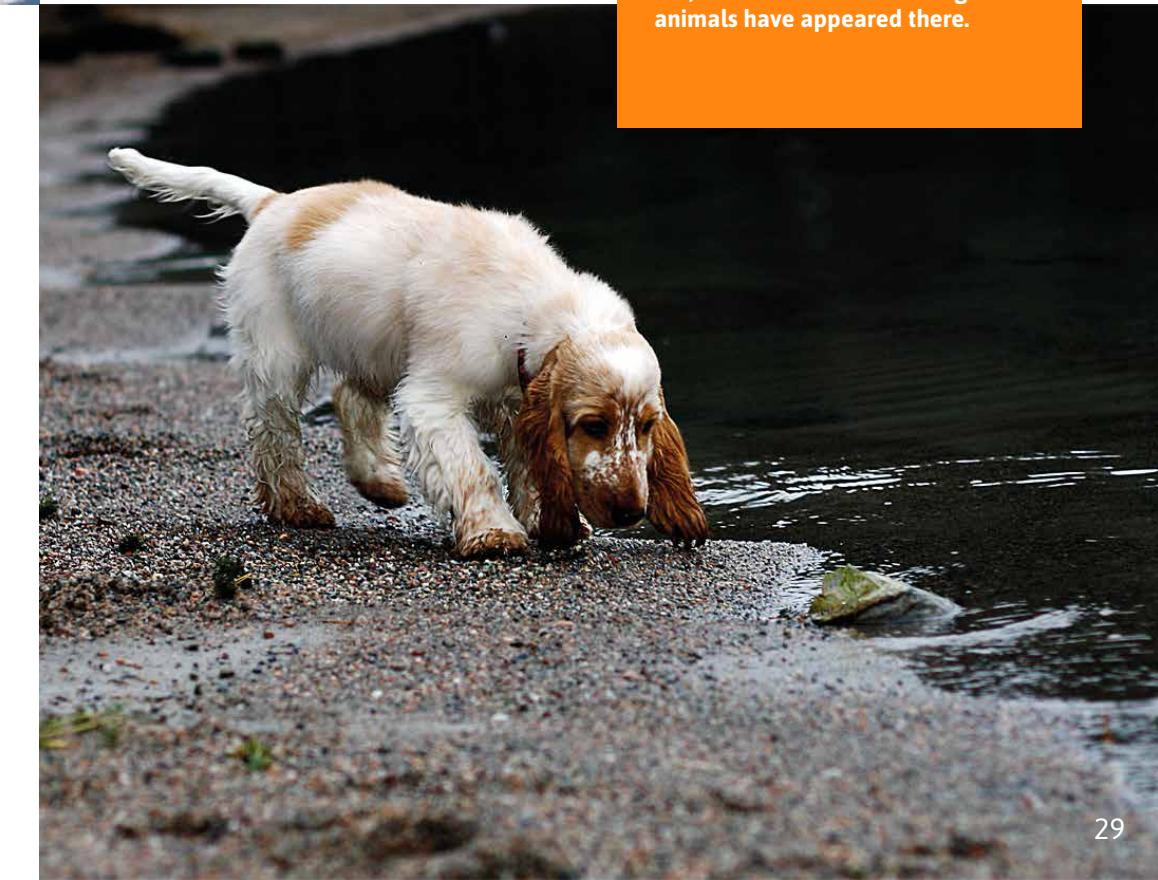
## Toys, playing and stimulation

**M**entally dogs remain part puppy even as adults. This is why many dogs like to play. Some breeds and individuals are especially fond of running games, others of playing with toys, and some of both. As sociable animals, dogs usually like playing together, either with other dogs or people.

Still, some games are so exciting for dogs that the dog might develop a sort of an addiction to the adrenaline rush felt during the game. This happens with dogs, who become "ball crazy" demanding that their human

throw the ball or stick over and over again. Engaging in throwing games too frequently with a dog like this might increase the adrenaline production of the dog's system, making the dog needlessly prone to get agitated in other situations as well. This is when the better solution is to encourage the dog to engage in some other activity that requires peaceful concentration.

Looking for small, hidden treats either outside or inside is a peaceful task requiring concentration that suits all dogs. Dogs can also be taught to follow tracks in the terrain or a





## Hobbies

There are all kinds of organised hobbies available for dogs and their owners, especially in cities. Hobbies are not necessary for a dog's health, but if the dog and owner both enjoy a hobby, this will bring more joy to their life.

The most suitable hobby depends on both the dog's personality and breed. For example, hobbies that require agility can be difficult and risky for dogs that are really heavy or have

short legs. The enthusiasm of the dog is a good way to determine whether a hobby suits him. Still, this is not the entire truth. It is possible for a dog to become too agitated from appropriate and enjoyable hobbies as well, if he does not have a sufficient number of recovery days between training sessions. This is when the dog's system is in a constant state of minor stress. The dog might also be more likely to react to everyday events or sounds.

**A**gility is a hobby favoured by many dogs and owners. However, there are some health risks linked to frequent agility practice. If the hobby includes high jumps, frequent landing can cause the dog's joints to wear in the long run. This is why some dogs develop problems in their carpal joints as a result of a long-lasting agility hobby.

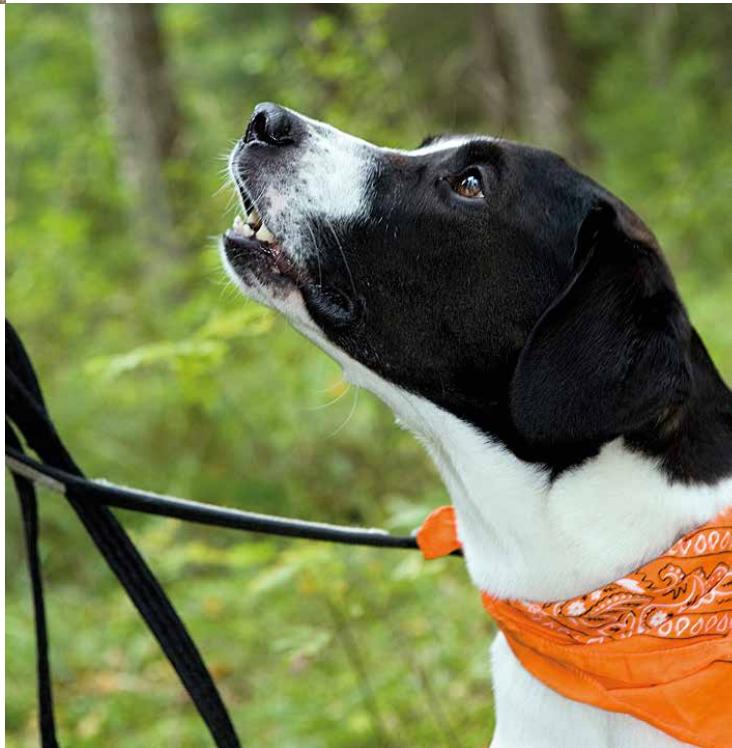
## Barking

**B**arking has its roots in the short warning and signalling bark that wolves use. This is why barking is usually connected to situations where the dog notices something suspicious or scary.

Barking at approaching dogs is usually due to the dog considering these other dogs a possible threat. It is possible that these kinds of dogs have not had enough opportunities as puppies to be in contact with friendly dogs so that they could have learned to trust unfamiliar dogs. They might also remember being attacked by another dog. Barking at approaching dogs is usually also maintained by the fact

that the dog learns to consider it an efficient solution that is rewarding. He will soon notice that barking makes other dogs take a sidestep and thus decreases his own fear, especially if he is big. You can read more about alleviating a dog's anxiety on pages 32–33.

Some dogs learn to bark to get their owner's attention. The dog might need company so much that even negative attention is a better option for him than nothing. In these kinds of situations, the solution is to ignore the dog when he barks, and vice versa, talking to him and scratching him when he comes to get attention without barking.



**T**here are significant differences between different breeds on how prone they are to barking. If a dog barks for a long period of time without a visible reason, the problem could lie in the lack of activity. Dogs prone to barking often react to boredom by barking.

**A**ggression is often caused by fear. When leashed, a dog reacts to the same cause of fear slightly more strongly than when free because his fear is increased by the knowledge that he has no way to escape.



## Anxiety

**A**dog's anxiety might sometimes go unnoticed by humans. The first thought might sometimes be that "he just wants to cause trouble", if the dog does not have the courage to go somewhere. The intensity of a dog's anxiety is often also underestimated. Fear is one of the primal emotions that are intense and in many ways similar in both humans and many other animals.

Barking at approaching dogs is one of the most common manifestations of a dogs' fear. Just as in other instances when getting used to scary things, gradual familiarisation is also the best solution in this case. The dog is taken into

controlled situations so that he can walk past other dogs to the point where he does not bark yet. He is also rewarded for not barking with small treats, for example. You can start narrowing the distance to other dogs gradually. If needed, the owner can step in between his or her dog and the other dog in order to increase the feeling of security.

The key to success is not taking the dog so close to the other dog that he or she might get scared and start barking. Instead, walking closer and closer past other dogs is reached gradually over weeks and months.

This same gradual familiarisation also ap-

plies to overcoming all other anxieties. When a dog is able to view his source of fear in a safe situation from a sufficient distance and often enough, the dog gradually begins to approach the source without feeling afraid.

The most common mistake in managing a dogs' anxiety is taking the dog to a scary situation against his will. Many people think that this helps the dog to overcome his fears. In reality, this will almost always merely increase his anxiety. The belief in the success of this

method is based on the fact that when an animal ends up in an overpowering situation with no escape, he is sooner or later overwhelmed by a so-called freezing response. At this point, the dog does not express his fear with external behaviour. However, his heart is still beating as rapidly as before and the emotion of fear is still strong. Thus, a true solution for overcoming a dog's fears is gradual and secure familiarisation and not just changing the dog's external reaction.



**A**wagging tail is sometimes misinterpreted. It is not always caused by happiness. Dogs might also wag their tails when either nervous or worried. The dog in the picture is attending a dog show and feels insecure because he is not used to dog shows.

**T**he smell of objects affects how tempting they seem to dogs. Items smelling of food, such as empty food packages are naturally tempting. If a dog is not particularly interested in chewing bones, they can be made more tempting by smearing a tasty substance on them.



## Chewing on objects

**C**hewing is part of dogs' natural behaviour. Puppies exploring their world chew on everything, but even adult dogs need chewing opportunities. This has a calming and uplifting effect on them.

If a dog chews on objects when he is alone, this might be caused by a lack of activity or the dog's attempt to alleviate his insecurity. The dog is not aware that the owner wants the objects to stay intact, nor is the dog able to associate the returning owner's irritation with what he did tens of minutes or even hours earlier as this event is already lost in the mists of the past according to the dog's track of time.

If the dog reacts to the owner's return by conciliating him or her with a wagging tail and ears pressed back, many owners might think that he is ashamed of what he did. In reality, the dog notices the slightest signs of irritation in the owner and tries to calm him or her down - without any idea of why the owner is angry.

The solution to chewing on objects is giving the dog sufficiently tempting, permitted chewing objects, such as chewing bones. It is a good idea to keep all valuables out of a dog's reach, if there is reason to assume that he might try to chew on them.

## Further information

### Information on dog care:

You can find comprehensive instructions on dog nutrition and healthcare, and other useful information for every dog owner on the Finnish Kennel Club website: [www.kennelliitto.fi/en/dogs](http://www.kennelliitto.fi/en/dogs).

### Books:

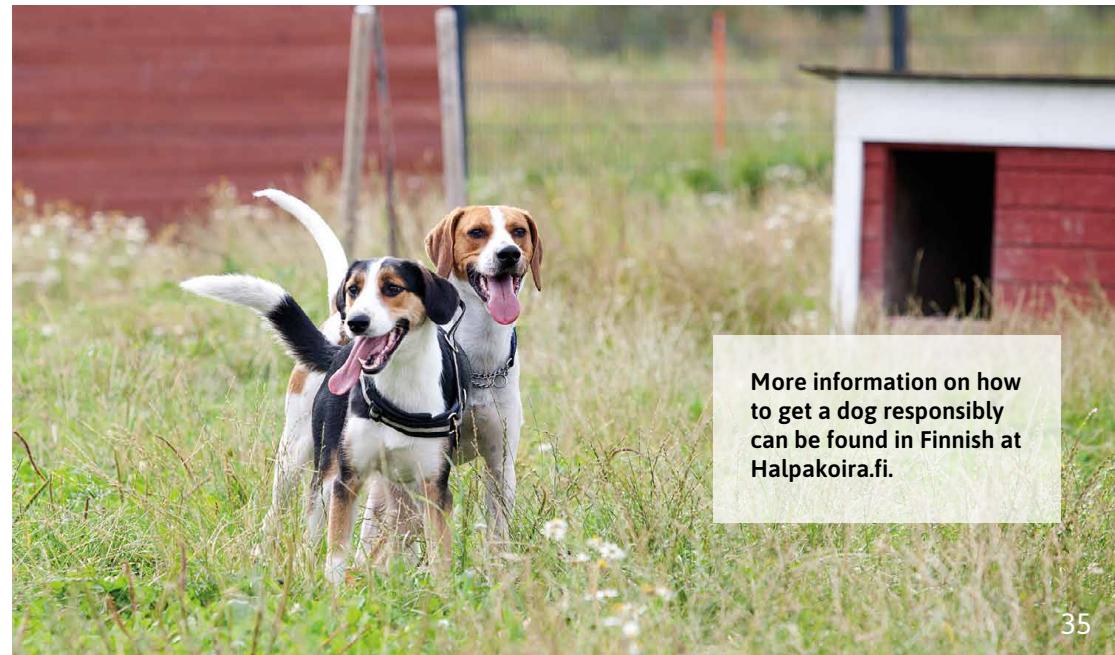
Tuire Kaimio: Pennun kasvatus (WSOY 2002) and Koirien käyttäytyminen (WSOY 2007). Comprehensive information packages for understanding dogs and handling their behaviour.

Helena Telkäranta: Millaista on olla eläin? (SKS 2015). A report on what science has revealed about animals' intelligence, emotions and experiences.

### Help for canine behavioural issues:

If you would like to contact a professional dog trainer, it is a good idea to use trainers approved by Suomen Eläintenkouluttajat ry (Finnish Pet Trainers). There are trainers in the business who use methods that include violence and other means that might only make the problem worse. You can find a list of approved trainers at [elaintenkouluttajat.com/kouluttajat](http://elaintenkouluttajat.com/kouluttajat).

As the trainers are independent entrepreneurs, they are not able to offer advice free-of-charge over the phone. Instead, you can get professional, practical guidance on training for a charge from these professionals.



More information on how to get a dog responsibly can be found in Finnish at [Halpakoira.fi](http://Halpakoira.fi).

# For the *animals*

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