

Indoor Dog

Making your dog part of the family

THE DOMESTICATED DOG

People whose dogs live outdoors are often unaware that “yard dogs” tend to be less social, more anxious, less healthy, and more likely to bite than their indoor counterparts. Because they are “animals”, many people believe that dogs (especially large breeds) belong outdoors and that they will provide themselves with enough exercise and stimulation to live a happy, healthy life. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case. Domesticated dogs are highly social creatures who depend largely on companionship and thrive in the safe, secure living environment of their pack. In addition, dogs (and especially puppies) require socialization, structure, routine, training, regular exercise and many other things that a backyard simply *cannot* provide them.

TIMES HAVE CHANGED

Some of us may have fond memories of growing up with a family dog living in the backyard, and are unable to recall having any problems. However, with the advent of two-income families, video games, television and computers comes a much lonelier, less adequate life for the outdoor dog. Additionally, in the past ten years, trainers and behaviorists have come to understand much more about the needs of domesticated dogs, and have come to the general conclusion that dogs are happier living indoors with their families. Fortunately, trainers have also developed easy ways to teach dogs to be indoor companions (please see our educational flyer entitled “Confinement”).

BUT DOESN'T SHE NEED EXERCISE?

The fact of the matter is that dogs do not exercise themselves, and a dog in a backyard is much more likely to find a spot to rest or pace nervously than to practice doggie calisthenics by herself! Your dog will not be worn out by spending time alone in the backyard – taking her for a long walk, participating in training sessions, or simply playing with her more easily accomplishes this goal.

CALMING ENVIRONMENTS

Dogs are pack animals by nature, and are happiest when they are with their families. While you're gone, being in a familiar space with the objects, scents and sounds that your dog attributes to your companionship is about 40% as calming and satisfactory as you being there yourself. The backyard can be a very anxiety-producing place for your dog to spend time, especially for a shelter dog who has no doubt discovered herself in a variety of environments with no real connection to any of them; the sights, sounds, people and animals going on beyond the fences of her yard.

THE EFFECTS OF OUTDOOR LIFE

Outdoor dogs often develop at least one serious behavior problem that is usually a direct effect of the boredom, loneliness and frustration they experience every day in their own backyards. Chewing, digging, escaping and excessive barking are not usually concerns for someone with an indoor dog (when they are properly socialized and introduced to the household), but they are commonplace for a family with outdoor dogs. The problems caused by backyard life are some of the more common reasons for outdoor dogs being surrendered to shelters. Sadly, most of these problems could have been easily avoided.



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