



Five Cheap Ways to Calm Your Crazy Dog

#1. Exercise, Exercise, Exercise. That's the first and most important recommendation for calming your dog down. Letting your dog out in the backyard to play is not sufficient exercise for most dogs. Give your dog both mental and physical outlets for his energy with the training games included in later chapters.

#2. The Do-Nothing Exercise. Sue Sternberg of Rondout Valley Animals for Adoption deserves the credit for this idea. It's one of my favorites for calming dogs down. Start in a small, quiet room. Be boring. Just sit and read a magazine while paying peripheral attention to your dog. When he finally lies down, click and throw him a treat. Yes, that will cause him to come running over to you in the hopes of some interaction. Nope, sorry. You are too busy reading your magazine. Soon he'll go lie down again. Click and throw him a treat. Gradually, your dog will learn that you really like when he is still. Be sure to keep rewarding him the longer he's quiet. The more effort you spend on training this, the less you'll have to do it over the course of the dog's life.

#3. High-Quality Food. Lots of dogs show ADHD-like behavior when they eat a poor diet. Visit All About Dogs' website (<http://www.allaboutdogsinc.com/info.html>) and click on "Healthy Dog Food" for more information about diet and a list of foods recommended by Whole Dog Journal.

#4. Lavender. A few drops of lavender essential oil between a dog's shoulder blades can help calm many dogs. It's an easy thing to try and the worst that can happen is your house will develop a fresh, floral smell. Many health-food stores carry lavender.

#5. Snug shirts. Do you remember when they brought your baby to you in the hospital? They gave you a child wrapped so tightly in a blanket that only her face was peeking out. There's a reason for that: snugness settles and soothes. Many dogs are calmed by wearing a snug t-shirt. Get one that fits your dog through the chest and ribs, and tie up the excess around his waist with a rubber band. Yep, it sounds crazy, but it often works. Give it a try. I love the Thundershirt, which is designed especially for dogs who'll benefit from some calming touch. www.thundershirt.com