



Patterns & Possibilities



Does My Dog Have ADHD-Like Traits?

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Important Information Disclaimer



This guide discusses
ADHD-like traits in dogs.

ADHD is not a formal veterinary diagnosis.

The information provided is educational
and does not replace veterinary advice.

Always consult a veterinarian or qualified
behaviour professional for medical or
behavioural concerns.

Training advice in this book is
welfare-based and force-free.

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1. What This Book Is (And Isn't)



This book does not diagnose your dog.

ADHD is not a formal veterinary
diagnosis in dogs.

Instead,
this book helps you notice

Patterns across:

- Days
- Environments
- Stress levels
- Sleep cycles

1.

What This Book Is (And Isn't)



We are looking for frequency and intensity — not single moments.

Every dog has distracted days.
Every dog has energetic days.

We are looking
for the bigger
picture.

2. The Three Core Trait Patterns



Research describes ADHD-like traits in dogs across three areas:

Inattention

Hyperactivity

Impulsivity

Most dogs show all three sometimes.

The
question is:
How often?
How intense?
How quickly do they recover?

Patterns matter more than labels.

3. Inattention

- What It Really Looks Like



Inattention is not simply “ignoring you.”

It can look like:

- Starting a recall but abandoning it mid-way.
- Sitting when asked – then instantly losing focus.
- Seeming engaged indoors but unable to hold attention outdoors.

3. Inattention – What It Really Looks Like



It is not stubbornness.
It may be difficulty filtering competing
stimuli.

Imagine trying to concentrate while
someone constantly changes the volume
in your environment.

That is what high distractibility can feel
like.

4. Hyperactivity Over-Arousal or Under-Settled?



Hyperactivity is often misunderstood.

It does not always mean lack of exercise.

It can mean the nervous system is stuck
in “on.”

Some dogs pace after a long walk.

Some dogs cannot settle even when
tired.

This is often arousal, not energy.

An over-aroused brain struggles to
switch off.

5. Impulsivity — The Pause Window



Impulsivity is the size of the pause between thought and action.

The smaller the pause, the faster the reaction.

The dog sees movement and reacts before the thinking brain engages.

Impulse control is not built through correction.

It is built through repetition of tiny pauses.

Impulse work is about widening that pause window.

6.

The Bucket & Trigger Stacking



Imagine your dog has a bucket.

Every experience drops into it:

Delivery vans.

Barking dogs.

Visitors.

Excitement.

Frustration.

If that bucket fills all day, by the time you take them for loose lead walking, it may already be overflowing.

6.

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The Bucket & Trigger Stacking



Trigger stacking builds like a castle.

Each small stress adds another block.

The final reaction is rarely the first cause.

It is the last block added.

Lowering the bucket level or emptying their bucket changes behaviour and helps them to listen and focus .

Bucket emptying = Sniffing, Licking & Stroking

7.

When It Might Not Be ADHD-Like Traits



Before assuming ADHD-like patterns,
consider:

- Pain.
- Gut discomfort.
- Sleep deprivation.
- Recent life changes.
- Inconsistent routine.
- Chronic stress.

Stress can mimic ADHD-like traits.

So can sensory overload, over tiredness and
over exercising.

A tired dog **isn't** a happy dog,
= It's an unpredictable dog

7.

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ADHD-Like Traits vs Sensory Overload



ADHD-like traits tend to show:

- Across environments.
- Across triggers.
- Across situations.

Sensory overload is often specific:

- Sound sensitivity.
- Touch defensiveness.
- Light or shadow reactivity.
- Movement sensitivity.

A dog frightened of vacuum noise may not struggle with impulse elsewhere.

Sometimes both overlap.

Understanding the difference matters.

8.

ADHD-Like Traits vs Sensory Overload



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9. The 2-Week Pattern Plan – Print



Day	Sleep Duration (hours)	Trigger Exposure	Reaction Intensity (1-10)	Recovery Time (hours)	Stress Level (1-10)
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					

9.

The 2-Week Pattern Plan



Patterns will begin to emerge.

You may notice:

Less sleep = more reactivity.

Busy family day = shorter pause window.

High arousal mornings = difficult evenings.

Data removes emotion.

Patterns create clarity.

10. When To Reach For Support



Seek professional support if:

Reactions escalate.

Recovery takes longer.

Aggression appears.

You feel overwhelmed.

Support is not failure.

It is responsible ownership.

You do not need certainty to start helping
your dog.

You need observation.

Calm structure.

Compassion.