

Lizzy Talk

Please Take Care of Me When I Get Old

By **Ted Slupik**

AUTHOR OF "SOPHIE...BEST FRIENDS ARE FOREVER"

There is a lot that a pet owner can do to help their senior dog prepare for their "golden years." Anticipating your older dog's changing needs and abilities will do much to help them adapt and enjoy their life. Some changes to work on are:

HEARING:

I am not ignoring you if I don't respond to your voice like I used to. Not responding may be the beginning of hearing loss. I tend to sleep a lot more as normal everyday sounds I used to hear are simply no longer heard. By teaching me hand signals, you may help me stay connected to you.

SIGHT:

It can be scary for a dog to begin losing its sight even if it is a gradual process. Dogs get cataracts just as humans do. I may startle easily as I am no longer able to notice movement around me as well. Keep my surroundings constant. Leave in place items such as furniture or the location of my bed, food, and toys. Dogs lose their vision from the bottom up so early signs of sight loss can be a reluctance to go down stairs.

NERVOUSNESS:

As I get older, I worry more, just like humans do. Stress not only can make me anxious or agitated but can affect my overall health as well. Please keep my routine consistent.

WEIGHT ISSUES:

Again, just like humans, we pets can pack on a few pounds during our senior

years. This can be due to less activity either due to less strength or less exercise, arthritis, or possibly even my metabolism slowing down. Take a look at my food; some gradual change to a lower fat or senior dog variety might be in order. By lessening my weight there will be less strain on those achy joints as well.

GROOMING:

I may need some extra care for my coat, teeth and pads. More frequent tooth brushing will help prevent infections, but do not replace dental cleanings. Coconut oil is a great moisturizer for my foot pads and is not harmful to me when I lick my feet after it is applied. Supplementing my food with some salmon oil may help keep my skin supple and avoid it drying out. Pay special attention to my nails as well. Since I am probably less active, I may need a pedicure more often.

CONFUSION/DOGGY DEMENTIA:

A sad part of life can be confusion, I may have difficulty remembering routine tasks or locations. Routine is the best way to help me cope with aging and make them more comfortable.

Remember, a little effort on your part will ensure that I, your senior dog, enjoy the years that I have left and you will be rewarded with more of my continued love, companionship and friendship.

Take a moment to enjoy your pet. Every day with them is a gift. 🐾

Lizzy was a long haired Chihuahua who lived a rich 16-1/2 years after getting a second chance at age 9. Lizzy's Fund provides all veterinary, grooming, dental, and even the adoption fees for seniors, aged 7 or older. Find out more or make a donation at lizzysfund.org. You can also like us on Facebook!



Lizzy