

DOG LIFE



A case of the 'Zoomies'

BY HARRY KALAJIAN

Every dog has its own individual character and temperament – no two dogs are alike. From a layman’s view, many behaviors look alike; however, circumstances or environments can trigger look-alike behaviors. Each individual dog’s behavior should be accessed by its environment, living habits, owners and circumstances.

Take this example. You have two dogs of the same breed, same age and same sex.

One dog will get the “zoomies” (fits and starts of crazy running, circling, bouncing off furniture, etc.) while the other doesn’t. The zoomies can be attributed to the environment, living quarters and their owner. If a dog is not walked enough or mentally stimulated, chances are it will get the zoomies. But, some dogs, even when they are trained and do a good walk (heel) may also get the zoomies.

Sometimes the reason behind that is simply that the dog did not get enough time to stretch its legs or just be a dog. It is very important on all walks that the dog gets both a controlled walk and a leisure walk. A leisure walk is when the dog can be anywhere on leash – smelling, investigating and so on. That decompresses the dog from the controlled walk.

They’re like an elementary school child; they have to be let out frequently for recess to blow off compressed energy.

Quite often the breed of dog will dictate the amount of time needed for the length of their walks and leisure time. Whether the dog is small, medium or large (according to the



American Kennel Club chart category) will give you an idea of the length of time. A Yorkie, for example, will not have to go for the same walk length or distance as, say, a shepherd. A small dog takes many strides to equal that of a larger dog, so with less distance or time they would have covered the same amount of exercise.

Always incorporate the controlled walks with leisure walks; alternating their walks will make them happier.

In an environment where there are kids, the house will often be overstimulated ... and so will the dog. In contrast, in a home with no kids dogs are more prone to be calmer, as long as it gets the proper exercise.

Many first time dog owners end up

choosing breeds that are not compatible to their lifestyle.

Their choosing was based on oh how cute and adorable the dog is, or the media impact that has affected them.

One should choose a breed based on character and temperament, as well as the breed’s natural traits. Owners should also take into consideration the amount of exercise the breed needs, as well as maintenance. Every breed has pros and cons, so research the breed you are interested in. Talk to a professional trainer, ask for their opinion. The last thing an owner needs is to get a dog that has traits that are not compatible with their lifestyle and environment.

Owners have a tendency to over-stimulate the puppy/dog in the beginning, or on their return from work or outing. That causes a dog to form a neurotic, excited behavior. It’s a man-made behavior and, with time, the learned behavior becomes annoying. Introduce your dog to the behavior you want them to exhibit later on in life. Don’t excite your dog and allow it to jump on you, then get upset when they do it regularly, and to other people. Also, ask strangers not to over-excite the dog so it doesn’t learn to jump up on people from day one.

If you have adopted or want to adopt from a shelter, talk to a professional, no-nonsense trainer ... or better yet, have the trainer go with you so they can evaluate the dog to see if it’s the right fit for your family. The trainer will perform tests in an effort to avoid dogs with ingrained behaviors you don’t want to see later.

Also, remember that when a dog hits a certain age, they will almost always become calmer.

Training isn’t hard as long as you are willing to put time and follow my formula for success: Patience, Persistence, Consistency & Repetition. If you still fail, it’s on you, not your dog. You didn’t stick to the formula.

Have a woof woof of a month.

Harry Kalajian M.D.T.

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