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Monday - Friday: 8:00-5:30 | Saturday: 8:00-1:00 | Sunday: Closed



# National



# Senior Pet Month

## Open Your Heart to a Senior Pet

If you've been thinking about adding a four-legged-friend to your family, consider opening your home and your heart to an older dog or cat in need.

While small kittens and puppies may be adorable, older pets are just as loving and loyal as their younger counterparts. Not to mention, adopting a senior animal companion comes with some cool advantages:

- Grown-up pets don't require the constant monitoring and training that puppies and kittens do.
- Many are already housetrained.
- Since senior pets are fully grown, you'll be immediately aware of important information like personality type and grooming requirements, making it easier to choose the perfect pet for your family.



It is a sad fact that senior pets are often the last to be adopted from shelters, putting them at an increased risk for euthanasia. When you adopt a senior pet, you're not only welcoming a lifetime of love into your home, you're also saving a precious life.

If you're feeling inspired to bring home an older pet in Santa Cruz area, stop by the following Animal Rescue Organizations to see some beautiful senior pets available for adoption:

[Peaceofminddogrescue.org](http://Peaceofminddogrescue.org)

[spcasc.org](http://spcasc.org)

[scanimalshelter.org](http://scanimalshelter.org)



## Teach An Old Dog New Tricks

Turns out, you can teach an old dog new tricks. There's no reason why you couldn't! Still, remember that the physical limits of your canine friend may mean choosing only specific tricks to teach them.

Like humans and all animals, dogs may be prone to achy joints and other physical ailments as they get older. Arthritis is common in senior dogs, and dental issues may cause pain for tricks that require the use of the mouth (like catching Frisbees or pulling and tugging toys).

If you'd like to teach an older dog a trick or two, Adobe Animal Hospital of Soquel suggests the following fun and basic tricks that are perfect for senior dogs.

### IDENTIFY TOYS AND OBJECTS

Before they can do other tricks with toys - including fetching or finding toys and putting them away - you'll need to teach your dog to identify different objects. It's best if your dog can sit and stay before starting this trick.

The most important point here is to start small. Take two or three objects from your dog's toy box or from around the house. Try a ball, a cup (plastic), and a hat, for example. Make sure that each item has a name that is distinct. In this case, ball, cup, and hat work fine.

Space the items out in front of you between you and your dog. Grab some small dog snacks and begin. Start by pointing to one item and saying its name over and over. Pick it up and show your dog while saying the name. Do this with each object.

Next, tell your dog to "Get the \_\_\_!" At first, it will be a complete failure, but that's okay. Keep trying! When your dog does eventually choose the right item to pick up (or even if they go toward the right item), give them a treat and praise them. Continue this, and over time, Fido will get the hang of it.

### RING A BELL OR CHIMES TO NOTIFY IT'S TIME TO GO OUT

For this trick, put a bell or chimes on the doorknob where they go outside. Every time they go out from now on, nudge them to ring the chimes or bell or nudge and simultaneously ring them yourself. Give a treat and praise. Continue this, and over time, your dog should begin to nudge the bell or chimes on their own to notify you that they want to go outside.

### TEACH YOUR DOG TO COME WHEN COMMANDED

Finally, "come" is a command that every dog should know. Even if your senior dog doesn't understand or use it yet, it's something that they can certainly learn. "Come" is fairly easy. You'll simply need treats in your pocket, but don't let your dog know that you have them or they'll hang around you all day anyway. Either on

purpose or randomly throughout the day, tell your dog to "come" when they are far away. If and when they do, they get a treat. They'll start learning this trick super-fast because they'll want those treats!

Teaching your senior dog basic tricks and commands is good for them - even if they've never been into tricks before. It's important to keep older dogs who might be less-active interested and mentally-stimulated, and tricks are the perfect solution. They'll enjoy it, and you will too! To learn more about properly caring for senior dogs, [book an appointment](#) with us today!

# Senior Pet Wellness



Senior pets are at risk of cancer, diabetes, joint problems, as well as heart, kidney, and liver diseases.



Exercise can help senior pets maintain better health and can even help prevent certain illnesses.



They also require **different veterinary care** than younger pets. Talk to your vet about caring for your senior pet.



Poor **dental care** leads to a higher risk of diseases, so practice home dental care and get professional cleanings.



There are **special diet and nutrition needs** to keep in mind as your pet ages. Your vet can help you learn more.



Taking special care of your senior pet can grant you extra years with your loved one! **Talk to your vet today!**

**For More Information:**

<https://www.asPCA.org/news/november-open-your-heart-senior-pet>

# Please make an appointment to discuss your pet's health:



[AdobeVets.com](http://AdobeVets.com)

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