

Blind Pets: Caring for Their Needs



I remember writing an article about The [Blind Cat Rescue and Sanctuary](#), on the outskirts of Fayetteville, North Carolina. The sanctuary's founder Alana Miller told me that blind cats act just like any other cat in the home, jumping on things and getting around because their other amazing senses come into play and, in fact, the felines don't know they are blind!

That made me feel good that a sight-impaired cat can still enjoy good quality of life. But it also got me thinking that it's still very important for certain changes to be made in the household to prevent unnecessary accidents from happening. A cat may be sure footed – but if a window is left open, a cat without sight could get outside onto a high windowsill without realizing the potential danger.

Taking extra precautions applies to sight-impaired dogs, too.

Recently, when we were having a Pet Health Central bloggers' conference call, my fellow blogger [Barbara Masi](#) mentioned that she had a blind greyhound who, when they went for a walk, would rub against her leg, using her as a "stick". Then there's that wonderful YouTube video of a [Labrador](#) that remained firmly affixed to the side of its blind friend, leading the sightless dog around to take care of it.

Animals are nothing short of amazing.

Here are some useful tips to help blind pets around the home and garden:

- Feed your pet and keep their water dish in exactly the same place each time
- Also, try to have your pet sleep in the same area on a routine basis. These areas will then become reference sites if your pet becomes disoriented.
- Don't re-arrange your furniture. Keep things familiar at all times.
- Make sure you push chairs back under the table after meals. Simple things like this will prevent your pet from bumping into things and getting disorientated.
- Teach your pet about stairs and put up gates if necessary to prevent accidents.
- Try not to carry your pet from one area to another. This can confuse them. If they walk from area to area they remain better oriented. It's a good idea to initially guide your pet through the house until they get their bearings.
- When it comes to cats, make sure they know the locations of food and water and the litter box, too.
- If your pet seems "lost" or disoriented, guide them gently with words or by leading them. Speak to your pet and encourage them to come towards you. When reorienting a pet, always take them back to the same spot, such as the feeding area or the bed.
- If you live in a house or an apartment with a balcony, be sure that your pet cannot walk between the vertical supports and fall to the ground. If necessary, place Plexiglas around it to prevent your pet from getting through. Don't let a blind cat outside alone as they could jump onto the top of the balcony and be unaware of where exactly they are!!!
- Make sure all hot tubs and pools are properly fenced – the same as you would do for small children
- If your pet is an outdoor pet, keep them away from any major landscaping projects. Take time afterwards to introduce them to the changes in their environment.

The same safety precautions should be in place that exist in any home with pets, such as never leaving burning candles on low tables with a cloth on that can be pulled off. But as the pet parent of a blind pet, you need to be extra vigilant at all times.

A pet that is sight-impaired is still a very loving pet – maybe even more so. So if you are adopting, consider a pet with special needs. Your kindness will only be rewarded with extra love.

-Photo Credit: From flickr by Jonathanb1989