



SAN TAN CANINE TRAINING NEWSLETTER

NATHAN BRAATEN • 602.320.2890 • By Appointment

TOP 10 TIPS FOR TRAVELING WITH DOGS

Whether you have a dog or other household pet, there's much more to keeping your furry friend safe and happy than just opening the passenger door. Here are tips to make your long road trip — or even your Sunday drive — problem-free.

1. Get to the vet. Before a road trip is a good time to take your pet for that overdue visit to the veterinarian. Beyond ensuring your pet's health, it's the only way to get a bona fide health certificate. That certificate — and proof of an updated rabies vaccine — is necessary if you board your pet at your destination. If your dog is the nervous sort, you may want your vet to choose a sedative (for him, not for you).

2. Tags aren't just for luggage. Your dog should always have a sturdy collar with home address and telephone number on a tag. To protect him while traveling, tape your local contact information or your cell phone number onto the tag before leaving, or get a second tag. Many pets today also have a [microchip](#) implanted under their skin as a form of permanent ID; it can be read with a special scanner. Also carry a current photograph of your dog that can be copied, to make it easier for others to recognize and return him if he gets lost.

3. Pack — and plan — for your pet. Just like you, pets like the comforts of home: their own bedding, toys, brush, even their own dishes. Bring them with you if possible. Pack a bowl for his water, treats, a first-aid kit, medications (both oral and topical), and a copy of his medical records. Most important, though, bring your pet's own food. Trust me; this is not the time to get experimental with your pet's digestive tract. (If you've ever changed your dog's food all of a sudden, you know what I mean.) The municipal water systems vary from place to place, so don't just let your pet drink the local water — the abrupt change could give him diarrhea. Instead, start with a gallon of water from home, and "water your dog" along the route, topping off the gallon from a local water source at each stop. That way, the change is gradual. And of course, don't forget the pooper scoopers.

4. Use some restraint. Just as humans need seatbelts, animals need some form of safety restraint when in the car. Pet *barriers* — which merely separate your pet from the rear of the seat — don't do much to protect animals.

Pet *carriers*, however, do. Carriers are essentially boxes made to confine and secure your animal. They come in different shapes, sizes and materials, but all should be well ventilated and have a secure door and latch. They should be large enough so your animal can sit and lie down. You can make the carrier more comfortable by lining the bottom with sheepskin, towels or foam. (How'd you like to lie on hard plastic all day?) Most important is to actually *secure the carrier to the car*; otherwise it can become a projectile, injuring both your pet and the car's occupants.

Fortunately for dogs, they have a more liberating option than a carrier. A special restraining harness can connect a dog to safety belts, preventing him from flying forward during sudden braking or impact (see photos). The dog can stand, sit or lie down, but not get loose. When you're ready to leave the car, just snap the leash onto the dog's harness and you're ready to go.

Before you open the car door, even for a second, make sure the leash is on him and that you have a firm grasp. If not you might find yourself chasing your dog through an unknown environment — or worse — traffic.

5. Dogs love trucks, but.... Dogs love trucks; it's true, but it's estimated that more than 100,000 dogs die from falls from pickup trucks each year. Bumps in the road or quick swerving motions can throw the dog out of the truck bed, injuring or killing him and potentially causing more accidents as other drivers swerve to avoid him. Dogs can also jump out — sometimes because the bed becomes too hot for their paws. According to the Humane Society of the United States, though, there is no harness or leash that will keep a dog safe in the back of a pickup truck — in fact, it could strangle or drag him if he's thrown. Instead, place the dog in a carrier in the back of an extended or crew cab. If you must put a dog in the bed, get a crate made especially for that purpose — and tie it down tight.

6. Animals get car sick, too. Some people get car sick; so do some animals. If this sounds like your pet, give him a light meal a few hours before you leave and feed him minimally during the drive. Offer him small amounts of water periodically in the hours before the trip. If you can, take along ice cubes, which are easier on your pet than gulping down large amounts of water. (They'll also keep him busy.) If your dog isn't accustomed to car travel or to a carrier, break him in gradually, well in advance of the trip, by taking short trips and using lots of praise.

7. No doggy in the window. Dogs absolutely love to stick their heads out the window and smell the air as it rushes by. Though it's sad to deprive them of this enjoyment, many dogs are injured when road debris or insects fly into their eyes, nostrils or windpipe. They can also become ill by having cold air forced into their lungs. What's more, dogs have accidentally strangled themselves by stepping on the electric window control. So keep the dog inside.

8. Skip the hot dog. Your dog or other pet can't tell you if he's feeling hot or cold, so be aware of the temperature. If the humans are wearing jackets, perhaps your pet would appreciate a blanket, too. In warm weather, open a window or raise the air conditioning to prevent overheating or dehydration. (Direct sun can be even harder on dark-colored dogs, so consider sunshades if your windows aren't tinted.) Bear in mind that while there are vents for the heat or A/C in the front of the car, there may not be any in the back.

Never leave your dog — or any pet or child — alone in the car. In the summer, the car's internal temperature can rise to fatal levels very quickly, even with the windows ajar. If you need to run into a store or stop for a bite to eat, take your pet with you if possible. If not, ask a travel companion to walk your pet or remain with the pet in the car while you attend to business. This also prevents pet-napping. It's rare, but it happens.

9. Take frequent breaks. A dog's legs need to be stretched just like yours do — perhaps twice as much. Your pet also needs water, exercise and potty breaks at regular intervals. Having your dog lie beneath the café table while you eat lunch is *not* exercise, so be sure to take Fido once around the block before jumping back in the car. Taking time for your pet may also help you to take in some interesting sights along your trip.

10. Avoid poison and choking hazards. Some dogs will eat *anything*. But ingesting antifreeze — even small amounts — can be fatal to cats, dogs, and birds alike. Clean up any antifreeze spills immediately. Even better, consider switching from conventional ethylene glycol antifreeze to a propylene glycol-based antifreeze, which is much less toxic.

While you snack in the front seat, avoid feeding your dog foods that are known canine toxins, such as chocolate, macadamia nuts, grapes or raisins. So, too, watch out for choking hazards in the car such as pennies, bones (yes, bones), socks, and small toys.

Finally, ask your dealer if there are any customized accessories for traveling with dogs. You might find a seat cover that fits like a glove — preventing fur, saliva, and mud from coming between you and your best friend.



Now that's a happy dog!



Resource: www.edmunds.com

**GIFT CERTIFICATES
AVAILABLE, CREDIT CARDS
ACCEPTED**



**PROFESSIONAL &
EXPERIENCED
LICENSED & INSURED**