



We put a twinkle in your eye, a smile on your face, a song in your heart, skills in your hands, so that the time with your family dog will be some of the best times of your life.

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Issue 82

Living With Dogs: How to Reduce Attention Seeking

How does your dog get your attention? A cold nose nudging your hand? A paw on your knee? Maybe there's barking or jumping, or the suggestive dumping of toys by your feet? Dogs are masters at getting us to focus on them – and they can become very insistent when the usual tricks don't work, for example when we're preoccupied or stressed out. That's usually the point when we start thinking the dog is 'jealous', 'angry', or 'out to get us'. What else could have brought on this (often called 'obnoxious') behaviour?

In reality, dogs do what works for them. If it worked once, they'll try it again. If it worked with one family member but not others, they'll adjust accordingly. And often it's the behaviours we like

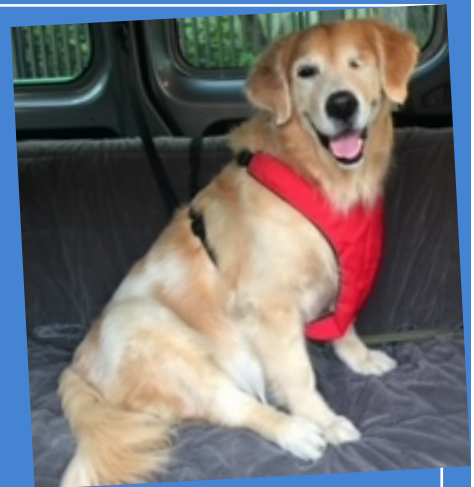


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Tips & Tools: Staying safe in the car

Car safety is also important for our four-legged passengers. Here are some tips to keep everyone safe while travelling:

- A crate can help keep your dog safe in case of an accident or sudden stop. Make sure it's large enough for your dog to stand and turn around in.
- A seatbelt harness can be a great alternative to a crate or carrier. It allows your dog to move around more freely but still keeps them securely in place.
- Avoid the front seat. It's safer for your dog to ride in the backseat and away from airbags.
- Dogs love to stick their heads out of car windows but be careful. Flying debris or an unexpected turn can lead to injury.
- Temperatures inside a car can rise quickly and become dangerous for your dog. Never leave them in a parked car, even for a few minutes.



cont.

... attention seeking

the least that, from the dog's perspective, works the best. Our reaction to 'annoying' behaviour – raised voices, eye contact, pushing the dog away – is very reinforcing for a dog. It mimics the noisy rough-and-tumble of dog play.

To reduce attention-seeking behaviours, spend a week observing when you react to your dog and what behaviour triggered your reaction. Make a chart of the behaviours and pick the most 'bothersome' to focus on. Then, instead of reacting when your dog does the behaviour, ignore him, get up, and go mark it on the chart. This gives you something to do instead of rewarding your dog with attention. Reward and give attention to your dog when he is doing behaviours that you like instead, such as lying quietly as you work, or playing with his toy during dinner. Be consistent and you should see a decrease in attention seeking. If you forget and react out of habit, don't worry. It takes time and patience to change behaviour, and it's normal for any behaviour to briefly get worse before it gets better. Keep at it and the results will follow. At the same time, be proactive and pre-empt undesired behaviour with quality interactions with your dog, e.g. playing enrichment games, or going on a sniff-walk.



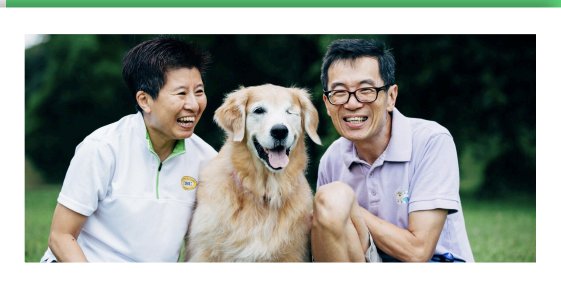
Dog In the Spotlight: Hokkaido Dog



The Hokkaido dog, also known as Ainu dog, is a breed of hunting dog originating from Japan. It's named after the Hokkaido region of Japan, where the breed was developed by the indigenous Ainu people for hunting deer and other large game.

Hokkaido dogs are medium-sized, sturdy, and muscular with a thick, double coat that comes in a variety of colours. They're known for their endurance, agility, and strength. They love being with their families, and while positive and early socialisation will help them warm to visitors, they're not known for their extroversion. Due to their hunting instincts, Hokkaido dogs need plenty of exercise and mental stimulation. They enjoy running, hiking, and playing, but also thrive on positive reinforcement training and dog sports.

Hokkaido dogs make wonderful and affectionate companions for active dog owners who appreciate their unique history and working dog heritage.



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