

Home Adjustments Checklist for Dogs With Cognitive Changes

Practical Steps to Support Comfort At Home

Making simple changes at home can greatly improve your dog's quality of life. Of these four areas, focus on one or two at a time and build from there. These adjustments work alongside veterinary care to support your dog's cognitive health.



ROUTINE

Consistent routines can set the clock for dogs who struggle with time awareness.

- Keep feeding, medications, and outdoor breaks at consistent times each day
- Limit stimulating activities late in the evening
- Provide calm, structured transitions between activities (especially before bedtime)
- Allow extra time for your dog to process and move between spaces



SLEEP

Nighttime restlessness is common, stressful for families, and important to address for brain health.

- Offer a nighttime potty break
- Place an orthopedic bed in a quiet, draft-free area
- Use white noise or soft background sound
- Give medications and supplements as directed by your vet
- Record pacing or distress, and if it continues or worsens, share this with your veterinarian



ENVIRONMENT

A predictable, safe setup with good footing can reduce anxiety and confusion.

- Set up predictable location for water, beds, and resting areas
- Block unsafe areas to prevent getting trapped or falls
- Add traction or block access to slick surfaces
- Clear clutter to widen walkways and reduce unnecessary corners
- Add night lights in hallways, stairs, and near doors



ENRICHMENT & ACTIVITY

Appropriate activity and mental engagement can help dogs feel calmer and more settled.

- Provide daily exercise suited to your dog's health
- Offer sniff walks at your dog's pace
- Use slow puzzle feeders or scatter feeding
- Do short training refreshers with simple cues
- Allow low-pressure exploration or outdoor time

Note: If an activity increases anxiety or confusion, scale it back.

For more information visit
www.agingdogdementia.org