

Calmness

A gentle Petfect guide to helping your dog settle, cope and choose calm in a busy human world.

Why calmness matters

Calmness is one of the skills that makes living with a dog a delight. Some dogs find it naturally; for others, it needs to be taught and practised.

Without this skill, dogs can struggle to choose a quiet, relaxing activity. Instead, they may bark or lunge at movement, jump up at visitors, counter-surf, stay over-vigilant or feel unable to hear your cues in a new environment.

A calm dog is more able to make good choices, cope when alone, and stay out of the spiral of frustration and overwhelm.

- Calmness supports contentment when alone.
- A relaxed dog is less likely to become overwhelmed by fear.
- Learning to rest gives your dog more choice in everyday life.

Calmness is not doing nothing — it is a valuable life skill.

How to inspire calm

What we rehearse becomes familiar. If every day is filled with barking at the window, high-energy greetings and activity, high arousal can become your dog's default.

Promoting calm activities helps your dog relax, empty their stress bucket and feel more at ease at home and out in the world.

- Offer a long-lasting chew.
- Use a Kong, Toppl or lick mat.
- Scatter food in grass for a gentle search.
- Enjoy quiet sniffing and appropriate bones.
- Set up a calm activity during busy moments, such as visitors arriving.

A day with sleep and calm activities can become a calmer day overall.

Capturing calmness

Every day, your dog will have moments when they choose calm. Quietly rewarding those moments makes that choice more likely to happen again.

For example, when your dog is asleep, calmly place a small piece of food near their nose. When they wake, they discover the reward connected with the peaceful action they were already doing.

If your dog chooses to move away from a window they usually bark at, gently toss a reward just in front of them so they happen upon it while they are calm.

- Reward the calm behaviour you want to see more of.
- Keep it quiet and low-key.
- Look for tiny moments of good choices.

Your dog will thank you for helping life feel safer and less stressful.