



Miniature Schnauzer  
Rescue of Houston, Inc.  
www.MSRH.org



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## What to Expect as Your Dog Ages

By Petplace Veterinarians

This article has been provided courtesy of PetPlace.com ([www.petplace.com](http://www.petplace.com)), the definitive online source for pet news, health, and wellness information.

### Senior Changes

You aren't getting older, you're getting better—at least, that's what a lot of people tell themselves. The same goes for our dogs, but we can't ignore some of the changes that occur as the years advance. Every dog ages differently, but there are some common changes that occur as the body gets older. Here is a list of the 20 most common things that develop in elderly pets.

- Loss of hearing. As dogs age, the nerve cells and hearing apparatus degenerates, resulting in a slow loss of hearing.
- Loss of vision. The lens of the eye becomes cloudy with age. Natural changes result in lenticular sclerosis, which typically does not cause significant vision loss. However, cataracts may develop, which do interfere with vision.
- Decreased activity. As dogs age, their metabolic rate slows. This results in a decreased activity level.
- Weight gain. Elderly dogs require 30 to 40 percent fewer calories. By eating a normal maintenance diet, obesity often develops.
- Infections. As the body ages, the immune system weakens, making it harder for the dog to ward off infections.

- Skin changes. The skin often thickens and darkens with age.
- Loss of hair or whitening. The advance of years causes the hair to lose its normal pigment, turning white. The ability of the hair cells to regenerate also deteriorates and hair loss is common, often seen as patches of hair loss.
- Loss of skin elasticity. Old skin not only thickens, but also loses elasticity. The most visible sign of this is in the male dog. The prepuce slowly becomes more pendulous as the dog ages.
- Change in feet and nails. Footpads begin to thicken and the nails become brittle, making it harder to trim the nails properly.
- Arthritis. Muscle, bone and cartilage decrease with age. With less cartilage, the bones begin to scrape against one another, causing the pain of arthritis.
- Tooth loss. Dental calculus that develops over time eventually causes tooth loss. The teeth also begin to lose minerals, contributing to the tooth loss.
- Gastrointestinal upset. Over time, the stomach lining begins to deteriorate, and the level of digestive enzymes from the pancreas falls. The result can be more nausea, vomiting, lack of appetite and/or diarrhea.

### MSRH Mission Statement

Miniature Schnauzer Rescue of Houston, Inc. is an all volunteer, donation sponsored, non-profit organization dedicated to the overwhelming task of saving the lives of abused, abandoned or unwanted Miniature Schnauzers who, through no fault of their own, have lost their homes. Many of these dogs come to us healthy. However, some are sick, injured, or abused. They come from shelters, off the streets, from owners who, for whatever reason, can no longer care for them, and from puppy mills, where they have never felt the loving security of a home. Our goal is that they will never have to feel unwanted or unloved again.

Continued on Page 2

## What to Expect as Your Dog Ages *Continued from Page 1*

- Constipation. With age, the colon has more trouble moving fecal matter, which causes more frequent constipation.
- Less energy. As the lungs lose elasticity, the volume of the lung decreases. With less lung capacity, the dog becomes tired more easily. In addition, the bone marrow becomes fatty and is not as functional as younger marrow. This results in a slow onset of anemia, which causes weakness and less ability to exercise.
- Incontinence. The kidney function and control over the urinary bladder sphincter slowly lessens, resulting in an increased incidence of urine leakage.
- Straining to urinate. In males that are not neutered, the prostate often enlarges with age. This causes some constriction of the urethra, resulting in some difficulty in passing urine.
- Mammary cysts and tumors. Elderly female dogs have a higher inci-

dence of lumps, cysts and tumors within the mammary glands. This is more common in dogs that are not spayed.

- Loss of house-training. Over time, the cells within the brain slowly decrease. As the cells die, senility develops. A common occurrence with senility is a loss of house-training.
- Heart murmurs. Heart valves scar and lose function as they age. This often results in heart murmurs, but usually does not cause a medical problem.
- Hair coat changes. In the senior dog, the skin becomes dry and scaly. It loses luster and looks dull.

Thanks to better nutrition, better veterinary care and excellent care on the part of the owner, dogs are living longer. Learning what to expect as your dog ages, you can give your dog the best quality of life possible in his golden years.



Be sure to mention that you are associated with MSRH when you board your dog at Parker Road Pet Resort and a donation of \$1 per day per dog will be made to MSRH. Not only will your dog be treated like royalty, but MSRH will be receive a benefit, as well.

Parker Road Animal Hospital  
& Pet Resort  
6740 Airline Drive  
Houston, Texas 77076  
Tel: (713) 694-0552  
[www.parkerroadpetresort.com](http://www.parkerroadpetresort.com)

### Note From Pat Strouse

You may recall that Pat and her husband, Jerry, were in our Volunteer Spotlight last month. Pat forgot to mention one of her fosters, Zeb, a real ball of fire, who has since been adopted. Zeb is just as special as all of the rest, and Pat was afraid Zeb would read the newsletter and have his feelings hurt that he was left out. Zeb, Pat wants you to know how much you are still loved by your foster family. (Schnauzers can read, you know. )

### Update to Dear Sophie—August Issue (Going Potty Inside)

Dear Miss Inside:

I have an update for you. Your parents can now purchase a black light that they can shine in a dark room (will work best at night). It will illuminate all the spots where you have gone potty on the carpet. They can mark them off with masking tape, then go back and treat these spots with odor neutralizing enzyme products, such as Odor-Nil®, Odor-Ban®, Nature's Miracle®, Anti Icky Poo®, or Zero Odor® just to name a few. Petsmart has a product called the "Simple Solution Spot Spotter" for \$21.99 (saw it online—good reviews), but you can do a Google search for more of these black lights on the market.

Sincerely,  
Sophie

**NOVEMBER INTAKES = 25**

**ADOPTIONS = 18**

## Dear Sophie—Did we get these cat-aracts from a cat?

We are best friends and getting up there in years. We have some vision problems. Our human told us we have "cat-aracts". We swear that we have not been around any cats. Well, maybe we chased a few, but we promise we ain't never caught any. Any ideas as to why we have these blurry eyes just because we got close to a cat? We look forward to hearing from you, rather we want to hear from you, but it is difficult to look!

Yours truly,

Cornelius and Iris

Dear Cornelius and Iris:

Go ahead and chase all of the cats you want. You can even catch 'em if you can. The cats are not your problem. Let me give you a little education on cataracts. A cataract is the result of the breakdown in the normal arrangement of the lens fibers of the eye. This causes a loss of transparency in the lens and thus a reduction in vision. There are several different forms and

causes of cataracts, and the age at which the cataract is developed is very important in classifying the type of cataracts that you have. The types of cataracts are:

- **Congenital Cataracts:** These are present at birth and usually occur in both eyes. They are not necessarily inherited. They can come from infections or toxins in unborn puppies. Miniature Schnauzers, however, are one of the breeds that can inherit these types of cataracts.
- **Developmental Cataracts:** These develop early in life. They may be inherited or caused by outside sources, such as trauma, diabetes mellitus, infection, or toxicity.
- **Senile Cataracts:** These occur in dogs over six years of age, and they are often confused with another condition called 'Nuclear Sclerosis', which is not considered a medical problem. Nuclear Sclerosis is a normal change that occurs in the lenses of older dogs.

It appears as a slight graying of the lens. It usually occurs in both eyes at the same time in most dogs over 6 years of age. The loss of transparency is due to compression of the linear fibers of the lens, but it does not significantly affect the vision of the dog and no treatment is required.

If your problem has arisen only since you've been older, and your vision is truly impaired, it sounds like you really do have senile cataracts and not nuclear sclerosis. The only treatment available for you is surgery. You will need to see a veterinary ophthalmologist for an evaluation to determine if you are a good surgical candidate. This will depend on your general health overall.

Sincerely,  
Sophie



## SENIOR HUMANS AND SENIOR SCHNAUZERS

MSRH often acquires senior Schnauzers either from senior owners and/or their families surrendering directly to us or after they have been surrendered by them to kill shelters. This is a very real problem all pets face when their senior owners have a life changing event happen, and there is not a contingency plan in place for the pet's care.

If you are a senior person, please take a moment and ask yourself "if my health, financial, or living arrangements should change, who would take care of my beloved pet?" Please make provisions for your four-legged companion, the one who loves you unconditionally and depends on you. If you don't plan for their future, they may not be so lucky as to have a rescue group, such as MSRH, to save them. Instead they might end up in a kill shelter as their last stop on this earth. Their chance of being adopted from one these shelters—extremely low; their chance of being euthanized—extremely high.

MSRH will not turn our back on any Schnauzer that needs our help no matter the age or health status. We are always in need of adopters and/or permanent foster homes for them. No animal deserves to be tossed aside like disposable trash just because they are older, but this is what happens to so many senior Schnauzers. If you are interested in fostering or adopting a senior Schnauzer, please contact us at: <http://www.msrh.org/volunteer>

## Seniors and Special Needs Miniature Schnauzers

By Lori Magyar

Fostering or adopting an older pet or one with special needs takes a special person - a person who possesses an open heart and mind, and a willingness to give unconditionally. These special angels are deserving of a good home and love; and have much to offer to their human companions. Don't get me wrong, adopting or fostering an older or special needs dog is challenging in many ways. To begin with, bringing a senior/special needs pet into the home can be frustrating - in most cases they are set in their ways (just like we are) and it can take a battle of wills, sheer determination, cooperation, and understanding prior to establishing a balanced pack environment. Expenses will be incurred monthly when special diets are recommended and for medications. As I foster, I agreed to pay for the medical and diet needs for the fosters that live me as a donation to MSRH.

I began my association with MSRH in 2003 when I adopted Cagney and Lacey at the age of 3. They were mostly past the puppy stage, and had been spoiled rotten by their previous owner, but it was love at first sight for the three of us. In 2006, I relocated to Katy TX. With a big yard I decided it was time to get involved in animal rescue. As a single person with a more than full time job, I decided to start with fostering, and as I enjoy the personality of Miniature Schnauzers, signed on with MSRH. Jack was my first foster. He was 2 years old and smart! He quickly wormed his way into my heart, and I knew at that point I was a foster failure - I couldn't give him up. So I adopted him for my parents and he is happily king of their household.



Lori with (clockwise top to bottom) Lacey (adopted 2003, 9 yrs), Cagney (adopted 2003, 9 yrs) Jack (adopted 2006, 5 yrs), Bailey (aka Taylor Ryan, Foster 11 yrs) and Lil Bit (aka Benson, Foster 13 yrs)

During this time, I was balancing Lacey's onset with gastritis and food allergies, and Cagney having bladder stones and surgery. Both of my girls started special diets and medications, and I knew they were getting older. I then began researching homeopathic treatments for dogs, developing creative ways to administer medications and quickly learned not to over react or panic to an ailment. Anyone with a child can understand the feeling that overwhelms you when a little one looks at you with big sad eyes and whimpers!

I tried again to foster a few younger dogs, and realized that older dogs fit into my lifestyle much better. So I offered to take in an older dog - and Bailey (Taylor Ryan) came to our home. Bailey has the most soulful eyes of any dog I have encountered. He has a heart condition, liver and kidney issues, bladder issues and is on a special diet and medications. Bailey loves life these days! After years in a kennel at a breeder, the freedom of a doggy door, and all the bones you can chew is heaven. Bailey is great at taking his medications and is living very comfortably these days. He is the easiest going of the pack, but is the most de-

manding for attention. If you continue to ignore him, he licks the back of your knees to get your attention.

Lil' Bit showed up next when MSRH was desperate for foster families. He was old, cranky and blind but quickly established himself as the alpha dog and stole my heart. Between us, Lil Bit and I trained Cagney and Lacey to assist as 'seeing eye' dogs, and they were a big help to Lil Bit during his time with us. At half the size of the other dogs, he was the biggest flirt! Lil Bit was about 13 years old when he crossed over this year from heart issues.

Petie, about 8 years old, is blind in one eye, has a kidney condition, and what appears to be a sinus condition. He is on a special diet and will need a vet visit to see if we can figure out what is going on with his sinus/lungs. Petie is learning the pack pecking order and is settling in quite well. With his vision and kidney issues, he has to be taken outside during the middle of the night so there are no 'accidents' in the house. Good thing I get up any way at night!

I love fostering the seniors from the battle of wills, to unconditional love. We are a pack that sticks together, we are a family. As my Minis mature and succumb to their various illnesses, the pack will continue to change and each new addition brings laughter, challenges and love. It takes about a month for the pack dynamics to settle back down after a new addition. Daily walks and play sessions are necessary to develop a pack that exists in harmony. We have our spats and tussles, mostly over bones or attention jealousy, but in the end we all snuggle up at night!

## THE SEASONS OF YOUR LIFE

By Jim Willis

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It is the Spring of your life,  
the beginning of our love.  
I laugh at your foolishness,  
show you what you need to know,  
protect you from dangers you know nothing about,  
and make sure you grow and glow with health.  
We will play and practice until . . .

It is the Summer of your life.  
My, what a beauty you've become!  
You've grown into yourself and you live at full tilt.  
Like the sun, you burn with a passion for life.  
You have learned and experienced much,  
but you may not appreciate everything until . . .

It is the Autumn of your life.  
You've grown more sedate.  
It's been so long since you were the source  
of any difficulty that I've nearly  
forgotten the Spring of your life.  
Your colors are still vibrant,  
but I notice the tinge of frost on your muzzle—  
foretelling that one season remains . . .

It is the Winter of your life,  
and your eyes have grown clouded as  
the December sky.  
I will care for you as I did during the Spring of your life,  
and promise that you will pass as gently  
as snow falling on frozen fields.  
I will sit by your grave and weep,  
and remember all the seasons of your life,  
for all the seasons of my own.

## BOOK OF THE MONTH

### "SENIOR DOGS FOR DUMMIES" BY SUSAN McCULLOUGH

There are several good books on the market today that offer helpful advice on caring for senior dogs, and selecting only one for a book of the month choice was not an easy pick. This book had only four reviews on Amazon, but all four of them were five stars. In 2004 it won a Maxwell Award, a prestigious award given by the Dog Writers Association of America, as 'Best Book on Care and Health'.

This is a good read if you want to just read straight through or simply use it as a reference when you need information on a particular topic. Among the topics covered, you will find out:

- How to meet your senior's dietary needs
- How to safely exercise your senior
- How to manage health care costs
- How to teach an old dog new tricks
- Gain inspiration from stories about super senior dogs

This book can be purchased at <http://www.amazon.com> for \$15.29.

## Top Ten Reasons to Adopt an Older Dog

1. Older dogs are (mostly) housetrained. (They are also old enough to know that they can make mistakes in the house to show you they are mad at you!)
2. Older dogs are NOT teething puppies who chew your shoes and furniture.
3. Older dogs can focus and are calmer. (Except when they are establishing the pack order in multiple dog households!)
4. Older dogs have learned what "no" means. (They have also learned when you are really serious about the 'no' and when they can work around you.)
5. Older dogs settle in with greater ease because they understand the concept of the pack. (True in most cases—dogs that have been only pets their entire life may not adjust to a pack without a lot of help.)
6. Older dogs are more loving and affectionate as they are grateful for the second chance. (This is true for any rescue dog!)
7. What You See Is What You Get: Unlike puppies, older dogs have grown into their shape and personality. (Working with rescues, you sometimes get surprises.)
8. Older dogs are instant companions.
9. Older dogs don't make demands the young dogs do for play time.
10. Older dogs let you get a good night's sleep, because they're accustomed to human schedules and don't need night-time feedings, comforting, or bathroom breaks. (True in most cases. Exceptions do exist.)

"Blessed is the person who has earned the love of an old dog."

Sydney Jeanne Seward

## Featured Pet—Petie

Hi! I'm Petie. I'm currently being fostered by Lori Magyar, so you've probably already read a little bit about me on Page 4. Yes, I'm blind in one eye, but I do have another eye that works quite well. Lori is helping me to manage my kidney problem with a special diet, and I'm on a holistic medication for my sinus condition. Other than those issues, I'm in great health!

According to the table on Page 8, I'm not a geriatric dog. I'm a senior, thank you very much, at age 8 (equivalent to age 48 in human years). For all of you humans who think you are still young at 48, well there you go! Lori will tell you I can jump 3 feet in the air, run really fast, and can disappear in the blink of an eye. How many of you 48 year old humans can do that?

I love playing with stuffed animals, chewing on bones, and being dried with a towel.

One of my special personality traits is that I am a lot like Houdini. I can escape out of a harness, and although I do well walking on a leash, the minute we stop walking, I start chewing on the leash to get free. So, the message here is as long as we keep it movin', I'm happy.

As you can see from my photo, I am a light salt and pepper color with natural ears. I have a docked tail, weigh 19 lbs., and I am a cutie patootie!

I know the basic commands of sit and stay, and I know how to use the doggie door, too.

Right now at bedtime I sleep on the loveseat in my foster mom's bedroom. She gets up during the night to take me to "use the facilities", but if you decide to take me to your forever home and that's inconvenient for you, I can take care of that night time potty



**Petie relaxing on the couch.**

break by myself if you give me access to the doggie door with adequate lighting (because of my vision).

I get along just fine with other dogs in the household, although I could probably get used to being your "one and only", too. I would probably do best in a home without small children, but I do love it when children come to visit.

## If a dog was the teacher, you would learn things like:

- When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
- Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
- Stretch before rising.
- Thrive on attention and let people touch you.
- On warm days, stop to lie on your back in the grass.
- When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.
- Be loyal.
- If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
- Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride
- Take naps.
- Run, romp, and play daily.
- Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
- On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.
- Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
- Never pretend to be something you're not.
- When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by, and nuzzle them gently.

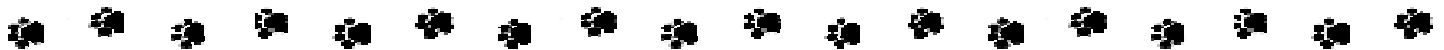
In the 1970's, dogs generally lived 7 or 8 years. Now, a dog might be looking at 10 to 15 years of life. (Source: American Veterinary Hospital Association) Rescuing an older dog may give you many years together. With the right care, it's not uncommon for dogs to live to 14 or 15 these days. I have learned there are no guarantees in this life, and each day is special when spent with ones we love. Using established guidelines to determine when your dog might qualify as a senior will help you to understand changes in behavior or to anticipate a change in health status. On the basis of your knowledge, you will be better able to identify and approach health problems at an early stage, when they may be more easily treated. Following is a table to give you an idea of the relationship between a dog's age and a human's. Note that the weight of the dog is related to his age in human years:

A Dog's Age in Human Years				
Age	Up to 20 lbs.	21–50 lbs.	51–90 lbs.	Over 90 lbs.
5	36	37	40	42
6	40	42	45	49
7	44	47	50	56
8	48	51	55	64
9	52	56	61	71
10	56	60	66	78
11	60	65	72	86
12	64	69	77	93
13	68	74	82	101
14	72	78	88	108
15	76	83	93	115
16	80	87	99	123
17	84	92	104	<b>Red numbers = Senior</b>  <b>Blue numbers = Geriatric</b>
18	88	96	109	
19	92	101	115	
20	96	105	120	
Chart developed by Dr. Fred L. Metzger, DVM, State College, PA. Courtesy of Pfizer Animal Health.				

**NO UPCOMING EVENTS TO REPORT THIS MONTH!**

# Many Thanks To Our November Transport Volunteers!

MUCH APPRECIATION GOES TO: A good Samaritan who picked up Crowder, a stray on 10/31/09; a good Samaritan who picked up Babs, a stray on 11/02/09; **Carol Harrington** who picked up Weston at Friendswood Animal Shelter on 11/4/09; **Sherry Eitel** who picked up Colt at Houston SPCA on 11/4/09; **Sherry Eitel** who picked up Nellie at BARC on 11/6/09; **Sherry Eitel** who picked up Vic at Harris Co. Animal Control on 11/11/09; Tag Team **Sandra Plunk/Nan Whomes & Ann Neal** who picked up Penny at Denton Animal Control on 11/12/09; **Marilyn Malaney** who picked up Fallon at Montgomery Co. Animal Control on 11/13/09; **Kevin Wolf** who picked up Vaughn at Conroe Animal Shelter on 11/14/09; Tag Team **John Austin/Marilyn Malaney** who picked up Kaden & Josh, owner surrenders, in Caddo, LA, on 11/15/09; **Sherry Eitel** who picked up Ebony, a stray, on 11/16/09; **Regina Schroeder** who picked up Blanca, a stray, on 11/16/09; **Sherry Eitel** who picked up Riley at Harris Co. Animal Control on 11/17/09; Tag Team **Sheri Golden & Wale-ska Ghini/Marilyn Malaney & Herb Hayes** who picked up Abby & Dante from Town Lake Animal Control on 11/20/09; **Janie & Jamie Honeycutt** who picked up Eva at Town Lake Animal Control on 11/25/09; Tag Team **Cindy Foster/Sherry Eitel** who picked up Bart & Bret at Henderson Animal Control on 11/27/09; **Laura and Dennis Virgadamo** who picked up Bambi, Betty Lou, Calvin, Hogan, Jennie & Mason at Lake Charles Animal Control on 11/27/09.



## From the Editor

Dear Readers:

In case you haven't noticed, this issue is dedicated to our senior Miniature Schnauzers. They are often passed over by adopters and first to be euthanized in a kill shelter, but they certainly deserve our love, respect, and a caring family just as our senior humans do. They have earned it, and I can't think of anything more devastating than to be homeless during one's twilight years, whether two-legged or four-legged.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Lori Magyar who contributed the article on "Seniors and Special Needs Schnauzers", as well as the table "A Dog's Age in Human Years", and "Top Ten Reasons to Adopt an

Older Dog".

This edition marks our twelfth issue of *The Schnauzer's Paw*, so we have reached a milestone—our first year completed. I must say I have enjoyed putting together every single one, and it is my hope that you have enjoyed reading them just as much. I also hope that you have learned something each time, just as I have.

In the upcoming January 2010 issue, I will be including several photos from the various events we participated in throughout the year, a recap of our 2009 fundraisers, and quarter end and yearend intake/adoption statistics. It is always a good feeling to be able to look back at what has been accomplished during the past year.



Linda with Sophie & Barkley

I would like to wish all of you Happy Holidays, a prosperous New Year, and thank you for the support you've given MSRH during 2009 and always.

Sincerely,

Linda



**MSRH WISHES A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON FROM OUR PACK TO YOURS!**