

Getting a dog in and out of the car

There are numerous reasons for animals disliking car travel, which include car sickness, instability whilst travelling, getting a mouth full of exhaust fumes from the tail pipe when previously asked to jump in or making journeys without pleasant associations, such as trips to the vet for treatment.

It's therefore not hard to see how animals come to see these metal boxes with wheels having an unpleasant meaning. Introductions to vehicles should be positive to form a good association. Begin with the care stationary and play games of retrieve in and out of the car, hunting out treats and toys from under, in and around all areas of the car with all doors open. Have the car parked on the drive, with the driveway gates closed so the animal can approach the vehicle in their own time, whilst the area remains safe.

Feeding small meals beside or in the tailgate of the car whilst stationary provides good associations, for pets. They begin to associate the car with reward. If your pet is fed several times a day these are good training opportunities to get your dog used to the vehicle. When it is time for journeys, these should be short positive journeys of just a few minutes. These journeys should end in a free run at a park, at the pet shop or at a destination the pet sees as positive. These positive journeys build confidence in travel and the vehicle.

Travelling with a dog in the foot-well, in-between the legs of the passenger of the car provides stability and reduces the sensation of movement whilst travelling. Any vehicle with a passenger air bag should not be used to carry a pet in the footwell, due to the potential dangers in an accident.

If motion sickness is the cause of the distress, talking with your vet about some of the herbal or proprietary branded products available may also help. Ginger is usually the base product of natural remedies and offering a ginger biscuit before journeys has been known to work.

