

Dog Environment

Getting out and about with your dog

Your dog's environment isn't confined by the borders of your home – it's everywhere they go! This might include the environment when you take your dog with you to work, go on a family holiday, visit a dog-friendly café or pub or attend training classes. A well-adjusted dog is more likely to feel calm and confident in these situations, rather than fearful or anxious.





Essentials for entering new environments

Before heading out, remember to pack anything your dog might need for the day. This includes not just the essentials like food, travel bowls and water, but also items that can help make them feel more settled or create a positive association with the new environment. This might include their favourite treats or toys and comfortable bedding with a familiar smell. Leads, collars, harnesses etc., are also essential to make sure your dog can be safely restrained when needed.



Travelling by car

When taking your dog to a different or new environment it's also important to consider the entire journey, starting with the car. Making sure your dog is physically safe and secure when travelling is critical.

A secure harness attached to a seatbelt, safe cargo area, or a secure travel crate are the most popular options. Remember as well to make sure there is a non-slip liner to reduce the chance of them slipping and injuring themselves.

Dogs must be safely restrained in cars at all times to prevent accidents and serious injury

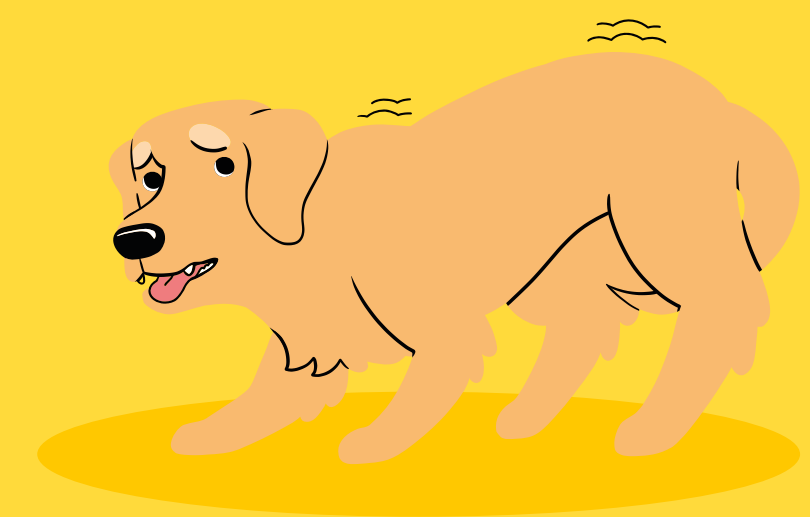




Easing your dog into long journeys

Your dog's physical safety and comfort aren't the only things that need to be considered in transit.

The car can be a scary place for young puppies that have experienced travel sickness or older dogs that haven't been appropriately exposed to car travel. Forcing these dogs to make long journeys in the car can negatively impact their emotional and mental wellbeing long-term as their fear and anxiety builds. To avoid this, all dogs should be gradually desensitised to the car while building positive associations.



Tips for travelling by car

- Start by sitting in the car with the engine off and building up slowly from there making sure your dog remains calm and happy at each step, e.g., engine off, engine on/car stationary, car moving slightly, shorter journeys to longer journeys
- You can help make this a positive experience for your dog by giving them some of their favourite treats or toys when in the car
- If your dog is crate-trained, securing them inside their crate in the car can also be an excellent way to help them feel safe and make car travel an enjoyable experience

For more information on safe car travel, see the [**WALTHAM™ Pocketbook of Responsible Pet Ownership.**](#)



A brown dog with floppy ears is sitting inside a grey, tent-like dog house. To the left of the dog house is a large potted plant with long, thin green leaves in a silver metal bucket. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The dog is looking towards the camera with its mouth slightly open.

Explore new environments

When taking your dog to a new environment, for example, the office, make sure they have a quiet area for resting, as well as a suitable space for exercise and to eat their meals without being interrupted. Remember that dogs like to investigate their surroundings, so if you can, try to give them the opportunity to properly explore their new environment. This might mean arriving a little early before meeting a friend or letting them explore the office on the weekend. Top tips and a toolkit for creating a pet-friendly office can be found [here](#).



Visiting the veterinary clinic

The veterinary clinic is another example of a new environment where dogs may feel anxious or fearful and can be a stressful experience for both you and your dog.¹ But by taking your dog to the clinic regularly for social visits that involve them receiving treats and positive interactions with staff, with no specific health check-ups or interventions where they may feel uncomfortable, you can help reduce fear.

For more tips on reducing stress at the veterinary clinic, follow this [link](#).



¹King, T, Flint, HE, Hunt, ABG, et al., 2022, Effect of Music on Stress Parameters in Dogs during a Mock Veterinary Visit, Animals, Vol 12(2), 187, Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani12020187>, Accessed 04 February 2022

Observe your dog's reaction

Always make a conscious effort to observe your dog's body language in a new environment as this can help infer what your dog may be feeling. Not all dogs will enjoy exploring new places, and you may need to make adjustments to the environment or remove or assist your dog to help them feel confident, calm and happy. See [Introduction](#) for a summary of what sort of body language to look for in your dog.

Learn more about environment and emotional wellbeing for your pets at shine.waltham.com

