

Paws in Progress

Dog Training & Canine Massage Therapy

Dealing with an adolescent dog

Just as you thought you had cracked the training your dog turns from a puppy to a teenager.

You worked hard at the puppy training and his recall was near perfect, he sat politely for everything and just as you sat back and congratulated yourself it all seems to fall apart. Your dog now no longer seems to listen to a word you say to him.

If you are not expecting it this can all come as a bit of a shock. It can seem as though all the effort you put in to training your puppy was a waste of time.

The age that adolescence starts varies from puppy to puppy and between breeds. It can be anywhere between 6 and 18 months. It can be thought of as a stage where your dog is changing from being a puppy to an adult.

This can be a difficult time for both you and your dog.

Dogs at this age undergo many changes; larger breeds for example may go through a period of intense growth. This can make it difficult for some dogs to physically work out how to sit or go down, even though they have always done so as a puppy. Now they don't seem sure of where their legs are any more.



The brain also undergoes a period of development at this time leading to behaviour changes. These changes can have important consequences for the adult dog.

The good news is that it does not last forever.

Behaviour Changes During Adolescence.

Your dog suddenly seems to go from a cute puppy to one who does not seem to understand the simplest commands.

Often dogs become more independent during this stage, instead of coming back to you they are more likely to ignore you and continue to do what they have been doing.

Occasionally even basics such as housetraining can break down.

This coincides with other changes such as your puppy exploring the world more on his own, roaming further afield and taking more of an interest in the sights and smells of the outside world than coming back to you.

During this time as well your dog seems to have boundless energy. His walks never seem to tire him out and he can be difficult to keep up with. This energy can manifest itself as undesirable

chewing or digging in the garden.

What You Can Do To Help

This is a time when you need to step up your training and reinforce boundaries.

This does not need to be done in an unkind way. Insist that your dog asks politely for things he wants, these might include his food, going through a doorway and having his lead on.

This is not a time for giving your dog more freedom. At this age he is not able to make sensible choices and there is a chance he will get into bad habits.

Instead concentrate on building up a relationship with your dog through training and games.

Keep your dog on a lead during walks until he learns to come back to you again.

Even take him to training classes where he will have more structure and mental stimulation.

Above all remember that this stage does not last forever.

