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## Introduction

After all the frustration to find out the truth on how to make a Dalmatian healthy, happy and obedient, I have created “Dashing Dalmatian”

Although I have bred Dalmatians since 1991 I felt that I needed to do more research before assembling this book.

I spent months just communicating with 93 Dalmatian Lovers (some are owners) to get their input and learn from their experiences.

Then, I searched the Internet, burning the midnight oil to read articles and forum posts to find out more. And, of course, I did not forget about the tips I’ve gathered from books I’ve bought from the local bookstores.

Next, I spent time with 4 professional dog trainers to find those who specialize in Dalmatian dogs. One gave me the low down on Dalmatian Dog behaviour problems and how to cure them. Another provided me with simple, but effective methods to specifically train Dalmatians to Sit, Stay, Lay Down, Come, Walk to Heal and more.

Finally, I spoke to my vet and local veterinarian training hospital, which gave me great advice on keeping a Dalmatian Dog health and how to prevent and cure common (and less common) Dalmatian Dog illnesses and diseases.

Phew! It was a lot of work, but if you were to ask me whether it was worth the effort, I’ll say YES, because I finally got my answers. It’s no longer a secret to me how to make a Dalmatian Dog happy, healthy and obedient the way you want it.

This is unlike ANY dog book you see on the shelf because it’s a researched book from people who personally own Dalmatian Dogs. This is information gathered that you can use and apply to your Dalmatian.

With that said, it’s time for you to start reading “The Dashing Dalmatian” and see improvement in your dog.



## Dalmatian Dogs At A Glance

A Dalmatian puppy is a perfect companion for an active family. Dalmatian puppies can be stubborn and must be trained quickly and consistently- especially being taught very early on not to jump up- this will pay dividends later on!

You will find Dalmatian dogs are friendly, lively, highly energetic, inquisitive, mischievous, loyal, outgoing, social and make lovely family pets- as long as you are prepared to put the effort in to the early training and plenty of exercises.

Though commonly thought to be a British Breed due to their popularity there with the aristocracy, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the history of the Dalmatian is actually something of a debate.

While some believe that their origins can be traced to northern India, reaching Europe by way of gypsy caravans in the Middle Ages via Dalmatia, Yugoslavia, this is not the only theory. Others believe that Dalmatians began in Egypt or Greece.

Due to their natural friendliness and as a favourite of children, Dalmatians make terrific family pets as long as they have regular exercise due to their seemingly never-ending stamina.

Our 4 Star Rating – to the suitability of Dalmatian Dogs for your home and lifestyle.

### Size

Shoulder height up to 22 – 24 inches, weight 45 – 70 pounds

### Coat Care

Sleek and glossy coat with fine, short hairs. Colour is white with either black or brown spots.

### Family Life

Dalmatian Dogs love humans, especially children – also adapts well to other household pets. Definitely a ‘people’ dog.

### Lifestyle

Dalmatian Dogs suit urban or rural lifestyle, as long as walked daily – Easily bored, and with their bounds of energy, they can become destructive if left unattended for long periods.

### Health

Life expectancy 11 – 13 years

Test Dalmatian Dogs for cardiac and hip recommended, watch for deafness as the breed is prone.

### Exercise

Dalmatian Dogs will need plenty of exercise – combination of free running in a good sized yard or garden for long periods of time and daily walking is the perfect solution to burning energy.

### Training

Dalmatian Dogs respond well and are fairly keen to please, remember though that consistency and perseverance in training regime are essential. Since they are so energetic, they can be stubborn at times, but overall, they do wish to behave and make you happy.



## What Is A Dalmatian?

Dalmatians are a great all-around breed.

They are a distinguished canine and are among the most unique and most lovable dogs out there. It is a medium-built and strong breed recognized for its black or liver coloured spots.

Throughout history the breed has been trained as a:

- Firefighting Dog
- Seeing-eye Dog for the blind
- Guard dog
- Watch Dog
- Circus Dog
- Coach Dog
- 

The Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) & American Kennel Club (AKC) categorizes dogs into 7 groups:

- Herding
- Hound
- Non-sporting
- Sporting
- Terrier
- Toy
- Working

The Dalmatian is registered as a non-sporting breed.

No doubt the Dalmatian breed makes for great utility dogs but the greatest advantage to owning one is that a Dalmatian can be your most outstanding companion on four legs and a great source of personal fulfillment.

This little book is meant as a quick guide for Dalmatian owners like you to better understand your wisely chosen pet, how to take care and love it, make him happy, keep him healthy, so that he will better understand you and listen to you, love you and make YOU a better person during your incredible life journey together!

## The Dapper Dalmatian

Devoted and glad owners of Dalmatians have come up with a long list of attributes and traits of their favourite pet that include:

- Alert
- Boisterous
- Boundless energy
- Brave
- Canine clown
- Child-friendly
- Courageous
- Devil dog
- Extroverted
- Exuberant
- Family dog
- Fearless
- Friendly
- Full of stamina
- Great
- Happy
- Hearing dog
- Highly trainable
- Intelligent
- Joyful
- Keen judge of character
- Loving
- Loyal
- Mischievous
- Nutty
- People dog
- Playful
- Quick learner
- Runners
- Self-assured
- Silly
- Smart
- Spirited
- Stoic
- Valiant
- Wonderful pet

And you can add to the list.....



### Dalmatian History

Though commonly thought to be a British Breed due to their popularity there with the aristocracy, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the history of the Dalmatian is actually something of a debate.

While some believe that their origins can be traced to northern India, reaching Europe by way of gypsy caravans in the Middle Ages via Dalmatia, Yugoslavia, this is not the only theory. Others believe that Dalmatians began in Egypt or Greece.

It is in England, however, that the Dalmatian was first given its official breed name; along with several colourful nicknames such as:

- ❖ The English Coach Dog
- ❖ The Carriage Dog
- ❖ The Plum Pudding Dog
- ❖ The Fire House Dog
- ❖ The Spotted Dick

The Dalmatian was initially used as a draft dog, a shepherd, a guard dog for carriages and coaches and a ratting dog. Dalmatians were bred to run under or along-side of horse-drawn carriages and therefore have a vast amount of stamina and energy. Today his tasks have expanded to include a terrific family dog too.

### Handsome Dog

Within the canine world, a Dalmatian is a medium-sized dog standing at around 22 inches at the shoulder for a full grown female and weighs around 45 pounds. The males should not exceed 24 inches at the shoulders and weight in at about 65 pounds.

It has a striking good look with a long head, moderate jaw and deep body that makes for a very handsome silhouette.

The ears are long and floppy but this does not obstruct his hearing -- one of the Dalmatian's most developed senses. It is always alert and vigilant and instinctive guard dog.

The coat is short, fine and smooth and possesses a natural sheen that can be enhanced with rubdowns with a chamois cloth (especially after a bath.) Don't worry though....the spots won't wash off!

## The Dapper Dalmatian

The short coat cannot protect him well from extreme elements of the weather and thus Dalmatians should definitely not be kept outdoors. It is a HOUSEDOG, sensitive to temperature extremes and does not enjoy cold drafts.

Dalmatians come in attractive colours of white with liver (brown) spots and white with black spots. They are born completely white and the spots start showing up at about 10 days of age.

Dalmatians always need something to do. They'll never be happy sitting around all day and if they aren't entertained, they're very likely to become destructive. It is in the nature of the breed to always be playful, happy-go-lucky, sensitive and quite loyal. Dalmatians always need human companionship, which makes them very prone to depression if they must spend too much time alone. It also means that they are not good dogs to be left out in the yard alone, even if the weather is mild where you live.

Dalmatians have incredible memories, making them quite trainable, but they will also remember any bad treatment they've ever received in their lives. They adore playing with children, but should be watched because they have a tendency to get a bit rambunctious, especially with toddlers. They're great with other pets in a family. Proper introduction of new pets is a must.

As high-energy dogs, they need dedicated socialization to avoid a timid nature. They're very intelligent, but also wilful, so they do very well with firm and consistent training. This breed can be trained to a very high degree of obedience.



## Dalmatians As Pets

Pet Dalmatians, although low-maintenance, require your consistent attention, exercise, human interaction, consistent obedience training and lots of love.

You cannot leave them to their own design for too long or they get lonely, bored and into trouble.

Being a big and strong dog as well as highly intelligent one, Dalmatians need both physical and mental stimulations to keep them even-tempered and dignified while still keeping their impish spirit and fearless courage intact.

### How to Keep A Dalmatian Out Of Trouble

Their high prey drive (some owners call it play drive) needs proper outlets or they could get destructive as house pets and tend to fight among themselves especially if the other family Dalmatians are of the same sex. The females tend to be more aggressive than do the males.

Keeping Dalmatians busy is the best way to keep them out of trouble! Tire them out with long walks at least 3 X's a day. Give them plenty of exercise, play with them, do canine activities with them. Never leave a puppy in the house unattended or they'll tear up your house out of boredom, pent up energy and frustration.

For all your love and caring, be prepared for wet slobbery drool and kisses and love in return.

### What some proud owners say about their pet Dalmatians

- ❖ 'Having a Dalmatian is like having another human in a dog body with you. You can talk to Dalmatians and they understand. They demonstrate feelings just like humans do. If they are loved, they will love and protect you.'
- ❖ 'Dalmatians are the most loyal companions. My Dalmatians bring me up when I am down. They are the canine clowns of the dog world. They are the only dog for me.'
- ❖ They are a gift! The two I have are always smiling and they cheer me up when I'm unhappy. They will be your friend for life!

## The Dapper Dalmatian

- ❖ 'My Dalmatian can take up my moods or lay quietly by my feet for hours.'
- ❖ 'Dalmatians are so intuitive, so easily bored and heartbroken. They are the definition of devotion and courage.'
- ❖ 'If I treat my Dalmatian puppy as an intelligent animal and talk to him almost like he's human, he is more responsive and better behaved, as though he's picking up on my sentiments by the way I am speaking to him.'
- ❖ 'Dalmatians can be very manipulative! They are a lot smarter than they look! Don't get taken in by their innocent-looking face or let them walk all over you no matter how much their eyes make them look like they're truly sorry.'
- ❖ 'Give up being house-proud and enjoy your 'devil dog!' Don't have potted plants because you'll end up with empty pots. Don't run to answer the phone because you'll be rugby-tackled and end up flat on your face;
- ❖ 'Bringing a puppy or an older dog into your home and your life is a major decision. It brings with it responsibility and commitment, but it also renders supreme joy, laughter and sadly, but inevitably, tears. Not one of us who has ever shared his life with a Dalmatian would have it any other way.'
- ❖ 'Dalmatians think they are human. Treat them like one – love them, talk to them, cuddle them and value them and you will get your love back unconditionally 10,000 times.'



## So, Are You Ready For A Dalmatian?

The answer is “NO” if you are the type who leaves your dog on a chain. Dalmatians require much of your love, attention and companionship although they are easy to take care of.

One Dalmatian-lover even said to never get one as a pet if you work full time!

Another point to consider is that the costs for food, training, grooming medical care, toys and other supplies do add up.

### **Dalmatians crave attention**

Dalmatians need constant attention and love to be babied. Treat your Dalmatian as your best friend and play, play, play with him.

One three-month old Dalmatian loves her bath more when the owner sings to her. Be it playing, talking or singing to them or taking them for a walk, Dalmatians simply love the attention.

Shower them with love, affection and attention as well as some treats.

These keep Dalmatians happy. Left to their own devices, Dalmatians can become very destructive when lonely, bored and ignored. One is known to jump over 6-foot fences if the owner is gone for too long.

Give extra space when you have to leave Dalmatians alone over extended period. They don't like to be locked in a room. The best solution though if you must leave the Dalmatian for extended periods of time is to purchase and exercise pen, 4 x 4 feet seems to work well. Shorter times a Dalmatian should be kept in a kennel.

When you have to leave your Dalmatian alone, you better make sure they have a toy they really like or they'll find something to do that you probably really won't like.

### **Destructive streak in Dalmatians**

Dalmatians are too smart and playful for their own good, and if they're bored and undisciplined they can be a disaster in the house.

That is why obedience training is important, in order to prevent the destruction of too many of your belongings. Training makes a happier dog.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

The accepted temperament for Dalmatians rules out aggression, hyperactivity and extreme shyness in the breed. You want to have these under control in your pet.

Experts suggest that, when adopting a Dalmatian, you should at least check the parent dogs for these undesirable traits before even looking at the puppies.

### Dalmatian and aggression

One owner said: "I love my Dalmatian girl, but she can be a terror sometimes and could get really hyper to where she'd attacked us. I'd hate to think what all she'd get into without any training at all!"

By the way, there are more accounts, from owners, of aggression among their female Dalmatians, especially towards other females.

### Hyperactive Dalmatians

Dalmatians have high play drive and they need their exercise or they'd get excitable and destructive.

Play, play and play with them. Give them extra space especially when you have to leave them alone for long periods. Tire them out with long walks and play sessions but within a fenced area or on a leash.

### Extreme Shyness (not to be mistaken with independence)

It's critical to socialize your Dalmatian. When they are still puppies, take them to public places like a pet store so they won't be shy.

A rule of thumb to follow is to introduce your new Dalmatian puppy to 100 people by then time the puppy is 4 months of age.

Begin training in an area that is familiar to your Dalmatian, where there is minimum distraction. Once both of you are skilled at several obedience commands, take him to practice at different areas with increasing amount of distractions present.



## The Dapper Dalmatian

This may seem like starting all over again, but it's worth the effort. One family took theirs to the local mini-mart and practiced obedience training right outside, where there were distractions from people.

“Strangers came over and petted him and gave him treats. He met all kinds of people and learned to follow commands despite the distractions and is a better dog today.”



## Choosing Your Dalmatian

An easier and more pleasant journey with your chosen Dalmatian starts with checking out the parent dogs for unbecoming traits like aggression, hyperactive and extreme shyness.

This is easier to do when you get your Dalmatian from a reputable breeder.

Do NOT get your Dalmatian puppy from pet stores, which get their supply from breeders of unknown reputation.

These “puppy mills” as they are called are not known to put much emphasis on the quality and health of pups they are producing.

Reputable breeders would adhere to the accepted standards for Dalmatians in terms of uniformity in the breed, good health, temperament, size and color.

Reputable breeders would be able to show the pedigree and registration papers and/or pictures of the parent dogs that may reside somewhere else.

Professional breeders are also there to produce dog show champions or prospects.

Even if you are not looking to raise a show champion Dalmatian, known breeders can provide you with some “best buy” puppies because not all puppies in a litter are show prospect/champion material.

But the full litter would have had benefited from the same proven bloodlines, nutrition and medical care. So you can choose from among the good-looking brothers and sisters of potential champion for a bargain.

Your other source option is animal shelters that in the US alone receive up to 12 million homeless dogs and cats every year, and about 25% of them are purebred. Paying the adoption fee is a lot less than the price you will pay to a breeder and you will be saving a life, but be aware there are no guarantees with a shelter Dalmatian.

The definition of good stock or purebred must include beauty and in a Dalmatian good looks means the coat is white with black or liver coloured (brown) spots all over their body.

When it comes to choosing male or female Dalmatians, there are not much clear-cut differences in their personalities.



## The Dapper Dalmatian

At times, the male is calmer, more tolerant of other dogs, willing to hold still for those hugs than the female. But at other times, the female can be so.



## Dalmatians And Your Family

Dalmatians are very family-oriented and always love to be around people. Treat them as family members. Never underestimate their need for human companionship, which is the most notable trait of this breed.

The Dalmatian is happiest when it is with people. Its whole pelvis moves with a Dalmatian wags its tail in delight and exhilaration. It can adapt to any environment as long as it is with people.

They love being with their 'families' and don't like to alone. Include them in your gatherings when company is around.

They love to be your shadow. Dalmatians are intelligent and are quite capable of participating in many family adventures.

Dalmatian dogs are like humans and they need lots of love to feel like a part of the family.

Accept them for what they are and give them time to show how loyal they can be. "They are very sensitive animal, so NEVER hit them. You run the risk of losing them.

### Dalmatians and kids

Dalmatians are gentle with children. Dalmatians love to play and are always ready for a romp or game, so make sure you have kids, said one owner.

Introduce the Dalmatian to the children at an early age, as this will bond the Dalmatian and child and stop jealousy. You will find the Dalmatian will be more protective towards that child.

Some owners found their Dalmatians love to be around children more than adults.

They are good-natured, accept friendly stranger and will calmly suffer the pokes and prods of children.

Dalmatians are also accepting toward other family pets.

One owner said 'My girl Dalmatian is wonderful to my daughter's little half-rat terrier puppy. She lets the very hyper puppy do whatever to her and they sleep together.'

## Dalmatian Dog Expenses

If you're thinking of getting a Dalmatian, be sure to budget for more than just the adoption fee of your new pet. From supplies, to health care, to regular monthly expenses, you should have the whole picture of dog expenses in mind when you make this decision.

That's not to say you need to be a millionaire. Truth is, most people who want a Dalmatian can make it fit their budget and lifestyle. But by thinking ahead about what you need money for and by researching those costs, you can make a better-informed decision when choosing your dog.

Naturally, costs vary from place to place and from person to person. Some people might want all the latest gadgets and conveniences; others just want the basics. We can't tell you exactly how much a Dalmatian will cost you when all is said and done, but we can tell you a few things you'll need so you can research costs in your area yourself.

### Start-up costs

Here is a checklist of the start-up costs and items most often needed by new Dalmatian owners. You should have these necessities on hand before you bring your new dog home.

- ❖ The cost of your Dalmatian dog, which will vary depending on whether you obtain him from a breeder or from a Human Society or rescue group.
- ❖ Vaccinations and first veterinarian visit – if you're getting an adult Dalmatian, these costs may be less, but you should go in for an initial check-up.
- ❖ Collar – a non-tightening collar (buckle collar) is perfect for puppies
- ❖ Leash – two of different lengths, long and short. Flex leads are great for walks where the dog can go a greater distance.
- ❖ Food and water bowls – stainless steel is best as bacteria can thrive on plastic bowls.
- ❖ Grooming supplies – including brush, nail clippers, shampoo.

- ❖ Cleaning supplies – your puppy or dog may have some accidents at first.
- ❖ Dog bed or blanket – choose between a nest or pillow bed.
- ❖ Crate -- a must for puppies. A crate will eventually become the puppy's den
- ❖ A supply of quality food. Remember, something that is low in protein.
- ❖ Safe Chew Toys
- ❖ Dog tags
- ❖ Dog training classes -- recommended for puppies or dogs that need addition training.
- ❖ Spaying or neutering costs if not already done.
- ❖ Ongoing expenses.

Every month you will need to budget for food. It's worth mentioning that, obviously, a larger dog eats a lot of food.

### **Veterinarian visits**

Dalmatian puppies may need up to 6 or more visits their first year; ask your veterinarian for an estimate of costs. Adult Dalmatians must have an annual check-up unless your veterinarian suggests more.

It's a good idea to have a little money available for emergencies. Like people, dogs can have accidents and illnesses that may require a hospital visit.

### **Other items**

There are also some optional supplies you might want to consider. These may be necessities in some cases – for example, a doghouse for the times your Dalmatian is outside.

- ❖ Fence
- ❖ Outside kennel
- ❖ Dog house

- ❖ Doggie door
- ❖ Gates – to block off certain rooms or staircases indoors
- ❖ Anti-chew spray
- ❖ Boots – an option for dogs in snowy areas or who are going to do a lot of walking over rough ground
- ❖ Dog coats – for dogs in cold climates
- ❖ Grooming table

### More on dog houses

Dalmatians can be happy outdoors, provided their needs are addressed. A mixture suits most Dalmatians well as long as they have quality time with their owners.

We do not recommend leaving your Dalmatian outdoors for any length of time, but. If you need to leave your Dalmatian outside, a doghouse is a good idea.

Remember:

- ❖ Dalmatians are den animals. They like a small, confined, safe spot for naps and hanging out. Various designs are available or you can build your own.
- ❖ Either buy or build one big enough for your adult Dalmatian, but not too big because heat escapes in a large space. While your puppy is growing, block off the extra space with boxes or a sheet of wood. Keep the occupied space appropriate for your dog's size.
- ❖ Insulate against both the heat and the cold. The shelter of a roof and walls will protect your Dalmatian from the wind and sun, but use flaps for airflow in the summer and some kind of insulation against the cold.
- ❖ Set or build it off the ground. Raising the doghouse even a couple of inches will block the cold air rising from the ground and will give added airflow in the hot months. It also helps prevent rotting and keeps water from seeping in.

With a little research, you should be able to find a way to make these expenses fit your needs. And if you have this planning out of the way before you get your Dalmatian, you'll have more worry-free time to enjoy spending with the newest member of your family.

## Dalmatian Beds

When it comes to comfort, nothing will make your Dalmatian happier than having their very own dog bed that they can relax, sleep on and enjoy.

There are three basic styles of dog beds that you can consider and can be found at local pet stores and online:

1. Nest beds
2. Pillows
3. Specialty Beds (special shaped, orthopaedic, thermal, bolster etc)

If you are interested in purchasing a bed for your Dalmatian, you will need to make sure that you select a bed that is a size large. Large size nest beds are 24” by 36”, while pillows are 45” to 55”. As for specialty beds, these beds will vary depending on their shape and size.

When selecting the bed for your Dalmatian it is a good idea to purchase ones that are durable, made of good quality and are machine washable. You will find they come in a variety of colours and patterns, so it shouldn't be hard to pick out the bed that should suit both you and your Dalmatian.

One owner said – “My Dalmatian loves his Bolster bed. It's the perfect size and is his very own mini floor couch that gives him ideal comfort. It's his favourite resting spot and was worth every penny.”



## ID Tags and Registrations

Nobody wants to think about losing their Dalmatian, but, unfortunately, dogs do get lost. Be prepared. Buy your Dalmatian a collar and some form of identification.

Identification tags are a popular and easy way to identify your Dalmatian. There are abundant options in colours, shapes and sizes to fit your dog's needs and personality. The problem with tags is that they can fall off or be removed. Two permanent methods are the microchip and the tattoo.

### Microchips

Contained in a capsule, the microchip is a small chip coded with your contact information or an ID number. About the size of a grain of rice, it's injected under your pet's skin with a needle, a procedure no more uncomfortable than a regular shot.

Your information is then put into a national database so if your puppy is lost, identification is easy. Lost pets may be taken to the humane society or animal shelter for scanning identification. It is not as easy as reading a tag on a collar, but it cannot be lost. It's safe, effective and meets international standards. Check with your local animal shelter or veterinarian for costs and more information.

It is important to keep your contact information current. When you move or change phone numbers, update your registration data. The only drawbacks to these chips are that not every place has the scanner equipment and the chip may move (harmlessly) around your Dalmatian's body, making it difficult to scan.

### Tattoos

A tattoo contains a number that you register with one of the national databases. It can be put on your Dalmatian's inner thigh or earflap. Wait until your dog is fully-grown so the numbers won't grow out of shape. Be sure to tattoo on an area that won't be covered by fur as your Dalmatian's coat matures. It's a simple and quick procedure, but check it periodically for fading. Don't forget to register the number and to keep the contact information current.

If your Dalmatian is registered with a Kennel Club such as the Canadian Kennel Club, identifying the individual puppies is mandatory. Check with your breeder on how your Dalmatian is identified.

## Dog Proofing Your Home

Before bringing your Dalmatian dog home, you'll need to 'dog proof' your house. Here is a simple checklist to make sure your home is safe before letting your dog run free.

### **Make sure all poisonous household items Are securely stored out of reach**

Put household cleaners, laundry detergents, bleach, disinfectants, insecticides, cleaning fluid, fertilizers, mothballs, antifreeze, insect poisons, rat poison and other items in cabinets or on high selves. Read about Home Safety.

### **Check your plants**

Many plants in and around your house can be harmful to your Dalmatian. Did you know that the pits of apricots and peaches, as well as spinach and tomato vines can make your dog sick and, in large dosages, can even be fatal? Read about Poisonous Plants. You will find a list in 'The Dog Lover Guide.'

### **Look at your house from your Dalmatian's point of view**

Get down on all fours and look around. Move or remove dangling electric cords, loose nails, plastic bags or other tempting objects that will be in reach.

Pick up buttons, string, sewing needles, pins and other sharp objects and anything small enough to swallow. Yes, even golf balls!

If your Dalmatian swallows any of these objects, they will cause damage to the mouth and internal organs. String and other entangling objects, such as curtain pulls, six pack holders and the like may cause abrasion or strangulation.

### **Keep your toilet lid down**

Dalmatians are often tempted to play in or drink toilet bowl water. This habit can be very hard to break. It's unsanitary and toilet cleansers can be harmful if swallowed.

### **Unplug, remove or cover any electrical cords in your dog's confinement area**



Chewing on these cords will cause severe mouth burns, electrocution and fires!

### **Close off balconies, upper porches and high decks**

Dalmatian Puppies in particular are so little they can slip through openings and fall.

In the last few days before arrival, give your house a good cleaning and remove breakable items from areas where your dog will be. Also, spend some time preparing yourself or your family. Small children need to know how to act around puppies and dogs.

## Home Safety

To a curious and creative Dalmatian, anything can be a potential toy, treat or prize. But there are many things in the home that can be harmful to your dog. Learning to identify and remove those things from your dog's reach is an important part of creating a safe home for your Dalmatian.

**Potential Hazard** – Cleaners: Includes household cleaners, bleach, detergents, dryer sheets, soap and more. All of these can have varying levels or toxicity or may burn if touched or consumed.

**What You Can Do** – Keep all cleaners sealed in their bottles. Store the bottles out of reach or in a latched cabinet. Remember, some dogs can open normal cabinets.

**Potential Hazard** – Chemicals: Includes automotive fluids, ESPECIALLY antifreeze (which is highly toxic yet very sweet), fertilizers, weed killers, mothballs, oven cleaners and more. These are often extremely toxic.

**What You Can Do** – Keep any household or automotive chemicals locked away in cabinets or storage areas. If these chemicals are in the garage, don't leave your dog in the garage unsupervised.

**Potential Hazard – Foil, Plastic Wrap and insulation:** Materials like these often have tempting food particles or grease on them, but shred quickly and

are easily swallowed. Any of these materials can cause serious internal problems, especially insulation, which is often made with fibreglass.

**What You Can Do** – Don't leave foil, wrap, insulation or similar materials lying around the house. If you use foil or wrap in the kitchen, throw it away someplace your dog cannot reach. If installing insulation doing construction, clean up all scraps.

**Potential Hazard** – Pets Control: Bug traps, rodent traps, foggers, insecticides—even your dog's own flea medication. All of these are designed to kill or trap and can cause harm to your dog. Insect traps are often sweet which is an extra temptation.

**What You Can Do** – Store these items in a locked or latched cabinet. If you have to leave insect traps out, make sure they're in places your dog can't get at them. Remember, Dalmatians have a long reach!

**Potential Hazard** – Drugs: Whether over the counter or prescription, or even your dog's own prescriptions, drugs can cause serious problems in the case of an overdose. And don't assume that 'mild' drugs are OK—even aspirin can cause serious problems.

**What You Can Do** -- Keep all medications in sealed containers away from your dog's reach. NEVER self medicate your dog. Only give drugs to your dog as instructed by a veterinarian.

**Potential Hazard** – Chocolate: This sweet treat can be toxic even in relatively small amounts. A half-ounce of baking chocolate or less per pound of dog can be very toxic.

**What You Can Do** – Don't give your dog chocolate. Keep it out of reach and don't leave it out where your dog can reach it. Again, Dalmatians are great counter cruisers!

**Potential Hazard** – Plants: Many household plants are bad for dogs and can cause problems ranging from stomach upsets to much more serious consequences. For a list, see our information on Poisonous Plants.

**What You Can Do** – Review the list of poisonous plants and make sure none of those plants are in places where your dog can reach them. Supervise your dog when you introduce a new plant to make sure your dog isn't tempted to take a bite.

**Potential Hazard** – Wires: While they seem like fun toys, wires that carry a current can electrocute a dog if chewed. Even non-connected wires are troublesome—if swallowed, they can cause internal damage

**What You Can Do** – Keep cords for lamps and other devices as short as possible. If you have to use extension cords, tack them to the baseboard so they're harder to chew.

**Potential Hazard** – Sharp Objects: Knives, forks, paper clips and sharp bits of plastic are among the hazards often found in the house. They can be swallowed and cause unseen harm or a romping dog could suffer cuts or punctures to the pads of the feet.

**What You Can Do** – Keep these items away from your dog. If you see your dog chewing such an item, get it out of his mouth immediately.

**Potential Hazard** – Universal Dangers: There are, of course, many other dangers that apply to humans as well as dogs. Falls, carbon monoxide poisoning, lead paint—if it can harm a person it will harm a dog.

**What You Can Do** – Keep your house as safe as you would for a child. Remember—dogs won't grow up and learn not to do certain things. Keeping a safe home is a lifelong commitment.

## First Aid

Accidents happen. When one happens to your dog, you may need to perform some first aid to stabilize or comfort your pet until you can get to professional help. Remember, first aid should not be the only aid your Dalmatian receives.

### **In an emergency**

In an emergency, keep a level head and get your dog to the veterinarian quickly. Call first. If your doctor's office is not open, call the nearest emergency pet clinic. Keep emergency phone numbers near your telephone.

Some quick tips on common injuries and issues:

**General Injuries:** Wrap your dog in a heavy towel or blanket to keep him warm and restrict his movements.

**Not Breathing:** Unless you have been trained to administer CPR, it is best and safest to seek immediate veterinary care. If you want to learn pet CPR, ask your veterinarian to recommend a program in your area.

**Bleeding:** Apply a pressure bandage (sterile gauze or a handkerchief) to stem or stop the bleeding.

**Burn:** Apply a cold compress or ice to a burn and gently hold it there until you get to a clinic.

**Poison:** Call your veterinarian or poison control immediately to determine if vomiting should be induced.

**Choking:** At any sign of choking (drooling, difficulty swallowing, pawing at the mouth, gagging) don't attempt to remove the item as you may push it down farther. Get to a clinic.

**Heatstroke:** Take your dog to a cool spot and sponge him with cold water. Encourage him to drink small amounts of water.

**Frostbite:** Get your dog in a warm place. Apply warm moist towels to frostbitten areas. Change them until the area becomes flushed. Severe frostbite damages paws and ear tips so see your veterinarian as soon as possible.

**Fever:** Check your dog's temperature. If it's above 103° degrees, get to your veterinarian for medication or advice. Read about taking your dog's temperature.

**In ALL cases:** It's worth repeating: Get to your veterinarian. Even small cuts can become big problems due to infection and there can be internal injuries you can't see and your dog can't tell you about.

### **First aid Kit**

Having some supplies ready in case of an emergency is a good idea. You won't have to go searching for what you need at a time of crisis. There's no need to replicate a veterinary hospital, but these basic items will come in helpful.

- ❖ Antibiotic ointment for cuts and scrapes
- ❖ A rectal thermometer—your dog's separate from everyone else's
- ❖ Tweezers—to remove thorns, stingers, splinters
- ❖ Wrap-style bandages and padding
- ❖ A blanket or large towel to wrap your dog.

# Your Dalmatians First Week Home

When you bring home a new Dalmatian dog or puppy, there will need to be some time for adjustment. By following these tips, you can lay the foundation for a long and happy life together and make the transition as easy as possible for everyone involved.

## **Plan ahead**

Make all your purchases ahead of time so you have supplies, food, toys and every thing you need ready to go, and have your house ready for your newcomer. Read about items you need to have and how to prepare your home.

## **Make time**

The best time to bring your new Dalmatian home is at the beginning of a weekend. If possible, add a few vacation days. This gives you time to acquaint your dog with its new home and begin housetraining and other training.

## **Choose a name**

Agree on a name ahead of time and make sure everyone uses it all the time when talking to your Dalmatian. This will help him recognize his name and avoid confusion.

## **See the Veterinarian**

As Soon as possible after you acquire your new Dalmatian, take your new pet to your veterinarian. Bring any immunization information you may have received when you acquire your pet to your veterinarian to begin a case history for future reference.

## **Get everyone on board**

Once in his new home, remember that your Dalmatian is adjusting to strange new surroundings and people. Children can become especially excited. Explain to them that their new friend needs time out for naps. Show children how to play nicely.

### Be a leader

Simple things like always walking through doors ahead of your Dalmatian and eating in your Dalmatian's presence before you feed him makes you look like a 'pack leader.' This will make it easier for your dog to accept that you (and your family) are in charge.

### Feed

It is best to bring home the pet food that your new Dalmatian has been eating to make the transition to a new home as easy as possible. New sights, new environment and all the attention will be very stressful. The only familiar thing may be the food he has been eating. If you plan to switch foods, you can minimize digestive upsets by having enough of the old food available to make the change a gradual one. Place food in the spot where the food dish will be kept to set a routine. If your Dalmatian doesn't seem to be eating, try moistening the food with water to make it easier to eat.

### Be fair

**NEVER** hit your Dalmatian. Never scold for something your puppy did a while ago. Your puppy will have no idea what the problem is and will think that you are mad for no reason. Instead, encourage the behaviour you want and prevent the ones you do not want. It is a much more productive approach. Learn more about behaviour issues and how to address them.

### Get out

Begin socializing your Dalmatian puppy as soon as your veterinarian gives the OK. Your Dalmatian puppy should greet and meet 100 new people by the time he's six months old. Take him out and gradually introduce him to new people and other dogs in controlled, safe settings. It is one of the most important things you can do for him. It teaches him to be a good citizen and gives him confidence and social skills.

### Make introductions

Introduce your new Dalmatian to resident pet in controlled situations – if the resident pet is a dog, perhaps on neutral ground where neither will feel the need to defend territory. Give each pet its own food dish, and give all pets attention to avoid competition.

### Do's and don'ts

Avoid bringing home a new Dalmatian during busy times such as birthdays and holidays. The noise and confusion may frighten the pet. Family

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members are generally too busy with the festivities to devote adequate time to help your dog become comfortable in his new home.

Do make sure your entire family knows how to act and agree on commands and rules. Complete cooperation of all family members is ideal. When a Dalmatian receives mixed signals, it can become confused and not know what to do.

Do have fun. Dalmatians of all ages love a good time.



# Choosing A Name For Your Dalmatian

Coming up with a name for your new Dalmatian is never easy. Do you keep a family tradition? Bend to the latest fashion? Honour a hero? Or come up with something wacky and altogether new?

A name can say a lot. Take Fido. The name is a classic “dog” name – but why? The name goes back to the Latin “fides” which means “Trustworthiness” or “protection.” It is also the root of words like “fidelity” and “confidante.”

Some starting points for this discussion can be historical figures, family members, mythical figures, qualities of your Dalmatian (his temperament or colouring) characters from books, film or television or anything else that you might have an interest in.

Here are a few suggestions:

## **Keep it simple**

One to three syllables is usually about right. Time can be of the essence when you're calling your dog; calling out a complicated name can slow things down and simply become tiresome.

## **It shouldn't rhyme with your negative words**

If you say “No” to your dog, you may want to skip names like Flo or Joe as they sound a bit too close to “No.”

## **Choose a name you really like**

You're going to be saying it for up to the next fifteen years if you're lucky. So take your time and select something you'll enjoy saying for the next decade or more.

## **Make it his word**

Use his name when you speak to your puppy. Reward him with affection and a kibble or two when he hears it and soon he will come running when he hears his special word.



## Socializing Your Dalmatian

Socialization is an ongoing process throughout your Dalmatian's life, but the most critical period is before six months of age. Quite literally, socialization means making your dog sociable. Your Dalmatian puppy should greet and meet 100 new people by the time he's six months old.

Socializing your Dalmatian puppy means providing quality time. Give him lots of attention and affection. Pet him and call him by his chosen name. Introduce him to your neighbours and 'service people' such as the mail carrier and others who come to your home regularly. Show children how to pet him.

Socializing your puppy to other dogs is important, but this does not mean letting him run free in the neighbourhood. Give your puppy the opportunity for safe, controlled interaction with dogs whose owners you know and be sure the dogs are immunized. For a Dalmatian puppy, this includes introducing him in happy ways to all sorts of people, places and things. Here are a few things you should do:

- ❖ Go to training classes
- ❖ Visit dog-loving friends
- ❖ Take your puppy on errands with you in temperate weather. (as always, NEVER leave your dog in the car in warm weather. It will become unbearably hot quickly!)
- ❖ Invite people over to your house.

Socialization isn't about forcing your puppy into scary situations but rather about creating pleasant associations with new events and faces. Things to keep in mind:

- ❖ What a Dalmatian puppy learns early in life stays with him for life.
- ❖ Between one month and three months old, a Dalmatian puppy gets almost all of his adult sensory, motor and learning abilities.
- ❖ The more loving interaction you have with your Dalmatian, the better.
- ❖ Include a little work in your play times and a lot of play in your work times. Make learning fun!

As soon as your veterinarian says it is safe, introduce him to the sights and sounds of his world. Make this fun by praising him and giving him a kibble when he explores his world.

### **Grooming**

Grooming and handling daily throughout your Dalmatian's life help make him a calmer, better-behaved, more tolerant companion. Make grooming a special time for you and your dog. Whether he needs it or not, brush him daily with much affection and reassurance so he learns to love this time together.

### **Handling his paws, tail, ears and mouth**

When your Dalmatian puppy is tired, gently handle his paws, look in his ears and open his mouth. Use your finger to gently massage his gums. This prepares him for having his teeth brushed. Praise him warmly when he allows these things. Get him use to all this early and grooming him later in life will be easy.

### **Feeding**

Utilize every opportunity to socialize your Dalmatian puppy. Make feeding time a happy experience by praising your puppy for being a good dog as you place his dish on the floor. Considerable puppy-owner bonding can occur through positive feeding experiences.

Feeding can also aid in training your puppy. As you place his food dish on the floor, give the command "Come." This introduces your puppy to an obedience command in a very positive way.

As you socialize and train your puppy, remember that puppies are eager to please. Reward your puppy for good behaviour by praising him. A little praise goes a long way in helping your Dalmatian puppy become an endearing companion.

## Dalmatian Dog Intelligence

Dalmatian dog intelligence can be measured several ways: how well or how quickly your dog can understand your meaning, figure out ways around obstacles or recognize people and things. But intelligence should not be confused with being a good companion. Smart does not always equal trainable. A smart Dalmatian might very well understand you but still choose to do something else.

The important quality of a companion dog is that he wants to please you. After all, most basic training involves conditioning your Dalmatian to listen to a command, but doesn't require that your dog 'understand' the command in the way a person does.

Some signs of intelligence are easy to spot. For example, watch how your Dalmatian uses his paws. Using paws to reach for or retrieve a ball that has rolled under a couch is one sign of intelligence.

One popular test is to show your Dalmatian a new toy, then set it on the floor and cover it with a towel. Dalmatians of above-average intelligence will make the connection between the towel and the toy and look for their toy. Other Dalmatians will think the toy simply disappeared and never look for it.

Evidence of memory can be seen in how your Dalmatian greets people he has met before. A Dalmatian with a stronger memory will not need to go back through the introduction process and will become comfortable with the visitor quickly.

Wherever your Dalmatian falls on the intelligence scale, remember that intelligence is developed through practice, just as it can be in humans. The more involved your Dalmatian is in your life, the more time you spend training and working with your dog, the more intelligent he's likely to be.

And regardless of intelligence, the important thing to know is that your Dalmatian wants to please you. Unless you really need or want a dog that can figure out how to open the refrigerator, intelligence can be overrated. For most families, the qualities to look for are gentle, tolerant and devoted – those are what make a family dog one-in-a-million.

## Understanding Dalmatian Puppies

Your Dalmatian puppy is a pack animal and he still follows the call of the wild. Your family is your puppy's pack. Who will be the leader and who will be the follower?

There are some ways to set yourself and your family as a 'Top Dog.' You want to earn your puppy's respect. That can mean being firm, but always fair. Dalmatian puppies do feel fear, but it's not useful for your dog to fear you.

### **NEVER HIT YOUR PUPPY OR DOG**

Dalmatian puppies don't have the ability to link cause and effect abstractly; that is, remember a past action and link it to your present reaction. Never scold for something your puppy did a while ago. Your puppy will have no idea what the problem is and will think you are mad at him for no reason. Only correct your Dalmatian when caught in the act.

Because Dalmatian puppies are pack animals, they crave your attention and approval. Use this to your advantage when teaching your Dalmatian.

Take the time to teach your Dalmatian puppy what you want. A puppy arrives in our world, often having just been born two or three months earlier. We should not expect him to understand anything but to love us. We get to teach him the rest – using persistence, patience and affection to shape him into the companions that we want and he is capable of becoming.

### **Your Dalmatian puppy's senses**

When you notice the way your Dalmatian puppy reacts in situations, remember that Dalmatians live in a world that looks, smells and sounds quite a bit different than ours. You might think a situation seems quiet and safe, but your Dalmatian may sense something you do not that causes agitation – a sound too high-pitched for you to hear or the scent of another animal you can't detect.

Dalmatians can see with less light, detect motion and see flickering light better than humans, but the clarity of their distance vision is typically poorer. The popular theory that dogs only see shades of gray may not be true. Some theories suggest they see blues and yellows but can't see reds and greens as humans do.

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A Dalmatian's hearing is more sensitive than yours. They hear higher pitches and lower volumes. Dalmatians are able to register sounds of 35,000 vibrations per second compared with 20,000 per second in humans. This sensitive hearing can alert you to visitors or danger, but it also means you would take care with loud noises and be patient when your Dalmatian howls at a train whistle or siren.

A Dalmatian puppy's sense of smell is much more acute than a human's – tens of thousands of times more acute by some estimations.

We'll never fully understand what their world looks like, smells like or sounds like, just as Dalmatian dogs will never even be able to understand how different our world is. But we both understand one thing: affection. Kindness crosses all barriers and lessens all differences.



## Schedules For Your Dalmatian Dog

Because Dalmatians are creatures of habit, schedules are very important. You need to schedule when to feed, water, exercise and take your dog outdoors to eliminate.

### **Why Schedule?**

For one thing, schedules will make your Dalmatian happy. Knowing what will happen and when it will happen gives your dog a sense of security. Also, schedules make it easier to train and control your Dalmatian. Housetraining in particular is generally easier with a schedule, supervision and encouragement.

### **Scheduling food and water**

Feed your Dalmatian at the same time every day, whether you feed your dog once a day or more. After 15 minutes, take away an uneaten food. Water should always be available.

### **Scheduling elimination**

Remember preventive training – it's always best to think ahead. Take your Dalmatian outside when you think he might have to eliminate, rather than wait too long and run the risk of an accident indoors. The more times you Dalmatian eliminates outdoors where you want him to, the slimmer the chance for him to have an accident indoors. The clearer the picture to your dog, the quicker he will catch on to what you want. Dalmatians really want to please you and you can show them how to do it.

Always accompany your new Dalmatian outdoors. That way, you can take him to a pre-selected area in your yard to eliminate, therefore doing away with the habit of smelling the whole yard and find the desired area. You will also be assured that your Dalmatian has eliminated before bringing him indoors and you can praise him.

### **Elimination schedules for Dalmatian puppies**

Dalmatian puppies need to go out frequently. At eight weeks old, a trip outside every hour or two during the day is suggested. By four months that can be about every three to four hours. Most puppies can make it through the night by four months of age or a bit older. By nine months or so, most Dalmatians can get by on three or four trips outside a day, though more are always appreciated to lower the risk of crystals forming in the bladder. As your Dalmatian gets into its senior years, these trips will need to be increased again.

### **Scheduling exercise and play**

Exercise is important for all Dalmatians. Many adult Dalmatians are either overweight or likely to get that way due to diet and lack of an exercise program. Lack of exercise can cause Dalmatians to exhibit destructive chewing behaviour because they become bored or are trying to burn off excess energy. Taking your dog for a 15-20 minute brisk walk can help socialize him, give you a chance to bond while doing something together and is a great way for you to get some exercise too.



## Dalmatians And Discipline

Most would agree that the day you bring the Dalmatian puppy home, you must already pick the direction in which you want to go with him.

Disciplining one is a matter of thinking and working a step ahead of your Dalmatian. Do it with love, gentleness but firmness as well.

Also, a Dalmatian that is well behaved today may not remain so forever. Dog's behaviour constantly changes; new problems can always develop and existing ones can get worse. So make the discipline constant.

Training your Dalmatian is the most important thing you will do for him and for yourself in order to have a much better relationship together.

A trained Dalmatian will listen and can safely be allowed freedom more than an untrained one.

A disciplined and well-trained Dalmatian is more confident and makes a wonderful companion that is smart, soulful, most people-oriented dog and blessed with boundless energy – a pleasure to live with.

A poorly trained dog can be a loud and destructive nuisance around the house that weighs on you more like a commitment and responsibility rather than a blessing.

### **Teach them young**

Teach them young when the Dalmatians don't know any better rather than stressing them out when they are older and more difficult to control.

It is not fair on your Dalmatian to let him pull on the leash when he is a small puppy and this doesn't hurt your hand, then to scold and shout at him if he does the same when he is big and strong and makes your arms feel like falling off the joints. It is not fair on your dog and certainly not fair on you.

Start the training some place that is familiar to your Dalmatian, where there are minimum distractions.

But remember socialization is also an important part of the training because you don't want to end up with a very shy Dalmatian.



So after both of you are skilled at several obedience commands, start taking him to different areas for practice, where there are increasing amount of distractions present. Examples are near a supermarket, busy parking lot and a busy park on Sundays. This may seem like starting all over again but you'll have a superbly trained dog at the end of it. So it's worth the effort.

### **Keep in mind Dalmatians are intelligent**

Being an intelligent dog has its own advantages and drawbacks.

They are quick to learn, both good and bad.

It also means Dalmatians have a mind of their own that would sometimes show up as stubbornness. Thus, they can be harder to train than most other breeds due to their independence.

Understand Dalmatian's intelligence/stubbornness, handle it well and you can avoid problems in disciplining and training them.

As owners, you must maintain respect between you and your Dalmatian. Respect goes both ways.

Respect their intelligence. Love them. Set the rules for behaviour. Trust them. There is no need for extreme measures to show Dalmatians that you are the top dog.

Handle their hard-headedness with patient and don't give up on their training.

And because they are stubborn, conventional obedience training may not be the most effective way to get them to listen to you.

### **Utilize their high play drive**

Utilize their high play drive for more effective obedience training.

Conduct 'play training' where by the raining tasks are made into fun games and the Dalmatian's high play drive is used as motivation. There are a lot of really good books available on this type of training.

Basically Dalmatians are intelligent and could be stubborn. So you have to outwit them!

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While training your Dalmatian, you have to make him WANT to do what you want him to. You can't make him do stuff unless it is FUN. Otherwise you are wasting both your time and his.

Your Dalmatian's favourite activities should become training, so that training becomes his favourite activity.

Dalmatians LOVE to play! You will have the happiest Dalmatian in the world and most obedient if you will just spend some time, giving them your undivided attention everyday. Otherwise they feel ignored, bored and will tear or chew things up and will not listen to you.

### **Some tried and proven tactics you can use to make your Dalmatian listen to you more.**

- ❖ When playing with your Dalmatian puppy, play at his level.

If play is encouraged at ground level, this builds your role as the dominant or top dog when you are standing and training your puppy. If the puppy is allowed to jump up and initiate play, then this can lead to unwanted jumping up as the Dalmatian gets older.

- ❖ From the very beginning, make sure your Dalmatian knows you are the master.

However, it suffice to teach your Dalmatian to obey simple commands of raising a paw in a handshake, giving a hand lick for a kiss or doing a roll over to show his submission to you. Most Dalmatians love performing these simple tricks (obedience commands) for you. There is no need for extreme measures to prove you are the boss. Obedience training should be fun and rewarding for you and your Dalmatian.

- ❖ Once it is established you are the boss, one owner declared: "Life with your Dalmatian will be just kidney bean dancin' all the way!" Another reported: "My Dalmatian wanted to be class clown at obedience class until I got serious and showed him I was the boss."
- ❖ The Dalmatian must always eat after you do.

This is the easiest way to show to your Dalmatian who is the boss. But this is easier said than done when there are many people in the family and not all would respect the rule.

- ❖ Very active young Dalmatians have short attention span.

It is best to have many short 5 to 10 minute lessons than a single, long 30-minute lesson. Keep then training session short and sweet. Lengthy sessions easily become dull, boring and tedious for both you and the Dalmatian.

- ❖ Start the training at quiet places familiar to your Dalmatian with very few things and people around to distract him.

Gradually move the training to places with more and more distractions so he will learn to obey your commands despite the distractions.

- ❖ Speak to your Dalmatian strongly but not in an angry voice.

Be kind but be firm while training and never give in to what they want. It seems cruel but in the long run you will have a much better relationship with your Dalmatian.

- ❖ Celebrate after every training session for a good job done.

Have a big play by running and throwing his favourite toys. If you give them a lot of playtime with yourself they'd listen to you more.

- ❖ Use only one work commands like 'sit,' 'down,' 'drop' and 'stay' when teaching Dalmatians. For example, when your Dalmatian gets on the lounge with you, say 'sit-down' and he should sit then lay down on your lap.

- ❖ To keep a Dalmatian from charging the front door, put up a door/gate that he can't see through or hop over.

Have him wait till people enter and come up the stairs then he gets a treat. This particular owner noticed that even when the gate is left open the Dalmatians don't usually go by unless they see a squirrel or cat.

- ❖ Finally, no matter how well trained you think your Dalmatian is, he has an attention span of seconds!

Don't let him run away because he'll just keep going and going. Always keep him leashed outdoors if not in a fenced area. He can run faster then you and you will not catch him if he runs for the road. If your Dalmatian does get away from you, call his name loudly to get his attention and then run away from him, with hopes that he'll turn to chase you.

## Becoming Pack Leader

There is no equality in dogdom. You're either ahead or behind your Dalmatian in line and that is decided by how you interact with your dog. Being a good leader means being calm, kind and consistent. Here are a few suggestions.

Teach your Dalmatian to control his mouth. If he mouths or nips you, react with a startling 'No biting!' This will teach him that you are not another puppy and he needs to treat you differently.

Have him 'sit' or 'down' before you give him anything he wants, from petting to tossing a toy. When he responds to you before you respond to him, he will start to look to you to set the rules, while at the same time getting in daily training practice.

Practice submission exercises daily. These include holding him in your arms or on his side and speaking to him gently until he stops squirming. When he stops, release him, praise and give him a kibble of food. Gently handle his ears, mouth and paws so he learns to accept this. These exercises are easy with most Dalmatians but if your dog really struggles or gets upset, seek assistance from a qualified dog professional.

Use tone of voice to communicate. A higher than normal pitch is exciting and playful and perfect for praise. A normal tone – direct and confident – is your command tone. A lower voice your Dalmatian hears as a warning, like a growl. With practice, your puppy can learn to understand your mood through your tone of voice.

When you get home, you and your family should eat in your Dalmatian's presence before setting out the dog food. Among dogs, the most important dog always eats first.

Remember: Pack Leaders NEVER share their food with other dogs. If you follow all of the steps above and then give your dog table scraps and bites of your sandwich you are sending mixed signals to your Dalmatian.

If you do these things consistently, you can elevate yourself in your Dalmatian's eyes, which can make all the difference in training.

# House Training Your Dalmatian Puppy

Whilst house training your Dalmatian puppy may not be a priority in choosing a new dog it usually springs to the top once the little chap gets home! I am often surprised at the number of people who find housetraining puppies so hard.

When you bring a new Dalmatian dog or puppy home, you should move to establish a routine as soon as possible. The faster you get things on track, the fewer mistakes you'll have to clean up. Although there are different strategies and ways of housetraining a puppy or dog, the following instructions are a good way to teach your pet to eliminate outdoors.

## House training step by step

House training can take different amounts of time for different Dalmatians. But by applying schedules, setting boundaries for where elimination is acceptable, a verbal command, praise and crate training, you should see progress quickly.

The good news is that you can banish the idea of having a house full of smelly old newspapers for the first six months of puppy potty training!

Dalmatians like most animals are naturally born/raised in a 'nest' environment and will want to move away from the 'nest' to complete their potty functions. This makes housetraining puppies easier than you may think. Most dogs will start doing this by themselves after about 3 weeks of age – your job is to make sure that when they start this natural process, they know where the 'right place' to go is!

Consistency and perseverance are the watch-words for all types of training and especially for house training puppies. For successful puppy potty training it is essential that each time an activity changes you take your puppy/dog outside to the nominated place to do his 'business.'

- ❖ Every hour up to the age of about 8/9 weeks
- ❖ Shortly after each feeding
- ❖ After playing
- ❖ After exercise
- ❖ After other excitement (visitors, etc)
- ❖ After a nap
- ❖ Last thing at night before retiring
- ❖ First thing in the morning

Corrections and punishments for indoor accidents will only teach your puppy not to eliminate around you (even when outdoors,) but won't stop him from eliminating indoors when you're not around. If you catch the puppy in the act, say "NO!" sharply and carry the puppy outside.

**WARNING! Avoid giving your Dalmatian the message that relieving himself is wrong. Don't rub his nose in the mess and don't hit him with a newspaper.**

When house training dogs praise is absolutely critical and the praise must be for the act of doing the business –not for going outside or for coming back in – dogs associate actions with praise – so catching them in the act is key to all successful training.

Choose some words that you will use for each act and stick with them – this will pay dividends throughout your dog's life. Remember to choose words you are happy to use in public.

Make sure you feed your Dalmatian at regular times every day as this makes bathroom breaks regular as well. Feed your puppy 2-3 times a day.

About 15 minutes after he is finished eating, take him to a grassy 'potty area.' Speak the words 'go potty' or 'go in the grass' before and while he's eliminating. Be sure to praise him when he is done.

What you are doing is building word associations with your Dalmatian that will allow you to encourage his potty activity on command.

This comes in handy when you and your Dalmatian are at unusual locations and at pit stops during long haul travel. It also saves you from cleaning unwanted fecal material off the carpet at home.

In the early days of house training your Dalmatian it is important to let your puppy/dog out during the night. You will quickly learn to recognize the difference between cries for attention and cries for a real need – this is the only way your puppy/dog can let you know, so it is vital that you respond. However, this nighttime requirement must be for business only, praise for doing the job and then straight back to bed – just like with children. If you are not strict with this, you will very quickly find yourself with a nighttime play routine, which your puppy/dog will adore!

It is a good idea to train your puppy to use a place where you can easily clean up and dispose of the droppings into the sewer. This is because worms that infect dogs and make them sick get spread around through the eggs or larvae found in the feces. Some, like the roundworm can infect children.

## House Training Accidents

Housetraining accidents can be frustrating but finding a mistake in the house can mean more than that your dog simply isn't housetrained. Before you blame your Dalmatian, look at all the possible reasons.

### Why Dalmatian dogs have accidents

Once you find the cause of a dog's accidents, a solution often becomes evident.

Common causes include:

- ❖ A medical condition such as a urinary tract infection or parasites. If your dog urinates small amounts frequently, suspect a urinary tract infection and contact your veterinarian.
  
- ❖ Territorial marking. If your Dalmatian is intact and lifting his leg in the house, he may be marking his territory. This is a behaviour training issue, not a housetraining issue.
  
- ❖ Anxiety or fear caused by being alone or some outside event like construction or loud noises.
  
- ❖ Confusion about what is expected, which means your Dalmatian is not actually housetrained.

### Solving the problem

Step one to resolving this problem is finding the cause and your first stop is the veterinarian. Once a medical condition is ruled out, then these basic steps should help get you back on track.

- ❖ Schedule food, water and exercise. This will help make the digestive system more predictable.
- ❖ Crate train your Dalmatian
- ❖ Try to catch hi in the act and dist4ract him by saying 'Arrrr' or 'No' in a serious tone. This should stop him in mid-stream. Then take him outside to finish the job.
- ❖ Always praise your Dalmatian and offer a kibble of food as a treat for relieving himself where and when you want. This will strengthen and reinforce good habits.
- ❖ Clean up accidents with a good order remover so no lingering smell attracts him back to that spot.
- ❖ Make sure your Dalmatian isn't left alone too long. If you work, either come home midday, hire a walker or leave your pup in a small, safe area on papers. Do not put papers inside a crate.

If your Dalmatian is having accidents the moment he or she is left alone, please seek the help of a qualified dog trainer or behaviour professional, as this may be a sign of separation anxiety.

### Do's and don'ts

- ❖ Do get Dalmatian puppies outside at least 8 times a day, adult Dalmatians at least 6 times.
- ❖ Don't punish your dog after the fact – you'll just give your Dalmatian another source of fear, which could lead to more accidents.
- ❖ Don't rub your Dalmatian's nose in the mess – this will scare him.
- ❖ Do control where and when your Dalmatian goes to the bathroom by using a crate, regular routine and close supervision.



# Crate Training Your Dalmatian

Unfortunately, most Dalmatian dog owners do not use crates for their Dalmatians, however most expert trainers, reputable breeders and veterinarians recommend them.

Providing your Dalmatian puppy or dog with an indoor kennel crate can satisfy many dogs' need for a den-like enclosure. Besides being an effective house training too (because it takes advantage of your Dalmatian's natural reluctance to soil its sleeping place,) it can also help to reduce separation anxiety, to prevent destructive behaviour (such as chewing furniture,) to keep a puppy away from potentially dangerous household items (i.e., poisons, electrical wire etc,) and to serve as a mobile indoor dog house which can be moved from room to room whenever necessary.

A kennel crate also serves as a travel cabin for your Dalmatian when traveling by car or plane. Additionally, most hotels which accept dogs on their premises require them to be crated while in the room to prevent damage to hotel furniture and rugs.

Most Dalmatians which have been introduced to the kennel crate while still young grow up to prefer their crate to rest in or "hang-out" in. Therefore a crate (or any other area of confinement) should **NEVER** be used for the purpose of punishment.

We recommend that you provide a kennel crate throughout your Dalmatian's lifetime. Some crates allow for the removal of the door once it is no longer necessary for the purpose of training. The crate can be placed under a table or a tabletop can be put on top of it to make it both unobtrusive and useful.

## Why crate train your Dalmatian?

Here are eight good reasons why you should use a crate for your Dalmatian.

1. Dogs in the wild live in a den, which provides protection and a great deal of psychological satisfaction. All dogs, including Dalmatians have a strong natural tendency to seek out this type of shelter.
2. In your home, if your dog has no place to call his own, he will make feeble attempts to curl up under a table, chair or some other choice location.
3. It also avoids unnecessary stress on your Dalmatian dog if an overnight visit at the veterinaries is necessary. Having the security of a crate will make your Dalmatian more at ease.

4. When you use a crate, you give your Dalmatian a place to feel secure...something to get his back up against. He won't feel isolated because the crate provides essential visibility and ventilation. Just like a baby in a play pen.
5. You will also be taking advantage of your Dalmatian's natural instinct to keep his home clean, therefore, when he has to "go" he will try to hold it until you can take him outside to the proper area. This will teach him a schedule and help him eliminate accidents.
6. With a crate, your Dalmatian puppy will have fewer behavioural problems like excessive barking and chewing.
7. Crates make comfortable and safe places for your Dalmatian to travel in.
8. But most of all, by providing him a safe and secure home, he'll be happier and more self-confident.

### Buying a crate

Where to buy a crate: crates can be purchased through most pet supply outlets, through pet mail order catalogues and through most professional breeders. There are a number of crate manufacturers like Vari-Kennels, which is my preference for their sturdiness.

Your Dalmatian should be able to stand up and turn around comfortably. Individual dogs within a breed can vary in size. You may decide a crate one size small or larger might be best for your Dalmatian. For my females I use the Vari-Kennel 400 which is 36Lx24Wx26H and for the males the Vari-Kennel 500 which is 40 Lx27Wx30H.

Crates can cost between \$35.00 and \$250.00 depending on the size and type of crate and source.

The cost of not using a crate:

Your shoes

- ❖ Books
- ❖ Table legs
- ❖ Chairs and sofas
- ❖ Throw rugs and carpet
- ❖ Electric, telephone and computer wires
- ❖ Huge veterinary bills
- ❖ The real cost however...your puppy's life.

### Location of your Dalmatians crate

Whenever possible, place the crate near or next to you when you are home. This will encourage your Dalmatian to go inside it without his feeling lonely or isolated when you go out. A central room in the home (i.e.: living room or kitchen) or a large hallway near the entrance is a good place to crate your puppy.

### Preparing the crate

**NEVER under any circumstances do you leave a collar and tags on your Dalmatian while in a crate!**

Var-Kennel Type: Take the crate apart, removing the screws, the top and the door. Allow your pup to go in and out of the bottom half of the crate before attaching the top half. This stage can require anywhere from several hours to a few days. This step can be omitted in the case of young pup who accepts crating right away.

Wire Mesh Type: Tie the crate door back so that it stays open without moving or shutting closed. If the crate comes with a floor pan, place a piece of cardboard or towel between the floor or crate bottom and the floor pan in order to keep it from rattling.

### Furnishing your Dalmatian puppy's crate

Toys and treats: Place your Dalmatian's favourite toy and treats at the far end opposite the door opening. These toys may include the Tuffy, Billy, Kong, Nylabone or a ball. Toys and balls should always be inedible and large enough to prevent their being swallowed. Any fragmented toys should be removed to prevent choking and internal obstruction. You may also place a sterilized marrow bone filed with cheese or dog treats in the crate.

Water: A small container of ice water should be attached to the crate if your puppy is to be confined for more than two hours in the crate.

Bedding: Place a towel or blanket inside the crate to create a soft comfortable bed for the puppy. If you puppy chews the towel, remove it to prevent him from swallowing or choking on the pieces. Although most Dalmatian puppies prefer lying on soft bedding, some may prefer to rest on a hard, flat surface and may push the towel to one end of the crate to avoid it. The towel helps absorb any accidents in the crate. Make sure you check the towel after each use.

### Introducing the crate to your puppy

In order that your Dalmatian puppy associate his/her kennel crate with comfort, security and enjoyment, please follow these guidelines:

1. Occasionally throughout the day, drop small pieces of kibble or dog biscuits in the crate. While investigating his new crate, your Dalmatian pup will discover edible treasures, thereby reinforcing his positive association with the crate. You may also feed him in the crate to create the same effect. If the dog hesitates, it often works to feed him in front of the crate, then right inside the doorway and the finally, in the back of the crate.
2. In the Beginning, praise and pet your puppy when he enters. Do not try to push, pull or force him into the crate. At this early stage of introduction only inductive methods are suggested. Overnight exception: You may need to place your Dalmatian in his crate and shut the door upon retiring. (In most cases, the crate should be placed next to your bed overnight.)
3. You may also play this enjoyable and educational game with your Dalmatian puppy: Without alerting your puppy, drop a small dog biscuit into the crate. Then call your puppy and say to him, "Where's the cookie? It's in your room." Using only a friendly, encouraging voice, direct your puppy toward his crate. When the puppy discovers the treat, give enthusiastic praise. The cookie will automatically serve as a primary reward. Your pup should be free to leave the crate at all time during this game. Later on, your puppy's toy or ball can be substituted for the cookie.
4. It is advisable first to crate your Dalmatian for short periods of time **while you are home with him**. In fact, crate training is best accomplished while you are in the room with your Dalmatian. Getting him used to your absence from the room in which he is crated is a good first step. This prevents an association being made with the crate and you're leaving him/her alone.
5. Do not release the Dalmatian while he/she is crying or whining. Open the door while he is quiet thus rewarding his/her good behaviour.

### Important reminders

Dalmatian puppies under 4 months of age have little bladder or sphincter control. Puppies under 3 months have even less. Very young puppies under 8 weeks should not be crated, as they need to eliminate very frequently (usually 8-12 times or more daily.)

1. Collars: Always remove your puppy or dog's collar before confining in the crate. Even flat buckle collar can occasionally get stuck on the bars or wire mesh of a crate. If you must leave a collar on the pup when you crate him (e.g.: for his identification tag,) use a safety 'break away' collar.
2. Warm Weather: Do not crate a Dalmatian when temperatures reach an uncomfortable level. Cold water should be always be available to puppies, especially during warm weather. **(Never leave an unsupervised Dalmatian on a terrace, roof or inside a car during warm weather. Also keep outdoor exercise periods brief until the hot weather subsides.)**
3. Be certain that your Dalmatian has fully eliminated shortly before being crated. Be sure that the crate you are using is not too large to discourage your puppy from eliminating in it. Rarely does a Dalmatian eliminate in the crate if it is properly sized and your dog is an appropriate age to be crated a given amount of time. If your Dalmatian continues to eliminate in the crate, the following may be the causes:
  - ❖ Your Dalmatian is too young to have much control
  - ❖ Your Dalmatian has a poor or rich diet, or very large meals
  - ❖ Your Dalmatian did not eliminate prior to being confined
  - ❖ Your Dalmatian has worms
  - ❖ Your Dalmatian has gaseous or loose stools
  - ❖ Your Dalmatian drank large amounts of water prior to being crated
  - ❖ Your Dalmatian has been forced to eliminate in small confined areas prior to crate training
  - ❖ Your Dalmatian is suffering from a health condition or illness (i.e., bladder infection, prostate problem, etc)
  - ❖ Your Dalmatian is experiencing severe separation anxiety when left alone.

### Accidents in the crate

If your Dalmatian puppy messes in his crate while you are out, do not punish him upon your return. Simply wash out the crate using a pet order neutralizer (such as Nature's Miracle, Nilodor or Outright.) Do not use ammonia-based products as their order resembles urine and may draw your Dalmatian back to urinate in the same spot again.

Dalmatian puppies purchased in pet stores or puppies which were kept solely in small cages or other similar enclosures at a young age (between 7 and 16 weeks of age) may be considerably harder to house train using the crate training method due to their having been forced to eliminate in their sleeping area during this formative stage of development.

This is the time when most puppies are learning to eliminate outside their den or sleeping area. Confining them with their waste products retards the house training process, and this problem can continue though out a dog's adult life.

#### Crating duration guidelines

9-10 weeks	approx. 30-60 minutes
11-14 weeks	approx. 1-2 hours
15-16 weeks	approx. 3-4 hours
17+ weeks	approx. 4-6 hours maximum

Except for overnight, neither puppies nor dogs should be crated for more than 5 hours, 6 hours maximum!

#### The crate as a punishment

The crate as a punishment NEVER use the crate as a form of punishment or reprimand for your puppy or dog. This simply causes the dog to fear and resent the crate. If correctly introduced to his crate, your puppy should be happy to go into his crate at any time. You may however use the crate as a brief time-out for your puppy as a way of discouraging nipping or excessive rowdiness.

#### Children and the crate

Do not allow children to play in your Dalmatian's crate or to handle your dog while he/she is in the crate. The crate is your Dalmatian's private sanctuary. His/her rights to privacy should always be respected.

### **Barking in the crate**

In most cases a Dalmatian puppy that cries incessantly in his crate has either been crated too soon (without taking the proper steps as outlined above) or is suffering from separation anxiety and is anxious about being left alone. Some Dalmatians may simply not have enough exercise. Others may not have enough attention paid to them. Try increasing the amount of exercise and play you dog receives daily.

### **Accidents in the crate**

Do not crate your puppy or dog if:

- ❖ Your Dalmatian is too young to have sufficient bladder or sphincter control
- ❖ Your Dalmatian has loose stools. Loose stools can be caused by: worm, illness, intestinal upsets such as colitis, too much and/or wrong kinds of food, quick changes to the dogs diet, or stress, fear or anxiety.
- ❖ Your Dalmatian is vomiting.
- ❖ You must leave him crated for more than the Crating Duration Guideline suggested.
- ❖ Your Dalmatian has not eliminated shortly before being placed inside the crate. (see House training Guidelines for exceptions.)
- ❖ The temperature is excessively high.
- ❖ Your Dalmatian has not had sufficient exercise, companionship and socialization.

### **Alternative methods of confining your Dalmatian puppy**

There are alternative methods to crating very young Dalmatian puppies and puppies that must be left alone in the house for lengths of time exceeding the recommended maximum duration of confinement.

Try the following:

Use a small to medium-sized room space such as a kitchen with non-porous floor. Purchase an exercise pen, high enough so the puppy does not get over the top. Set up the crate on one end, the food and water a few feet away and some newspaper (approx 2'x3' to 3'x3') using a 3 to 4 layer thickness, several feet away from his crate.

## Basic Dalmatian Obedience Training

Dalmatians are born cute, the rest you have to teach. Good Dalmatian puppy training is the key to a well behaved dog. Good dog behaviour makes your Dalmatian a pleasure to own and a credit to you as it's owner – this is why it is important to teach your dog to respond to simple commands.

No training routine should be a chore; it should be fun for both of you and will bring many benefits for years to come. It is extremely satisfying owning a well behaved dog, but the early steps of dog training require consistency, understanding and unlimited patience to make training puppies easy!

### 10 Top Tips To Ensure Dalmatian Training Success

1. Make training fun for both of you. If you and your dog are enjoying yourselves, you're more likely to succeed.
2. Before you start your training session for the day, have your goals in mind.
3. Be patient and progress gradually.
4. Don't make the sessions too long, avoid boredom (for both of you.)
5. Reward good behaviour with praise and treats
6. Never shout at or punish your Dalmatian
7. Teach one thing at a time.
8. Always use the same command words for the same actions – and make sure the rest of your family does too.
9. Keep training sessions short. 3 short sessions of 5-10 minutes each will teach your dog more than 1 30-minute session.
10. Timing is everything in dog training. Video yourself or have a friend watch you to make sure that you reward your dog as he does the behaviour you ask for – not afterwards! Studies have shown that one of the biggest differences between pro trainers and amateurs is that the pros give their rewards in a timely manner while the amateurs are late.



Dalmatians are born with an inherent desire to please and this natural trait is maximised with enthusiastic training combined with a reward system. Always reward good dog behaviour – this means every single time he is obedient and responds correctly to your commands. Rewards based dog training is without doubt the most effective.

Dalmatian puppies, just like babies, learn from trial and error – so if your dog burns his nose on the fire, it is extremely unlikely that he would ever do it a second time! If he barks for attention and everyone ignores him, he will soon give up. However, it is easy for your dog obedience training to go wrong if he does something wrong and is rewarded, like raiding the bin and finding food, as then he is likely to repeat it.

Repeat rewarding good dog behaviour and stopping doing the things that are unpleasant or unrewarding is the basis of all learning experience. In order to train your dog/puppy you simply need to exploit this process and manipulate situations so that he learns what you want him to do.

All Dalmatian puppies (and humans!) learn more quickly and retain more of what they have learned, if they do not feel under stress. This means that puppy training using rewards is far more effective and sustainable than teaching using punishment. It is important to create a feeling of trust between you and your dog/puppy whilst using any puppy training techniques – this allows your dog to find new ways of earning rewards, without the fear of being wrong.

Rewards when puppy training can be anything that your dog/puppy wants – the most obvious is food, however pleasant social contact, verbal praise (usually accompanied by that high pitched, excited, squeaky voice that we do so naturally!) and physical praise, strokes on the back and/or chest also works really well – but not pats on the head, who would enjoy that!

The quickest and easiest way to train a happy working dog is with food. You can use the food to lure your dog into position and to make the behaviour really rewarding for your dog. Don't worry – you'll fade the use of food out quickly!

Games with toys are good puppy training rewards – but just like humans, different dogs are motivated by different things. You will need to find out what motivates your dog and what is the most successful puppy training reward and therefore will work best.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

Sometimes we expect too much from our dogs too soon. Dalmatians are really bad about generalizing. Just because they know 'sit' in the living room, this does not mean that they know what 'sit' means in the park. You'll have to practice each new command in a variety of places before your dog knows it everywhere. But remember, the more commands you teach your dog, the more quickly he'll generalize new ones!

The secret is to make your Dalmatian training positive and fun.



# Training Your Dalmatian To Sit

## Step 1

Get a good supply of small food treats. Take them and your Dalmatian into a quiet room.

## Step 2

Hold a treat just over and above your Dalmatian's nose. Slowly draw it straight up so that your dog's nose follows the food. He'll sit when you do so to keep the food in sight. Don't give any command at this stage!

## Step 3

As your dog is sitting (be quick!) praise your dog and give him the treat! Repeat until your dog is sitting quickly when he sees the food move. Take a break.

## Step 4

Get ready with your dog and food as for the first session. Take a piece of food, say 'sit,' and then lure your dog into position. Praise and treat. Repeat until your Dalmatian is starting to sit as you say the word 'sit. Take a break!

## Step 5

Now you start to fade the food. Get ready as you did for the last session. Say 'sit.; When your Dalmatian sits, praise and pet your dog! Repeat the 'sit,' but this time give your dog a treat for sitting. Repeat, giving your Dog a treat at random times. Remember the 'jackpot principle' referred to in my first article!

## Step 6

Now you can start to generalize. Ask your Dalmatian to sit in different locations. Only give the command once. If your Dalmatian does not respond, you may need to lure a few sits with food first in the first few new locations. Randomly treat the sits. Keep practicing in new locations until your dog reliably sits on the first command no matter where you are.

## Step 7

Remember to always release the dog after the exercise. Giving a command like "OK" will let him know that he is now free to move.

Congratulations – you have trained your Dalmatian to sit.

# Training Your Dalmatian To Stay

## Step 1

Get a supply of small, tasty treats Go into a quiet room. Have your Dalmatian sit. Hold a treat in your hand and let your dog know you have it. As your dog reaches for it, close your hand. The instant your dog pulls his head away, even a bit, praise and let him have the treat. Timing is important here! Repeat until your dog does not go for the treat, but instead instantly pulls back.

## Step 2

Repeat Step 1, but wait for a second or two after your Dalmatian pulls back before giving the treat and praise. Make sure you treat/praise while your dog is sitting! If he gets up, walk a couple of steps away and try again. Repeat until your dog is sitting for 5 seconds. Stay right by your dog while doing this! The commonest reason that people have trouble-teaching stay is they try to leave their dogs too quickly. If your Dalmatian won't stay when you are next to him, he certainly won't stay when you walk away! Making sure your dog is always successful in this step before you move on will make later learning much more successful.

## Step 3

Continue step 2, but now tell your dog 'stay' as you show the treat and give a release word like 'OK' when you give your Dalmatian the treat. Work until your dog will sit with you right in front of him for 30 seconds. If your dog gets up, quietly say something like 'uh-uh' and try again. You want your dog to learn that 'uh-uh' means that he won't get the reward.

After your dog makes a mistake, scale back your criterion a bit. For example, if he got up after 15 seconds, go back to sitting for 10 seconds for the few tries, and then try 15 seconds again. If your dog makes more than 1 or 2 mistakes in a row then you are hurrying too fast. Move back to what your dog can do successfully and build from there.

## Step 4

Repeat step 3, but begin to move away from your dog just a little bit-for example, take 1 step backward then return. Then take a step to one side, then the other. Repeat until you can walk a tiny circle around your dog. Again, if your dog gets up, say 'uh-uh' and try again. Remember not to hurry.

## Step 5

Repeat step 4, but start walking up to 5 steps away from your Dalmatian. Continue until your dog will stay for 30 seconds while you walk no more than the 5 steps away.

### Step 6

Start doing stays in areas with some distractions and in new areas. When first practicing in a new area, go back to very short stays right in front of you and only do more when your dog is successful. Repeat until your dog will stay in a new area for 30 seconds with you 5 steps away.

### Step 7

Very slowly lengthen the distance you go when you walk away to 30 feet and up to 1 minute. Remember not to hurry!

### Step 8

You can train a down-stay in the same way, starting at step 1. It should go much faster now that your dog knows something about staying.

Congratulations – you have trained your Dalmatian to stay!

## Training Your Dalmatian The Down Command

### Step 1

Get a good supply of small food treats. Take them and your dog into a quiet room.

### Step 2

Hold a treat just in front of your Dalmatian's nose. Slowly draw it down and between your dog's front legs towards the ground. He'll lie down as he follows the food. Don't give any command at this stage! If your dog has a hard time with this, hold the treat under a chair or table where he'll have to lay down to get it.

### Step 3

When your dog's elbows touch the floor (be quick!) praise him and give him the treat! Repeat until your dog is laying down quickly when he sees the food move. Take a break.

### Step 4

Get ready with your dog and food as for the first session. Take a piece of food, say 'Down' and then lure your dog into position. It helps if you point to the ground, using a motion similar to the way you used the food lure (you can use this later as a signal to your dog.) Praise and treat. Repeat until your dog is starting to lie down when you say the word 'down.' Take a break.

### Step 5

Now you can start to fade the food. Get ready as you did for the last session. Say 'down.' When your dog lies down, praise and let your dog! Repeat the 'down,' but this time give your dog a treat for lying down. Repeat, giving your dog a treat at random times. Remember the 'jackpot principle' referred to in my first article!

### Step 6

Now you can start to generalize. Ask your Dalmatian to lie down in different locations. Depending on your dog, you may need to lure a few downs with food first in the first few new locations. Randomly treat the down. Keep practicing in new locations until your dog reliably lays down on the first command no matter where you are.

Congratulations – you have trained your Dalmatian to lie down!

# Training Your Dalmatian To Come

The 'come' command is one that is routinely disobeyed by many Dalmatians and often for good reason!

To start with, here are a few rules for teaching 'come.'

- ❖ NEVER call your Dalmatian to you for anything he may perceive as negative – scolding, baths, nail clipping, pill-giving etc. If you need to give your dog a bath or pill, go get your dog! 'Come' should always be a command your dog is happy to hear.
- ❖ Never call your Dalmatian when you can't reinforce the command or haven't trained your dog to respond to the command. You are just teaching your dog to ignore you.
- ❖ If your Dalmatian already routinely ignores the word 'come' pick a new command word like 'here' or 'front' to use when training him to come.

Remember, as with all exercise give commands only once and expect your Dalmatian to respond.

## Step 1

Get a good supply of small food treats. Take them and your dog into a quiet room; one where you have enough room to take several steps backwards and where there is nothing of great interest to your dog.

## Step 2

When your dog is a few steps away from you and not looking at you, say "Rover, come!" in a happy, high-pitched voice. As he turns to you, back up quickly so he has to run to catch you (the chase instinct is a powerful motivator for most dogs!) As he reaches you, lure him into a sit in front of you and give him treats and praise! Repeat until he is running up to you at the sound of your call. Take a break!

## Step 3

Repeat the step above. Now however, before you give your Dalmatian his treat, take a hold of his collar as he sits. Feed him while you hold his collar. As you release the collar, say "Go play!" This step ensures that you can control your dog when he gets to you. Without this training, lots of dogs will just run up to you and run circles around you when you call them! Repeat until he is sitting in front of you and you can take his collar every time you call him.

### Step 4

Now move to the back yard. Repeat Step 2 above. If your dog does not come as soon as you call him, turn and run as you call him. He'll run to catch up!

It is best to train this without a leash (after all, most of the times you want your dog to come to you, he'll be off-leash,) but if your dog isn't responding, put him on a leash. Do not let the leash get tight, unless you have to run backwards and do not jerk the leash or yell at your dog. Even if you need to use the leash, make sure to praise and pet your dog when he gets to you. Save the treats for the times he responds right away. After a few sessions with the leash on, let it drag, picking it up only if your dog does not respond to the command. Then remove it.

### Step 5

For this step, you'll need a 'long line.' You can use a 50' piece of clothesline or a special long nylon leash. Practice in your back yard or fenced area. Let your Dalmatian drag the line; do not pick it up. Let your dog wander away, if he starts to go too far, step on the line, but try to call him before he goes too far.

When he's about 10' away, call him. If he responds right away, teats and lots of praise! If he doesn't respond, run backwards as in step 4 above. Remember to praise and pet as he comes to you. If he does not come even when you run backwards, take a hold of the line and give it a gentle tug. Praise and pet him when he comes to you.

Save the treats for the times he responds right away. Repeat until he is running up to you at the sound of your call every time. Don't forget to take a hold of the collar and release him with a 'go play' command. Take lots of breaks.

### Step 6

Repeat step 5 above, but gradually let your dog go a little further before you call him. When he comes every time from 50' go to step 7

### Step 7

Repeat Step 6 in many different areas until your Dalmatian is absolutely reliable. Gradually introduce distractions such as people nearby, other dogs, food, etc. If your dog is distracted, shorten the leash and work until he comes even with the distraction. When your dog comes every time, even with distractions, go to step 8.



## The Dapper Dalmatian

### Step 8

In a safe, fenced area, remove the leash. Let your Dalmatian get some distance away. Call him. If he comes right away (he should!) HAVE A PARTY!

If not, walk him down. Do not yell or get mad, but calmly walk up to your dog and take him by the collar (no matter how long it takes you to catch him!) Quickly walk him back to where you first called, giving the collar short shakes and saying something like “I said ‘come!’” At the point where you called him, release him and then call again. He should come straight to you – most dogs need only one or two collar shakes to know you mean business. Repeat until he comes every time.

Congratulations – you have taught your Dalmatian to come!



## How To Train Your Dalmatian To Walk Nicely

This method relies on the fact that dogs out for a walk like to go somewhere. It is very effective.

### Step 1

Put your Dalmatian on a leash, preferably a 4-foot one. From now on, you will tolerate no pulling. Every time your dog pulls, immediately stop. Plant your feet and do not move. As long as your dog pulls, stay stationary. But, the minute your dog lets up the tension on the leash, praise and continue walking. Don't expect to get very far the first walk. You may not even get out the door! When your dog is properly close to you, give him praise and an occasional treat – and the opportunity to keep walking!

### Step 2

Most Dalmatians learn very quickly that they don't get to go anywhere if they pull. If you have a really recalcitrant dog, instead of just stopping, every time your dog pulls, quickly turn and walk in the opposite direction. Be prepared to get a bit dizzy! As soon as this method starts having results, switch back to just stopping.

### Step 3

If you have a very large or strong Dalmatian, consider using a head halter. These work like the bridle on a horse – where the head goes, the body must follow. They are not muzzles. A couple popular brands are Halti and Gentle Leader. It is impossible for a dog to pull while wearing a head halter.

## How To Train Your Dalmatian To Fetch

Teaching your Dalmatian to fetch is one of the easiest commands, simply because it is his nature to carry things in his mouth.

The best items to use when trying to teach your Dalmatian to fetch or retrieve items back to you is his favourite toys.

It is a good idea to first teach your Dalmatian to stay before you teach him fetching, that way you can throw or hide his toy before allowing him to find, retrieve and bring the toy back to your.

### Step 1

Begin by commanding your dog to sit and toss his toy a few steps away from where he is positioned, so that he can clearly see it. Then ask him to find it by using the command 'Find' 'Toy' or the name of the toy. As soon as he goes to the toy, even if he doesn't touch it, praise him instantly and give him a treat. Continue repeating this manoeuvre, praising him each time and try to encourage him to pick up the toy in his mouth. Once he picks up the toy, praise him and give him a treat. And then give him back the toy and play with him for a while.

### Step 2

As soon as your Dalmatian has learned how to retrieve the toy, you will then need to begin working on getting him to bring the toy to you. The first time he comes running to you with the toy, praise him right away and give him a treat. After the first time, only praise him when he puts the toy in your hand. You can help him accomplish this by trading the toy for a treat. Do this 2 times, then put the toy away and act like you're done playing. End the game on your terms. He will be more excited the next time you play retrieving.

### Step 3

Once your dog is able to easily retrieve and give you the toy, you can then begin to proceed with more advanced retrieving exercises, such as randomly hiding toys or other objects somewhere in the house or outside and give him the command to 'find' the toy. His task is to bring you the object or toy that is hidden which contains human scent. You will find that teaching your Dalmatian to retrieve is not only a fun game he will enjoy, but it can be quite useful if you ever lose an item.

The more practice your dog has at it, the better he will get. Remember to always praise him.

Congratulations – you have taught your Dalmatian how to fetch!

## How To Train Your Dalmatian To Swim

By nature, Dalmatians are known as paddlers rather than swimmers. Just like people, they need to be introduced to the water before they jump in, as a bad water experience could lead to them having a fear of water, making it nearly impossible for you to ever encourage your Dalmatian to swim.

The best time to teach your Dalmatian to swim is when he is still a puppy, but this doesn't mean you can't teach an older dog to swim. It only implies that the process for an adult Dalmatian may be more of a challenge, but the training process is identical.

### Step 1

Choose a warm day and take your Dalmatian to a calm pond or lake and bring someone along with you, as you will need them to help you with the task. You will need to wade into the water with your puppy, up to your knees so make sure you are wearing shorts or swimwear. The other person should be waiting on shore.

Hold your puppy by placing one hand under his belly and use the other to gently hold the base of his tail and lower him into the water without letting him go.

Your Dalmatian should instinctively begin to paddle with his paws,. Encourage him with words of praise, but don't give him any toys or treats as this will only distract him from the task at hand – you will find that words will go a long way.

### Step 2

As soon as your Dalmatian begins a stronger paddle, let go of his belly, but continue to hold on to the base of his tail to support his back end and make it level with the front of his body. Continue to give him praise.

It is very important that you keep your Dalmatian's front and back end level during the first few swimming lessons until he can do the manoeuvre himself, as swimming vertically will be very difficult for your dog.

### Step 3

As soon as you feel that your dog will be able to stay afloat on his own, have the other person begin to attract the dog's attention by acting excited and vigorously calling him to come.

As soon as your Dalmatian begins to paddle even stronger, release your hold on him and let him make his way towards the other person on shore.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

Make sure you follow after him closely in case you need to scoop him out of the water if he stops swimming.

If your dog is successful and reaches the shore,, praise him immensely and reward him.

Each time you repeat the lesson, increase the distance from the shore.

If however, your dog is having a difficult time making it to the shore, decrease the distance and slowly begin to increase only when he makes progress.

With continuous lessons, before long you will have taught your Dalmatian how to swim confidently – Congratulations!



## How To Stop Your Dalmatian Jumping Up

Dalmatians are very excitable and tend to very 'bouncy' particularly when they meet people.

Jumping Dalmatians are a traditional greeting at doors across America. Guests hat it. Owners hat it. And dogs are having a field day because they get more attention than ever!

### Why Dalmatian dogs jump

Dogs jump up on people because they're excited, they've been encouraged to do so or in some rare cases, because they are being less than friendly.

Think about it. Dalmatians jump to greet people at the door is natural. They see us talking at eye level and they want to be at eye level too! So they jump to try to get up to eye level and greet the person at the door. But what results is a nightmare as people then push the dog away (an actions that Dalmatians consider to be playtime) and yelling.

There's really one main way to try and cure the problem of having a Dalmatian jump at you when you enter the house. Simply ignore the dog. When you enter your house, cross your arms over your chest and look straight ahead or up at the sky. Pretend that the dog isn't there at all, until it calms down. You might want to set some of its favourite toys next to the door so you can throw it at the ground when you enter the house in order to divert its attention.

Another tactic is to get a friend to help you. Ask the other person to ring the doorbell 10 times every 30 seconds. You should sit in your living room as if nothing is going on. Completely ignore the doorbell. Your dog at first might jump toward the door. But as the doorbell ringing persists, your Dalmatian will stop.

Also, you might want to try tying up your Dalmatian at a certain spot every time the doorbell rings. It can be your dog's spot to go when the doorbell rings. Eventually you can then take your dog off its leash and start teaching it to sit in that spot when the doorbell rings and tell it to "stay," in order to make a positive door greeting.

### Teach your Dalmatian to sit, not jump

A really neat way to prevent and solve this problem is to simply teach your Dalmatian to sit to greet people as opposed to jumping on them. As with most behaviour problems, preventing/redirecting the unwanted behaviour while encouraging better behaviour is an effective plan.

First teach your dog to sit. Then Practice “sit.” Have your Dalmatian sit for everything he enjoys in life from food to petting, from opening the door to throwing a toy. Soon your dog will learn to associate sitting with everything good and this will give him something else to do other than jump.

Now it is time to have your dog practice sitting for a family member or friend. Have them repeat the same steps you did. At this stage, your Dalmatian has surely learned that sitting in front of people is a sure fire way to getting praise and treats.

Next practice sitting to greet people at the front door. Don't be surprised if your dog needs a little extra help here. The front door is an exciting place for a dog. So, stay calm, keep your dog on a leash for control and safety and reward like crazy for polite greetings!

Don't reward jumping. If your pet hug or respond excitedly when he jumps, he'll think you like it. When your dog jumps, step forward toward your dog and say 'Off!' in a low tone. ('Off' is the preferred command since 'Down' is usually used for lie down.)

If he puts four on the floor, praise him calmly. Now direct him to 'sit' and calmly praise him again. A food reward would be good as well. If he does not respond, try luring him off you with a treat – preferably a piece of his food, - and into a sit. Practicing this can quickly give him an acceptable way to greet you.

### **For your guests**

Consistency is the key to training a dog. Stand next to your guest and practice your greeting routine with your dog. Practice with dog-loving friends who understand that training takes time. If this isn't possible with some guests, then prevent the issue entirely by confining your dog when your guests arrive. You can always bring him out later, on lead, when things are calmer.

After a week or two randomize with what and when you reward. Sometimes offer him a treat. Other times toss a ball after he sits nicely. And still other times simply offer calm, happy praise. This way you keep your dog guessing and don't end up with a dog who sits only when he sees a treat.

## Dalmatians And Obedience Class

Discipline is one of the most important aspects of owning a Dalmatian.

Puppy school is not an option, it is a necessity to train owners, including children in the family, how to manage your Dalmatian and nurture it into becoming a well-adjusted member of the family.

Puppy training is a valuable long-term investment. It serves many purposes: It teaches your puppy specific commands and also teaches him how to learn; it teaches you how to teach; it teaches your puppy to be comfortable with other people and other dogs. All in all, it's one of the best investments you can make in your puppy's future behaviour.

To choose a good trainer or training facility, check with your veterinarian and friends for recommendations and then visit the facility. Know the trainer and facility before you lay down any cash. Wait until your Dalmatian is at least 6 months old before putting him through any serious work.

Trainers with extensive experience and knowledge can deal with just about any behaviour problems your pup might come up with.

Choose a trainer who is purposeful and patient. Avoid trainers that have a heavy hand. The well-trained Dalmatian is a sight to behold going through his paces in the class. Their innate intelligence makes many Dalmatians great successes in the obedience ring.

Of more importance is for you as owner to continue to practice the obedience lessons with your Dalmatian.

They will best remember the lessons when you incorporate them into your everyday routines with your Dalmatian.

For example you can tell your pup to 'heel' while he follows you around the house and to 'sit' and 'stay' while you prepare his dinner. As you wake up greeting in the morning he can do a 'roll over.' Tell him to 'go find the ball' while you get dressed and 'go get the leash' before you go for walks together.



### Dalmatian school checklist

- ❖ You're the pack leader, so start early. If your Dalmatian puppy needs extra work, consult a trainer or your breeder and take their advice. Time invested in training your pup will pay off in companionship for the rest of your Dalmatian's life.
- ❖ Whether choosing a private individual or a franchise, don't gauge quality by price. A competent, experienced trainer may be very reasonable in price.
- ❖ Trust your initial impression of the trainer. It probably is valid.
- ❖ Check your puppy's tail; it should be wagging. Is your Dalmatian comfortable? Does he like the trainer?
- ❖ Check out the training course and methodology. What and how do they teach? Do they cover everything you want your Dalmatian to learn?
- ❖ Check experience and credentials. Is this a summer job for someone or a lifetime passion?
- ❖ Is the trainer patient? Different Dalmatian puppies learn at different rates. Some are shy while others are bold. They may need different methods to succeed.
- ❖ Observe a class. Both people and dogs should be relaxed and having a good time – smiles and wagging tails all round.

## Reprimanding Your Dalmatian

Talk to Dalmatians like you would to children when they do something wrong.

Tell them 'no' and show them immediately what the correct behaviour should be and reward them for doing it right. After a few times they'll know how to do it right.

For example, tell him "NO" when you catch hi chewing the shoes. Then immediately give him his own toys to chew and cheer him on to chew on the toys. Praise him for doing so.

Use sparingly those reprimanding words like 'No,' 'Stop that,' 'get off,' and 'bad dog!' Instead use more praises to reward good behaviour in your Dalmatians and only then the reprimands will take on stronger meaning.

A correct reprimand is short, sharp and immediate.

Only reprimand when you catch your Dalmatian doing something wrong and punish only with your voice.

Hitting, kicking, slapping or spanking your Dalmatian will create more problems and usually makes existing problems worse. You may just end up with a barking and chewing dog, one that is leery, hand-shy, fearful or aggressive.

## Repetition And Rewarding Your Dalmatian

Repetitions in doing the right things and rewarding your Dalmatian every single time are crucial in training.

The more often he is rewarded, the better and quicker he will learn. Create situations where your Dalmatian can get plenty of practice at doing the right things.

Be sure to praise when he does a good job.

This is simple but not always easy to do. Bad behaviours like biting, constant yelping and barking and tearing the house apart get our immediate notice. What we easily forget to acknowledge are the good parts – when the Dalmatian is lying down quietly, chewing on his own toys, leaving the carpet unsoiled.

Praise and reward are the most important part of maintaining your Dalmatian's good behaviour and preventing him from getting into trouble.



# Unwanted Dalmatian Behaviour And How To Cure It

Training your Dalmatian is relatively straightforward. Dalmatians are intelligent and helped by their instincts begin to learn behaviour patterns which are normal for them or make their lives easier but which are not acceptable to humans.

In this section you will find out about the most common of these behaviours which, as humans, you see as problems but your Dalmatian sees as fun, normal or making his life easier.

There are 4 key things to remember when curing unwanted behaviour:

1. Remember your Dalmatian is a dog, so don't expect him to behave like a furry human.
2. Be consistent
3. Be consistent
4. Be consistent

Lack of Consistency is the biggest source of failure in adapting a Dalmatians behaviour.

For example: If you spend time working to stop him begging but the children drop food on the floor he will continue to beg. As he will if Grandma sneaks tidbits of food under the table when no one is looking.

**So remember BE CONSITANT!**

## Excessive Barking

Dalmatians bark to communicate. The key to managing this behaviour lies in determining the cause, then offering a quieter alternative.

### Why Dalmatians Bark

It's a fact of life that most dogs bark. Some breeds bark more than others. Some barking is necessary and useful ("There is someone at the door.") And other barking is just plain annoying. When your Dalmatian barks, he or she may be communicating:

- ❖ I need exercise
- ❖ I'm bored
- ❖ I need to go outside
- ❖ I hear something
- ❖ I'm home alone
- ❖ Pay attention to me RIGHT NOW!

### How to solve the problem

If you think your Dalmatian needs something like exercise or water in his bowl, call him to you. Have him sit, praise him and only then do what needs doing; otherwise you'll be rewarding the barking, which can lead to more barking. If your Dalmatian dog or puppy's needs are met and he's just barking to bark try this:

- ❖ Start by saying "quiet" in a calm but firm tone.
- ❖ If he stops barking, praise him and give him a treat, preferably a kibble of his food. Good dog!
- ❖ If he does not stop barking (and many Dalmatians won't at first) clip his leash on and call him to you.
- ❖ Back away from whatever he's barking at and keep calling him until he focuses on you. Good dog! Now praise and offer a food reward.

You can also try a mild aversive like a steam of water from a plant mister. If your Dalmatian is barking at the window, say 'quiet,' spray your dog (who should stop in surprise,) call him to you and praise him.

After he looks at you and gets rewarded, have him sit or down (calmly help him obey if you need to) then offer more praise! A Dalmatian who learns to stop barking, come to you and lie down is a pretty easy dog to live with and that's a fine goal to work toward.

Leave a radio on for your Dalmatian if he barks when left alone. This is good company for him and helps drown out the outside noises.

### Do's and don'ts

- ❖ Do make sure your dog is getting plenty of exercise and training everyday. A bored dog is more likely to bark.
- ❖ Don't leave your dog alone in the backyard for long periods; that can cause many dogs to bark.
- ❖ Make sure you know the cause of the barking. He may be trying to tell you something.

Please remember – any action to stop barking must be made while your Dalmatian is barking. After-the-fact attempts at correction will only confuse your dog. Use a calm, firm voice. Avoid yelling, which can be stressful and upsetting to your dog.

## Begging

Dalmatians are not born knowing how to beg. Someone has taught them that begging works. Dogs beg for food, attention or other things they want. We teach dogs to beg by giving them what they want when they do so. The best solution is NEVER to start rewarding begging in the first place, but if it's too late for that, there are ways to correct this behaviour.

### Why Dalmatian dogs beg

Dalmatians beg because it works. The dog has learned that whenever it whines, barks or begs in any way, the human hands out food or attention. You are training your dog to beg every time you:

- ❖ Slip a piece of food under the table in response to begging.
- ❖ Get up at night to check on a whining dog.
- ❖ Do what the dog wants in response to its pleading eyes or insistent whining.

### Correcting begging behaviour

Dogs seldom repeat behaviour that doesn't pay off; so if begging stops pay off, it will stop – eventually.

Never feed your Dalmatian from the table. In addition to avoid in that perpetual beg, it also supports your position as the leader – for dogs, leaders control the food. If your Dalmatian is already begging, consider crating him elsewhere when you eat.

Feed your Dalmatian puppy away from where you eat so there is no confusion.

When your Dalmatian whines for any reason other than to go outside, just ignore him. If you cannot ignore him, give him other commands like 'come,' 'sit' or 'down' and praise and reward him for obeying your command. This will give him something positive to do and reminds him you're the leader in a non-confrontational way.

### Do's and don'ts

- ❖ The most important thing is consistency. If you surrender to your frustration after your Dalmatian has spent half an hour begging, you've simply taught him to beg for at least half an hour. Instead, train your dog to do what you want. Reward your dog when he's quiet and well behaved and eventually he will be quieter and better behaved.

## Boredom

Although Dalmatian dogs are creatures of habit, they still crave exercise – both physical and mental. If you don't provide it for them, they can get bored and start to entertain themselves – often by doing things you don't like.

### When Dalmatians dogs are bored

Bored Dalmatians may:

- ❖ Dig
- ❖ Chew
- ❖ Run away
- ❖ Bark or otherwise try to get your attention
- ❖ Harass the cat, annoy you, 'lose' the ball under the couch
- ❖ Repeatedly lick themselves creating hot spots

### What to do about it

If you suspect your Dalmatian may be suffering from boredom, whether or not problem behaviours are present, you may want to:

Make a list of simple 'tricks' to teach your dog and try to teach a new trick every couple of weeks.

Keep a well-stocked box of dog toys (out of view) to provide diversion when it is needed. Rotate toys every few days, keeping 3-4 out at all times.

Introduce food-dispensing toys to your Dalmatian

Make sure your Dalmatian gets plenty of exercise. Simply hanging around in the back yard is not enough. Do things with your dog such as take long walks or play fetch.

Interact with your Dalmatian and offer praise and a kibble of food for good behaviour. See how many good behaviours you can reward in a day.

When possible, take your Dalmatian along when visiting friends or running errands.

### Remember.....

Your Dalmatians lifestyle influences his behaviour. Regular walks or play times with your dog and praise for tricks will make your dogs life fun and stimulating. A happy Dalmatian is less likely to develop annoying behaviour problems.



## Chewing

Chewing is normal for Dalmatians, but it can cause problems when your shoes, books or furniture are the targets. Correcting problem chewing is often simply a matter of preventing unwanted chewing while encouraging your Dalmatian to chew appropriate dog toys. If chewing only happens when left alone, try confinement (see Crate Training) It may also be a sign of Separation Anxiety or Boredom.

### Why Dalmatian dogs chew

Chewing is usually a healthy, normal thing to do when it isn't destructive.

Dalmatians chew for many reasons:

- ❖ To release pent-up energy
- ❖ Stress
- ❖ Teething, which generally occurs between three and six months of age
- ❖ Because they simply find chewing enjoyable.

Keep in mind that some behaviour that looks like chewing or biting is actually exploratory 'mouthing.' Dalmatians learn about an objects feel and texture with their mouths in the way people learn those things by feeling with their hands.

### Correcting inappropriate chewing

Buy appropriate chew toys. Then, when you see your Dalmatian chewing something inappropriate:

- ❖ Say 'no' or 'eh' in a low voice. (It's a sound similar to a mother's growl, which your puppy will take as a sign of disapproval.)
- ❖ If your Dalmatian stops to look at you, praise and give your puppy a preferred chew toy. Do not use old shoes, socks or gloves, as that will actually train your dog to chew your things.
- ❖ Praise your dog whenever you see him chewing a dog toy. This teaches your Dalmatian that it is not chewing that is wrong – just chewing the wrong things.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

- ❖ Make sure Dalmatian puppies have chew toys available at all times, especially when teething.
- ❖ When possible, put items your Dalmatian likes to chew away or out of reach. If you can't, keep your dog out of the area with gates or by closing doors.
- ❖ When you aren't home, confine your Dalmatian in a safe area or crate your dog.
- ❖ Increase his exercise and his training.

### Do's and don'ts

- ❖ Do provide lots of good, solid dog toys for chewing.
- ❖ Do prevent problems by supervising your dog closely and exercising him often.
- ❖ Do stay calm. If you catch your Dalmatian chewing something other than a dog toy do as suggested above.
- ❖ Don't blame the Dalmatian for being a dog – give him toys to chew, reward him for chewing those, and prevent access to other items.

## Digging

Digging can be annoying. In some cases it can be 'hardwired' into a Dalmatian's personality. Other times it's a learned behaviour or it can also be a sign that your dog needs something. Watch when and where your Dalmatian digs – that will give you clues to why your dog is digging and how to manage, prevent or control it.

### Why Dalmatian dogs dig

- ❖ Dogs dig for many reasons:
- ❖ In summer, lying in a cool hole brings relief from the heat.

- ❖ Burying treasures, such as bones
- ❖ Investigating an interesting smell – in fact, terriers are ‘hardwired’ to dig up moles and other rodents.
- ❖ Releasing pent-up energy or alleviating boredom.

### How to deal with digging Dalmatians

If you'd like to stop your Dalmatian from digging, there are two ways to approach it: Redirect the behaviour to a more desirable place or try to stop it entirely. You may want to try a combination of these ideas:

In warm weather, make sure your Dalmatian has a cool, shady spot to rest and plenty of water – better yet, bring your dog indoors.

To discourage future digs, bury a little of your Dalmatians waste just below the surface when you fill in the hole. If your dog digs in the same spot, he will find the waste. This often is enough to discourage digging.

If you catch your Dalmatian in the act of inappropriate digging, a sharp “Leave it!” followed by a command such as “Come” and praise for compliance will help distract and refocus your dog.

Make sure your Dalmatian gets plenty of exercise and time with you. Being alone in the backyard does not qualify as exercise. Walks, games of fetch and romps with other dogs will tire your dog out.

Do not leave your Dalmatian outside unattended for long periods – that invites digging. If he must be left outside for a time, be sure to provide plenty of toys.

To redirect the behaviour, you can build a sandbox for you dog. Bury toys just under the surface and reward your dog when he digs in the ring area and finds his treasure.

### Do's and don'ts

- ❖ Do give your Dalmatian plenty of exercise every day.
- ❖ Do keep him with you as much as possible.
- ❖ Do use commands to direct your dog to behaviours you want then reward him

- ❖ Don't punish your Dalmatian when you find holes. Your dog won't associate the punishment with the crime.

## Disgusting Habits

Dogs do a number of things that people find disgusting – but for the most part, these things are more annoying to humans than they are bad for dogs.

### Disgusting things Dalmatian dog do

- ❖ Dalmatians may eat feces – their own or another animals – out of hunger, boredom, curiosity or more appalling to us, they appear to just plain like it.
- ❖ Dalmatians lick their crotches during grooming and sniff each other's crotches during normal greeting.
- ❖ Dalmatians like rolling in smelly things – dead fish, garbage, anything they can find.

### What you can do

These habits, while upsetting to humans, aren't typically dangerous to dogs. Still, in the interest of having a well-mannered Dalmatian that is welcome in the house, you can try to control these behaviours or at least learn how to deal with them.

Try to keep your Dalmatian healthy and entertained to alleviate hunger and boredom.

Pick up waste that is left in the yard every time you take your Dalmatian outdoors.

Coat feces with bitter flavour to create a negative memory for your dog – your Dalmatian will be more likely to avoid it in the future. Be sure to provide plenty of fresh, clean drinking water so your dog can get some quick relief.

Licking is part of a normal grooming routine, but excessive licking can indicate an infection or irritation. If you're not sure, ask your veterinarian.

A well-trained Dalmatian who obeys your command to 'come' can be steered clear of tempting targets to roll in.

If your Dalmatian does get smelly, simply bathe him and try to prevent him from rolling in the future by keeping him on a lead, removing the attractive item and working hard on his 'leave it' and 'come' command.

### Do's and don'ts

- ❖ Do pick up after your dog.
- ❖ Don't leave him off-leash in an area where there are temptations.
- ❖ Don't punish your Dalmatian for being a dog – he won't understand.

## Fearfulness

The world can be a scary place to a Dalmatian dog, but it needn't be. Here are some common fears and things you can do – and things you shouldn't do.

### What to do

Act the way you want your Dalmatian to act. So if you want him to be happy and calm, act happy and calm. No matter what the source of the fear, DO NOT try to comfort your dog through snuggling, petting or saying it's OK. It may seem like the most natural thing in the world, but your tone of voice and body language are actually telling your Dalmatian that there really is something to fear. Instead, find fun distractions, like fetch or other games. Create positive experiences and reasons for your dog to feel good. Some pointers about common fears.

### Fear of storms

The Cause: Most often, it's the strange sounds that accompany storms. Howling wind, lashing rain, booming thunder (made worse by the bright flashes of lightning,) all these are much louder and scarier to dogs.

The Solution: A small, secure "den" like a crate can be comforting. Try turning on a radio or TV; the noise may take the shock out of the boom of

thunder. Or you can try playing with your Dalmatian or try a training session – it'll distract your dog and give you plenty of chances to reward your dog, creating a positive experience. If this doesn't calm your dog, speak with your veterinarian.

### **Fear of storms**

The Cause: Your Dalmatian may see other dogs as a threat.

The Solution: The best solution is experience. Bring your Dalmatian into contact with other friendly, dog-savvy dogs early and often; a training class is a great way to do this, since it's neutral territory and the dogs are under control. Trips to the dog park should be done with caution, as often there are adolescent, excitable dogs there with little owner control. Some Dalmatians will thrive. Others will be overwhelmed and frightened. Watch your dog and see if he is having fun or is scared. Meeting plenty of friendly dogs should also help make your pet more comfortable.

### **Fear of people**

The Cause: Your Dalmatian may see people as threats, either because your dog has not had enough socialization with enough different people, had frightening experiences with people, or possibly, has a genetic predisposition to shyness.

The Solution: Experience will help. Always allow your Dalmatian to approach the person, do not allow the person to reach for your frightened dog. Do not drag your dog up to anyone.....EVER. Instead, give your dog treats – preferably something that he really likes, -- when new people are around. As he gets braver, let people toss your dog a piece of food so that meeting new people becomes a good experience. Never, ever, attempt to force a frightened Dalmatian to take a treat from or meet a new person. By going slowly, allowing your Dalmatian to set the pace and using plenty of food rewards, your dog should learn to enjoy the company of people. If you're not seeing progress, have any concerns, have an aggressive dog or see growling, lunging or cowering/hiding, please seek the guidance of a qualified dog trainer or behaviour professional.

### **Fear of veterinarians**

The Cause: First, establish that the fear IS of the veterinarian and not people in general. If you do see behaviours at the veterinarian's office that you don't see otherwise, it could be sensory overload at the smell of so many other

Animals or perhaps your Dalmatian has bad associations due to shots or other treatment.

The Solution: Try to make the experience good in general. Bring a favourite toy for entertainment and include a trip to the park or other positive experiences. Bring food treats and ask your veterinarian and the staff to give pieces to your Dalmatian before, during and after the visit is complete so your dog has a positive association.

### **Remember:**

You set the tone. If you're nervous and worried, your Dalmatian will be too. Making sure your dog is used to other animals (for example, by attending a dog training class) can help too.

## Outside Marking

When your Dalmatian stops for a quick 'potty break' at every tree, bush and streetlight, what you're seeing is marking behaviour. Depending on where you live and your dog, this may be behaviour you want to stop.

### **Why Dalmatian dogs mark**

If a male dog's leg lifting bothers you then consider purchasing a female Dalmatian. Dalmatians "mark" to establish territory. Male Dalmatians lift their legs to mark, usually selecting upright 'targets.' Each dog has a unique smell that the other dogs' sensitive noses can identify. So these marks act as a personal calling card, telling other dogs he has spoken for this territory.

### **Why correct marking behaviour?**

There are two good reasons to put a stop to marking:

- ❖ Dalmatians that mark frequently often have an attitude problem. Getting control of the marking often helps you get control over other problems as well.
- ❖ If you live in an area with a lot of dogs, marking can lead to conflict. When dogs who have claimed the same area meet on the street, each dog can try to drive off the 'intruder.'

### How to correct marking

In the best of all worlds, don't let your Dalmatian start. But if you have, the sooner you retrain your dog, the easier it will be.

First, neuter your male Dalmatian and doing so early (6 months of age and no sooner) will prevent problem leg lifting and done at any age, will help minimize this behaviour.

Encourage your Dalmatian to eliminate in one spot in your yard before you start your walk. Do this by walking back and forth in that area. When he urinates, praise him then go for a large stroll. This rewards quick emptying with exploration.

If your dog tries to mark during your walk, keep walking while saying, "Let's go!" in a happy tone of voice. If you keep moving and praise him for coming with you, you can prevent persistent lifting entirely.

If your Dalmatian is lifting his leg in the house, please seek the assistance of a qualified dog trainer or behaviourist.

## Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is defined as your Dalmatian being greatly distressed whenever you leave, every time you leave. Scratching at the door, chewing things up, housetraining mistakes, barking hysterically and generally being extremely upset are a few of the signs. Most Dalmatians want to be with their humans as much as possible. Dalmatians that haven't been taught how to stay alone calmly may exhibit unwanted behaviours. Gradually adjusting dogs to being alone is the best approach.

Most puppies and some dogs experience a level of anxiety when left alone, even for very short periods of time. Most puppies learn that when they are alone, nothing really bad happens to them, they are still alive and their 'people' come back. They learn how to entertain themselves while alone and gain confidence in their ability to be alone. As they grow up and gain confidence in themselves, their 'people' can leave them for longer periods of time.

Some dogs, for various reasons, do not gain confidence in themselves. Some dogs are left alone too long when they are puppies and they become traumatized by the event. Other dogs are neglected or abused and therefore



## The Dapper Dalmatian

Have a low self-esteem. These dogs can be bounced around from owner to owner and usually end up in an animal shelter. After they are adopted to well-meaning people they can still carry their low self-esteem and exhibit their learned behaviour of separation anxiety. Other dogs for unknown reasons have a low tolerance for anxiety. And lastly, any dog can become traumatized unbeknownst to their 'people' by some event and can spontaneously begin to experience separation anxiety.

All of these types of dogs can show profound anxiety when being left alone, or simply out of eye-sight of their 'people.' The process of teaching them self-confidence and the ability to entertain themselves can be time consuming and requires a lot of patience and positive reinforcement. Here's how to do it:

### Preventing separation anxiety

It's good for your Dalmatian dog or puppy to be comfortable when home alone. You can help him learn this if you take a little time and use these simple steps.

Begin by changing your 'leaving' routine. Dalmatians that exhibit separation anxiety usually begin to get anxious long before you walk out the door. Most people have a set 'leaving' routine that they go through before leaving the house. They put their shoes on, close the windows, lock the doors, jingle the car keys etc. Dogs learn this routine very quickly and if they already get anxious from being left alone, this long, drawn out 'leaving' routine can make matters worse.

When you leave the house, do so promptly. When you leave, say "Take care of the house." Don't make a big deal out of leaving, just start to teach them a phrase that means, "I'll be gone, but I'll be back!" Then, when you leave, turn around and come back in after about 30 seconds to 1 minute. Say hello to your dog in a low-key manner and go about your day. You need to be low-key so that you teach your dog to be low-key. If you are overly anxious about leaving or coming home you will be conditioning your dog to be anxious as well.

The first day, you will leave and come back about a dozen times. Each time you leave, increase the time you are gone: 1 minute, 2 minutes, 3 minutes, 5 minutes, 7 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes 45 minutes, etc. Any time you come home and your dog was exhibiting his anxious behaviour (chewing, barking, etc) cut the time you leave in half next time. If he's still experiencing separation anxiety, cut your time in half again! Once your dog is no longer anxious, start increasing the times again.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

Because of the time and commitment involved in these exercises, it is best if you do this on your vacation time for the first week or until you build up to about 4 hours of being gone with no anxiety from your dog. If vacation time is impossible, then start on Friday afternoon or evening and make this your primary activity for the whole weekend. Then repeat this again the following weekend, varying the time you are gone. Leave for 30 minutes, then for 5 minutes, then for 10 minutes, then for 2 hours.

Dalmatians are social animals and any Dalmatian that spends 8-10 hours a day, everyday all alone may begin to exhibit obsessive behaviours that may or may not develop into separation anxiety. A dog that experiences separation anxiety usually does his damage as soon as (or very shortly after) you leave the house. A dog that is bored and lonely will become destructive after a few hours (usually 4-6) of being left alone.

Another great confidence builder for Dalmatians is any type of doggie classes. Even if your Dalmatian knows all the obedience commands, he will benefit from a class situation. Taking your dog to a doggie class increases his confidence in being able to handle new situations. It also increases his confidence in you as 'leader.'

Most importantly, it gives him the opportunity to socialize with other dogs and people and spend quality time with you.

If your Dalmatian is an 'only' dog it is possible that this exacerbates his separation anxiety. Some Dalmatians that do not have canine companionship become overly dependent on their humans. Sometimes referred to as "Velcro-dogs" (a dog that seems to stick to you where ever you go) they experience a great amount of stress whenever they are not accompanied by a human. Although not recommended as a cure-all, you may want to consider getting another dog or puppy for companionship. Another wonderful options is to find a playmate for your Dalmatian.

A weekly visit to or from a doggie-playmate's house can be very beneficial to 'only' dogs (even those that do not suffer from separation anxiety.) Dalmatians benefit greatly from canine companionship. Schedule a playtime for your dog, with another dog that he likes, two or three times a week.

Be sure to spend quality time with your Dalmatian DAILY. One-on-one time spent with your dog for 5 – 20 minutes a day can help him feel more secure in his environment as well as help strengthen the bond between you both.

Even if you have a Velcro-dog, quality, one-on-one time where your attention is focused on your dog is essential. This quality time should not consist of babying, stroking or cuddling. Instead, it should consist of doing things to build a strong master/dog relationship and bolster the confidence of your Dalmatian. Fun obedience work using positive reinforcement, interspersed with fun games of fetch, chase and hide & seek can be very beneficial for the psychological well-being of your Dalmatian.

### Using a crate

A crate is another good way to prevent or cure separation anxiety in Dalmatians.

- ❖ Start by introducing your dog to his crate.
- ❖ Crate him for short periods while you are present. Gradually increase the time crated. Reward quiet behaviour with calm praise and perhaps a treat.
- ❖ Start leaving your puppy alone – start with just a few minutes at a time if possible.
- ❖ Gradually increase the time spent alone.
- ❖ Limit your attention when you are home so it isn't such a shock when you leave.
- ❖ Reward your Dalmatian with a treat and attention when he lies quietly away from you.

Most Dalmatians don't need to be crated forever, but don't rush freedom. Most Dalmatians aren't ready to be given unsupervised freedom in your home until they're a year-and-a-half or older.

For those of you who work, consider hiring a walker or neighbour to give your Dalmatian a midday break. Keeping your schedule similar on weekends as on workdays can help make things easier for your dog.

Exercise – and plenty of it – helps dogs that must be alone long hours.

### Do's and don'ts

Do make leaving and arriving uneventful. If you make leaving a big production – lots of hugs and goodbyes or asking if he'll miss you – your Dalmatian will assume it's a big deal.

When you return, don't go directly to his crate or room and make a fuss except if your Dalmatian is a young pup or has been left for many hours. In those cases, take him right out as he may really need to relieve himself and making him wait can lead to a wet crate. If you can, wait until your dog is calm and quiet, then casually go greet him and praise him for being calm and quiet.

Always give your Dalmatian puppy an opportunity to eliminate prior to crating him and provide him with an appropriate chew toy.

### Signs of serious separation anxiety

Some Dalmatians, especially puppies, may whine or cry a little when left alone. True separation anxiety is defined as destructive or disruptive behaviour, including tearing up the room, constant barking and whining, or housetraining mistakes every time you leave – often starting immediately after you leave. For cases where the strategy above doesn't work, you may want to consult a qualified dog trainer or behaviour professional.

## Whining

In the middle of the night, at the dinner table, at the door – whining is annoying. Learn what whining means and how to correct it.

### Why Dalmatian dogs whine

People often try to comfort whining dogs. But in reality, your Dalmatian is often demanding something – and when you give it, you've just taught him that whining works!

- ❖ Whining can mean many things, but it almost means your dog wants something
- ❖ A Dalmatian whining when you are sitting down to eat is probably saying, "Give me your food."
- ❖ A Dalmatian whining at the back door or bedroom door is probably saying, "I want to come in."
- ❖ A Dalmatian whining in his kennel or crate at night is probably saying, "I want out now!"
- ❖ A housetrained Dalmatian whining while inside may be saying, "I need to go outside!"

### What to do

What you want to do is to establish when whining is OK (rarely) and when it is not okay (most of the time.) When your Dalmatian understands that, he's less likely to whine. As always, the following tips are more effective the sooner you do them:

- ❖ If your Dalmatian is whining to go out and go to the bathroom, be sure to comply. Go out, take care of business and come back in with no play.
- ❖ In all other cases of whining, be strong. Don't give in.
- ❖ When your Dalmatian whines, give him something productive to do like 'sit' or 'down' – have him do several commands in a row then praise him calmly.
- ❖ Try to notice the sweet sounds of silence and praise your Dalmatian then. If he gets attention for being quiet, he should start weaning off the whining.
- ❖ Make your Dalmatian's crate a comfortable den so your dog will like time there. Make it cozy and include toys. Crate him for short periods, often, so he learns to accept it calmly.
- ❖ If your Dalmatian suddenly starts whining "out of the blue," take him to the veterinarian. He may be in pain.
- ❖

### What NOT to do

Don't give in! Every time your Dalmatian gets what he wants when he whines, you teach him that whining works. Like people, dogs do what works so he'll whine more and longer next time. Do it enough times and your Dalmatian will view whining as the best way to get what he wants. Also, avoid giving in after holding out for a long time. If your dog or new puppy whines when left alone for the night and you let him whine for three hours and then give in, your Dalmatian will think that whining for three hours is the best way to get your attention (which is what your pup wanted in the first place).

## Dalmatian Toys And Games

Foods, treats or praise will bring out the best responses from your Dalmatian during training

Treats can come in the form of their favourite food, toy or something the Dalmatian really loves to do.

Whenever practicing any obedience training and upon finishing, one owner and his Dalmatian will have a big playtime by running and throwing his favourite toys. Other Dalmatians prefer to go for rides, enjoying the wind in their faces or even playing football!

Some Dalmatians will take the commands in training with great joy knowing that they will get something to eat!

Some favourites are ice cream, cheese, ham and chicken. One Dalmatian fancies a handful of ice cubes to crunch on though he's not thirsty.

The all time dog favourites of fetching and hide and seek games can be made more treasured using your Dalmatians favourite fall or toy and giving him plenty of stoking in between throws.

## Exercise And Play

Dalmatian dogs typically need 30-45 minutes of exercise a day whether it is a brisk walk, a jog or chasing a ball.

Outdoor space is essential for Dalmatians. In the coldest part of winter, that can be a challenge. Always have your dogs health evaluated by his veterinarian before you begin an exercise program.

Always check with your veterinarian before starting a new and demanding activity with your Dalmatian. Once you get the go ahead – have fun!

Some ways to make exercise and play a part of your dogs life:

Check with breeders and dog clubs for direction. Ask when the next obedience or agility classes will start and enter your Dalmatian just for the fun of it.

Even if he is already trained, attending a refresher class will give him an opportunity to interact with other dogs and focus some of his energy into an appropriate behaviour.

In the winter, wrap up warm and go for a walk. Even a short walk is preferable to no walk. Find a place with a windbreak and dress appropriately.

Treadmills are trendy for people and can be fun for dogs. You can teach your dog how to walk on the treadmill. Don't ever leave your Dalmatian unattended, don't allow the leash to dangle when it could tangle and like you, build up his endurance slowly.

Have your veterinarian instruct you how to do detect possible warning signs, which may indicate your Dalmatian has exercised too much.

### **Do**

Consider your Dalmatian's needs and present physical condition. Leisurely walks may be best for an older Dalmatian while a young adult dog will have ample energy for a vigorous exercise program. Dalmatian puppies should not stress their growing bones, joints or muscles through excessive jumping or strenuous exercise. Be sensible about what you ask your Dalmatian to do. Hard games of fetch or catching a flying disc burn off a lot of steam, but they also stress a dog's joints to the maximum.

Go slow! If you have not exercised your Dalmatian regularly and decide to launch a regular exercise program, begin with short periods of activity at slow speeds and gradually increase the time, speed and distance.

Begin walking or running your Dalmatian on soft surfaces such as dirt, sand or grass until his pads toughen. Keep your dog's nails trimmed so they won't tear as he runs.

Keep your Dalmatian on a leash; it gives you control when walking or running.

If you exercise at night, place a reflective collar on your Dalmatian, use a bright coloured leash and wear white or light-coloured clothing so the two of you can be seen.

Check your Dalmatians feet for the presence of burrs, grass, thorns, rocks or ice and snow, all of which should be removed immediately.

Check carefully for ticks after exercising outdoors. [Read More](#) about ticks.

Obey local laws about cleaning up after your dog and using a leash. Your police department or animal control department can tell you more about laws in your area.

### **Don't**

Exercise your Dalmatian immediately before or after he has eaten; a full stomach may cause serious digestive upset. Provide only small amounts of water before and directly after exercise.

Go out in the noonday sun. Running in the heat is dangerous not only for yourself but also for your Dalmatian. Just because he is willing to jog with you in 90-degree heat doesn't mean it is safe for him, not to mention yourself.

Raise a couch potato. Dalmatians can live longer, healthier lives if kept lean and fit. If you claim to love your dog, then you'll exercise him.

## **Games To Play With Dalmatian Puppies**

Games are fun, but they can also teach your Dalmatian puppy valuable skills like retrieving, searching and obedience. Depending on your puppy's personality and temperament, you can teach your puppy variations of games as vast as your imagination.

Fetch is a favourite game and can be useful for reinforcing the "coming when called" command, as well as teaching your puppy to bring the newspaper or your slippers if you are so inclined.

Find-the-toy type games teach your puppy to rely on his sense of smell and use his brain. They can also prepare your puppy for tracking.

Tug is a natural instinct but be careful. When you remember that each game teaches your Dalmatian something, you will realize that tug teaches your Dalmatian to fight with you. If your puppy has a dominant streak the game may get out of hand. Make sure that you are the one to start and finish this game and that your puppy drops the toy on command. Never let your dog get the toy when playing tug. If he gets the toy, then he has won the game!



Agility games are a great way to burn off extra calories and energy. They also increase your puppy's coordination and confidence. Dalmatians love the challenge of jumping and negotiating obstacles as well as getting the praise you give when they do well. But before you start be sure to find a trainer who understands that Dalmatian puppies should not stress their growing bones, joints or muscles through excessive jumping or strenuous exercise.

In the end, games are about a connection between you and your puppy. Sure, your puppy has toys that are fun and provide entertainment. But games include you and that's the best as far as your puppy is concerned.

## Dog Sports

Dog sports are increasing in popularity every year. More and more events are being televised, from agility contests to dog shows and there really is something for every dog and person to participate in and enjoy.

### Choosing a Sport

In order to choose a sport, you have to know a little about each one. Here's a short description of some of the more common dog events:

#### Agility

Dogs race over, through and around obstacles as quickly as possible with the human keeping up and giving the directions. Most dogs and people can enjoy learning the basics of this sport even if competition is not a goal. Different size dogs jump different height jumps, so many toy breeds can compete with great success. Read more about Agility Courses.

#### Flyball

A canine relay race where a dog races over a series of jumps, grabs a tennis ball and races back. When one dog crosses the finish line, the next dog in the team starts. Jump size is set for the shortest member of the team, so most teams include a fast, small dog.

#### Big Air/Diving Dog

A relatively new event, this sport involves a dog racing down a dock and leaping into the water for a thrown object. The longest leap wins.

### **Flying Disc**

This is a sport for truly athletic dogs. Leaping in the air and vaulting off the handler's back makes for great entertainment, but these moves are extremely demanding. The dog is landing hard and often, twisting and turning in every direction, making injury a real risk. Make sure your veterinarian approves before starting.

### **Conformation**

This is what most people think of when they hear "dog show" – a contest to see which purebred dog most closely conforms to its breed standard. Some of the largest shows are now televised, so everyone can enjoy the glamour of these events. Dalmatians must be registered to enter conformation shows.

### **Obedience**

While many of us struggle to get our dogs to sit, obedience competitors teach their dogs a complex series of behaviours on which they are judged.

### **Other activities**

There are numerous other sports in which to participate: pet assisted therapy, ski-joring, tracking, herding, Rally-O, dancing with dogs, hunt tests, backpacking, carting, swim tests, earth dog tests, sledding and much, much more are available. Conduct a little research, invest your time and energy in training and you and your dog can join in the fun!

## **Things to Consider**

### **Age**

Dalmatian dogs need to be fully mature to start doing strenuous physical activities, but do not let that stop you from starting to teach your pup the basics of the sport you're interested in early. Just work with a sensible trainer and take things easy until your veterinarian tells you it is safe for your Dalmatian to compete.

### **Soundness**

A strong body is a requirement for many sports. No matter what your dream is, if your Dalmatian isn't built for it or doesn't enjoy it, then it's time to adjust your plans. You and your dog are a team. It is your job to make sure your Dalmatian is safe, pain-free and happy.

### Time to devote

The more strenuous the sport, the more time is needed both for training and for conditioning your Dalmatian to peak physical condition. Training or competing with a dog that is not in top physical form can lead to injury. So your choices are to devote the time needed to succeed, participate in a less intense way or find another sport that you can more easily work into your schedule.

Few things are as rewarding as competing with your Dalmatian, having all your months and years of training come together seamlessly so you both do your best. Win or lose, such moments are among the rewards of Dalmatian ownership.

## Good Toys For a Dalmatian Puppy

One of your Dalmatian puppy's "jobs" is to chew. It may relieve some of the pain of teething, it may be the practice of feeding skills, it may be just something to do, but chewing is a huge part of puppy's first year. Your job is to supply appropriate toys for chewing so he won't choose your shoes.

Squeaky toys, rattling toys and those with bells are great fun. Most such toys are also destructible, so monitor your puppy if he has moved into a destructive phase. Squeakers and nylon pieces are better in the toy and as part of the toy than in your puppy – so don't let him chew and swallow any pieces.

Toys made of hard rubber are sturdy and come in various shapes and sizes. Insert a biscuit treat or peanut butter into a rubber toy with holes and puppy will be highly entertained. To aid in cleaning puppy's teeth, choose dental toys or chews that are made with bumps and grooves.

Be sure to rotate the toys puppy plays with each week. Otherwise, he may get bored with them and ignore them in favour of something new, like sheetrock or your sneakers.

# Feeding Your Dalmatian

Giving your Dalmatian a raw, natural diet (as opposed to commercially prepared one) makes the feeding task flexible and you get to control the quality of the food your Dalmatian is getting.

The Biologically Appropriate Raw Food or “BARF” diet is easy to prepare. You are basically feeding him ‘bones and raw food,’ adding in or taking out supplement as needed.

It is better to first understand the principles behind this feeding method. There are excellent reference books available on this subject matter.

Basically, the BARF diet is made up of raw meat and raw meaty bones, raw processed vegetables plus dairy products, eggs, fish, offal, muscle meats, fruit and maybe some supplements. It is a very balanced diet and you get to control the ingredients as well as the quality. Some people leave out dairy products or grains.

Dalmatians tend to have a lot of food allergies. One owner put an ailing and lethargic Dalmatian on a strict venison diet and within a few short weeks her dog thrived, gained weight and became very active.

There is also a recent concern about eating a large amount of grapes or raisins, since they can be toxic to dogs, leading to acute kidney failure.

The reports concerning this grape/raisin poisoning have only just surfaced and the information is still sketchy at best. The Animal Poison Control Centre is investigating this new medical development.

Some questions remaining to be answered are:

- ❖ How many grapes or raisins eaten could become toxic to your dog?
- ❖ What is the toxic substance?
- ❖ How does it affect the kidneys?

To be safe, do not feed your Dalmatian dog grapes and raisins but if he has eaten a large amount have your veterinarian check your Dalmatian because healthy kidneys are key to its survival.

## More On Choosing Dog Food For Your Dalmatian

It is best to understand a Dalmatian's needs before deciding on which food to use. **Following your breeders advice** and learning more on the Dalmatian's special needs in regards to crystal and stone formation is top priority. If you own an LUA (Low Uric Acid) Dalmatian then your job just became easier.

Even before your Dalmatian comes home, you should decide on a dog food. It has to be healthy, tasty and it has to fit your lifestyle.

### Nutritional claims

Read the label for nutritional claims.

Look for life stage claims. For example, a puppy food should say it is complete and balanced for 'growth' or 'all life stages.' Foods balanced for 'the maintenance of an adult dog' won't give a puppy enough nutrition.

### Types of food

There is a wide variety of commercially produced dog food available in variety of styles. Choose one that fits your needs, your Dalmatian's needs and your budget.

Dry food is an extremely popular choice for Dalmatian puppy owners. It tastes good, is easy to store and has more nutrition per pound on a dry matter basis than other types. It also helps keep teeth clean.

Soft and moist food is increasing in popularity. Moist chunks are enjoyable for your dog to eat, meaning he's likely to eat all his food and get all the needed nutrition.

Canned foods are the most palatable for your Dalmatian. However, due to their high water content, they contain less nutrition per pound of food, so you will need to feed your Dalmatian a higher volume. Also watch for dental issues – soft foods don't scrape the teeth like dry diets.

### Guaranteed analysis

Look at the levels of calories, protein, fat and other nutrients in a food declared on the package. You can compare these analyses between foods as long as they're foods of the same type; for example, all canned foods will have less protein per pound or cup than dry foods because canned foods contain so much moisture, so in this case you need to compare them by daily feeding amount – you will feed more of the canned food per day. But you can compare dry to dry or canned to canned.

While comparison might help you select in some circumstances – for example, you may want to feed an overweight dog a food with less calories per cup or a hardworking dog a food with more calories per cup – your best bet is to use the nutritional claims and look for a food that is appropriate for your dog's life stage. More or less of a particular nutrient may be good or it may not – too much calcium can lead to bone problems, for example (read more about these types of nutritional balances in About Minerals.)

### Other considerations

Since this is a decision you want to make once and stick with, consider other aspects of the food including:

- ❖ Flavour – does your dog seem to enjoy it?
- ❖ Availability – can you get your chosen food easily?
- ❖ Cost – does it fit comfortably in your monthly budget?
- ❖ Reputation – do you know people who have used and recommend the food? Is the manufacturer reputable?
- ❖ Special needs – if your dog has specific nutritional needs identified by a veterinarian, does this food meet those needs?
- ❖ With these guidelines, you can find the food that's right for you and your dog.

## Pet Food Labels

Pet food labels provide the pet owner with a great deal of information. But what do they mean? When evaluating potential diets for your Dalmatian, you may want to know more about what you are reading. Here is a rundown of many of the types of information you may find on the dog food label.

### Caloric statement

Dog food labels may have a statement of the calorie content of the product. Calories are stated in terms of metabolically kilocalories per kilogram (ME kcal/kg) of food and may also be expressed as calories per unit of household measure such as per cup or per can.

Manufacturers may determine the calorie content of their product through calculations based on laboratory analysis of the product or through feeding trial procedures established by AAFCO (The Association of American Feed Control Officials, an independent body that sets guidelines for the pet food industry.)

### Additives

Two types of additives are included in pet food products; those that are nutritional and those that add other benefits.

Nutritional additives include vitamins, minerals, fats and amino acids. They permit the supplementation of a product to increase single nutrient levels without disturbing the levels of other nutrients in the diet.

An animal's body cannot distinguish between vitamins that occur in natural ingredients and those which are produced synthetically. The use of synthetic nutrients help achieve the high degree of nutritional balance found in good quality pet foods.

The pet food label lists a number of ingredients which do not necessarily provide nutrient benefits, but which do have a specific purpose in the diet. These types of additives are detailed below:

- ❖ **Antioxidants:** Ingredients such as mixed tocopherols are added to the fats in pet foods at extremely low levels to prevent rancidity and thus, prevent the unpleasant odour, loss of palatability and destruction of vitamins that can occur when fats go rancid.
- ❖ **Chemical preservatives:** Preservatives are used in semi-moist-type pet foods to prevent spoilage. These include such ingredients as propylene glycol, sorbic acid and potassium sorbate. All ingredients of this type must be approved by the FDA for use and are identified as a preservative.
- ❖ **Flavouring agents:** Flavourings are a convenient way to make the products more appealing to dogs. Some may have complicated chemical names, but others such as garlic and onion are used as flavouring agents.
- ❖ **Colouring:** Colours are added to some pet foods to help maintain a consistent product appearance because the colour of natural ingredients can vary, or to distinguish between flavours in a multiparticle food. Artificial colours used in pet foods are the same as those approved for use in human foods and are approved by the FDA.

### Feeding Directions

Information in this section should also include the amount of food recommended, which will be a 'rule of thumb' or a starting point. Actual feeding amounts will depend on age, activity, size, environment and body metabolism and is best determined by your observing your Dalmatians body condition.

Dog food labelled as complete and balanced for any or all life stages is required to list feeding directions for each life-stage declared on the product label. These directions are expressed in common terms and appear prominently on the label.

### Guaranteed analysis

Certain nutrient guarantees are required on the label of all pet foods. These are:

- ❖ % Crude protein (minimum amount)
- ❖ % Crude fat (minimum amount)
- ❖ % Crude fibre (Maximum amount)
- ❖ % Moisture (maximum amount)

If the manufacturer desires to list any additional guarantees such as vitamins and minerals, in the units defined by AAFCO, these will be shown after moisture.

The reason for the word crude is that the minimum or maximum amount shown is determined by lab assay and is not the amount actually utilized by the animal. Consequently, figures given in the guaranteed analyses do not necessarily indicate nutritional balanced or product quality.

### Ingredient listing

All ingredients used in the manufacture of the pet food shall be listed in the ingredient list on the label. The ingredients shall be listed in descending order of predominance by weight. No reference can be given to ingredient quality or grade in the ingredient list. The names of all ingredients must be shown in letters that are the same size, colour and type.



## Nutrition For Dalmatian Puppies

The nutritional needs of Dalmatian puppies are greater than at any time in a Dalmatians life other than reproduction. Understanding what your puppy needs will help you make the right dietary choices.

### What happens

The puppy stage sets the foundation for a Dalmatians whole life. The length of this period can vary; the rule of thumb is 18 months for Dalmatians. A lot of physical development happens in a very short time, including:

- ❖ Bones and joints growing to full size
- ❖ Muscles developing and growing
- ❖ Internal organs growing (this continues even after your dog appears to be full size.)
- ❖ Immune system developing and learning to protect
- ❖ Cognitive development and brain growth.

### Dalmatian puppy's nutritional needs

Supporting that level of development – similar to what a human goes through from birth to 14 years of age – in just one or two years takes the right level of nutrition. This includes:

- ❖ **Protein** – A key building block of muscle, skin, coat, organs and other tissues. During this period of growth, a puppy needs abundant protein.
- ❖ **Calcium and Phosphorus** – Necessary ingredients for healthy bones and teeth. They must be present in the correct ratios to grow bones and teeth correctly.
- ❖ **Omega Fatty Acids, including Linoleic acid** – Provides complete and balanced nutrition, promotes a healthy immune system and helps keep your puppy's skin and coat healthy.

These are not the only needs of a puppy of course. What your Dalmatian puppy eats will need to supply all of these and more. And how the ingredients are mixed is important as well.

### Do's and Don'ts

Be sure to follow the feeding guidelines. One of the worst things you can do is allow your puppy to become overweight – it has serious health implications.

Don't feed your puppy from the table. People food often adds calories and unneeded fat to a Dalmatians diet and it can make your puppy into a finicky eater.

When you change foods, gradually mix the new food in with the old over seven days. If you gradually increase the amount of new food and decrease the amount of old, you make the transition easier on your puppy.

Feed at the same time every day; 3 times a day for young puppies up to 4 months of age.

## Nutrition For Adult Dalmatian Dogs

When a Dalmatian reaches full maturity, it enters the maintenance period. The objective of feeding at this time is to maintain a healthy body condition while supplying needed nutrients and energy.

### Feeding Basics

Normal healthy dogs that are not pregnant, nursing or hardworking have relatively low nutritional requirements for maintaining an appropriate body condition. Unlike Dalmatian puppies, which are developing into their adult bodies, adult Dalmatians need to keep the bodies they have healthy and strong.

If your Dalmatian doesn't have these conditions, you want to feed a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food in amounts that will keep your Dalmatian in ideal body condition. A good body condition is one in which the animal is well proportioned, with an observable waist behind the ribcage and just a shadow outline of ribs.

### Tips for proper feeding

Choose a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food.

Providing a proper diet for an adult Dalmatian can be straightforward and simple without the need for supplements of any kind.

If supplemental meat or table scraps are fed, they should account for no more than 10% of the total diet.

For Dalmatians with lower caloric needs and/or Dalmatians that are less active, attention should be paid to the potential for excessive weight gain.

Often a Dalmatians weight can be reduced simply by eliminating table scraps and treats from the diet and by avoiding high-energy dog foods.

Feeding recommendations for adult Dalmatians can vary, depending upon the dogs activity, metabolism and owners preference.

Adult Dalmatians should be fed twice daily and should be fed at the same time and fresh drinking water should always be made available.

A Dalmatians appetite may vary from day to day and should not be a concern unless the loss of appetite persists or your Dalmatian shows signs of illness or weight loss. In these situations your Dalmatian should be examined by a veterinarian.

### **Switching foods**

Dogs, including Dalmatians, do not need variety in their diet. In fact, it is best to switch foods as little as possible to avoid creating a finicky eater. But when you do need to change foods, gradually mix the new food in with the old over a weeks time. If you gradually increase the amount of new food and decrease the amount of old, you'll make the transition easier on the dog.

## **Nutrition For Hardworking Dalmatian Dogs**

Hardworking Dalmatian dogs need much more nutrition than a typical Dalmatian. These dogs will need special diets and feeding schedules to support the exertions of their work and training.

### **Is your Dalmatian dog hardworking?**

The first step in deciding your Dalmatians diet is to figure out if he truly is a "hardworking dog." If he spends most of the week indoors and then goes out for a vigorous run or long play session on the weekends, a normal diet will probably suffice, with maybe a little extra on exercise days to make up for the calories he'll burn off.

On the other hand, if your Dalmatian spends several days a week out in the open running around, dietary adjustments may be in order.

### **Feeding hardworking dogs**

Hardworking Dalmatian dogs often will need to be fed more of their diet to keep up body condition. In addition, it is a good idea to keep handfuls of food with you when out in activity to give your dog a “pick-me-up” during the day.

Some people feed their Dalmatians candy to maintain energy and blood sugar. This can be dangerous because of the canine problems associated with large amounts of chocolate. Talk to your veterinarian if you think you will need to give your dog a special boost. Your Veterinarian can recommend products designed for this need.

Don't feed immediately before or after hard work. Make sure there is always plenty of water, but regulate it before and after exercise so your dog doesn't get sick. Keep the water cool, but not cold. In cold weather, you may need to feed your Dalmatian extra just to keep warm. The rule of thumb is 7.5 percent more calories than normal for every drop of 10 degrees from normal.

### **In the off season**

One of the challenges for feeding working or busy Dalmatians is what to do in the off-season or winter if you (and he are not so active.) There are two schools of thought: feed your Dalmatian less of the protein-dense food, which avoids a food transition but can leave your dog feeling hungry when he volume is reduced; or feed your Dalmatian the same amount of a less-dense food, which keeps your Dalmatian full but can result in finicky eating if he prefers one over the other. The best thing to do in either case is make the transition slowly over a 7 day period.

## Nutrition For Inactive Dalmatian Dogs

Dalmatian Dogs that don't get much exercise don't need as many calories as Dalmatians that do. You should pay attention to your Dalmatian's energy level, potential reasons your dogs energy level might change and things you can do to keep your less active Dalmatian fit.

Inactive Dalmatians are more likely to put on extra pounds since they don't burn as many calories. This puts them at risk for obesity, which carries with it greater risk for a variety of health ailments. Learn more about Obesity.

### What is an inactive Dalmatian?

There is no precise definition for an inactive Dalmatian, but you probably can tell if your dog fits this category. Inactive Dalmatians don't get much exercise and often don't seem to have much interest in exercise – Dalmatians that prefer to sleep, don't run when they do outside or tend to move as little as possible most likely fit this category.

### Why is a Dalmatian inactive?

Dalmatian Dogs might be inactive for a variety of reasons:

- ❖ **Age:** As Dalmatians grow older, their energy level tends to drop.
- ❖ **Illness or injury:** Physical ailments can make it harder to move as much. These might be temporary slowdowns, but adjustments should still be made.
- ❖ **Overweight:** Dalmatians that are overweight may tend to be less active. This can create a dangerous spiral. The more overweight, the less active, the less active, the more overweight.
- ❖ **Genetic makeup:** Some Dalmatians can be just very inactive and couch potatoes. These types of Dalmatians must have their weight monitored constantly.

### Feeding an inactive Dalmatian

If you have an inactive Dalmatian, you should try to feed the right amount of calories for your dogs' activity level. If your Dalmatian is in ideal body condition and isn't gaining weight, you're feeding the right amount. But if you dog has become less active while his feeding has remained the same and he's getting overweight, try these tips:

1. First, cut back on treats and snacks. These are generally high in calories and may contribute to weight gain.
2. The second step can be to feed less of the animals' regular pet food. Measure the amount of food that's put into the pets dish to prevent the serving size from increasing overtime.
3. Third, owners can increase the Dalmatians exercise with additional walks or playtime each day. This helps you the owner as well as your Dalmatian and has the additional benefit of increasing the amount of time you spend together.
4. Finally, you could consider switching to a reduced-calorie food. These products are designed to allow you to serve a nice-size portion while still reducing the calories the animal eats.

It is always a good idea to consult with a veterinarian before changing the Dalmatians diet. The veterinarian can rule out any health issues like thyroid problems, and then the veterinarian can help tailor a program for an individual pet and can track progress and help troubleshoot along the way when your Dalmatian is physically healthy.

## Nutrition For Senior Dalmatians

When Dalmatians move into their senior years – usually defined as 7 years of age or older – they can often benefit from a diet tailored to their particular life stage. Here are some ways to tell what your Dalmatian needs and how to provide it.

### Signs of a senior Dalmatian dog

By the most common definition, Dalmatians cross into their senior years when they enter the final 25% of the expected lifespan.

As a good rule of thumb, you should start looking for the Seven Signs of Senior at about seven years of age. Those signs include:

1. Greying muzzle or coat – or other coat conditions that weren't there before.
2. Slowing down and staying down – less energy, trouble getting up or limping.
3. Sleeping more – a common side effect of age

4. Changing habits – including play preferences and eating or drinking habits
5. Change in weight – some dogs gain weight as they age while others lose weight.
6. Bad breathe – a sign of dental and gum problems, sometimes exacerbated by age.
7. Hearing and vision changes – like humans, senses can dull over time.

If you see these signs, you should consult your veterinarian. There may be options to treat or reduce the symptoms. Also, these signs could also be related to another issue besides aging that your veterinarian might catch.

### **Feeding a senior Dalmatian dog**

If you have a generally healthy Dalmatian over seven years of age, your dog may benefit from a properly balanced senior dog food. Older Dalmatians sometimes have different needs that adult Dalmatians and foods can be tailored to help meet those needs. Consult your veterinarian for more information.

One changing need that should be tracked is reduced activity level, a common sign of aging. Less active animals may have reduced energy requirements. Over-feeding may predispose animals to obesity, which is associated with various physical disorders. For these reasons, it is particularly important to feed older dogs according to their individual needs and to maintain a healthy body condition.

Also note that older Dalmatians may have difficulty chewing as a result of dental issues. A visit to the veterinarian to clean the Dalmatians teeth will make things right again.

## **Treats In A Balanced Diet**

Treats are a popular tool to use in training and many people like to give their Dalmatians little tidbits of food as a way to show affection. But from a nutritional point of view, treats can be problematic. If the treats are too rich, your Dalmatian can develop an upset stomach. Feed too many and you could be on your way to an overweight dog.

Dalmatians get all of the nutrition they need and all the calories they need from a complete and balanced dog food. Treats that are given in addition to a Dalmatians' regular diet add calories, fat and extra nutrients that may not be good for your dog.

### **The risks of excessive treats**

The extra calories contained in dog treats and people food can be a leading issue in giving treats. These extra calories, if not burned off through extra play and exercise, can lead to weight gain and even obesity, which carries with it increased risk of a number dangerous issues.

In addition to extra calories and fat, people food can also raise a host of additional problems. The wrong food in the wrong doses can result in unexpected consequences. To avoid these, the safest thing to do is never supplement your Dalmatians' diet with people food.

### **Responsible use of treats for Dalmatian**

A safe way to use food as treats is to measure out your Dalmatians daily allowance of kibble in the morning and dip into that for training treats. This way you can give your dog a food reward for a job well done while not worrying about causing any problems.

Of course, it is possible to use manufactured dog treats responsibly. Simply remember that if you feed your Dalmatian treats, they should be low in fat and you must reduce your dogs caloric intake accordingly to accommodate for the extra calories.

When training, you want to work away from giving a food reward every time. Sometimes you will want your dog to sit but you won't have any food. So start gradually replacing the treats with praise. Once your dog has learned a command, give the treat every other time, then every third time.

Make sure your praise is lavish every time, with or without a treat. Pretty soon, your puppy will work for praise – and the occasional snack.



## Supplements

Some people worry that their Dalmatians aren't getting all the nutrition they need. They may supplement their Dalmatians' diets with people food or with vitamin or mineral supplements similar to those many humans take. But if you're already feeding a nutritionally complete and balanced dog food for the appropriate life stage, these supplements are unnecessary and could possibly be dangerous.

When it comes to providing optimum nutrition for Dalmatians, reputable pet food manufacturers have done the work for us. Research scientists have formulated commercial diets containing all the nutrients normal, healthy dogs need for a particular life stage. For Dalmatians with certain health conditions there are special dog foods that are designed to help address those issues. The veterinarian or your breeder can help you choose the right dog food.

### People food

Supplementing with human food adds calories to a pet's diet, may lead to an obese Dalmatian and can unbalance a pet's diet. People food can lead to other issues depending on the food and the amounts in which it is fed.

### Vitamin and mineral supplements for Dalmatians

Vitamin and mineral supplements are best left to the experts. For example, some Dalmatian owners believe that additional calcium, and possibly other minerals should be added to the diets of pregnant and nursing females and growing puppies.

It is true that more minerals are needed at these times, but they are normally obtained through increased consumption of a high quality nutritionally balanced diet. Adding them out of proportion to other nutrients can create skeletal deformities and other problems. Learn more about the interactions of minerals.

Always talk to your veterinarian and breeder if you think supplements may be needed. They can make that call and if needed your veterinarian will prescribe the right minerals in the right amounts.

## Weight Gain

As a symptom, weight gain can point to a few different issues, but the cause is usually the same: Your Dalmatian is consuming more calories than it is burning. The cause is usually very mundane – overfeeding by the owner – but the effects can be serious. Do not write weight gain off as a harmless issue.

### Determining weight gain

The truth is ‘weight gain’ is not really the issue. Dalmatians like people can and should gain weight at certain times – puppy-hood is the obvious example. As a Dalmatian puppy gets larger and fills out, you are going to see some weight gain.

The real problem to watch for is changes in body condition. It is very important that you learn how to evaluate your Dalmatians body condition and monitor it from puppy-hood on.

### Risks of weight gain

When extra weight adds up over time, it can lead to obesity, which can result in certain health problems involving the cardiovascular, respiratory and skeletal systems. Learn more about problems associated with Obesity and ways to address them.

If you determine that your Dalmatian is overfed, the cause is almost always overfeeding and/or lack of exercise. But there can be root causes, such as injury, illness, aging or changes in metabolism. These conditions might carry their own risks above and beyond weight gain.

### How to address weight gain in Dalmatians

Since most weight gain comes from too much food and/or too little exercise, start with these easy steps:

1. Follow the guidelines on the Body Condition and Obesity pages, including eliminating table scraps, reducing treats and reducing the amount you feed.
2. If you think you might want to try a reduced calorie food, consult your breeder or veterinarian about the best course to take.
3. If the weight gain is sudden or there is no clear cause, or if unusual weight loss or maintenance practices don't seem to help (for example, if your Dalmatian has trouble exercising more,) go to your veterinarian. There may be other conditions that need treatment or analysis.

## Obesity

Obesity is the number one nutritional disorder among Dalmatians. Studies suggest that approximately 25 percent of the Dalmatians presented to veterinary clinics are overweight. This extra weight puts pets at risk for certain health problems. Know how to recognize obesity, what causes it and how to correct – or better yet, prevent it!

### Definition of obesity

Dalmatian dogs that have an accumulation of body fat that puts them 20% or more over ideal body weight are considered obese. These dogs often have fat deposits over the thorax, spine and the base of the tail, as well as the neck and limbs.

Obesity is a major concern because it disposes a Dalmatian to certain health problems involving the cardiovascular, respiratory and skeletal systems. Revealed in a study by Nestlé Purina, dogs fed to a lean body condition may live longer than dogs allowed to eat more freely.

### Recognizing obesity

Owners are so familiar with the appearance of their Dalmatian dog that they often fail to recognize obesity unaided. Try these techniques and if you think your dog may be obese or aren't sure, have your veterinarian take a look.

- ❖ **Rib check:** Place both of your thumbs on your dog's backbone and spread both hands across the rib cage. On an obese dog, you won't be able to feel the ribs through the fat covering, or will only be able to feel them when you exert significant pressure. Actually feeling your dog is important, as the coat of many dogs will make a visual check difficult.
- ❖ **Profile check:** Examine your dog's profile – it's best if you are level with the dog. In an obese dog, the stomach will hang down and there will be no abdominal tuck behind the rib cage.
- ❖ **Overhead check:** Looking at your dog from overhead, see if you can see a waist behind the ribs. An overweight dog will not have a discernible waist.

It's a good idea to learn more about how to rate your dog's body condition.

### Causes of obesity

The simple reason why Dalmatians gain weight to the point that they become obese is because they are consuming more calories than they burn through exercise and metabolism, but the cause of this discrepancy can have different sources.

### Diet and exercise

For Dalmatians who are simply eating more calories than they burn, there are two ways to impact the animals weight: feed fewer calories or increase the amount of exercise the pet gets, thus burning more calories.

### Genetic predisposition

Certain breeds seem to be more susceptible to obesity than others including beagles, basset hounds, dachshunds and Labradors. You must watch the weight of dogs of these breeds more closely. However, Dalmatians can also be prone to put on weight if you are not careful.

### Hormonal disorders

Conditions, which impact hormone balances in dogs, may contribute to the development of obesity. These include thyroid or pituitary gland dysfunction. Neutering and spaying may also cause changes in metabolism. You must watch the weight of Dalmatians with these conditions more closely.

### How to correct obesity in Dalmatians

If you know or suspect your Dalmatian is obese, see your veterinarian before making any significant changes. Your veterinarian will recommend a regimen that includes some or all of the tips below, and will tell you how much your dog can handle and how quickly:

- ❖ Eliminate table scraps and treats
- ❖ Reduce the amount of food you give your dog
- ❖ Increase the amount of exercise your dog gets
- ❖ Consider switching to a low-calorie pet food

### Preventing obesity in Dalmatians

As always, the best thing you can do for your Dalmatian is not let him get obese in the first place. Here are some small steps you can take to control your Dalmatians food intake and calorie expenditure:

- ❖ Don't feed table scraps; they are typically high in calories.
- ❖ Limit treats. Remember that if you feed your dog treats, they should be low-fat and you must reduce your dogs caloric intake accordingly to accommodate the extra calories.
- ❖ Make sure your dog gets exercise regularly and try to make time for extra.
- ❖ Measure servings – don't just eyeball the amount you serve and don't use an oversized bowl, which makes it easier to overfeed.
- ❖ Feed two or more smaller meals a day instead of one big meal so your dog feels more satisfied.
- ❖ Utilize the feeding guides provided on pet food packages. Remember, these guidelines are averages and you may need to adjust your feedings based on your dogs' individual body condition.

## Finicky Eating

Sometimes it can be hard to get your Dalmatian to eat his complete and balanced dog food. This can be a problem, especially if it means your dog is not getting enough nutrition or is getting the wrong from somewhere else.

### What is finicky eating?

As a rule, finicky eating is when your Dalmatian will only eat certain things. It is sometimes manifested in a dog that refuses to eat the complete and balanced dog food you offer or doesn't eat enough. Finicky eaters usually do so out of preference, but you should keep in mind that Dalmatians might also refuse to eat because of a medical condition.

Also keep in mind environmental factors. Many Dalmatian owners comment that their dogs eat less during hot weather. This is not unusual. Studies show that, as a general rule, dogs need about 7.5 percent fewer calories with each 10-degree rise in temperature.

### Change in diet

One possible cause of finicky eating is a sudden change in diet. Some tips on making diet changes more tolerable:

- ❖ Before leaving the breeder find out what type, flavour and brand of food your Dalmatian has been eating. Acquire some of this food.
- ❖ If you want to switch your Dalmatian to a new food at any time, begin with a day or two of feeding the same food he had before.
- ❖ Then mix that food with your chosen brand or flavour for a few days, slowly decreasing the amount of old food and increasing the amount of new. This should take about a week.
- ❖ Do this any time you change foods or your dog may develop gastrointestinal upset.

### Making food more palatable

If your Dalmatian doesn't like the new food, hang in there and try to make it more appealing.

- ❖ If you've chosen dry food, add a little warm water to moisten it.
- ❖ If you serve a moist food, warm it a little.
- ❖ Allow your Dalmatian time to adjust.

If he still won't eat it, you may want to try a new food. This causes finicky behaviour.

If he won't eat that, have a talk with your veterinarian. You maybe experiencing a complete refusal to eat.

If your Dalmatians checks out OK with your vet, don't despair. I have never seen a healthy Dalmatian starve themselves. Be persistent and don't give in by feeding junk food!

### **Scheduling and controlling diet**

An indulgent family member rather than your Dalmatian may be the problem. By feeding human treats and food from the table, your Dalmatian's hunger is satisfied with all this people food and it either refuses to eat or nibbles only a few bites of the food it should be eating.

Don't feed your Dalmatian people food and if you feed treats, do so sparingly and reduce the amount of complete and balanced dog food you offer to accommodate the extra calories.

Make sure your Dalmatian isn't eating somewhere else. The garbage can is a common temptation for dogs. Keep garbage out of reach; not only might it reduce your dog's appetite for dog food, it can cause a host of other problems, including diarrhoea.

Scheduling specific feeding times throughout the day is beneficial. Your Dalmatian will know when food is coming and will learn to eat at that time.

If none of these tips help, ask your veterinarian to examine your dog for other conditions that may be leading to these eating habits, especially if your dog seems to be unexpectedly losing weight.

## **Refusal To Eat**

Complete refusal to eat can be a sign of a serious problem that will require a veterinarian's attention. But don't rule out that your Dalmatian may just be finicky.

### **Distinguishing between finicky eating and refusal to eat**

Refusal to eat is when your Dalmatian dog completely stops eating the food put before it or eats small amounts only reluctantly.

Finicky eating is often a result of the food options made available to a dog. Your Dalmatian still wants to eat, but it only wants to eat certain things. This can occur when his diet is changed unexpectedly or when he gets used to certain foods. One example might be a Dalmatian that regularly eats scraps from the table; this dog might eventually refuse dog food because it wants people food.

Finicky eating is a learned behaviour and there are certain things you can do to try and address it.

### **If your Dalmatian refuses to eat**

If your Dalmatian simply won't or can't eat, no matter what you try, you must see your veterinarian. This is especially true if your dog starts losing weight. The problem could be anything from sore teeth to serious internal problems, and your veterinarian can diagnose and recommend solutions to the problem.

## **Sudden Weight Loss**

Sudden or unexplained weight loss should be reported to your veterinarian immediately. It can be a sign of a number of issues, some relatively easy to correct and some quite serious. Don't risk overlooking a potentially serious problem like cancer.

### **Cause of weight loss in a Dalmatian**

In very broad terms, weight loss occurs when your Dalmatian is burning more calories than he is consuming. But why this is happening can vary.

- ❖ There might be some internal problem that means your dog isn't utilizing the calories he is eating.
- ❖ There may be an internal disorder that redirects calories from vital life functions.
- ❖ Your dog may not be eating as much, sometimes due to teeth problems that make eating painful.
- ❖ Your dog may suddenly be burning more calories. Cold weather makes a dog's body burn calories for warmth and dogs that are working hard use more calories too.

### **What to do**

Unless the cause is extremely obvious (such as you've started running a great deal with your Dalmatian, but haven't been offering more food,) you should consult with your veterinarian. Sudden and unexplained weight loss isn't normal and you should find the cause before the weight loss causes further problems for your Dalmatian.



# Water

Water is the one necessary nutrient not adequately available in a complete and balanced dog food – and it is also one a Dalmatian cannot be healthy without. Owners should have a clean bowl filled with fresh water available to their dogs at all times.

### Functions of water

All animals depend on water for life processes. Water is the most important nutrient for survival on a short-term basis and it is one that is too frequently neglected. Among its functions:

- ❖ Water is found inside and outside cells and is involved in most biochemical reactions within the body.
- ❖ Water is essential in helping regulate body temperature.
- ❖ Water lubricates body tissues.
- ❖ Water is a fluid medium for the blood and lymph systems.

The amount of water a Dalmatian will need depends on the amount of activity he is involved in, the temperature and humidity of the environment and other factors such as pregnancy and lactation.

### Sources of water for Dalmatian dogs

Obviously, most of the water your Dalmatian needs is consumed by drinking it. Some water may also be present in your Dalmatians food if you feed a canned or semi-moist (chewy) food; however, you should never rely on the water present in food to meet your pets' needs.

### Providing water

As noted above, plenty of fresh, cool water should be made available AT ALL TIMES! While you might not need to bring water along when you walk around the block, you may want to bring a bottle and a dish to the dog park or when out exercising, especially in warm weather.

# Dalmatian Grooming Basics

Proper dog grooming is an important part of Dalmatian care. It not only makes your dog look better, but contributes to his or her physiological and psychological health. Ensuring you have the proper dog grooming supplies will make your dog healthier and your job easier.

Dalmatians are basically low-maintenance dogs that tend to keep themselves clean.

You need only to bathe and/or currycomb it occasionally and tidy up his short, hard coat with a soft brush as the coat does shed. To make a Dalmatian coat gleam after a bath, rub the coat down with a chamois cloth. It works and their coat stays so shiny!

Their nails require regular trimming or could also get naturally worn down by hard surface. Most Dalmatians are very sensitive about their paws and don't like you to touch them. Early training in handling the Dalmatians feet and toes are very important.

Have your veterinarian remove tartar from your Dalmatians teeth periodically, especially as your dog grows older. You can also learn to do this yourself. Here are some more detailed grooming tips for you and your Dalmatian.

## Coat

Brush your Dalmatian thoroughly at least twice a week. This is the most basic of dog grooming steps. It helps keep his or her hair in good condition by removing dirt, spreading the natural oils throughout the coat and keeping the skin clean and free from irritation.

It is best to start brushing your Dalmatian at an early age, but do not despair if he or she is an older animal. It is possible to train one to enjoy dog grooming. Proceed slowly and be sure to use treats and plenty of praise to make the experience fun!

## Nails

Trim your Dalmatians nails about once per month. You'll need a clipper designed specifically for the kind of companion animal you have. Either a scissor or guillotine style clipper can be used. You should also purchase a small bottle of blood-clotting powder.

### How to cut your Dalmatians nails

1. Have your dog sit beside you. Then place one of his or her paws in your hand and gently pull it forward. If your pet dislikes dog grooming, slowly accustom him or her to it by offering treats and praise.
2. Gradually shorten one nail. Be sure to stop before you reach the quick, which is the part of the nail that contains nerves and blood vessels. If you can-not see the quick clearly, stop cutting just behind the point at which the nail begins to curve downward.
3. If you cut into the quick, do not panic. Put some clotting powder on a moist cotton swab and press it firmly against the nail for several seconds, or sprinkle a bit of powder into the cap of a pill bottle and press the nail into the powder.
4. Repeat the process until all of your dogs' nails have been trimmed.
5. Do not forget to trim the dewclaw, which is located on the inside of each front leg just above the paw. All reputable breeders have the dew-claws removed after the puppies are born.

### Ears

Ear care is an important part of dog grooming. Ear infections are not only painful, but can lead to permanent hearing loss. The signs of a problem with dogs' ears include redness, constant scratching head shaking and odour.

### How to clean your Dalmatians ears

1. Check your dogs ears twice per month as part of your dog grooming routine. The skin inside and on the flaps should be pale pink. If there is a foul odour and/or any red, brown or black skin or debris it is time for a visit to your veterinarian.
2. Moisten a cotton ball with warm water or a little mineral oil and use it to clean the opening into the canal and the flaps. Do not probe too deeply into the canal.

### Teeth

Dalmatians can get cavities and develop periodontal disease, so their teeth should be cleaned as part of their dog grooming routine.

Here your Dalmatian can do his own dog grooming! Giving your dog chews once or twice a week will go a long way to keeping his teeth clean and healthy.

Otherwise you should clean your dogs' teeth with pet toothpaste regularly. It is best to use a small toothbrush that has soft bristles. Cleanings performed by the veterinarian may also be required.

### **Bathing**

Ensure that bathing forms a regular part of your Dalmatian grooming routine. Bathe your dog once every two months or as often as needed.

#### How to bathe your Dalmatian

1. Place a rubber mat in your bathtub, or a towel in your sink for secure footing. Then place a cotton ball in each of your Dalmatians ears to prevent water from entering.
2. Rinse your pet with warm water. Use a spray hose if one is available, but be sure to keep the nozzle very close to your Dalmatians body. Never spray him or her in the face.
3. Apply a shampoo designed especially for dogs in small amounts, working from the head to the tail. Be sure to clean the rectum, between the toes, behind the ears and under the chin. Try to avoid getting shampoo in your Dalmatians eyes.
4. Thoroughly rinse your Dalmatian with warm water.
5. Dry your Dalmatian with a towel and/or hair dryer.

## Choose The Right Vet For Your Dalmatian

Choosing the right veterinarian for your Dalmatian is an important decision, because you will want to find someone whom you can trust to diagnose your Dalmatian should they ever become ill, as well as provide you with the best advice to assist you with treatment options.

After yourself, the most important person in your Dalmatian's life is a veterinarian. Take your puppy or dog in for a visit as soon as possible after coming home for the first time. Your veterinarian can check for problems you might miss and if there is a problem, the sooner treatment starts, the better.

When it comes to selecting your vet, you won't want to base your decision on:

- ❖ How friendly he or she may be
- ❖ How inexpensive he or she is

All that should concern you is how logically the vet thinks and how well they respond to your dog's condition, so they can help you, help your dog.

There are two different types of veterinarian care that you can choose for your Dalmatian:

1. **Allopathic Veterinarian:** This is a type of veterinarian whose philosophies are based on treating your dog's symptoms with either some form of drug, medication or chemical. Some people believe that this style of treatment, only adds more stress on your Dalmatian's immune system and may lead to other complications or even negative reactions if the chemical wreaks havoc on the Dalmatian's other bodily organs.
2. **Holistic Veterinarian:** This type of veterinarian believes in using natural elements of healing such as herbs used for medicine, vitamins, minerals, acupuncture, antioxidants, enzymes and homeopathy as ways to treat illnesses in animals if they should ever occur. The idea behind this approach is to prevent illness from occurring, by keeping your dog's immune system strong and healthy.

Some believe that the holistic approach is the safer and logical choice, but in the end the approach you pick will depend entirely on your beliefs and what you think will work best for your Dalmatian. Don't be afraid to ask questions and find out detailed information about both veterinarian options before making your final choice.

When you look for a veterinarian, consider the following:

- ❖ Recommendation of family and friends – often the best indicator of a good veterinarian.
- ❖ Cleanliness and orderliness of office – a sign of professionalism and good for your Dalmatians health.
- ❖ Proximity to your home – you want to be able to visit easily if you have questions or an emergency.
- ❖ Office hours that fit your schedule – convenience matters; otherwise you might not go.
- ❖ Rapport between yourself and the veterinarian – you want to be able to communicate openly about concerns.

Also identify the nearest animal hospital. You never know when there might be an emergency.

By building a relationship with a veterinarian, you will know that your Dalmatian is getting care from someone you trust. And by going to the same veterinarian over time, you will be building a medical history for your Dalmatian. Building this relationship will have a positive long-term impact on the quality of care your Dalmatian receives throughout life.

## Your Dalmatians First Visit To The Vet

When should you first take your new Dalmatian to the veterinarian? The short answer is, as soon as possible and it must not end at one visit. Your puppy will need more veterinary care in the first year of life than any other time. Not only are there concerns of immediate importance, there is a lot your veterinarian can do and recommend that will help keep your puppy healthy even when he is all grown up.

### **First Visit**

Ideally, select a veterinarian even before bringing your Dalmatian puppy home. Once your puppy is home, the first meeting of veterinarian and puppy should happen as soon as possible – ideally within 24 hours. In addition to a general check up and examination for parasites, you and the veterinarian should work out a specific schedule of visits and vaccinations at that first meeting.

### **First three months**

In the first three months of your puppy's life, your veterinarian will probably want to meet every three or four weeks for vaccinations. How long this schedule continues varies by location, but going until 16 weeks of age is not unusual.

### **Three to six months**

Rabies vaccinations sometimes are regulated by local laws and often begin between three and six months of age. Between four and six months, your puppy should be checked again for parasites and your veterinarian may recommend heartworm treatment. Also watch for your puppy's permanent teeth to come in.

### **Six months to a year**

After six months, the veterinarian visits usually taper off. There are boosters at about one year and these will be repeated on a regular basis, following your veterinarians' recommendation. In general, it is a good idea for adult Dalmatians to make at least one visit a year to maintain the healthy start they got as puppies.

Perhaps the most loving, responsible thing you can do for your Dalmatian is to see that he receives timely health care from a qualified veterinarian. His life depends on it!

## Vaccinating Your Dalmatian

Just like humans, puppies receive vaccines to protect them against disease according and viruses to the schedule provided by your veterinarian. Although only your veterinarian can tell you how many visits are needed and when, expect several in the first year of your dog's life and annual boosters after that.

If you have adopted an adult Dalmatian and don't know if its shots are current, see your veterinarian about the best course of action.

A vaccine works by introducing your Dalmatian's immune system to a small strain of a particular virus, without actually giving the animal the disease. This allows your dog the chance to become familiar with the virus, allowing them the chance to fight it off. Therefore, the next time your Dalmatian is introduced to the same virus, his immune system will be able to quickly fight off the foreign bacteria with ease.

Your veterinarian may provide routine vaccinations for canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvovirus, coronavirus, parainfluenza, Bordetella, Lyme disease and rabies. Remember, most vaccines must be given over a period of time and require multiple veterinary visits. So check with your veterinarian and get ready for a happy, rewarding friendship with your Dalmatian.

### Canine Distemper

A highly contagious viral disease that affects a dog's respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems. It can be spread through the air or by contact with an infected animal, its feces or urine and can be FATAL. Because a puppy's natural immunity may wear off before he's vaccinated, reduce risk of exposure by limiting contact with unfamiliar dogs until the vaccination series is completed.

Symptoms include coughing, sneezing, nose and eye discharge, fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea and seizures.

### Infectious Canine Hepatitis

This viral disease, also known as adenovirus, is spread by contact with infected animals, their feces, urine and saliva. It affects the liver, kidneys and cells lining the blood vessels.

Symptoms include high fever, thirst, inflammation of nose and/or mouth, diarrhoea, abdominal pain and tenderness, liver damage, loss of appetite, haemorrhage and depression.



### **Leptospirosis**

An extremely contagious bacterial disease that spreads through contact with nasal secretions, urine and/or saliva of infected animals. Early signs are not apparent, so infection can go undetected. Recovered animals can continue spreading the disease, which can also affect humans.

Leptospirosis may produce inflamed kidneys, fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, loss of appetite and listlessness. Liver damage can also occur. Note that early signs of the disease may not be readily apparent.

### **Parvovirus**

This viral infection is a common, deadly viral infection and usually strikes puppies. It is spread by contact with an infected dog's blood, feces or vomit.

Symptoms include severe diarrhoea, fever, vomiting, loss of appetite and dehydration. Parvovirus gives diarrhoea and vomit a very unique smell.

### **Parainfluenza**

A highly infectious virus that can be one of the causes of 'kennel cough'. It spreads quickly among dogs kept in close quarters and can seriously damage the respiratory system or even result in death.

Symptoms include a dry, hacking cough, loss of appetite, depression and runny nose and eyes.

### **Rabies**

This is an infection of the central nervous system that results in paralysis and death. Rabies is always fatal. It is usually transmitted through the bite of an infected animal. Rabies is a serious public health threat, so it is essential to vaccinate your dog. Most states have laws requiring vaccination.

A stage of high excitability includes unprovoked biting and sensitivity to noise. There is also a stage of paralysis, cramps and swallowing difficulties.

### **Coronavirus**

A highly contagious viral infection of the gastrointestinal tract. Again, this disease is spread through contact with infected blood, feces or vomit.

Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhoea, high fever and dehydration.

### **Bordetella**

This is an airborne bacterial infection involved in "kennel cough." Dogs may catch this when exposed to other dogs in kennels, dog shows, grooming shops and field trials.

### Lyme Disease

This is a tick-borne disease that affects both dogs and humans.

It can exhibit itself as arthritis with the sudden onset of severe pain and lameness, fever, lethargy, loss of appetite and depression

Newborn Dalmatian puppies receive disease-fighting antibodies from their mothers milk. These antibodies normally last six to sixteen weeks. After that your puppy needs vaccinations to help protect him from this disease.

Some Dalmatians may have a reaction to a vaccine, but these reactions are rarely dangerous. If your Dalmatian experiences loss of appetite or excessively sleeps for more than 48 hours after a vaccination, you should consult your vet.

If your Dalmatian has symptoms of swelling, vomiting or hives, their reaction is stronger, but none life-threatening. Simply have them examined by the vet, and inform the vet of possible allergic reactions before the next vaccination, so he or she can take precautions to lessen the stress on the dog.

Even if your Dalmatian has a reaction, you should still have him or her vaccinated regularly, as small reactions pale in comparison to contracting a fatal virus.

Dalmatians should begin receiving vaccinations when they are puppies. Your vet will inform you of the vaccinations most needed for your dog, so don't be afraid to ask questions and learn all about the various diseases that threaten the life of your canine companion so you can keep them well protected.

## Pet Health Insurance

One of the best ways to protect yourself financially if your Dalmatian suffers from any future illnesses that require expensive treatments is to obtain pet health insurance.

If you are interested in obtaining pet health insurance for your Dalmatian, you will find that there are many excellent insurance companies such as Pet Plan Insurance. You can find them at [www.petplan.com](http://www.petplan.com) or 1.800.268.1169. They can provide coverage for your dog if he or she should ever become seriously ill.

Of course there are different pet health insurance plans for you to consider, so you can choose the one that you feel most comfortable with and within your budget.

However, you should keep in mind that just like most insurance policies, pet health insurance will not cover any pre-existing conditions in your Dalmatian. That being the case, if pet health insurance is something you want for your dog, you should sign up for it as soon as possible, so both you and your pal can truly benefit from it.



# How To Keep Your Dalmatian Healthy

Your Dalmatian will rely on you to keep him in good health. A proper diet, regular exercise and grooming and routine check-ups at the veterinarian will help keep your dog in top form.

It is also important for you to get to know your Dalmatians habits – eating, drinking, sleeping and so forth – since a variation in those habits can be an indication that he isn't feeling well.

A good pet care plan can help with the cost of providing quality healthcare throughout your dogs' life. As vet bills for dog health care in later years can be very expensive.

If your Dalmatian does become ill then it is important to give him the best care possible.

## Skin

Healthy skin is flexible and smooth, without scabs, growths, white flakes or red areas. It ranges in colour from pale pink to brown or black depending on the breed. Spotted skin is normal, whether your dog has a spotted or solid colour coat.

Check your Dalmatian for fleas, ticks, lice or other external parasites. To do this, blow gently on your dogs stomach or brush the hair backward in a few places to see if any small specks scurry away or if ticks are clinging to the skin. Black "dirt" on your dogs' skin or bedding may be a sign of flea droppings.

## Coat

A healthy coat, whether short or long, is glossy and pliable without dandruff, bald spots or excessive oiliness.

## Eyes

Bright and shiny eyes are an excellent sign of a healthy dog. Mucus and watery tears are normal but should be minimal and clear. The pink lining of the eyelids should not be inflamed, swollen or have a yellow discharge. The white of your Dalmatians eyes should not be yellowish. Eyelashes should not rub the eyeball!

### Ears

The skin inside your dogs' ears should be light pink and clean. There could be some yellow or brownish wax, but a large amount of wax or crust is abnormal. Poor dog health is shown by redness or swelling inside the ear. Your Dalmatian shouldn't scratch his ears or shake his head frequently.

### Nose

Most people assume that a shiny wet nose is a sign of good health and a dry, warm nose a sign of a sick dog. A dog's nose is usually cool and moist. It can be black, pink or self-coloured (the same colour as the coat,) depending on the breed. Nasal discharge should be clear, never yellowish, thick, bubbly or foul smelling.

### Mouth, teeth and gums

Healthy gums are important for a Dalmatian's health. They should be firm and pink, black or spotted just like your dog's skin. Young dogs have smooth white teeth that tend to darken with age. Puppies have 23 baby teeth and adults have around 42 permanent teeth, depending on the breed. As adult teeth come in, they push baby teeth out of the mouth.

To check your Dalmatian's mouth, talk to him gently, then put your hand over the muzzle and lift up the sides of his mouth. (lips) Check that adult teeth are coming in as they should and not being crowded by baby teeth. Make sure the gums are healthy and the breath is not foul-smelling. Look for soft white matter or hard white, yellow or brown matter. This is plaque or tartar and should be brushed away to keep your dog in good health.

Mouth infections can lead to serious problems in the gums and lead to poor dog health in other parts of the body including the heart, so it's important to give your dog's teeth and mouth special attention.

### Temperature

A Dalmatian's normal temperature is 101 to 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 to 39.2 degrees Celsius.) Taking a dog's temperature will tell you a lot about your dog's health.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

To take your dogs temperature, you'll need a rectal thermometer. Put some petroleum jelly on the bulb of the thermometer. Ask someone to hold your dogs head while you lift his tail and insert the thermometer about an inch or so into the rectum. Do not let go of the thermometer. Hold it in until the temperature is read (about 3 minutes for a mercury thermometer,) and then remove gently.

### Eyes

The heart beat of a Dalmatian in good health will be from 60 to 130 beats per minute depending on whether they are resting or playing. Puppies have faster speeds, up to 220 beats per minute.

To check your Dalmatians heartbeat, place your finger over the left side of the chest where you can feel the strongest beat.

To check the pulse, which is the same speed as the heartbeat, press gently on the inside of the top of the hind leg with your middle finger. There is an artery there and the skin is thin, so its easy to fee the pulse.

### Wee & poo!

Urine is a great indicator of good health and should be clear yellow. If the urine is cloudy could be crystals forming. Contact your vet with your concerns and make an appointment. Crystals can be a sign of stones forming.

Most adult Dalmatians have one or two bowel movements a day. Stools should be brown and firm. You can also check for worms. Runny, watery or bloody stools, straining, or too much or too little urination warrant a call to the vet.

### Weight

A healthy Dalmatians weight is the result of the balance between diet and exercise. If he is getting enough nutritious food and exercise but still seems over or underweight, he may have a health problem.

Don't let your Dalmatian get fat by giving him too many between meals snacks; obese dogs often develop serious health problems. The best way to tell if your dog is overweight is to feel his rib-cage area. You should be able to feel the ribs below the surface of the skin without much padding.

If you let your dog get over weight or feed him the wrong thing then he will certainly suffer from poor dog health at some time.

# 10 Tips For A Healthy Dalmatian

1. Feed him a balanced diet.
2. We prefer to supplement our Dals with A digestive Enhancer over plain yogurt and 2 salmon oil capsules (1000 mg.) a day.  
<https://copperhollow.com/pages/k9-power>
3. Ask your vet about giving your Dalmatian calcium tablets as they could have some problems later on in life!
4. Keep him comfortable so his immune system can remain strong.
5. Dalmatians are shorthaired and sensitive to extreme elements of the weather and thus must be kept a housedog. His shortened muzzle also makes hot and humid weather uncomfortable for him.
6. Give your Dalmatian LOTS of exercise and regularly. Remember that he is a big, strong breed and requires physical outlets for his boundless energy and high play/prey drive.
7. Walk your Dalmatian at least three times a day or have good play sessions. Provide plenty of space for them to bounce around. You want to keep their spirit up and not break it because he won't be the dog you fell in love with in the first place. Healthy and happy Dalmatians are a joy to live with.
8. Make your breeder your friend. Keep in touch with your breeder who sold you the Dalmatian. The breeder can advise you about care and health matters that are unique to the breed. Any Dalmatian breeder, for that matter, can be an invaluable ally to your though out your Dalmatians life.
9. Guard your Dalmatian from fleas. Your Dalmatian has fleas if you find black specks on the fur or fleabite marks on the skin. A tip given by an owner is to give your Dalmatian garlic daily to prevent fleas from finding a home on your companion. Dalmatians can catch fleas from other animals. It is an every day problem in some parts of the country that, at some time or another, you can expect to encounter in your Dalmatian. The fleas only go to the Dalmatian to feed on its blood. Fleas mostly live and multiply in your home. The comfortable living – central heating, double-glazing and best of all, the fitted carpet – work best for the fleas.
10. De-worm your puppy as per your veterinarian's advice.

# Taking Care Of Your Sick Dalmatian

Dalmatian illnesses can happen at any time. Believe it or not, some dogs are more susceptible to certain dog illnesses than others.

## Symptoms of dog illnesses

Symptoms of dog diseases can vary from poor coat condition to bleeding. You may be able to treat minor complaints yourself but should your dog exhibit any of the following symptoms then you must take him to a vet **immediately!**

- ❖ Bleeding from the nose, mouth, rectum, genitalia
- ❖ Not eating or eating much less than normal for more than 1 day
- ❖ Drinking excessively
- ❖ Lethargy.
- ❖ Pain when you touch or move the animal.
- ❖ Inability to urinate or defecate or showing signs of straining when attempting these activities.

A veterinarian should always be contacted whenever your dog is not acting normally or its health is in question.

When you go to visit your veterinarian, you might want to ask him or her about the common dog illnesses for your particular breed of dog. You need to be prepared for what's ahead and you want to provide your dog with as much immunity to these diseases as possible.

The best way to ensure you can provide for your dog when he is ill is to take out pet insurance. Vet bills can be very costly and no one wants to be in a position where they can't afford to look after the dog when he really needs care.

Your vet will likely give your dog the necessary shots to keep him healthy for many of these potential illnesses, but you have a right and a need as a responsible pet owner to know what may lie ahead.

In addition, knowing what dog illnesses are common in particular breeds can help you and your vet determine what a particular illness might be. If you know what the symptoms are for the illnesses that are most common in your breed of dog, you can better diagnose your pet and catch the illness before it becomes severe. Knowing the common dog diseases will help you keep your dog healthy.



Here are some common Dalmatian illnesses. Some of these illnesses are found mainly when your dog reaches an older age; others can occur at any point throughout your Dalmatians life.

- ❖ Skin allergies
- ❖ Food allergies
- ❖ Cancer
- ❖ Crystals in the urine
- ❖ Stones in the bladder
- ❖ Hip dysphasia
- ❖ Bloat
- ❖ Heart ailments
- ❖ Hypothyroidism
- ❖ Fleas
- ❖ Worms

Knowing what they are will help you to better monitor your pets health and to gather the pertinent information, in case of an illness, that you assist your veterinarian to administer the correct diagnosis and treatment. Below are some common afflictions of Dalmatians.

## Your Dalmatian And The Weather

No matter where you live, the weather can pose a danger to your Dalmatian at one time or another. Know what the risks are and how to avert them.

### Hot weather

Heat and humidity – and conditions that come with them – can pose a risk to dogs.

Make sure your Dalmatian has shade when outside.

Supply plenty of cool water in a clean bowl.

Make sure your Dalmatian has a rest between periods of exercise.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

Avoid excessive exercise during hot days or warm, humid night. The best time to exercise dogs is either early in the morning before sunrise or late in the evening after the sun goes down.

Watch for muscle weakness, heavy panting, dry skin, rapid heartbeat and/or Collapse. It can mean heatstroke. Get to shade, give small amounts of water, immerse your dog in cool water if possible and get to your veterinarian.

In some areas, summer means mosquitoes and the risk of heartworm. See your veterinarian for preventative treatment.

The problems of fleas and ticks can intensifies during summer months.

Hot pavement, sticky tar or gravel may cause footpad problems. To remove tar from footpads, rub them with petroleum jelly and then gently wash with mild soap and water and rinse thoroughly.

**NEVER LEAVE YOUR DALMATIAN CONFINED IN A CAR OR ANY OTHER POORLY VENTILATED ENCLOSURE; IT CAN BE FATAL TO YOUR DOG!**

### Cold weather

Remove salt, ice and packed snow from your Dalmatians pads.

Make sure your Dalmatian isn't left "out in the cold." A cold day or night is no time to leave your Dalmatian outdoors. Bring him in!

Feed your Dalmatian extra food if he spends time outdoors exercising. It takes energy to keep warm.

Wintertime means less exercise outside, which could mean weight gain. Watch your dogs' body condition and adjust feeding amounts if needed.

If your Dalmatian is outside, encourage him to run around. It keeps the blood flowing.

You may find your Dalmatian experiencing dry skin and shedding. This is usually the result of low humidity. Frequent brushing helps remove dead hair, skin and stimulates oil glands.

Keep fireplace screens in place and train pets to keep a safe distance; cinders and fumes can cause problems.

If your Dalmatian suffers from frostbite, do not rub the skin. Get your dog in a warm place. Apply warm moist towels to frostbitten areas. Change them until the area becomes flushed. Severe frostbite damages paws, ears and tails so see your veterinarian as soon as possible.

### Storms

Whether it's a winter or summer storm, your pet should not be left outside. Dangers include:

- ❖ Flying debris that can strike and injure your pet.
- ❖ Excessive cold and wet that leaves your dog miserable and weakened.
- ❖ Lightning can pose the same risks to dogs that it can to in humans.
- ❖ Winter winds and snow can lead to frostbit, chapping and hypothermia.
- ❖ Dalmatians have natural coats, but the aren't invincible. If you won't stay out in the weather, your dog shouldn't either.



## Dalmatians And Holidays

Holidays are a lot of fun for people and they can be for Dalmatians too. But they can also carry some risks. When you and yours get together, include your companion in the holidays in a way that is sensible and provide supervision and forethought.

### Food

Many gatherings involve wonderful meals! Your family and guests may be tempted to slip your dog a little food as a holiday treat. Avoid this and ask your company not to give handouts. They could upset your Dalmatian's stomach; poultry may include bones and if your dog becomes accustomed to treats, you will end up with a dog that begs at the table year-round.

### Decorations

Some Dalmatians are notorious for chewing. Yarn, tinsel, ribbons and other "Chewables" are attractive to a playful puppy or dog and may cause internal damage if swallowed. If you can not supervise your Dalmatian dog or puppy, keep him confined in a safe area.

### Candy

Dalmatians, like people may be tempted by holiday goodies. Allowing them to have holiday treats and sweets can lead to digestive upsets. In the case of chocolate goodies, BEWARE! Chocolate contains theobromine, which is toxic to dogs!

### Excitement

Please remember that the holidays can be stressful for Dalmatians. More people, more noise and changes in their daily schedule may frighten or confuse them. Securing your pet in a quiet area during a holiday party can be easier for your Dalmatian and for you.

Holidays like Halloween include the extra excitement of lots of visitors, strange sights and sounds and candy everywhere. If your Dalmatian is timid by nature, new people are frightening enough without all those noisemakers and funny costumes. If your Dalmatian is protective of you, all those people ringing your doorbell is certain to stress him as he's trying so hard to protect you and can't understand why you keep telling him it's ok. If your Dalmatian is friendly and curious, he could easily make a quick exit through that constantly opening door. Keep your dog on a leash or in a crate if you have concerns.

### New Dalmatians as gifts

Although a new Dalmatian puppy or dog as a gift on a holiday would be a wonderful surprise, it can be stressful for the dog, causing him to become over-excited and confused. This confusion may create problems in getting your new companion off to a good start. You may not have adequate time to begin housetraining your dog immediately and help him adjust to his new surroundings. Both time and patience are needed to establish a routine for a new Dalmatian.

If possible, pick up your new Dalmatian no later than the weekend before the holiday. This will allow time to become accustomed to his new home and family before the hustle and bustle of the holiday. If this is not possible, or if the days prior to the holidays promise to be hectic, arrange to pick up your new Dalmatian after the holidays when the household activities are calmer.

Most reputable breeders will not sell puppies as gifts and breeders are selective about who can purchase a puppy. There are contracts to be filled out and references are needed.



## Dalmatian Travel

If you are planning to travel with your Dalmatian, you should start by asking yourself if it makes sense to bring your canine companion. Many dogs love to travel and many more can tolerate it, but flying your Dalmatian across the country just to have him stay in his crate once you arrive isn't fair to either of you.

If you decide it does make sense to bring your dog along, there are preliminary preparations to make.

- ❖ Contact your destination and make sure your dog is welcome where you are staying.
- ❖ Go to your veterinarian and make sure all your dogs' vaccinations are up to date including heartworm medications.
- ❖ Ask your veterinarian to make sure your dog is in good enough health to travel. If your dog gets car sick ask for
- ❖ See if there are any particular health concerns (i.e. insects, cold, heat) at your destination. Take the necessary precautions.

### Packing for your trip

- ❖ Take health and rabies certificates, which are needed when crossing some borders.
- ❖ Bring a recent photo of your dog to help identify him if lost.
- ❖ Pack bowls, leashes, toys, crate, medicines and grooming equipment.
- ❖ You may want to take food if traveling by car or if you aren't sure where to get food at your destination. Sudden diet changes can lead to digestive upsets and spoil the trip for you and your Dalmatian.
- ❖ Make sure your Dalmatian is wearing ID tags and preferably carrying contact info for you at your destination. Make sure you know his tattoo and or his microchip number(s).

### Traveling by car

- ❖ It's best to have a crate or a car carrier in the back. Don't put it in direct sunlight.
- ❖ If your Dalmatian is not riding in a crate, then make sure he's buckled up. Special harnesses that connect to the seat belts are available. Don't use a leash – in a sudden stop, this could cause serious injury or a broken neck.
- ❖ **DO NOT** travel with your Dalmatian in the back of a truck.
- ❖ Do not feed your Dalmatian for at least three hours before leaving on a trip. If you must feed him and he gets car sick try ginger capsules to settle his stomach.
- ❖ During stops, provide fresh drinking water for your Dalmatian. You may also reward him with a dog snack for being a good traveler.

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### Traveling by air

- ❖ Try to avoid peak travel periods when delays and stopovers are longer, especially in very hot or very cold weather.
- ❖ Plan a trip with as few stops and transfers as possible.
- ❖ Make hotel, resort and airline reservations for your Dalmatian well in advance.
- ❖ Some airlines allow cats and small dogs to travel (for an extra charge) with their owner if the carrier fits under the passenger seat. Not likely with a Dalmatian!! Otherwise, rent or purchase a carrier or crate which meets airline regulations and affix a LIVE ANIMAL sticker. Mark it with your name and address and the name of a person who can be contacted about your Dalmatian at your destination if necessary. Put your dog's name in a clear place so that everyone passing can use it and help him feel more at ease.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

- ❖ Put a cushion or blanket on the crate floor. Attach a small water pail to the crate door. Freezing the water insures that the water won't spill and as it melts the Dalmatian is assured to have water to drink.
- ❖ On the day of the flight, take your Dalmatian for a LONG walk before leaving for the airport. Allow him the chance to relieve himself before putting him into the crate.
- ❖ Remove his collar before locking him into the crate.
- ❖ At the end of the trip, pick up your Dalmatian promptly.
- ❖ Be prepared for your Dalmatian to spend time in quarantine at foreign destinations. Ask your travel agent about the possibilities of this.



# How To Breed A Dalmatian

When you adopt your Dalmatian puppy, you will need to decide whether or not you wish to neuter your dog or keep him or her available for breeding.

If you choose to Breed Dalmatians, you should first consult with the breeder to hear his or her advice and also learn everything there is to know about breeding so you know exactly what you are getting into, what to expect and how you can keep both the mother and her puppies safe and health. Many reputable breeders sell pet stock on a non-breeding contract and sell breeding stock on conditions. Conditions can be that the Dalmatian be shown to its Championship, have all the necessary health checks in place like certifying hips at the age of two, thyroid testing and many other conditions.

The first aspect you need to understand is that breeding can be frustrating, tedious, time consuming, expensive unnerving and often distressing because it is NOT uncommon for puppies to be stillborn or for the mother to have complications or even die from whelping problems! Are you willing to take the chance that you loose your companion?

## Female Dalmatians in heat

Your female Dalmatian will experience estrus -- commonly known as her heat cycle -- usually every 6 to 8 months, which will last for approximately three weeks.

You will recognize the signs of heat in your dog, as she will experience vaginal bleeding for 10 to 14 days after the end of the first week she has been in heat. You will also find that her vulva is swollen and most likely every intact male dog on your street will be showing up on your doorstep.

## How to breed successfully

It has been estimated that the best time for breeding for the female is around the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> day of heat. Once the day has arrived she should be taken to the home of the male, as it appears males are more successful when you are able to breed in familiar surrounding.

You will also find that to determine if your female Dalmatian is ready for breeding, there are tests that can be conducted to either examine her vaginal cell or the new and more accurate test that finds changes of progesterone level in her blood. Be advised that these tests can be quite expensive.

### **Caring for your pregnant Dalmatian**

A female dog will usually remain pregnant for 60 – 67 Days; therefore, after breeding has been complete, you will need to begin counting and preparing yourself for the birth.

After three weeks from the breeding day, take your female dog to the vet so that the vet can verify if your Dalmatian is pregnant. If she is pregnant, with your veterinarians' guidance he will recommend which food to put her on whether it be puppy or her regular diet for the time being. The puppies will grow at a rapid rate and the female will need the extra nutrients.

You will notice that your pregnant Dalmatian will grown a tremendous appetite and will ingest about 1 and ½ the amount of food she ate before she was pregnant. Feed her several times a day, remember she's not just eating for one anymore and she needs her strength for whelping.

You may also notice that your female Dalmatian will become more loving and probably demand more attention from you. She will want to be close to you especially as whelping draws near.

### **Preparing for whelping**

Before the time of whelping occurs, you will need to procure a proper whelping box that is large enough for your dog to comfortably move around in and have sides that are low enough that she can easily see out of and for you to provide her with assistance if needed.

The box bottom should be covered with layers of newsprint...not newspaper as the ink is very dirty. This will help with absorbing the fluids from birthing, and can easily be changed and disposed of without overly disrupting the mother and her puppies.

### **Labour and delivery**

For the most part, many Dalmatians experience very few complications during delivery.

You will know when it is almost time for your Dalmatian to give birth as her temperament will change almost 24 hours before labour starts. She will probably act nervous, may start to nest and she will start to pant. Her rectal temperature will drop below 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius and will remain consistent up until delivery. If her temperature goes up there may be problems and a trip to the veterinarian is needed.

It is a good idea to stay with the female Dalmatian if this is her first time delivering, as she may need assistance. If all goes well, she should deliver her first two puppies quickly and with ease.

For the most part, puppies that have larger and rounder heads will take longer to deliver than those with smaller heads. For smaller head dogs, successful deliveries with no complications can take no more than two or three pushes but for bigger head dogs it is not uncommon for the mother to have to strain more. There can be an hour or more between puppies but do not let the mother strain for more than one hour to deliver a puppy.

When a puppy becomes visible, it should only take a few contractions to push the puppy free from the birth canal, making it only a few minutes for a puppy to be born after it is visible.

About 40% of puppies are born headfirst, so in many cases it is not uncommon for the puppy to come out tail first. If the puppy is tail first, keep a close watch and be prepared to offer assistance.

When the puppy is born the mother should immediately begin to lick the sack (placenta) that the puppy is in-cased in. Her tongue will rip the sack exposing the mouth, nose and face of the puppy who she will continue to lick clean. The vigorous cleaning provided by the mother is what stimulates circulation and breathing within the pup. The mother will chew to sever the umbilical cord and eat the placenta. Both of these proceedings are normal. Be sure that the mother doesn't chew the umbilical cord too close to the puppy's body.

After 24 hours of the successful delivery, the mother Dalmatian and her puppies should be examined by the Vet to ensure that everything is fine. The dew claws on the puppies can be removed at this time.

You should also expect the mother to have vaginal blood discharge for up to 7 days after whelping, but any longer than that, you should have her checked out for possible problems.

If whelping does not occur smoothly or successfully as described above, your Dalmatian mother could be experiencing many complications. Therefore, make sure you consult the advice of your vet, your breeder and read plenty of information on the art of breeding before you attempt it.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

In addition to breeding your female Dalmatian and all the things that can go wrong consider her puppies. If your female dies then you will have to raise the puppies on your own which is not an easy task.

You are also responsible for placing the puppies into good homes when the time comes. Screening potential puppy buyers is very time consuming, frustrating at times and worrisome. Make sure you have a good mentor to help you through the process.

In addition, keep in mind if you don't choose to breed or neuter your dog, you should know that the female dogs' reproductive system can shorten her Life span by making her more susceptible to serious health problems and the males' reproductive system can make him more aggressive, occasionally cause him to ignore commands, claim your items and even attack other male dogs.

Therefore, make sure you choose the best choice for both you and your dogs before you jump headfirst into breeding.



# Common Dalmatian Illnesses

## Dog Worms And How To Cure Them

Every single dog in the world is susceptible to dog worms (internal parasites.) From the eerily fatal Heartworm, carried by mosquitoes, to the relatively benign Roundworm, all dogs should undergo regular fecal exams and parasite prevention.

It is important to know about the possible dog worms that can affect your pet because you can catch them too. As you interact with your dog, you are susceptible, as are any children in your home.

Worms are another everyday problem in Dalmatians but the puppy is more likely to get sick from worms than the adult Dalmatian. The sick one would lose weight and become weak, suffer from upset stomach, poor growth, listlessness or even lung trouble. Worms may impede your puppy's growth and cause him to have a potbelly or be thin and have a shoddy looking coat.

Your grown Dalmatian may not be showing any sign of worms but he could spread them more than the sick puppy, through large amount of larvae or eggs passed out in the feces. Released into the surrounding, these larvae and eggs could infect other animals and children.

### **The most common dog worms**

There are different types of worms that infect dogs such as tapeworm, roundworm, ringworm and heartworm.

### **Roundworm**

The most common internal parasite, roundworms are especially prevalent in puppies. Puppies are often infected in utero, from a roundworm infested mother.

The roundworms (toxocara) live and produce hundreds of eggs in the intestine.

They cause digestive upset in puppies, poor growth and thin our out of conditioned coat.

The infected puppies may become listless, have a potbelly or tucked un appearance.

Once the roundworms migrated from the gut to the lungs, your Dalmatian will suffer lung damage, cough and pneumonia. The roundworm eggs in your dog droppings get passed out and about.

These are very hardy eggs, resistant to heat and cold, and can survive up to 7 years in the soil. The eggs can pass on to children through ingestion and cause them to fall sick as well.

As precautions, you can toilet train your Dalmatian puppy to use a place where you can easily clean up and dispose of the droppings into the sewer. Have your children wash their hands every time after they handle the puppies.

### **Heartworm**

Heartworms, left untreated, will be fatal. These deadly dog worms are spread by mosquitoes and take up residence inside the muscles of the heart. Prevention is very much recommended.

### **Whipworm**

Whipworms are long, whip-shaped dog worms that take up residence in your dog's colon. Eggs are shed and diagnosis can be made three months later through a veterinarian fecal exam. Weight loss, anemia and fresh blood in the stool are signs of a heavy infestation.

### **Hookworm**

Hookworms are minuscule (12 to 15 mm) intestinal worms that hook onto the intestinal wall and consume copious amounts of blood. The hookworm infestation can kill a puppy before the eggs are ever discovered in a fecal exam. It is extremely important to test all dogs on a regular basis, as hookworms are not only very contagious to other pets, but also to humans.

### **Tapeworm**

The most common dog tapeworm is transmitted through fleas. The most common sign of infestation is discovering the egg sacks around the anus. Egg sacks look like grains of rice, that may or may not be moving. Treatment is accomplished by a prescription from your veterinarian. Due to the nature of tapeworms, regular de-worming medication will not help.

As part of the tapeworms' life cycle occurs in the flea as the host if your Dalmatian has tapeworms, it has fleas too and the treatments for both are usually prescribed together by the vet.

The tapeworms have a flat, segmented body. You see them as single segments or chains that resemble segments of rice in the dropping of infected canine.

### Common signs of dog worms

Some of the common signs of worm infections are listed below, but these may also be symptoms of other illnesses. When ever your pet is acting ill, we always recommend an examination of your pet and an analysis of a fecal sample.

- ❖ A change in your dogs appetite
- ❖ A distended abdomen in puppies
- ❖ Coughing or hiccapping resulting from the coughing up of worm larvae emerging from the lungs
- ❖ Weight loss
- ❖ Weakness
- ❖ A dull coat
- ❖ Vomiting or diarrhoea
- ❖ Observing the worms-either round worm, which looks like spaghetti or tapeworm segments that look like grains of rice in the stool or on the fur
- ❖ Exercise intolerance due to heartworm.

### Steps to prevent dog worms in your Dalmatian

Regular veterinary check-ups and fecal exams are an important part of responsible dog ownership and the only way to ensure your best friend stays parasite free (and you too!)

De-worm your Dalmatian puppy every month and your grown Dalmatian every 6 months.

Have your veterinarian screen your dog for worms twice a year – and more often if your dog is at high risk of a worm infection.

Examples of high risk Dalmatians are those animals living in crowded urban areas, show dogs, hunting dogs, dogs that live on farms or acreages and multiple pet households. Worm your dog regularly.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

Control fleas, which can carry certain tapeworms. These tapeworms can be transmitted to dogs or people who accidentally swallow an infected flea.

Prevent your dog from eating animal carcasses, such as rabbits and rodents, which may contain immature tapeworms that will mature in your dog.

Maintain good hygiene. For instance, whipworm and roundworm eggs dropped to the soil in your dogs feces can remain infectious for years, while hookworm larvae can accumulate in the earth of a dog run. All can re-infect your Dalmatian. Rapid removal of feces is important. Pave over your dog run. This is much safer than having a soil or gravel surface in which worms can survive.

## Flea Infected Dalmatians

Flea-infected Dalmatians can develop skin diseases especially those allergic to flea bites.

Black specs in the fur and bite marks on the skin tell if your Dalmatian has them. To check further, spread some newspapers and place your Dalmatian on top. Brush him and look for the black specs falling off.

Fleas live up to 6 weeks, feeding on blood and during that time would have laid hundreds of eggs that mostly land on your Dalmatians bedding, carpets and other favourable nests around your house.

The eggs hatch into larvae that seek nice, dark places while feeding on flea droppings, dust, human shed skin, dandruff and other such tasty morsels.

The larvae turn into hardy pupae that can survive for months before changing into adult fleas.

Fleas are host to tapeworms. Both problems are likely to occur together in your Dalmatian and, therefore, the treatments are also usually given together by the vet.

A bit of garlic a day may keep the fleas away from your Dalmatian.



### **Dog flea control: finding and curing fleas**

Effective dog flea control requires the three P's! Pet, Premise and Persistence!

- ❖ Pets – control the fleas on your dog
- ❖ Premise – control of dog fleas in your environment
- ❖ Persistence – controlling dog fleas can be an ongoing battle

Environmental dog flea control is probably the more important of the two. Adult dog fleas on your dog account for as little as 5% of the total flea population. Dog fleas can be shared by cats and dogs, so if you have a cat it must be treated too.

Dog fleas feeding on your dog can cause several problems:

- ❖ Itching and scratching at the flea bite – in most dogs, the itching is mild and temporary.
- ❖ Some Dalmatians become allergic to flea saliva and develop severe itching, hair loss and skin damage from scratching and biting at the site. If left untreated a skin infection will develop
- ❖ Tapeworm infection – dog fleas are an essential part of the tapeworms life cycle. Your dog is infected with tapeworms when it swallows a flea that contains immature tapeworm stages
- ❖ Anaemia – loss of red blood cells. This occurs only with severe flea infestations and usually only in your or sick animals.

### **Finding dog fleas on your Dalmatian**

It is easy to tell when your Dalmatian is heavily infested with dog fleas. You can see the fleas crawling over your dogs skin and through the hair.

However, if your dog has only a light infestation, you may not see any fleas unless you look for them. A common place to see fleas is on your dogs belly and the inside of the thighs where the hair is thin or the skin is bare. Another place to look for fleas is in the dense hair over your dogs rump, especially near the base of the tail. Part the hair and inspect the skin for either fleas or flea dirt.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

Flea dirt is actually flea droppings. It looks like black grains of sand or cracked pepper on your dog's skin. If you place a few particles of flea dirt on a white surface (e.g. a piece of paper) and wet them, you will see a reddish brown stain form. This is because droppings from the dog fleas contain digested blood from the flea's blood meal. You may also notice tiny areas of dried blood on your dog's bedding from moistened flea dirt that has since dried.

### **Dog flea control**

There are many excellent products that if used appropriately are excellent for dog flea control on your pet.

There are numerous products that will kill adult dog fleas on your dog. However, they vary in the duration of their effects.

### **Flea shampoos, sprays and powders**

Most will kill any dog fleas at the time of application, but they have no lasting effect. Your dog may have more fleas within 24 hours of being treated. Some of the newer sprays can be safely used every day if necessary.

### **Flea rinses (dips)**

May provide effective dog flea control for 4-5 days, depending on the product. The rinse is applied after your dog has been shampooed; it is left to dry on your dog's coat.

### **Sprays containing flea growth regulators**

Depending on the product, these sprays are usually applied weekly. The growth regulators help break the flea's life cycle for more effective dog flea control.

### **Flea collars**

Can give effective dog flea control for a couple of weeks. Flea collars are not very effective in warm, humid climates (environments that are ideal for immature flea development.)

Some dogs are sensitive to flea collars and develop skin irritation under the collar. If this happens, you should remove the collar and use another method of flea control.



### Spot on products

Advantage® and Frontline® are two brined name products that are applied to a small area of your dogs skin; they effectively kill fleas for at least a month.

The kill the adult dog fleas, usually before the flea has a chance to bite your dog. Be sure to select the appropriate package for your dogs body weight.

### Program®

Program is a tablet that sterilizes any eggs laid by the fleas that feed on your dog. You must give your dog the tablet once a month for effective dog flea control. This drug does not kill the adult dog fleas on your pet, but it does break the flea life cycle by preventing hatching of the next generation of flea eggs. Consult your veterinarian for a recommendation on what would work best for your pet.

### Manage your environment

Dog flea control in your pets' environment is fairly simple for indoor dogs, especially if you have no other pets that regularly go outside. It is impossible to ride the outside environment of all fleas. Dog flea control in pets that regularly go outside or live outside can be more difficult.

Unless you have strictly indoor pets, environmental dog flea control must target both your house and your yard.

### House

Use a fogger or long-lasting spray to kill any adult and larval fleas. If you have a particularly bad problem with dog fleas, it is often worth having a professional exterminator treat your home.

Dog fleas in the pupal (cocoon) stage are resistant to insecticides, including foggers, so it may be necessary for you to treat your home 2 or 3 times to get rid of all fleas.

The second treatment should be done 2 weeks after the first treatment.

You should also wash or otherwise treat your dogs bedding on a regular basis.

### Yard and garden

Spray your yard with an insecticide that has residual activity for at least 30 days.

For a difficult flea problem, consider having an exterminator treat your yard.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

In warm, humid climates, it may be necessary to spray your yard every 30 days during the warmer months of the year.

Some newer products contain a growth regulator (fenoxycarb) and need to be applied only once or twice a year.

With the new residual treatments for your Dalmatian, environmental control is less important. In some cases, using these products on your dog effectively controls the flea population in the environment. Consult your veterinarian for more information on controlling fleas in your pets environment.

## Dalmatian Allergies

Dalmatians, like humans, can also suffer from allergies. Most common Dalmatian allergies are itching of the skin. The respiratory tract can be affected causing coughing, sneezing and/or wheezing. At times, the eyes and nose may develop a discharge. Also, the digestive system may be affected causing vomiting or diarrhoea.

The most common dog allergies usually fall into one of the following; skin allergies, flea allergies, food allergies, inhalant allergies, contact allergies or bacterial allergies.

### Skin allergies

An allergic skin disease of dogs, known as canine atopic dermatitis, is caused by your dogs immune system hypersensitivity to common substances in the environment, such as dust mites or molds.

The signs of atopic dermatitis usually appears within the first two years of a dogs life.

If your dog begins to groom excessively, with licking or chewing of the paws, abdomen and hind quarters, then it may suffer from atopic dermatitis. Also, check to see if the ears are reddened and hot to the touch.

Signs of dog allergies of this type are in the armpits, groin or between the toes of the paws. Check to see if there is saliva staining. In light coloured dogs, it appears as a red-brown staining. In chronic cases the skin, mostly in the abdomen may change colour from a pinkish to angry red to black mottling.

Other dog allergies like flea allergy, food allergy and parasitic infestations may mimic the symptoms of atopic dermatitis making it difficult to diagnose. Once fleas, foods and parasitic infestations are eliminated as being the offending culprits, then allergy skin testing for dust mites, pollens and molds may be done to determine what causes your dogs atopic dermatitis.

### **Flea allergies**

In areas where fleas are a problem, flea allergies are the most common form of flea allergy dermatitis. The flea itself is not the culprit in canine flea allergies. It is their saliva that causes the allergic reaction.

A skin allergy test can be preformed to determine if a dog is allergic to flea saliva. If it is, then a strict flea control regimen is required to reduce symptoms to dog allergies of this kind. Caution must be used however to make sure the chemicals in the flea preparations are not harmful to your dog.

### **Inhalant allergies**

Just like humans, canine inhalant dog allergies can be caused by pollens (tree, grass and weed) dust mites, molds and chemicals.

Although any purebred or mutt can acquire inhalant allergies, the most common breeds that are affected by these dog allergies include Terriers, Poodles, Dalmatians, German Shepherds, Irish Setters, Miniature Schnauzers, Pugs and Shih Tzus.

The symptoms of an inhalant allergy include scratching, biting, chewing at the feet and constant licking. The itching may be most severe on feet, flanks, groin and armpits.

Inhalant allergies are often the reason for recurrent ear infections in your dog.

### **Food allergies**

Dalmatians can become allergic to a food they have eaten for years which causes many people to overlook the possibility of a food allergy.

Food allergies only account for 10 percent of dog allergies. Common food allergies to food include: chicken, beef, pork, milk, fish, eggs, corn, wheat, soy, artificial sugars and chemical preservatives.

Determining which food allergen can be time consuming. First, eliminate all the possible allergens from the diet, by using a home made diet consisting of a protein and a starch your dog has not eaten before. Gradually add back, one at a time for a week, the ingredients of your dog food. If symptoms return then the offending food allergen should be easily determined. Commercial dog foods can be found that do not contain the offending allergen.

Food sensitivities in a Dalmatian may manifest as itchy skin, scratching at ears, shaking of the head, licking and biting at the hind quarters or feet, rubbing faces on carpeting, ear inflammations, coughing and rarely vomiting, diarrhoea, flatulence, sneezing, asthma like symptoms, behavioural changes, seizures, gagging and vomiting.

### Contact allergies

Contact allergy is the least common of all the types of dog allergies. Some of the common contact allergens include flea collars, wood bedding, grass, plants and sometimes chemicals.

### Bacterial allergies

Several species of Staphylococcus (Staph) bacteria live on normal dog skin. Normally Staph does not cause a problem with its host, but some Dalmatians develop an allergy to it.

With this type of allergy your dog develops areas of hair loss that look much like ring worm. These areas become infested and need to be treated with antibiotics. The Staph allergic dog usually has recurrent Staph infections.

## Deafness

Dalmatians is among the more than 35 breeds of dogs on record to have hereditary deafness. In fact, they are among the most prone to deafness of all breeds.

The condition cannot be reversed with medications, surgery or hearing aids. Dogs could also become deaf from old age, toxicosis or infection.

A small percentage of Dalmatians born are born deaf in both ears. These dogs should never become a health problem for anyone, as the responsible breeder should have them euthanized before they are old enough to leave the litter. Dalmatians who are deaf in only one ear make perfectly good pets, but are generally inappropriate for breeding. The hearing status of any Dalmatian puppy should be documented by BAER (Brainstem Auditory Evoke Response) testing, which is highly reliable and usually done when the puppy is 6 weeks old.

## Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders

Dog seizures are due to abnormal electrical conduction within the brain, that results in loss of consciousness (in most cases) and various physical signs that can be associated with the seizure.

Most dog seizures usually last between 30 seconds to 2 to 3 minutes. It may only take place for 30 seconds but it may seem forever to you. You need a veterinarian if it lasts more than 5 minutes.

Emergency treatment is definitely called for if your Dalmatian goes into seizure for 10 minutes or longer; twice in the span of 24 hours, or if he has a second attack before he could completely recover from the first seizure attack.

### Physical signs of dog seizures

- ❖ Falling over to one side
- ❖ Legs 'paddling' or generalized trembling and/or twitching
- ❖ Jaw 'chomping'
- ❖ Salivation
- ❖ Urination
- ❖ Defecation
- ❖ Eyes 'rolled back'
- ❖ Vocalizing

Most dogs will seem anxious, seek out the owners prior to the actual seizure when the above signs can be seen. What do you do in such instances is not panic and time the attack by actually looking at a watch or clock. Remain by your Dalmatians side; be there when he comes out of the seizure to calm him. Stroke and comfort him.

Then your dog will often seem disoriented and 'drunk' in appearance, sometimes behaving blind, stumbling about, poorly responsive to his/her environment. This last phase of disorientation with dog seizures can last from as little as 10 minutes to several hours.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

To keep your Dalmatian from hurting himself during the seizure, place thick cushions, blanket etc between your dogs head and any hard furniture and protect him from the stairs, any sharp objects, water etc. Unlike seizure attacks in human, animals do not swallow their tongue. So you don't have to put your hand or spoon or any other object into your Dalmatians mouth when he has an attack. Be very careful to avoid handling your dogs head directly since this has often resulted in a biting injury to owners hands.

With a seizure your dog will be unaware of his/her surroundings when having a seizure and may bite down very hard on your hand and not even realize it.

Also, keep children and other pets away from your Dalmatian.

Coming out of the seizure, your Dalmatian will be groggy, confused and feel like he has done something wrong. He may make unusual sounds and stumble around.

Do not allow him on the stairs until he has fully recovered. In the mean time, sooth him by talking to him softly, offer him some water and use long gentle stokes to comfort him.

If dog seizures last for longer than 5 minutes they may be turning into "status epilepticus" which essentially means a constant state of seizure activity and if the seizures are not stopped, this can lead to life threatening consequences.

This also can cause some temporary or permanent damage of the brain tissue. If a seizure climbs towards 5 minutes, get your dog to a vet immediately!

If your pet has more than one seizure in a 24 hour period, this is considered a "cluster" of dog seizures. You need to seek veterinary care once he or she has the second seizure, since this indicates a rapid succession of dog seizures and may require anticonvulsants be started to control these. A "cluster" will often precede "status pilepticus," as indicated above.





### Make a record

Make sure to pay close attention to what you are witnessing. Record in a notebook the following: Time the length of the seizure and record time. Time the length of the 'disoriented' phase that follows the seizure and record. Document exactly what signs were seen (from above list) was it associated with any events eg: exercise, eating, drinking etc...date and time of seizure.

The information that would be important to your veterinarian regarding such episodes includes:

1. Duration of the attack
2. The type of muscular activity your Dalmatian exhibits during seizure.
3. Any abnormal behaviour during the attack
4. frequency of the seizure.

By keeping a journal, it helps you know to know how often your Dalmatian is suffering from dog seizures and are these getting longer or more violent. This information is important for your vet to help him treat the seizures.

The first time your Dalmatian has a seizure, your vet may take blood and X-rays to be assessed for any systemic problem that may cause the seizure as well, examine your pet for any abnormal neurological or cardiac signs.

### Patterns of dog seizures

Some Dalmatians have been known to have one seizure in their lives, while others develop serious repeated dog seizures. Your pet may never seizure again or may continue to have dog seizures. You play an important role in the diagnosis and proper treatment of your pets seizures, by providing an accurate history and seeking veterinary help when indicated.



## Cancerous And Benign Tumours

Dalmatians are prone to cancer. So anytime you see a bump on your Dalmatian, you should have it checked out.

Watch out for both external and internal lumps, eye ulcers or cherry eye as they call it, as well as dermodicosis or skin sores.

Mast cell tumours are malignant and they do not occur over often but can form either in the skin or within the body.

The related disorders reported along such tumours are round raised masses in the skin of your Dalmatian, lack of appetite, vomiting and abdominal pain. Check for tarry stools due to bleeding in the upper intestinal tract.

Dalmatians of any age can develop mast cell tumours but older ones over 8 years old are more prone to it.

Never take tumours in your Dalmatian lightly, even a small one! The veterinarian would usually have them removed immediately because of their high susceptibility to cancer.

One owner noticed her Dalmatian had a bump the size of a mosquito bite that did not go away even after 10 days. The vet diagnosed it as a malignant tumour and removed it the very next day. The owner felt so relieved that the tumour was removed before the cancer had a chance to spread.

Another owner found both his Dalmatian girls had lumps and had it checked out immediately. The vet removed the lumps due to their breed and the Dalmatians are fine now.

Another owner noticed a small lump on her Dalmatians ear and pointed out to her vet. They decided to leave it to see what it did. In less than three weeks the lump had more than doubled its size. It was decided to remove the lump, but at the same time the vet had to take out a lot of the surrounding tissue and now the Dalmatian is missing a piece of his ear. The lump was cancerous. So far it has not come back.

Yet another owner was not so lucky.

“I have had the pleasure of raising two great Dalmatians but both passed away much too young of cancer. The last one, Nick, died one week after being diagnosed with anal cancer. It spread rapidly and he was only 7 years old.

## Dermodicosis

Dermodicosis or non-contagious mange first appears as numerous patches anywhere on the Dalmatians skin. The hair will fall off, leaving bald patches in large areas and the bald skin starts to break down, turning into crusty sores.

## Atopy

Atopy is itchy skin disease caused by allergy to something the Dalmatian breaths in or touches.

It can not be cured and is the number two common allergic skin condition in dogs, after flea allergy dermatitis. Having fleas would make it worse for your Dalmatian.

A Dalmatian suffering from atopy would have itchiness particularly on the feet. He would chew his paws, scratch his ears, shake his head, scratch his muzzle or rub his muzzle on the ground. These same symptoms can also be brought about by food allergy.

Acne in young dogs show as red bumps (papules) and blackheads (comedones) on the chin and lips.

Shorthaired dogs like Dalmatians are more likely to get them. And like in humans they start getting acne around puberty, but the problem usually goes away after one year old or so.

However, you may have to help with some topical gel medication similar to the one used by teenagers. Such lesions may become infected and develop pus, which becomes itchy for your Dalmatian and he starts rubbing his face in the carpet or against furniture.

## Urinary Incontinence

Urinary incontinence in dogs can be due to a neurological lesion – something not normal with the parts of the nervous system that deal with urine regulation. Incontinence has also been linked to altering a puppy too soon.

A Dalmatian with incontinence will dribble urine and if a neurological lesion is the cause, then this has to be removed.

## The Dapper Dalmatian

There are also other reasons not related to the nervous system like congenital defect and bacterial urinary tract infection, also known as bacterial cystitis or bladder stones.

If your Dalmatian leaves wet spots where he has slept and he has skin irritation from contact with the urine then he may have incontinence.

However, wet spots around the house alone may simply mean that he drinks a lot more and needs to relieve himself often but you are not allowing him outside frequently enough. Straining while urinating and blood in the urine are two signs of bladder stones.

## Hip Dysplasia

This is a bone disorder whereby there is an improper fit of the large femur bone with the hip socket, causing lots of pain and lameness.

It occurs more in male than in the female of primarily large breed dogs like Dalmatians.

Hip dysplasia is genetic and can be passed on to the offspring. If you think your Dalmatian may have hip problems, take him for X-rays when he is 24 months old for a proper diagnosis. And then, if he tested positive do not breed him or her.

It develops in puppies and can show up as early as when the Dalmatian is four months old. Or it could show up much later when he is an old dog and the hip weakens and becomes arthritic.



## Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Dalmatians having IBS aren't gaining weight, seem lethargic and have pale colour mucus membrane in the mouth (oral mucosa) and eyes (eye scleras.)

Monitor their stool for frank or occult blood and start with a blood test to check for hematocrit (abdominal bleeding,) which could save their life. This condition can be caused by food allergy.

One male Dalmatian diagnosed with IBS of the small intestine was failing to thrive and began to have syncopal episodes (fainting spells.)

The owner put him on a strictly venison diet and he finally thrived, gained weight and is very active. The owner said many butcher shops sell venison and it is very reasonably priced.

## Kidney Problems

Preventing kidney damage is key to your Dalmatians survival.

If you suspect your Dalmatian may have kidney trouble, take him to the veterinarian for aggressive treatment.

Remember the concern over too many grapes or raisins is toxic for dogs and could ruin their kidneys?

Aggressive treatment in such poisoning cases mean if your Dalmatian had just overindulged in the grapes/raisin, the doctor will induce vomiting immediately and prescribe some activated charcoal pills.

There will be repeated blood tests to determine the status of kidney function plus hospitalization and intravenous fluid therapy if necessary.

The induced vomiting is to remove as much grapes or raisins as possible while the activated charcoal is to help prevent absorption of the toxic substance.

Two days of intravenous fluid therapy is often recommended to help prevent damage to the kidneys.

Blood test is usually repeated after 48 hours and 5 to 7 days to ensure the kidneys are functioning within the normal range.

When kidney damage has occurred, the intravenous fluid therapy shall continue until blood tests indicate the kidneys have returned to normal function again.

## Urinary Stone Disease In Dalmatians

Dalmatians and mostly all other breeds form urinary stones. Some stone-forming dogs, Dalmatians included, live out their lives happily without ever revealing any symptoms, according to U.S. veterinarian specialists in urinary stone disease. Many other Dalmatians never develop active stone disease at all.

Today, stone-forming dogs can easily and successfully be treated - the benefit of over 30 years' research and findings in this health problem.

Accumulated knowledge improving diagnosis and treatment provides methods even to avoid surgery which used to be the only treatment, but no longer is. These advances are largely from two U.S. centers specializing in urinary stones: (1) the Minnesota Urolith Center at the School of Veterinary Medicine of the U. of Minnesota, and (2) the Urinary Stone Analysis Laboratory at the School of Veterinary Medicine of the U. of California at Davis (names, addresses and telephones cited elsewhere in this pamphlet).

The breed-specific "urates/purines" making up most (not all) Dalmatian stones may best be prevented by diet and probably by type of water intake.

Paralleling advances in veterinary knowledge, anti-urate food formulations have also evolved. After being weaned from puppy diets, maturing and adult Dalmatians can be fed now from a choice of non-beef, non-meat dog foods such as vegetable-and-rice or turkey-and-barley and go their entire lives without active stone disease. In other Dalmatians, urate stones already formed can be successfully dissolved non-surgically with an anti-urate drug, allopurinol, and anti-urate food formulations. For the few resistant cases for whom stone-removal surgery is unavoidable, well-tolerated anaesthetics for dogs such as Isoflurane provide no more threatening aesthetic risks than with appendix removals in humans.

### Why do some Dalmatians form Urinary Stones?

Dalmatians, humans and apes are unique in the way their urine is formed and takes place. Not every human will form purine/urate stones and neither will every Dalmatian.

More important than the amount of dietary protein contributing to the problem is the type of protein particularly those dog food formulations containing large amounts of "purine-yielding" ingredients. For feeding a confirmed urate stone former, liver and other organ meats are undesirably very high as purine-yielder's whereas other foods like eggs and most vegetables and fruit are low as purine-yielder's.

When the diet of some humans is high in purines, they develop gout or kidney stones. When the diet of some Dalmatians is similarly high, they precipitate out urate stones in their urine. Dog foods with high amounts of beef and meat or their by-products should be avoided for the Dalmatian who has been diagnosed with abnormal urate urinary crystals/stones.

**FEEDING PURINE-CONTAINING TABLE SCRAPS TO DALMATIANS IS PERHAPS ONE OF THE WORST DISSERVICES TO THEIR NORMAL GOOD HEALTH!**

Of all Dalmatians with active stone disease, the vast majority form urates but a few may form other minerals. Treatment of one type of stone may worsen another type so an essential first step is a dependable assay by an experienced laboratory if treatment and prevention of future stone forming is to be successful and not misguided.

Urate stones may be composed of one or more urate derivatives. Over 90 percent of all stone-forming Dalmatians produce "ammonium acid urate," a purine stone very responsive to simple non-surgical treatment. A conscientious program of anti-urate medication and anti-urate diet can be highly effective for both treatment and especially for prevention of recurrences.

The number one type of stone in other dogs is "struvite," so identified with urinary tract infections they are nicknamed "infection stones." The treatment of infection stones vs. Dalmatian-specific urate stones is totally different and emphasizes the importance for accurate assay of the type of urinary stone being formed if treatment of the Dalmatian is to be successful.

Urinary stones in dogs are found in the "upper" system (e.g., the kidneys), or in the "lower" urinary system (e.g., the bladder). Data collected from some 2,800 stone-forming Dalmatians showed 97 percent of their urinary stones were passed or found in the lower system where treatment and maintenance is simpler and more successful than for those in the kidneys.

### **How is a Stone Former Detected?**

A standard urinalysis generally shows if abnormal crystals are forming in the urine long before the crystals "grow up" to become stones, which then may reach a size large enough to create the dreaded urinary obstruction in males. Urinary pH showing persistent and unchanging abnormal acidity vs. alkalinity is another sign.

If no diagnostic tests ever are done, stone forming may progress to show symptoms more obviously detectable in male dogs than those in females, perhaps because of the marked difference in their gender's normal urinary anatomy. As a large enough stone is carried down the urinary pathway, it can lodge within the male dog's penis at a dam like narrowing of an inflexible cartilage, the "os penis." (The same size stone may pass uneventfully through female urinary anatomy.)

When normal urine flow is obstructed by a stone, the male dog will strain to urinate. No urine will pass or only a few drops. The dog will repetitively attempt to urinate with little or no result. Urinary obstruction in male dogs is thus very visible to the observer aware of these signs and regularly watching for them.

Females with stones may demonstrate symptoms similar to those of urinary infections, namely more frequent urinating, "accidents" by housebroken bitches and very frequent licking of their genital area. (Because these are similar symptoms to simple urinary infections, do not become concerned unless results of a urinalysis confirm abnormal crystals and/or abnormal pH.)

After unproductive attempts, some stone-forming dogs will have a sudden flood like outpouring of urine. In such cases, it is likely that the stone creating the obstruction was "passed" thereby opening and restoring the normal flow and pathway of urine. Any obstructed dog, even those who quickly pass stones, should be seen by their veterinarian for workup and to embark immediately on a preventative program of anti-stone medication with the proper anti-stone diet.

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### General Preventative Guidelines for Stone-Forming Dalmatians

Have a routine, inexpensive urinalysis done periodically. If centrifuging spins out sediment ("sand" or "gravel") from the urine specimen, send it - not the liquid - for assay to one of the two U.S. urinary stone centers, addresses cited elsewhere.

Obtain fresh urine for testing in a clean and chemically-inert container, such as glass. Avoid obtaining a sample after Dalmatian has recently urinated when crystals or stones may have been already flushed out. Instead, obtain a fasting specimen as "first catch" in A.M. before feeding (after urine has sat un-emptied in the bladder overnight). Deliver urine to vet promptly. Do not refrigerate to avoid temperature-induced crystals forming deceptively as the urine specimen cools down from body temperature.

One major goal of prevention is to maintain a normal plateau of urinary pH 6.5 to 7.0. Dipstick fasting urine from stone formers frequently and keep a diary of pH readings.

If the pH falls into the acidic area of pH 6.0 or less below normal and stays there over several dipstickings, consult with your vet to re-evaluate the Dal's diet and anti-stone drugs and chemical additives to alkalinize the persistent, abnormally acidic urine.

If the pH remains up in the alkaline area of 8.0 or higher above normal over the course of several dipstickings, contact your vet to rule out a possible urinary infection.

Stone formers should perhaps drink only distilled water. It is inexpensive and available anywhere bottled water is sold. Make sure labels specify "distilled" water. (Many faucet filters affect only the taste of water). No medical research supports this recommendation, only anecdotal reports. Crystal and stone formation accelerates in stagnant urine. Permit the Dalmatian to urinate as frequently as possible (at least every 4-5 hrs.) permitting the bladder to be flushed of crystals before they can progress into larger stones capable of obstructing.

## Minimize Purine-Yielding Foods

### Food Highest in Purines

anchovies  
brains  
gravies  
herring (including roe)  
liver (calf or beef)  
mackerel  
meat (beef, lamb, pork & ham, veal)  
meat, game (venison, etc.)  
meat soups & broths  
meat, beef extracts & by-products  
mussels  
organ meats (liver, kidney)  
sardines  
scallops  
yeast

### Foods Moderately High in Purines

asparagus  
breads & cereals, whole grain  
cauliflower  
eel  
fish (fresh & saltwater)  
legumes (kidney, navy & lima beans, lentils, peas)  
mushrooms  
oatmeal  
peas, green  
poultry (chicken, duck, turkey)  
shellfish (crab, lobster, oysters)  
spinach  
tongue  
tripe  
wheat germ & bran

### Foods Lowest in Purines

beverages (coffee, tea, sodas, cocoa)  
butter  
bread & cereal (except whole grain)  
cheese  
eggs  
fats  
fish roe (including caviar)  
fruits & fruit juices (avoid citrus)  
gelatin  
milk (including butter, condensed, malted)  
nuts (including peanut butter)  
pasta (evaluate sauce ingredients separately)  
sugars, fruit syrups, sweets (avoid chocolate)  
vegetables (except those above)  
vegetable & cream soups (made with acceptable vegetables. but not with beef stock)

## EMERGENCY!

### Dalmatian Cannot Pass Urine ("Urinary Obstruction")

**Rush dog to your veterinarian or emergency clinic!** Obstruction of the urinary pathway can quickly reach life-threatening status within 24 to 72 hours as urine relentlessly backs up into the dog's body system instead of being expelled out of it.

## The Dashing Dalmatian

Have dammed-up urine easily and immediately removed from bladder either by “cystocentesis” or by catheterization. Urine may be so drained several times while diagnosis and treatment are being evaluated. Tapping off urine “buys time.”

Have the type of urinary stone or crystal assayed at once. Abnormal urinary crystals are identifiable under an office microscope. Urate crystals thrive in abnormally acidic urine. Struvite (“infection”) crystals thrive in abnormally alkaline urine.

Have ultrasound confirm size, location of stones but remind veterinarian the most commonly-seen urate stones in Dalmatians may not be seen via normal x-rays. Most urates require “indirect radiography” or ultrasound to be visualized.

Non-surgical clearing of the obstruction can be often accomplished by “uropropulsion” whereby, under anaesthesia, the stones are flushed back up into the bladder. The newest adaptation, also under anaesthesia, is “voiding uropropulsion” which instead of back flushing, expels the stones out of the dog's pathway. If other stones continue to move down and quickly re-obstruct, then surgery may be unavoidable to restore lasting urinary flow. If so, request Isoflurane or other newer anaesthetics with less aesthetic risks.

Note “urethroStomy” is not simple stone-removal surgery! It is a surgically created, irreversible urinary opening and should be considered a last resort after all other anti-stone procedures have failed. It should be performed only by a member of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons (who must be “Board certified” for membership) and is experienced in performing urethroStomies.

Have Dalmatian started on antibiotics for existing urinary infection or to prevent the onset of one.

Shift the stone former to distilled water, only.

Rush specimens (stones passed/catheterized or removed surgically - or sediment centrifuging out during urinalysis) to one of the two urinary stone centers listed in this pamphlet who will confirm assay by electronmicrography, chromatography and other highly specialized testing procedures. (Minnesota Urolith Center does not charge.)

## Dog Arthritis

How to recognize and treat canine arthritis in your Dalmatian

Dogs arthritis is a common, painful condition that affects one out of five adult dogs- more than eight million in all. Although there are no miracle cures, much can be done to make old dogs with arthritis more comfortable and improve their lives.

Dog arthritis occurs when joint cartilage begins to split and fragment. The first signs might include stiffness, lagging behind on walks or perhaps difficulty jumping up. Often, these signs are mistaken as part of the natural aging process however, the real cause is usually arthritis.

Unfortunately, because our Dalmatians can't tell us if and when they hurt, it can be difficult to know that our pet is in pain and not just "getting older." Dog arthritis is one such ailment that can cause pain resulting in changes in behaviour. The key is to recognize changes in your pets behaviour and realize that medical intervention may often make a huge difference to bring your pet back to his old self.

### **Some signs of dog Arthritis in Dalmatians include:**

- ❖ decreased activity
- ❖ reluctance to walk, run, climb stairs, jump or play
- ❖ stiffness
- ❖ limping
- ❖ difficulty rising from a resting position
- ❖ soreness when touched
- ❖ yelping or whimpering in pain
- ❖ acting aggressive or withdrawn
- ❖ exhibiting other personality changes

If you notice any of these changes, see your veterinarian. The sooner the condition is recognized the sooner your pet can be helped.

### **Long-term pain: Canine Arthritis pain relief**

There are dozens of products for animals intended to relieve dog arthritis by promoting joint and cartilage health. Their use has become nearly universal among veterinarians, no safety problems have arisen and they are generally quite effective. Many vets say that every dog showing even the earliest signs of dog arthritis should be receiving one of these products. They work best in the early stages of arthritis, while there is still reasonable joint function left to preserve.

Medications can soothe your arthritic pet a resort quality of life to your dog.

A non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication that's approved for long-term use, such as Rimadyl may be prescribed to relieve your dog's pain and inflammation, thereby improving quality of life.

Rimadyl is a new non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drug given in tablet form and labelled specifically for dogs and is effective in relieving pain and inflammation safely, even for dog arthritis long-term use.

### **Weight-loss exercise program**

Taking off excess weight will help decrease stress on affected joints, while moderate exercise can help prevent decreased joint function.

### **Diet change**

Your veterinarian may recommend a diet specially designed to meet your pet's needs, such as Eukanuba Senior Plus or Hill's G/D

### **Soft comfortable place to sleep**

Your dog's bed should be as comfortable as your own. An old mattress or soft couch is excellent. Soft foam rubber at least four inches thick is good. Scout around for an old baby mattress.

### **Gentle, regular exercise**

Provide limited, gentle exercise. Once around the block two or three times a day is about right. Avoid strenuous activity on the weekends alternating with little or none during the week.

### **Surgery**

In severe cases your veterinarian may recommend surgery to address such abnormalities as hip dysplasia.

## Medical Terms For Dalmatians Health You Should Know

### Health Terms

Alapechia	-----	Hair loss of the trunk
Aortic stenosis	-----	Heart ailment
Atopy	-----	Itchy skin disease
Axonopathy	-----	Disease of the nervous system
Bacterial systitis	-----	Bladder stones
Bradycardia	-----	Slow heart rate
Dalmatian cardiomyopathy	----	Cardiac conduction
Calcrinosis cutis	-----	Calcium deposits on the skin
Cardiac conduction	-----	Heart ailment pertaining to irregular heart beat
Cardiomyopathy	-----	Heart ailment
Cherry eye	-----	eye ulcer
Comedones	-----	blackheads/acne
Cryptorchidism	-----	undecended testicle
Chushings syndrome	-----	Adrenal gland disorder
Demodicosis	-----	Non-contagious mange
Dilative cardipmyopathy	-----	Enlarged and thinned-walled heart muscle
Eye scleras	-----	Mucus membrane in the eyes
Gastric Torsion/GDV	-----	Bloat
Heratocrit	-----	Abdominal bleeding
Hip dysplasia	-----	Genetic disorder of the hip bones
Hyperadrenocorticism	-----	Overactive adrenal gland
Hypothyrodism	-----	Disorder of the thyroid gland
IBS	-----	Irritable bowel syndrome
Incontinence	-----	Poor control of urination
Intervertebral disk disease	----	Spinal cord disease
Mast cell tumour	-----	Malignant tumour
Oral mucuso	-----	Mucus membrane in the mouth
Papules	-----	Red bumps/acne
Polydipsia	-----	Increased water consumption
Polyphagian	-----	Increased appetite
Polyuria	-----	Increased urination
Syncopam episode	-----	Fainting spell

## Conclusion

Now that you have learned many interesting and exciting facts about your Dalmatian from this book, you have every opportunity to improve upon the health of your faithful companion, train him and make him a welcoming addition to your family and society.

Remember to take your Dalmatian to the vet for regular checkups, feed him a healthy diet, give him lots of attention and plenty of exercise to help him remain happy, in shape with a good immune system.

In spotting any ailment in your Dalmatian before the condition becomes serious and supported by routine checkups by the veterinarian, will help ensure you have a happy and healthy Dalmatian that loves and is loyal to you.

In return, during your life journey with your Dalmatian, you also become a happier, healthy and loving person.

Don't forget that obedience plays a key role in the development of your Dalmatian and will determine how he will respond to you and others. Take the time to teach your Dalmatian so all of the rewarding characteristics linked to his breed can be brought out in him.

The more you learn about the nature of your Dalmatian the better you will be able to understand him and know how to respond to any problems that may arise. This will also help him understand you!

You will find that before long you will have stories of your own to share just like some of the owners found in this book and you too will know all about the joys, frustrations and love that is involved when selecting and training a Dalmatian as your companion.

Truly, there is no better companion than that of a faithful, loyal and loving Dalmatian. Enjoy raising your Dalmatian, they grow up all too fast and may he or she live as a friend and asset to you and be part of your family for years to come.

One day soon you could be proudly sharing your Dalmatian stories with others, if you apply the many tips inside will help you create many great moments with your Dalmatian that makes for better stories for you to tell others.

I hope you have found this book helpful to make your Dalmatian happier, healthier and more obedient now.

Please keep in contact, I'd love to hear about your Dalmatian experiences.

