

ADHD in dogs

Many people think their dog has ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), but very few really do. In most situations the owner just needs to provide their dog with more opportunities for exercise, human interaction, and mental stimulation. These are simply cases of pent up energy, not ADHD.

In an average year I see one or two client dogs that I can say likely have ADHD. Dogs who have ADHD are usually high energy breeds. Any breed of dog can be ADHD, but it is more common in field hunting and herding breeds.

With ADHD dogs you can't help but notice how difficult it is for these dogs to be still. They are constantly in motion. It seems they have only two speeds, zero (asleep) and 100 miles an hour (everything else they do). They move so quickly that it is not uncommon for them to lose their footing and slide around on the floor, sometimes even slipping and falling. These dogs are usually overly attached to their humans. You can see they really want to please. Unfortunately, their neediness and racing around are often sources of frustration for their humans.

The most glaring issue of an ADHD dog is the lack of impulse control. When you tell the dog to stop doing something they will stop, but



then almost immediately start back again. No matter how many times you stop them, within seconds they are at it again. Even after receiving a harsh correction the dog will stop for a moment and then repeat the undesired behavior. It's like they never get that you want them to stop it FOREVER, not just for two seconds. The most common impulse control problems I have noticed with ADHD dogs are 1) learning to not pull when on the leash, and 2) not jumping up on people. However, issues can vary from dog to dog.

Dogs with ADHD typically have some similar characteristics. They display more hostile attitude when they meet another dog. Their hackles go up and they show a dominant body language. Often an ADHD dog will race up to a new dog and get right in the dog's face, often while growling. The ADHD dog is actually not looking to start a fight, although it is a likely, as a result of this behavior. If a fight

does happen and the ADHD dog is on the losing end, they will not learn from it. Chances are the next time they meet a new dog they will do the same inappropriate greeting behavior again. In fact, they might even go right back to the dog who just beat them up with the inappropriate behavior.

At their core ADHD dogs are usually anxious. They whine a lot, and can be super sensitive to sights and sounds, resulting in a lot of barking. If there is a stimulus that gets the ADHD dog too excited their barking can turn into misdirected aggression. This means they might attack another dog they know who is innocently standing nearby. ADHD dogs can be very nervous when alone outdoors, especially after dark.

ADHD dogs typically are very intelligent and capable of learning a lot of commands and tricks. They also seem to do really well with people and love human attention. These dogs usually like to play, although their play tends to ramp up to an abnormally high intensity. They can make dog friends with other playful dogs who will overlook their social missteps. Dogs who aren't so understanding, and especially other highly anxious dogs, usually have no patience for an ADHD dog, and are likely to

growl and snap at them.

ADHD dogs seem to do best in homes with no more than one or two dogs. The owner needs to be aware that their dog cannot help their impulse control issues. Most dogs with ADHD will settle some as they age. By the time they are five or six years old, you should notice an improvement.

As with humans, ADHD is diagnosed by giving a dose of the drugs used for treatment. After being given a dose of the medication the vet can determine if there are any measurable physiological changes; such as a lowered heart rate, respiratory rate, and a calmer behavior. The changes will be noticeable within minutes.

I haven't typically recommended medicating ADHD dogs with my clients. Understanding and management of the dog and its environment can be helpful when living with an ADHD dog. But, if the behavior is too much for the owner, medication is an option to consider. Consult with your dog's veterinarian for diagnosis, suggested medication, and doses.

Valerie Broadway, the Canine Coach, is a dog trainer and behavioral specialist. For information: 919.542.4726 or www.caninecoachingservices.com.

"HOME" for the holidays

by Jan Butta

*"Oh, there's no place like home for the holidays,
'Cause no matter how far away you roam,
When you pine for the sunshine of a friendly gaze,
For the holidays, you can't beat home, sweet home!"*
*"Oh there's no place like home for the holidays,
'Cause no matter how far away you roam,
If you want to be happy in a million ways,
For the holidays, You can't beat home, sweet home."*

I always loved this song, in the Perry Como version, and remember it well, every holiday as a kid, enjoying time off from school and having my mother home and cooking in the kitchen close

by. Home is the place to be for the holidays for sure, and part of what makes that true of course is the family that surrounds. Part of it too is the way we decorate our homes at the holidays, the care and enjoyment with which we create our spaces. Personal and unique to us, familiar and reassuring. . . it adds to the comfort of it all.

I hope everyone has a nice home to go to this holiday season and wish you the best of celebrations. The notion of home is important to me personally and to many of us, if not all. We hear and say things all the time like: Home is where the heart is. A house is not a home. The kitchen is the heart of the home. . . and about the idea to make a home — it is almost like a verb in a way as much as it is a noun. I use this in my tag line for real estate: *Helping you find the art of home.* Because "A man's home is his castle". Where

better to make space for ourselves and create a feeling, an environment that nourishes and supports us? No matter your circumstances or finances, your home can be your place. Why not make it, or find it and create it, to be the way you want? Do you want to sell and move to get something more suited to your current needs? There is so much out there, so many options, for every person and every lifestyle. The one you have now might be perfect for another family or individual at their stage of life; why not put it on the market and move on to your next stage? Call me with your questions or to set up a meeting to discuss the real estate market here in our area today. And may your home be filled with joy and peace this holiday season.

Jan Butta is an agent with Realty World Carolina Properties in Pittsboro. She can be reached at jan.butta914@gmail.com.

Winter Twilight

by Lou Lipsitz

over the dark highway,
over the woods
and the clusters of small houses,
the clouds appear
—the great clouds of a winter twilight!
when i see them i feel like a hundred men
who have slipped out of prison without
a trace
the great clouds —
ragged and ancient like the heart,
like the heads of old, pious men
we cannot help loving
and everything that was forgotten takes
hold of me
i walk out into the small congregation
of the twilight
and find I must sing and weep and
speak to the dead.

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DECEMBER 6: Canvas and Cork, 12:30-3:00 p.m. with Sally Sutton. Recreate Sally's "Chatham Christmas". \$45

DECEMBER 9: Wine Dinner, 7:00 pm. \$40

DECEMBER 24: 9th Annual Free Christmas Eve Dinner, TAKEOUT ONLY. Begin serving at 5 p.m. Food donations accepted between now and Dec 24. VOLUNTEER HELP NEEDED from 9 a.m.–10 p.m., cooking, decorating, serving, cleaning. A fun day you won't want to miss.

DECEMBER 31: New Year's Eve Party, 9 p.m.–1:30 a.m. \$45 per person. INCLUDES: glass champagne at midnight, heavy fabulous appetizers, all non-alcoholic beverages, 12:30 a.m. breakfast buffet, party favors, DJ music.

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