Senior checklist

Slower, stiffer, and often the best years you will have together.

8 years and up for a medium dog · size-adjusted, approximate. Stages are behavioural as much as chronological.

01 This stage is done when

Tick each one as it becomes true most days, not once.

- [ ] Check-ups moved to twice a year, and you asked what a senior visit should include
- [ ] A baseline blood panel done, and you know what was normal so a change can be spotted
- [ ] Weight and body condition recorded at every visit, with any loss reported rather than assumed
- [ ] Slippery floors covered on the two or three routes your dog actually uses
- [ ] Jumps removed: a ramp for the car, steps for the sofa or bed
- [ ] A supportive bed in a warm, quiet, low-traffic spot, and a second one where the family sits
- [ ] Nails and the fur between the pads kept short, because both change grip
- [ ] Ten minutes of scent work most days, replacing distance rather than adding to it
- [ ] You have asked your vet how they assess quality of life, before you need the answer
- [ ] Somebody other than you knows the medication routine, in case you are away

02 Ask your vet

Questions to take to an appointment — not tasks, so no boxes.

? Ask your vet the same week if your dog loses weight without a diet change, or starts drinking and urinating noticeably more. In an older dog these are the two changes least worth waiting on.

? Ask your vet whether stiffness, slowing down or reluctance to jump is arthritis rather than just age, because arthritis is treatable and age is not a diagnosis.

? Ask your vet about night-time pacing, staring, getting stuck in corners or house-training slipping. Canine cognitive change has real management options and they work better started early.

? Ask your vet about any new lump, any lump that has changed, and any sore that is not healing, rather than watching it for another month.

? Ask your vet whether your dog's teeth are causing pain, particularly if they have gone quiet about food, chew on one side, or drop kibble.

? Ask your vet how they assess quality of life and what scale they use, well before you think you need it. Having the conversation early is kinder to everyone, including you.

03 Have ready

By need: the starter kit first, then THEN the recommended additions. The stage page carries the researched picks and current prices.

NOURISH

- [ ] A senior formula, if your vet recommends one
- [ ] An elevated or wide, shallow bowl
- [ ] THEN A dental routine adapted for a sore mouth
- [ ] THEN A joint supplement, on your vet's advice

REST

- [ ] An orthopedic bed with solid support
- [ ] THEN A second orthopedic bed where the household sits
- [ ] THEN Washable waterproof covers or liners

MOVE

- [ ] A padded harness with a back handle
- [ ] Runners or mats on slippery floors
- [ ] THEN A ramp for the car
- [ ] THEN Steps for the sofa or the bed

THINK

- [ ] A snuffle mat and scatter feeding
- [ ] THEN Easier puzzle feeders
- [ ] THEN Softer chews for older teeth

TRAIN

- [ ] Soft, high-value treats
- [ ] THEN A settle mat used as a target and a landmark
- [ ] THEN Grooming tools for cooperative-care practice

PROTECT

- [ ] Non-slip runners on the routes they use daily
- [ ] Continued parasite prevention
- [ ] THEN A cooling mat for summer
- [ ] THEN Washable pads or liners for the sleeping area

Notes — vet visits, weights, dates

From **wagyears.com/ages/senior** · WagYears, a Hilly Shore Labs site · content as of 2026-09-25. We are not veterinarians and nothing here is veterinary advice; anything that could be a medical decision belongs with your vet. Life-stage boundaries follow the AAHA canine life stage guidelines and the AVMA's senior guidance, as summarised on the stage page.