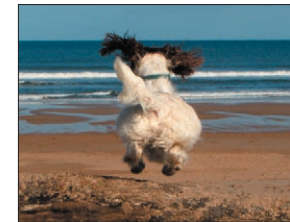
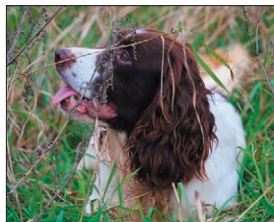




We all want our Springers to be happy, confident dogs that enjoy their lives and enrich ours. However, this can be a lot to expect, unless we put the time and effort in to help our dogs to achieve it. Here are just a few ideas that you might want to think about.



Behaviour

## Socialisation

If a puppy is to grow into a happy, well adjusted dog, then the more new situations he can meet when he is young, the better. Ideally puppies should have get as much experience of the world as possible before they are 14 weeks old. This can be difficult in practice, as often they do not have the full protection of vaccination until they are 12 weeks old. Take this time to let them have as many experiences as possible about the home. Think about all the household noises and equipment – doorbell, vacuum, washing machine etc. Without overwhelming your puppy, think of who you can invite who will be a different experience – different heights, ages, men with beards and moustaches. Think of people of different cultures, those who may use sticks or wheelchairs.

Once your puppy is able to be safely out and about, think of all the outdoor experiences he can have. Traffic noises, different types of ground, water, different modes of transport, other animals, and especially other dogs of all ages and breeds, shapes, sexes and sizes.

Think too about attending a good well organised puppy class. Get a recommendation from someone you trust, ask your vet about local classes, or check with national organisations about registered dog trainers in your area.

The secret of success is to let your puppy meet new experiences in a safe and controlled way, and going one gentle step at a time.



## Older dogs

Socialisation goes on throughout a dog's life, and older dogs should be encouraged to meet new situations in a confident and interested manner, when it is safe to do so. Older dogs who have not been well socialised as puppies may have particular problems – for help with this, see 'Behavioural Advice' below.

## Potential Problems

Because not every dog has an ideal start in life, there are some problems that are, sadly, not uncommonly seen, and can be something that a rescue dog needs to work through in their new home

## Ground rules

When settling into a new home and new routines, your dog needs to learn that people are always in charge, and that loud, boisterous behaviour is not acceptable. Most dogs will quickly understand this if owners are calm and consistent in their approach. Unfortunately many dogs get most attention paid to them when they are behaving badly, and this can rapidly escalate into a situation where the dog uses whining, barking, pawing, mouthing and jumping up as a way to seek attention. Although with patience this can be corrected, it is much easier not to let it start!

## Insecurity

Many dogs feel insecure in a new environment, until they are settled with their new people and new routines. An anxious dog may well not cope with being left on his own, which can lead to behaviours such as howling and barking, destructiveness and chewing, and in extreme cases self mutilation. The new owners will need to work to build up the dog's confidence and security in his new situation. This is best done by setting an example of confidence - owners should act calmly and naturally around an insecure dog and give them time to come around rather than try and effect change.



## Boredom

All the destructive behaviours above can also be due to a lack of physical and mental stimulation. Springers are bright, active dogs, and need to exercise their minds and their bodies. Springer Rescue for Scotland have a leaflet and a webpage on games, which can help get you started.

