

# Adolescent Dog Survival Guide

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# The Adolescent Survival Guide

## Introduction

What happened? Your cute, fluffy puppy has suddenly turned into a wild-eyed monster, running off at every opportunity, deaf to your commands, pulling on the leash and chewing up your house. Your adorable pup now jumps up on visitors, steals food when you are not looking and does unspeakable things to every dog he meets—and all this just when you thought the training was finally paying off. Welcome to the world of doggie teenage angst! Welcome to adolescence!

Adolescence may be a challenging time for both owners and dogs, but it certainly doesn't have to be a disaster. Despite all the changes that are occurring, with a few sensible steps and a big helping of patience, you will find that it is a temporary stage, and—just like with human teenagers—it will all come good in the end.

## When and why

Nearly all dogs go through a “teenage stage” although it's fair to say that it is usually more obvious—and potentially challenging in males than in females. This is because adolescence is the result of a flood of hormones in the system. These have a big physical impact—broadening the head in both sexes, strengthening muscles and maturing the reproductive system—effectively making them ready to find a mate and have puppies. However, the behavioral effects are just as striking! Dogs who have been previously good on walks, angels in the house and perfect in social situations may change almost overnight. Driven by their hormones



to test boundaries, find a mate and enjoy themselves no matter what the consequences, they may appear to be brimming with confidence—however, just like humans, they still need parental guidance, help and support.

Most owners are surprised to know that adolescence can start as early as 18 weeks of age. In theory, once a dog has lost all his deciduous or baby teeth, (between 20-24 weeks) he or she is no longer a puppy. Of course, sexual maturity tends to onset at around 7-9 months for most common breeds and types of dog, although some giant breeds mature more slowly. This means that for bitches, their first season is likely to occur at this time. In males, leg lifting to urinate also happens around then, although this is sometimes dependent on the presence of canine role models that they can copy!

## Knowing the signs

### Males



### Females



A testosterone increase occurs between 5 and 18 months in male dogs. The effect of this varies from dog to dog.

#### Signs to look for:

- Mounting objects/people/dogs
- Being told off by other dogs
- Ignoring you!
- Running off
- Squaring up to other dogs
- Leg lifting when urinating

Neutering can be done at any time. It is a simple procedure. The dog will have stitches in for 10 days post-op and will need to be walked on leash during this time.

Neutering removes frustration and the development of some aggression problems. However, it does not remove all sexual behaviors, nor is it a cure for all naughty behavior!

Do not allow your dog to form a habit of scent marking continuously when walking on leash, this can lead to territorial behavior and is also an annoying habit to break later on!

The first season usually occurs between 7-9 months of age and lasts for approximately two weeks.

#### Signs to look for:

- Swelling of the vulva
- Licking of the vulva
- Swelling nipples
- Frequent urination (tiny amounts)
- Flirtation or irritability with dogs
- Blood spotting

Spaying is often done mid-way between the first and second season, or before the first season. The first season may help to mature the sphincter muscles, reducing the risk of urine leakage.

It's essential to keep your bitch in season away from male dogs to prevent unwanted pregnancy. There are also behavioral risks in allowing your bitch to mix with other dogs if she is irritable with them, as this can become a learned habit. Seek professional advice immediately if your bitch starts to have conflict with another bitch in the household.

## Mounting

A perfectly natural, if embarrassing behavior which most adolescent dogs just love to engage in! Mounting is not just confined to males, and may be directed at other dogs, objects such as

cushions or soft toys and...humans.

Dogs mount as a sexual activity, but also for fun—because it feels good—and because it gets attention. Interrupt the behavior calmly, then distract the dog with a more appropriate pastime.

## Don't fight it!

Adolescent dogs love to get your goat! Often, their greatest pleasure is getting you wound up over some trivial matter, such as refusing to have their feet wiped, stubbornly ignoring your commands to come in from the yard or playing “keep away” with the TV remote control.

Remember, what fuels the misbehavior is often the conflict itself, so avoiding the battle is far more important than trying to win it. This means staying calm and refusing to get engaged in a battle of physical strength or a shouting match with your dog. Instead use your superior (!) brain power to find a way around it.

For example, your dog has a tantrum and starts biting the towel while you are wiping his paws. Instead of getting frustrated and engaging in a wrestling match, stop, line up four treats on a surface where he can see them, and give him one

treat per paw for good behavior. It may feel like bribery, but the positive result will prove that rewards work fast.

Imagine your dog runs under the dining room table with a tissue. He tries to tempt you to come and take it from him—which you know will end up in confrontation. Don’t engage! Instead, keep your dignity and prevent the situation from escalating by simply walking away and ignoring him.

### It's NOT dominance!

If your dog repeatedly performs a behavior which you find infuriating, such as barking, attention seeking, or pulling on leash, ask yourself what's reinforcing it.

These are NOT symptoms of dominance or so-called “alpha” behavior. Your dog is not trying to challenge you for leadership. It's far more simple and obvious than that.

#### *Dogs repeat behaviors that get rewarded.*

Rewards include eye contact, vocal contact and physical contact. They also include getting you wound up, cross and upset.

If your dog is getting any of these rewards for his misbehavior, you need to change tactics and stop giving them immediately! Fold your arms, look away and walk out of the room if practically possible. Being ignored is a major consequence for most dogs.



## You are what you Eat!

What you feed your dog can affect his behavior. If you answer “yes” to two or more of these symptoms, your dog may need a diet change!

Does your dog have itchy skin, flatulence, bad breath (phew!) or pass big, smelly feces?



Does your dog eat unusual things, such as tissues, sticks, grass, stones or paper?



Does your dog need to go to defecate (solids) more times a day than he is fed?



Does your dog have ‘temper tantrums’ or mouth a lot?



Is your dog hyper-active even though he gets lots of exercise?



Does your dog have difficulty concentrating, or gets easily over-excited?



### What to choose?

Good quality, complete foods are easy to feed and nutritious. They contain everything your dog needs, and can also be used as training treats.

Always read the label before buying. Look at the ingredients list: the top three items should include high-quality protein that you recognize, such as fish, chicken, or lamb. Avoid foods which are made from “meat and animal derivatives”—as these can include indigestible items—or have a high proportion of unspecified cereals. Ask your vet for advice if you are unsure.

Just like humans, some dogs can suffer from the effects of low blood sugar and can be irritable if they are hungry, so feeding two or even three meals a day is sensible.

### A gradual change

If you decide that your dog might benefit from a diet change, do this slowly, to avoid upsetting his stomach. A change to a new food should be done over at least a week, gradually feeding a little more of the new food, and less of the old, each day.

## Understand your dog's—breed needs

Understanding your dog's behavioral, physical, cognitive and emotional needs is a key part of dog ownership.

We should not be surprised that Collies need to chase, Retrievers need to pick things up, Terriers need to dig and Greyhounds need to run.

Breed specific behaviors are hard-wired—in other words, they cannot be removed—only channelled. Make sure you know what your dog was bred to do and give him an appropriate outlet for that behavior.

If this means that you have to attend agility classes, play with your dog every night even when you've had a hard day, hide items for him to find, give him a digging pit, or teach him to chase a ball sent flying from a tennis racquet, then so be it.

Dogs need to express natural behaviors to be happy and healthy—and it's up to us to allow this to happen.

Think about how you can allow your dog to have a natural, and appropriate, outlet for his breed needs.



### Let them be dogs!

Give your dog an outlet for his natural drives—let your imagination run wild!

#### Type: Terrier

#### Breed need: digging

Suggestion: Give him a digging pit in the yard or teach him to "dig" inside a cardboard box when indoors.

#### Type: Hound

#### Breed need: to follow scent

Suggestion: Teach nose work—hide and seek, and hunt for hidden items.

#### Type: Herding (e.g., Collies)

#### Breed need: to chase and herd

Suggestion: Teach a chase recall and focus on chasing toys outdoors.

#### Type: Gundogs (Sporting)

#### Breed need: to carry items

Suggestion: Teach them to retrieve! Reward him for picking up toys.

### Don't nag!

Question: What happens when you nag someone? Answer: They ignore you! Beware of nagging your dog. It's nearly always better to be calm and quiet so that your dog listens when you do give him a cue. If you find you are repeating yourself ("Max, come! Max, stop that! Max, no!") think about what triggers the behavior you don't like and find a strategy to prevent it. This is not giving in—it's sensible management and will help to maintain a positive relationship between you.

## Teaching impulse control

### Settle down!

Most teenage dogs (like teenage humans) would really like to be doing something that feels good, and not what they are being told to do. In order to cope with life, dogs have to learn to control their own impulses rather than simply reacting, or over-reacting.

There are a number of specific exercises which can help to teach this.

1. Put your dog on a leash and sit down in your chair or somewhere comfortable.

2. Place your dog's leash firmly under your foot. He should have enough slack to stand up, sit and lie down, but no more. You need to limit his options.

3. Watch TV or read a book (you will be here a while!).

Probably the **MOST** supremely useful behavior ever!

Just imagine your dog being calm and settling down at the vets, with visitors, in other people's homes, out and about... the list is endless.

4. Ignore your dog no matter what he does! (e.g., chew the leash, pull, get tangled up, bark, wriggle, or any other attention-getting effort).

5. Eventually your dog will lie down (usually with a sigh of deep resignation). Praise him gently and stroke him calmly. Stay like this for a couple of minutes, then say "Release!" and take off the leash.

6. Repeat this every evening for a week until your dog is settling down immediately when you start the routine. Now you can say, "Settle down" or "Chill" just before he lies down, as a cue.



# Teaching impulse control

## Leave

A wonderful cue that tells the dog not to touch...just think how useful that might be!

1. Hold a treat in your hand, and close your fingers around it tightly. Present your hand to your dog and wait while he or she sniffs, licks and nibbles, trying to get the food.

2. Don't say anything. As soon as your dog takes his nose away from your hand, even for a split second, click, or say "Good," then release the treat.

3. Now you can wait until your dog has taken his nose away from your hand for the count of three, then click and treat. Lots of dogs turn their face away as if to resist temptation! Click and treat!

4. Build up the amount of time that your dog will wait with his nose well away from your hand to about ten seconds. At this point you can add in the cue "Leave." This is said in a calm voice, not a threatening one, just before you present the food.

5. Repeat this several times. Most clever dogs learn to take their mouth away from your hand in about four repetitions.



6. Once your dog has the hang of this, repeat the exercise, but this time say, "Leave," then present the food on your *open* hand. If your dog tries to take it, simply close your fingers around the food—do not jerk your hand away.

7. Extend the difficulty of the exercise by practicing with the food in your hand, on low surfaces and on the floor. Always pick up the treat to give it to your dog as a reward—do not let him dive on it.

## Practice makes perfect

Over a number of repetitions, your dog will learn that "Leave" means "do not touch," no matter what the item or where it is. However, be realistic—dogs are born scavengers! If they find food left out unsupervised, they will eat it!

## Keep training!

During adolescence, it's not unusual for owners to wonder if any of the training they did with their puppy was really worthwhile. If it seems like your dog has suddenly lost his hearing, or his desire to do anything to please you, don't panic! The answer is to make sure that you keep on training.

Go back to basics and reinforce simple tasks, such as "Sit" which you can reward your dog for getting right.

Good training can solve all of these irritating habits, and more. However, in the meantime, it's important to prevent them from happening to ensure that your dog doesn't have a chance to practice them. For example, using a head collar to prevent pulling is sensible, using an indoor training leash to control when visitors arrive is wise, and using a long line outdoors so your dog cannot run off is safe and practical.



Management such as this may not be sexy, but it is effective and it will save your sanity!

## Use rewards wisely

Not all rewards are the same. If you had to list your dog's favorite things, you might find that his ranking would be:

1. Cooked chicken
2. Liver biscuit
3. Squeaky toy
4. Dry food.

Use this information wisely. If your dog finds sit on cue easy, then praise or a piece of dry food is adequate. However, if you want him to do something he finds more difficult, such as coming away from playing with other dogs, you will need to use the treats at the top of the list—and lots of them!

## Implement consequences

What should you do when your dog doesn't do what you ask? Well, at this stage, it's OK to implement consequences for his behavior. For example:

Refusing to come back in the park = owner puts you on leash.

Pulling on leash = owner stops and puts a head-collar on you.

Using a word to tell the dog that he got it wrong just before the consequence occurs will start to have an impact too. "Wrong" said in a firm tone, or "Oi!" to interrupt the behavior you don't like can work well, provided they are always followed up by the removal of fun, and the implementation of the consequence.

## No jumping up

Dogs jump up on people for a number of different reasons, but even when their intentions are purely friendly, it can cause havoc and devastate your social life!

### Sit to greet

This method simply requires a consistent approach—each and every time your dog greets someone he is asked to sit before being petted. This works wonders because it's physically impossible for your dog to jump and sit at the same time. However, it also has the added benefit that you can praise and reward your dog for doing the right thing, rather than nagging him for “bad” behavior.

You can also encourage visitors to help train your dog for you. Keep a toy, such as a Kong stuffed with food treats, by the front door. When someone arrives, ask them if they would help with your dog's training by giving your dog his special toy—but only when he sits. Magically, this seems to make even the most harried visitor into an instant dog trainer!

### Rehab for jumpers

If you already have a problem with jumping up, then as with most training, consistency is the key. If you have just one member of the family or someone who regularly visits who says, “I don't mind,” then you are doomed to failure. Most dogs jump up to make friends, to greet their family, and to get attention. If this works, even randomly, then they will pursue the habit forever.



### Zero tolerance

Follow the program below to create zero tolerance for jumping up—but still allow your dog to enjoy greeting

**1.** If your dog goes to jump up, turn away and fold your arms. It gives a strong, clear signal that he will not get any attention.

**2.** Don't touch, look at or talk to the dog, until all four feet or his bottom are firmly placed on the floor.

**3.** Praise, pet and reward only when all four feet are on the floor, or the dog is sitting. Be consistent!

## In the energy zone!

By definition, young dogs have bundles of energy. They need to get rid of this in a variety of ways—and chewing up your furniture should not be one of them. One ideal way of allowing adolescent dogs to let off steam is to allow them time running off-leash in a safe place every day. However, in order to be able to do this, your dog needs to come back when he's called.

## Recall training review

In order to review your recall training, it's important that you are honest about what's happening now.

- Q.** When you call your dog in from the yard, does he ignore you?
- Q.** When you say your dog's name, does he immediately look at you?
- Q.** When you call your dog in and around the house, is he reluctant to come to you?
- Q.** Can you call your dog away from exciting distractions at home, such as when there is someone at the door?

Bear in mind that when you are out in the park, you are competing with all the distractions of the big wide world. Smells in the grass, other dogs, squirrels—you name it, your dog would rather be having fun than coming back to you.

If you have problems simply getting your dog to come to you in the house or garden, what chance do you have when you are outside on a walk?

## Whistle training

You need to change your dog's mind about what happens when you call him. Whistle training can help here, as the new signal is more relevant to your dog. Dogs do not respond automatically to the whistle, but need to be "tuned in." For one week at home, split up your dog's food portion into at least four meals. You are going to use these as training rewards.

1. Place one portion of your dog's food in his dish.
2. Blow the whistle—two short, sharp blasts.
3. Give your dog his food.

After a couple of days, your dog will have made a good association between the whistle and being fed. Now you can blow the whistle at random times, sometimes when you are in sight and sometimes not, and give your dog a portion of the food. Practice this for at least one week.

As your dog gets the idea, ask him to sit on his return and take hold of his collar before you give him the food. Build up to practicing in the yard where there are more distractions. When your dog is responding reliably, don't give food every time. Instead, sometimes play a game, sometimes give a treat, and sometimes give his whole dinner. This will keep him guessing: it's like gambling—he never knows when it will pay off, so it's always worth trying.

## Recall outside—manage it!

### How fun are you?

Once outside, your dog is constantly weighing whether you are worth paying attention to! If you are dull, cross, indifferent or half-hearted, your dog will make the easy decision that everything else is more attractive.

I often see owners walking and talking on their mobile phones while their dogs simply do their own thing. The only time they ever interact with them is to end their fun by calling them back, or to tell them off. If I was a dog, I would ignore them too.

Make sure that you are the center of your dog's world on a walk. Take a toy (a ball on a rope or a tug toy is perfect) and play games with your dog, engage in hide and seek, make sudden changes of direction, and be fun. All these things help to keep the dog's interest on you.

### Recall Rules

- Praise is not enough—take really good treats with you on every walk!
- Walk with a friend if their dog has a good recall—avoid those that don't!
- Don't call your dog if you know he's likely to ignore you, i.e., just started to play with another dog or about to go relieve himself.
- Call your dog often on a walk, not just when you are about to go home.
- Don't reprimand your dog for a slow return—he will simply learn to avoid you in the future.



### Using a long line

It is far better to manage your dog's recall on a long line(15-30 feet) than it is to allow your dog to practice ignoring you on a walk. Using a long line gives you both a "safety net" and still allows your dog some freedom while you maintain control. However, the long line is not intended to become a means of dragging your dog to you or of giving long-distance leash-jerks. This will only make your dog eager to get away.

1. With the long line attached to your dog's buckle collar, allow your dog to have some freedom.

2. When you are ready to call, do so in a friendly voice (or use the whistle).

3. If he does not come right away, use the line to prevent your dog from moving further away. Encourage him to come by heading in the opposite direction, and reward when he follows.

## Walking on a loose leash

It's a well-kept secret that many dogs actually like pulling on the leash! Even if they are choking and spluttering, they still think that they will get to go where they want to quicker if they pull.

Of course, the harsh reality is that dogs who pull on the leash tend to get taken out for fewer walks, thus decreasing their leash-walking skills even further. Reduced exercise also impacts your dog's level of mental stimulation, his ability to be calm at home, and his social skills with other dogs.

Dogs who pull on the lead nearly always do so well *before* they leave the house, and this is where your training needs to start. If your dog acts like a whirling dervish when you produce the lead, the following steps are an essential starting place.

1. Take out the leash. Ignore your dog, no matter what he does!
2. Put the leash away again.
3. Repeat and repeat, and repeat... until your dog is calm when he sees the leash. This may take some time and patience!
4. Now ask your dog to sit. The aim is to put his leash on while he sits calmly. If he gets excited, guess what, the leash gets removed and there's no chance of going for a walk. Most dogs learn that they must control themselves very quickly.

Walking nicely on the leash is probably the most challenging exercise to master for many dogs, so be patient and use a head-collar in order to stop your dog from practicing pulling on days when you don't have the time to prevent it.

Make sure *you* decide which direction to walk in, how fast, and when and where you stop!

### Tools to make life easier

**Head-collars:** There are many different styles of head-collar to choose from and they all work on the same power-steering principle. Head-collars work. They may need time and patience to get the dog used to them, but they are the ultimate in gentle control and are recommended to prevent pulling in nearly all breeds and types. Try the Gentle Leader ([www.premier.com](http://www.premier.com)).

**Body-harnesses:** Body harnesses don't teach dogs not to pull, but they do make walking more comfortable for both dog and owner. A good choice is the Easy Walk ([www.premier.com](http://www.premier.com)). Of course, no tool is a substitute for training practice. However, they do make life easier when time is short and the dog is strong.

## Heelwork practice

Re-start your dog's leash training in a calm, quiet place, not when you are under pressure from time or the weather. Many people find this exercise difficult because they simply don't put in enough practice. If your dog never goes on the leash, you cannot expect him to know how to behave on it.

Dogs need information about when they are in the right place when walking nicely on the leash, and this is where a voice marker or clicker is really important. Rather than reprimanding your dog for pulling, take away all his fun by simply standing still. When your dog is in the right place, let him know by clicking or saying "Good"—thus marking the right behavior—and giving a treat, then moving forward.

Focus on encouraging your dog to follow you—there should be no reliance on the leash at all—keep your dog guessing where you are going to go and when he's going to be rewarded and he'll be at heel without needing force.

**1.** Hold a food treat in your hand closest to your dog. Let him know it's there. As soon as your dog puts slack in the leash and looks at you, click or say "Good" and treat.

**2.** Walk just three or four steps. If there is tension on the leash, stand still or suddenly change direction. Do not take one single step in the direction your dog wants to go if the leash is tight.

**3.** Every time there's slack in the leash, click or say "Good" and treat. Repeat this several times, then stop and have a game. Be generous with the food initially, then gradually reward only his best responses.

**4.** As your dog realizes that pulling no longer works, you can phase out the treats. Instead, his reward is to keep moving.



## Chewing

All dogs need to chew. What they chew is the problem. Although nearly all owners are aware that puppies need to chew, we often forget that adolescents go through a second “teething” stage, and that during this time we must provide appropriate chew toys to keep the dog from developing a taste for more expensive items!

Dogs love novelty. For this reason, it is a good idea to rotate the toys and chews that your dog has in his toy box, so that they are not out all of the time. Make sure that anything you give your dog to chew is safe—it should not splinter or break into pieces that the dog could swallow.

Excellent chew items are:

- ✓ **Kongs**
- ✓ **Nylabones**
- ✓ **Stuffed bones**
- ✓ **Dental chews**

### A chewing challenge

- Take one large Kong
- Press a cheese slice inside the base, using a teaspoon.
- Add pieces of your dog's dinner, bits of cooked chicken or pieces of hot dog sausage—press these into the cheese slice so they stick
- Sandwich these with one more cheese slice pressed in firmly on top.
- Finish with large dog biscuits: these should be forced in on top to prevent fall-out!



### How to stuff a Kong

Kongs are an adolescent owner's sanity-saver. They can be filled with delicious foods which then tempt the dog to chew the toy, and reward him for doing so. A dog chewing a Kong cannot be chewing anything else, nor can he be jumping up at people, leaping all over the furniture, barking, or trying to escape from the yard.

Favorite Kong-filling ingredients:

- Peanut butter
- Meat paste / fish paste
- Cheese slices
- Cheese paste
- Frozen yoghurt
- Shaped dog biscuits
- Your dog's dinner!

If your dog is eating unusual items, such as sticks, grass, tissues, or paper, he may benefit from a diet change—see page 4.

## Mental stimulation—fast solutions for bored dogs

Dogs are designed to solve problems. They need mental stimulation just as much as physical exercise. Indeed, engaging a dog's brain in training or puzzle-solving exercises for 20 minutes can be the equivalent to an hour's walk in terms of stimulation.

Left to their own devices, many dogs will find ways to entertain themselves if they are bored and under-stimulated—and the devil makes work for idle paws, so keep your dog busy!

### Message in a bottle

For this puzzle you will need an empty plastic water bottle (minus the lid). It's important that the plastic is the kind that crumples when squashed, rather than splitting, as this could hurt your dog's mouth.

Pop a few pieces of your dog's dry food or a couple of treats into the bottle, and then allow your dog to shake it, roll it and throw it around to get the food out.



### Scatter brain

Rather than simply placing your dog's food in a dish and handing it over, encourage him to work for it. If you are feeding a dry food, throw it out into the garden, so it scatters in the grass. This will keep your dog amused for some time while he searches for the pieces. If your dog struggles to get the hang of this, or if it's wet, then scattering dry food in the kitchen can be just as entertaining.

Dogs fed on wet food can also enjoy a version of this game—as long as they are not at risk from gastric disorders. Split the food up into as many small portions as you can manage and hide them in dishes around the patio or yard. Then allow your dog to go and find them—it's the equivalent of a doggie treasure hunt!

### Boxing clever

A large cardboard box can provide hours of fun, while allowing your dog to be appropriately destructive. Make sure the box is free from staples, plastic tape, etc., before you start. Place it upside down with toys or a treat underneath to begin with, and let your dog explore. Once he has got the hang of this, then place it upright with things inside. A "nest" of boxes—with one smaller box inside another and so on, with a treat sandwiched in between, is the ultimate challenge.

Placing a large ball inside the box is another idea—terriers in particular seem to love putting their heads right in and "digging" for it.

## Keep socializing

Ever found a teenager annoying? So it is in the dog world too. Teenage dogs can be a right royal pain around other dogs, and for this reason, they are often reprimanded by mature, confident dogs.

Far from this being a problem, it can help to teach respect and a little self-restraint, as well as appropriate social skills. However, from your adolescent dog's point of view, there may be times when he feels that the whole world is against him, and this needs to be balanced by meeting lots of dogs—some of whom will be grumpy, some full of the joys of spring, and some simply a bit dull.

### Numbers game

Overall, it's the sheer number of different interactions that your dog has that will determine a balanced and sensible outlook on meeting other dogs.

Bear in mind that if he doesn't meet many, those that he does encounter will have a bigger impact on his behavior. Too few interactions, and he's also likely to be frustrated or anxious when he sees other dogs. Of course, one of the reasons why people keep their adolescent dog away from others is that his behavior is over-the-top, embarrassing or confrontational. This leads to a downward spiral of worsening behavior.

Using a head-collar to control your dog when he first meets other dogs out and about is a sensible, calming strategy. Just like the other suggestions in this booklet, it only needs to be a temporary measure, but will help you manage the situation while he is going through an adolescent stage.

One of the easiest and best ways to maintain social skills around other dogs (while also teaching him to ignore them when you want to keep control) is to keep taking your dog to a good training class.

### Lessons in life

Find fun and inspirational training books, toys and treats at Dogwise ([www.dogwise.com](http://www.dogwise.com)) or find a local member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers trainer ([www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com)). If you attend group classes, at the very least, you'll have other owners of adolescent dogs to empathize with!



## What's next?

### Tricks for all

The more you can teach your dog during adolescence, the better. However, if you are finding it tough to simply revise basic control exercises, why not keep it fun and teach your dog some new tricks.

Tricks are light-hearted, motivating and—if you are clever—practical. Teaching them can alter the way that both of you view training.

#### Practical tricks to try

- Is your dog slow at coming when you call? Teach him to touch your hand with his nose as a trick—he'll be speeding toward you in no time.
- Your dog hates having his feet looked at? Teach him to rollover on cue!
- Naughty dog jumps up at visitors? Clever dog fetches a toy instead.



### Agility fun

Agility training is enjoyable for many adolescent dogs. It gives your dog physical and mental exercise simultaneously. It is also an activity which requires your dog to be under control while off leash around other dogs.

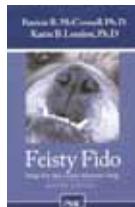
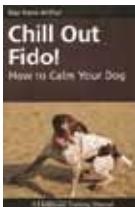
Dogs need to be over one year in order to be able to take part in jumping and competitive agility, but some clubs offer “obstacle course” classes which are an excellent way to start. Check with your local kennel club about classes.

### Track and field

If your dog is the outdoor type, why not try some tracking or searching? Lay a simple track, just a few steps long to begin with, by walking on grass in a straight line and hiding your dog's toy at the end of the trail. Then send him to find it.

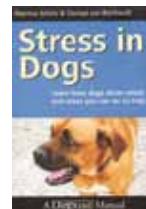
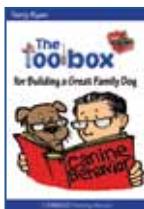
### Your clever dog

Finally, it's important to realize that while many adolescent dogs can be difficult or challenging, they are also great fun, bright and entertaining. Make sure you enjoy this period in your dog's life and set the scene for the years to come. Happy training!



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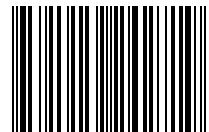
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