

A Blind Dog In My House

First, let me tell you how my dog became my dog. Dukie belonged to my husband's son. He was a birthday gift to my stepson from his girlfriend. Unfortunately, my stepson was not able to raise a dog, so he gave him to my husband. Dukie is a black lab, a big but lean black lab. He is loveable, gentle and funny. He thrived in our household because we already had two other dogs, one golden retriever, and one other black lab. They all got along just beautifully. No fights just play time all the time. I started noticing Dukie bumping into things, getting "lost" when out and running around. He had one bad eye already; he hurt it on a stick when he was a puppy. Anyways, I took him to the vet, and once I let him off the leash in the examining room he promptly walked into a wall. Well, I really got scared at this point. The vet checked him out, and low and behold, my Dukie was blind. I couldn't believe it. My vet sent me to an eye specialist, and sure enough Dukie suffered from a degenerative eye disease. I freaked, I thought this is it, now I have to put him down. My eye specialist sent me back to my own vet, and forwarded the information to him. The vet calmed me down and said no way do you have to put him to sleep. He said "Look how well he has handled his blindness so far" And, the vet was right. I mean, I didn't even know he was totally blind. So began our live with a blind dog in our house. The thing is, if you do not move the furniture around too much, and things pretty well stay where they are, you won't even know your dog is blind. At least not with Duke. He walks around the house like he is king. He goes in and out of his dog door and wanders around the backyard no problem. I take Duke out for car rides, which he loves, and for long walks, and for bike rides. Although I have stopped the bike rides, I noticed more and more that he does not like speed. I think it makes him feel unbalanced. Duke loves company; he does get hyper and excited when they come though. I suppose because he does not see them, he has a need to lean right against them. But, a few minutes after greeting them, he just goes back and does his own thing. When he gets excited he does tend to get "lost"; he loses his sense of where he is. But, he finds it again fast enough. He still gets along good with our other dogs, and our neighbours dog. However, he no longer likes it when strange dogs come and say hello to him. I suppose being blind and not seeing the other dog poses a threat to him. So far, that has been his only negative reaction to being blind. When I move furniture, or get new furniture I make sure I introduce duke to these changes. He adapts very fast. When walking, I forget he is blind, and I can have a tendency to walk him into fences, hedges and poles. Duke is the perfect dog to take for walks. He doesn't pull, he heels and he doesn't see those cats or squirrels on our walks. He is a favourite with the kids. He loves kids and is very good with them. And, most important, he is my husband's dog. My husband has advanced MS, and Dukie will spend hours with him. He often "steals" my husband's couch. When my husband gets in his wheelchair to go to the bathroom then Dukie hops right up on his couch. Duke has his own mini couch beside my husband, but, to Duke, that is not the same thing at all. It is a job getting him off the couch again. Cookies help. The two have become inseparable buddies. I would recommend a blind dog any time from my own experience. Duke had been a wonderful part of our family, and he has not been any trouble whatsoever. So, if you dog is going blind, or you have the opportunity to adopt a blind dog, do not hesitate, they also make great pets. My Duke still does.

About the Author

Ruth's passions are people and pet health. She is very active with dog therapy visiting. Her Blog: <http://www.happypetstop.com/blog> and her dog training site: <http://www.happypetstop.com/adamstraining.htm>

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