



Home Adaptations for an Older Pet

PETSLIKEMINE
SENIOR PETS

A room-by-room walk-round: grip, access, warmth and easy reach

PET NAME	DOG OR CAT	VET PRACTICE
_____	_____	_____

The home your pet grew up in was built for a young, agile body. Adapting it is the change with the fastest, kindest return: small, cheap, mostly reversible, and you can watch your pet be more comfortable by tonight. It comes down to four things: grip, access, warmth and reach. Make the changes, and book the check-up: adapting sits alongside finding out why your pet is slowing down, never instead of it.

GRIP: THE SINGLE HIGHEST-VALUE FIX

- Lay non-slip runners or rugs along the routes your pet actually walks (bed to door to bowl)
- Yoga mats and interlocking foam squares work well and wipe clean; anchor anything that can slide
- Anti-slip tape over slippery thresholds and that one awkward step
- Keep nails short and trim the fur between the pads, so the foot can find the floor

ACCESS: RAMPS OVER JUMPS (DOWN IS HARDER THAN UP)

- A ramp wherever there is a regular jump or steps: into the car, onto the bed, up the back step
- Low gradient, genuinely non-slip, wide enough to feel secure
- Stair gate the risky solo descent; bring bed, water and the toilet route onto one floor
- Cats: break the climb to a perch into stages (stool to sofa to sill); prop open a pet flap they avoid

THE LITTER TRAY IS A CAT'S MOST IMPORTANT RAMP

A cat will not complain; it will quietly stop using a tray that has become painful, and then you have an "accident" that is really a mobility problem. Use a tray with a low, cut-down side, make it bigger so they can turn and posture, put one on every floor, and offer soft, fine litter rather than hard pellets. A nightlight nearby helps fading sight.

WARMTH AND REACH

- A supportive orthopaedic or memory-foam bed in a warm, draught-free spot
- Any heat pad set to gently warm, never hot, with an auto shut-off and room to move off it
- Raise food and water bowls to roughly elbow height to spare a stiff neck and shoulders
- Spread water bowls around the house; add nightlights on the main routes
- Keep walkways clear, and try not to rearrange the furniture (pets navigate from memory)

ONE BIG-DOG SAFETY NOTE

In large and giant-breed dogs, raised food bowls have been linked to the dangerous stomach condition bloat. For big dogs it is safer to raise only the water and keep food at floor level, or ask your vet.

Written and reviewed by Dr Alastair Greenway MRCVS and Claire Greenway BVM&S MRCVS. This sheet explains and records. It does not diagnose or prescribe. Always follow your own vet's instructions.

How to use. Walk the house at your pet's eye level: where do they slip, what must they jump, where is it cold, what is hard to reach? Fix the daily routes first, and re-walk it every few months. A wellbeing aid, not a substitute for veterinary advice.

**GRIP, RAMPS, WARMTH, REACH;
ALONGSIDE A VET CHECK**