

# Hey there. It's me ... your older dog

Older dogs, like people, can experience arthritis and dementia, but how do you tell the difference when it comes to your dog? Here's what your friend might tell you, in his own words, about when he needs your help ...



**H**ello, human! Sure, I may not be as young as I once was, but when you walk into the room, you just light up my world. So even if I don't jump up and greet you the way I used to, I hope you can tell by my thumping tail how much I love you.

Sorry I haven't been paying as much attention to you as you deserve. Some things aren't quite right with me. I'm not sure what they are, but I know you can help me...

## When it could be arthritis

I'm sore. Everywhere hurts. It started with this dang elbow—or maybe it was my hip or the trick knee. I lick and chew at it to heal it, but it's just not working. When I walk, I try to keep my weight off of it, and it's harder for me to get up in the morning and go up and down stairs. I'm really stiff after sleeping and when it's cold outside.

It's really hard to get comfortable, and sometimes that makes me restless, and I bark at night. I'm sorry. I used to lie on my stomach, but now that hurts, so I lie on my side.

I still love walks and fetching balls and chasing squirrels, but it hurts so much that I have a harder time keeping up. Sometimes it hurts so much I give up altogether or I get really grouchy. I'm sorry. Can you help me?

## When it could be dementia

I'm really confused. I'm awake when I should be asleep, and I'm sleeping a lot more during the day than I used to. I'm sorry—I know that's probably exhausting for you.

I can't find my keys (oh wait, that's you), I mean I can't recognize my favorite treats anymore, and when I drop food, I can't find it. I end up standing in the corner of a room or the yard or staring at a wall because I can't remember where I am.

Yesterday, I got stuck behind the couch, and when you let me in from going potty, I got really confused and bonked right into the other side of the door that doesn't open.

I'm really embarrassed because the other day I had an accident in the house. I just didn't know where I was—I'm sorry. I used to love barking at the letter carrier, but I've lost interest.

I've also noticed that I can't stop bobbing my head, I'm pacing a lot, and my leg won't stop shaking.

Can you help me?

*Pet owner: Yes, you can help. With the right medicine or treatment, your veterinarian can help your dog live a longer, healthier life. Come visit us to talk!*