

# SUPPORTING YOUR DOG AND MANAGING BEHAVIOURS DURING CORONAVIRUS



The lockdown conditions imposed to protect us from the Coronavirus have led to a vast change in routine for most dogs. The Vetoquinol team have partnered with Clinical Animal Behaviourist Rosie Bescoy who shares her top tips on coping with this new situation:

## REDUCED PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Some dogs are getting out for a walk once a day which may be less than they are used to. It is important that older dogs are not suddenly taken out for one longer walk than they can physically cope with. Keep to one short walk, and for all dogs address excess energy at home instead.

### For example:

Get your dog to work for their food using activity feeders.

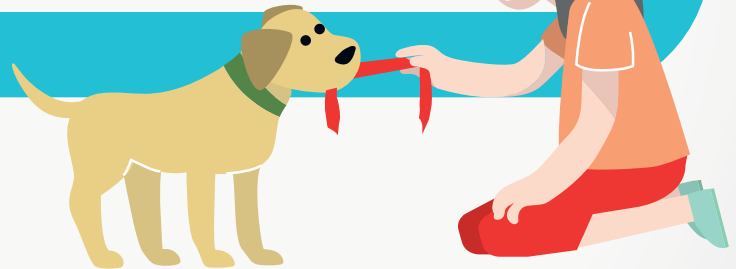
- Make the most of items in your recycling box by getting your dogs to snuffle for food from an old cardboard box. Take a muffin tin and place food in each partition and a

tennis ball on top of each section and let your dog have fun getting to the food. Alternatively lie a towel out flat with some food placed on, then fold it in half and half again and let your dog work out how to get to the food.

- Hide a favourite toy or food around the house and encourage your dog to search for it.
- Play games of tug or fetch.
- Teach new tricks or brush up on behaviours that will help increase control on walks (coming when called, response to cues with different distractions etc) – there are lots of online training courses available at the moment!

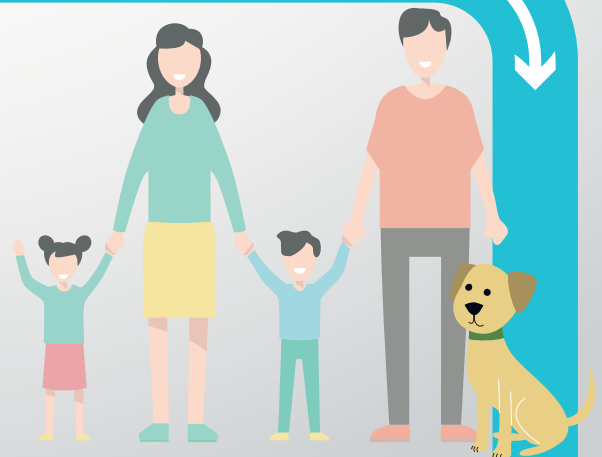
## NO SOCIAL INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER DOGS

Our dogs may be used to spending time most days with doggy friends either at daycare, with a dog walker or on routine walks that can lead to positive interactions with frequently encountered dogs. Now our dogs are restricted from social interactions, try to focus this time on working on YOU being the most interesting thing to your dog on walks. Make walk times interactive with games (take a favourite toy) or using part of their meal portions to get them to search for food. Practice some training and your dog won't be missing their friends because they'll be having so much more fun with you!

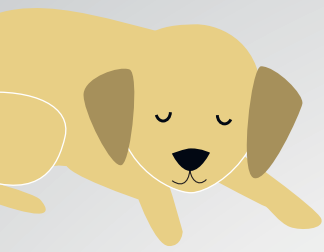


## CHILDREN

When activity levels are higher at home, dogs are less likely to get the rest they need - and a tired dog can lead to a crabby dog. They need an incredible 14-20 hours per 24 hour period, depending on the age. We need to set up the environment so that our dogs get peace and quiet. Provide an area where they can take themselves to, which is strictly a child-free zone. No child should interact with a sleeping dog – if the dog is in its bed, it should be left alone. Equally, when the dog is eating or chewing on something they must be given space.



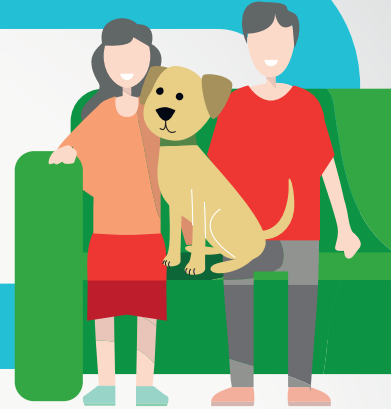
## OVER-ATTACHMENT ISSUES



A lot of dogs will be thrilled that their people are home with them permanently, but there are concerns about how dogs will cope when the routine changes and company is no longer available 24 hours a day. It is worth encouraging your dog to settle in their own bed, which you can gradually move away from where you are working. Close doors as standard as you move around the house so they cannot follow you everywhere. Try to leave them alone at home for at least 10 minutes everyday (assuming your dog has always been ok with this!) even if it means sitting in the garden without your dog.

## ATTENTION-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

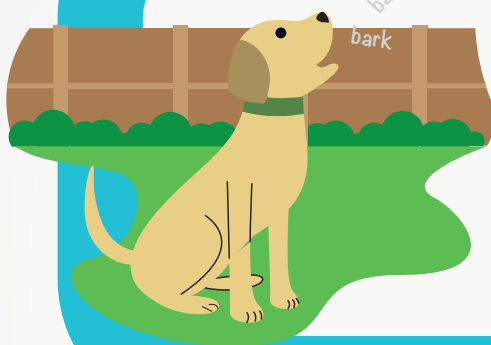
Some dogs are used to their owner's full attention when they are home. This can lead to pawing, vocalising or misbehaving in an attempt to get a response from the human. Think about what behaviour you want your dog to do instead, and work on teaching them and reinforcing them to do this. For example, settling quietly in a bed.



## BARKING IN THE GARDEN

With everyone being at home and the potential for pleasant weather, increased activity in neighbouring gardens can lead to territorial barking from some dogs.

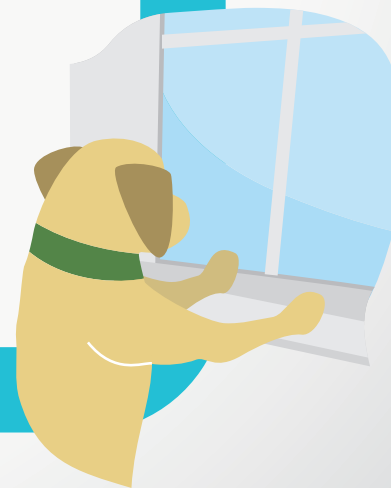
Provide your dog with self-reinforcing, arousal-reducing activities to do in the garden such as sniffing for their food, chewing or gnawing on something, or licking at a food-filled toy. The idea is they are aware of noise in next door's garden but are gaining more reinforcement from their current activity to bother reacting.



## REACTIVE DOGS

Social distancing on walks means reactive dogs are more likely to get the space they need from other people and/or dogs, which is the perfect opportunity for teaching them new behaviours. Allow your dog time and space to process information, let them sniff and engage with their environment and associate any scary stuff with tasty food.

For dogs who struggle with visitors coming to the house, now is the perfect time to teach them to go to their bed when the doorbell goes. Teach the behaviour you want ('go to your bed') and make sure this is positively reinforced. Then add the doorbell as the cue (doorbell goes, then 'go to your bed' then reward). Lots of repetitions will lead to your dog to automatically take themselves to their bed when they hear the doorbell.



## LIFE CAN BE STRESSFUL FOR PETS

Zylkene is a calming supplement that contains a natural ingredient derived from a protein in milk called casein that has clinically proven calming properties to help relax cats and dogs. It is a peptide (protein) molecule, well-known to promote the relaxation of new-borns after breastfeeding.

Zylkene has become a valuable support for veterinary surgeons, behaviourists, nurses and pet owners for use in helping pets cope when facing unusual and unpredictable situations or before occasions such as a change in their normal environment.



Zylkene is a dietetic complementary feeding stuff for dogs and cats  
This information is provided by Vetoquinol, manufacturers of **Zylkene**

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