

Canine Etiquette

Here Are Some Can't-Miss Dog Owner Tips for the Coming Summer Season

Summer, with its sunny skies and Searly Fridays, is the best time of year to spend more time with your dog. Whether taking your urban pooch for a long walk to explore a new neighborhood or retreating to the Hamptons for the weekend, being out and about more means being mindful of your manners.

Remember that you and your pet are goodwill ambassadors for dogs and their owners throughout our city. Obeying local health ordinances (i.e., pooper scooper, licensing, and leash laws) and having a clean, well-mannered pet is a great way to make a favorable impression.

Yours truly, Miss Fido Manners, the mistress of canine etiquette and columnist for *Fido Friendly Travel* magazine, suggests eight tips to polish your pet performance in the summer's heat, when manners have a tendency to get lost in the pack.

1. **Walking the Dog Walk:** With the hot weather, the city is an urban jungle thick with tourists. Don't create chaos on city streets with a frolicking dog. Use a four- or six-foot leash for control walking on crowded sidewalks. Use a retractable leash in the park so your pet can romp and run ahead.

2. **Doggy Doos:** Be kind to other city dwellers by always picking up after your dog, using a plastic bag that can be tied or sealed to contain the unpleasant odor. Deposit in appropriate waste receptacles.

3. **Help Keep Your Neighborhood Beautiful:** Volunteers spend many hours and dollars to keep our neighborhoods looking good. Give 'em a break. Keep your canine out of neighborhood tree pits. Their tramping can destroy delicate flowers, and their fertilizer is not the kind that residents wish to see or smell.

4. **Meet and Greet:** Although it is always fun to meet and greet new pet parents and their charges, do so politely and carefully. Ask other dog owners if their dog is friendly before allowing the canines to approach and sniff each other.

5. **Make Friends, Not Enemies:** Be on your best behavior by bringing a healthy, parasite-free, and social dog to the dog run. While at the dog park, never reprimand or give food to another person's canine. Most important, don't bring toys to the dog park unless you want to share them or you don't mind them being destroyed.

6. **Eating Out:** We all love to eat outside when the weather gets warmer, so why shouldn't your dog? Show consideration for others; take your dog to a restaurant only if she is not going to bark for attention, beg for food, and generally annoy other patrons. And don't expect your waiter to service your pet. Bring your pet's own accoutrements such as portable



water and food bowls. Leave at least a 20 percent tip for those waiters who provide excellent pet-friendly service to you.

7. **Be a Good Guest:** When visiting family and friends in the Hamptons, Catskills, or other fashionable weekend retreats, don't assume a weekend invitation is for you and your dog. Call and confirm that your four-legged friend is a welcome addition and that she can enjoy herself without creating stress for you, your hosts, or their other invited guests.

Travel with a housebroken dog, bring all pet supplies necessary, and take care that nothing in your host's home is destroyed, broken, or covered in fur during your stay. Also, just in case, find out the name of a local pet-sitter or dog kennel by visiting the Web sites of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (petsitters.org) or Pet Sitters International (petsit.com) or the American Boarding Kennels Association (abka.com). Within 24 hours of your departure, send a thank-you card from both of you.

8. **Travel with Social Graces:** When staying at a B&B or a hotel, make cleaning up after your pet as easy as possible for yourself, your pet, and the housekeeping staff. Feed your pooch in the bathroom so that messes can be easily wiped off the tile floor, and carry some moist towelettes in your luggage to pick up the crumbs or slobber.

Keep your pet in the crate when housekeeping is cleaning your room. If your dog likes to sleep with you in bed, bring an extra sheet or blanket to prevent shedding on or soiling the linens. Most important, when you check out, make sure you leave your room like you found it when you arrived.

If you are worried that you and your pet may not be as presentable as you should be, take your dog to the groomer for a good summer haircut and bone up on your manners in obedience class. Ask your veterinarian for recommendations of canine professionals in your neighborhood. ■

Charlotte Reed is a pet expert and columnist for several magazines, including American magazine, Fido Friendly, and New York Resident. A former attorney, Charlotte's love for animals led her to switch careers and found Two Dogs & a Goat, a New York-based complete pet-care service in 1996. Charlotte has shared her expertise on pets with millions of people through her Pet-Ownning Made Easy series of booklets and her appearances on CNN, Good Day New York, Fox Pet News, and other TV shows. She is currently writing two books on pet-related topics. She can speak about everything from pet health and insurance to pet etiquette.