

How to Socialize an Adult Dog and Why It's Never Too Late

Hounds Lounge

Even in dog years, age is nothing but a number! Get the scoop on how to socialize an adult dog and why it's never too late to do so.



At Hounds Lounge, we believe you *can* teach an old(er) dog new tricks, including socialization. Contrary to popular belief, it's possible to socialize an adult dog. We see it happen all the time!

If you think your dog might need to be socialized, you're in the right place. Keep reading to learn how to help your dog make furriends, both canine and hooman. You'll learn that dog socialization is not only good for Fido, but it's grrreat for your peace of mind, too!

What is dog socialization?

Dog socialization is the process of making your pooch feel comfortable in the presence of other dogs, around new people, and in unfamiliar environments and situations. Socialization is all about gaining experiences. Understanding the world around them helps your dog live a happier, more relaxed life.



It's easiest to [socialize puppies](#), because they are fearless and curious. Everything is new to them. They haven't yet developed any negative feelings toward people, places or pets. While it's slightly more challenging to socialize older dogs, it's still very achievable!



Does my dog need to be socialized?

Not all dogs experience the luxury of getting socialized as puppies. Furr example, many woofs are adopted well after their puppy days, entering their new homes without proper socialization. In fact, this was the case for many of our Hounds Lounge pack members, [rescues](#) who are now shining examples of how to socialize an adult dog!

Other times, the opportunity for socialization is simply out of our paws and hands. The [recent lockdown](#) prevented many young pups from gaining new experiences in the world.

Whatever the circumstances, some dogs miss the ideal time frame for socialization, which is seven weeks to four months. Some dogs learn a few lessons in socialization, and they simply don't stick. (You will soon learn that repetition is key!) Some dogs have social skills but lose them due to isolation. (Continuation is also key!)

Here are some telltail signs that your adult dog needs to be socialized, courtesy of [Hill's](#):

They're fearful or aggressive around people or other animals

They back up or raise their hackles (hair on the back) when you or another person approaches

They're nervous when out on walks

They're shy around other dogs or people

They can get overly excited and cause anxiety in other pets or people

If your dog is showing any of these behaviors, it's time to start socializing! While the process might seem intimidating, it will ultimately be a rewarding bonding experience for you and your fur child. Now, let's dig into how to socialize an adult dog.



How to Socialize An Adult Dog

According to [Dr. Marty Pets](#), socializing an adult dog is more challenging than socializing a puppy because you aren't starting with a blank slate. Older dogs are more hesitant to accept new experiences. To combat this obstacle, Dr. Marty recommends introducing potential triggers and then rewarding calm behavior with a mix of treats and praise.

How to socialize an adult dog:

Go for walks to take in the sights, smells and sounds of the neighborhood.

Introduce your dog to another adult dog, such as during a nice, relaxed walks.

Introduce your dog to another adult human by inviting a friend over.

Introduce your dog to puppies and children.

Visit dog parks at a slow, leisurely pace.

Attend doggy daycare so your dog can show off their new social skills.

Tip: Start Slow

The last thing you want to do is overwhelm your woof. Before you introduce a new pet, person or place, make sure your dog is feeling calm. In the early days of socialization, make sure your dog is in a controlled environment where you can jump in to help if needed. It's useful for your dog to know commands such as "[come](#)," so that you can get their attention in potentially stressful situations.



Tip: Stay Pawsitive

Be prepared to give your dog the praise and treats they deserve for good behavior. It's not easy to break old habits! Getting social can be a little ruff on your pooch, so make sure they feel encouraged.

Step 1: Go for Walks

Walks are not only great for [exercising](#) but for socializing as well. Taking in all the sights, smells and sounds of the neighborhood is an important part of socialization. If you encounter a stressful situation, simply turn around and go home.

Don't forget to bring treats to reward positive interactions with other dogs and hoomans!