

The Complete Rottweiler Guide

Loving & living with your Rottweiler.

Step-by-step training plans for real family life.

The Complete Rottweiler Guide

Before You Start

Congratulations. You share your home with one of the most loyal, confident and loving dogs on the planet. You also share it with a big, strong, protective working dog, and that comes with responsibility.

If your Rottie pulls, mouths, grumbles at guests, ignores you at the park or tests every rule, none of that makes them a bad dog. It means a brilliant working brain hasn't been given clear instructions yet.

This guide gives you those instructions. Every chapter follows the same pattern, so you always know what to do next:

- **Why it happens:** what is going on inside your Rottie's head.
- **The method:** a named, step-by-step plan, with how long, how often, and when to move on.
- **If this happens:** fixes for the most common problems.
- **Practice games:** short daily games that build the skill without a fight.
- **Your action plan:** exactly what to do today.

> **How long does this take?** Most owners notice a calmer dog within 7–14 days of following the daily routines. Bigger habits like pulling, reactivity or home-alone stress usually take 4–8 weeks of steady practice. Little and often beats long and rare.

> **A quick safety note:** if your dog has bitten, shows serious aggression, or panics to the point of injuring themselves, please work with your vet and a qualified behaviourist alongside this guide.

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Plus: 20 Popular Questions Answered.

The Rottweiler Mind

In this chapter, you'll learn why your Rottweiler weighs everything up before acting, why "just run them more" often makes things worse, and the simple daily plan that gives their brain the job it's been craving.

By the end, you'll know how to give your Rottie a day that leaves them calm instead of wired.



Drovers, Guardians and Family Dogs

Rottweilers come from the German town of Rottweil, where they drove cattle to market, pulled carts for butchers and guarded their owners' money and property. A good Rottweiler worked all day, made calm decisions, and protected the people and animals in their care.

That history explains a lot of what you see at home:

- **They're strong.** An adult Rottweiler is powerful. Good manners aren't optional; they're a safety issue.
- **They're protective.** Many Rotties watch over their family and home, and are naturally reserved with strangers.
- **They're thinkers.** Rotties weigh up situations before acting, and sometimes test whether a rule really applies.
- **They're loyal and affectionate.** Many are big softies at home, leaning on their people and "rumbling" happily when stroked.
- **They mature slowly.** Many Rotties don't fully mature until 2–3 years old.

The Rottie Rumble

Many Rottweilers grumble or "talk" when they're happy, being stroked or playing. Learn your dog's happy rumble (loose body, soft eyes, wiggly bottom) so you can tell it apart from a warning growl (stiff body, hard stare, freezing).

The Long-Run Myth

The most common advice for an energetic Rottie is "they just

need more exercise." So owners walk further, throw the ball longer and add a run in the evening.

For a few weeks it seems to work. Then the dog gets fitter, and needs even more to feel tired. You've built an athlete, not a calm dog.

Physical exercise matters, but a Rottie's real need is **mental work**: sniffing, problem-solving and following your cues. Ten minutes of brain work tires a Rottie more than half an hour of chasing a ball. Just as important is the skill most Rotties are never taught: **switching off**.



The Rottweiler Mind

Know Your Rottie

Every Rottweiler is an individual. Watch your dog: how quickly they calm down after excitement, how they react to strangers, how they cope with new places. That tells you what your dog needs most from this guide: more calm, more confidence, or more self-control.

> **Rotties and responsibility:** a well-trained Rottweiler is a wonderful ambassador for the breed. Chapter 15 covers how to keep your dog, and everyone around them, safe.

The Method: The Three-Job Day

Every day, give your Rottie three short "jobs." Together they take about 30 minutes, and they replace hours of nagging, chasing and barking.



Step 1: The Nose Job (10 minutes, morning)

Skip the bowl at breakfast. Scatter your Rottie's breakfast across the lawn, or into a snuffle mat or rolled-up towel. Sniffing lowers the heart rate and works the brain hard.

Start easy: scatter in a small area so they succeed fast. Over a week, spread the food wider or hide it in boxes.

Step 2: The Brain Job (2 × 5 minutes)

Twice a day, run a five-minute training session. Practise sits, downs, a "look at me", or one of the games at the end of this chapter. Keep it fun and stop while your dog still wants more.

Rule: five minutes means five minutes. Short sessions keep a Rottie keen; long ones make them frustrated and mouthy.

Step 3: The Off-Duty Job (15–20 minutes, afternoon or evening)

This is the most important job, and the one most Rotties never learn. Put a mat or bed in a quiet corner, away from windows and the front door. Give your dog a long-lasting chew or a frozen food toy *on the mat*, and sit nearby with a book or your phone.

You're teaching: **"When we are home, this is how we relax."** If your dog leaves the mat, calmly lead them back. Don't scold; just reset.

Step 4: Check the Results

After 7 days, ask yourself:

- Is my Rottie settling faster after walks?

- Are they following me less?
- Are they barking at the window less?

If you're seeing even a little improvement, the plan is working. Keep going, and add more difficulty to the Nose and Brain Jobs each week.

If This Happens

"My dog won't eat from the grass or snuffle mat." Make it easier. Put a few pieces on top of the mat where they can see them, then slowly hide more.

"They get more wound up during training." Your sessions are too long or too exciting. Cut them to two or three minutes and use calmer rewards, like dry food instead of a tug toy.

"They won't stay on the mat." Tie a lead loosely to a heavy piece of furniture near the mat for the first week, and give a chew they really love. Sit with them. The goal is calm, not perfection.



Practice Games

Game 1: Which Hand?

Hide a treat in one closed fist. Hold both fists out low. When your Rottie sniffs or paws the correct hand, open it and let them eat. If they pick the wrong one, show them the empty hand and try again. Play 5–10 rounds. It teaches them to think before acting.

Game 2: Cup Shuffle

Put a treat under one of three plastic cups while your dog watches. Say "find it!" and let them knock over the right cup. Once they've got it, slowly slide the cups around before letting them choose. It's a great rainy-day brain workout.

Game 3: The Look-Back

On a quiet walk, every time your Rottie glances back at you without being asked, say "yes!" and give a treat. In a few days they'll check in with you constantly. This builds the focus you'll use for recall and lead walking later.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Feed breakfast as a Nose Job starting tomorrow.
- ☐ Do two 5-minute Brain Jobs every day.
- ☐ Set up an Off-Duty mat in a quiet corner and use it every evening.
- ☐ Swap one long ball session for a sniffy walk.
- ☐ Check your results after 7 days.



Building Trust & Bond

In this chapter, you'll learn why your Rottweiler's loyalty is both their greatest gift and the reason harsh training backfires, how to run a two-week "Clean Slate" that resets your relationship, and how to read the small signals your dog is already sending you.

Whether you have a new puppy or a five-year-old rescue, this chapter is your foundation for everything that follows.



Loyal, Sensitive and Always Watching

Rottweilers bond deeply, and often more strongly with one or two people. They read your tone, your body and your mood all day long.

That sensitivity is why kind, consistent training works so well with Rotties, and why shouting, jerking the lead or "alpha rolls" go wrong. A Rottie who is scared of being corrected doesn't become obedient. They become **worried**, and worried Rotties bark, guard and snap.

The goal isn't to be the boss. It's to be the person your Rottie trusts to make good decisions, so they don't have to.

Bond vs Velcro

A strong bond and a "Velcro dog" are not the same thing.

- **A bonded Rottie** checks in with you, follows your cues and relaxes when you're relaxed.
- **A Velcro Rottie** can't settle unless they're touching you, panics when a door closes, and watches your every move.

This chapter builds the first kind. If your dog already struggles when you leave the room, start here, then read Chapter 7 and your Home Alone Blueprint bonus.

The Method: The Two-Week Clean Slate

For the next 14 days, you'll change a few simple things about your day. These changes show your Rottie that you are predictable, fair and the source of everything good.

Step 1: Turn Meals Into Paychecks

Measure out your dog's daily food in the morning and keep it in a pouch or pot. Use about a third of it through the day to reward good choices: lying down calmly, coming when called, sitting at the door, looking at you. Feed the rest as usual.

Why it works: your Rottie learns that you notice and pay for good behaviour. Most dogs earn hundreds of rewards a week this way.

Step 2: Make the Day Predictable

Keep walks, meals and bedtime at roughly the same times. Use the same words for the same things, and agree them with the whole family: "off" for furniture and "down" for lying down, never the other way round.

Why it works: a Rottie who can predict their day doesn't need to watch you constantly to work out what happens next.

Step 3: The Pet-Pause-Ask Test

Pet your Rottie for three seconds, then stop and take your hand away. Watch:

- If they lean in, nudge you or move closer, they want more. Carry on.
- If they stay still, look away, lick their lips or move off, they're done. Respect it.

Why it works: your dog learns that you listen. Dogs who feel listened to are far less likely to growl or snap when they're uncomfortable.

Step 4: Handling = Treats

Every day, touch one body part briefly, then immediately give a treat: an ear, a paw, the collar, their mouth, their tail. One touch, one treat, five times. Over two weeks, build up to holding a paw for two seconds or looking in an ear.

Why it works: vet visits, grooming and nail trims become easy, and your dog learns hands near them mean good things.

Growls Are Information

If your Rottie growls, **never punish it.** A growl is a warning, and it's useful. Punishing the growl doesn't remove the feeling behind it; it just removes the warning, so the next step can be a snap.

Instead, calmly create space, then work out what caused it: pain, fear, being disturbed while resting, or guarding food or toys.

> **Guarding food, toys or spaces?** If your Rottie stiffens, freezes, growls or snaps when you approach their bowl, a chew or their bed, don't try to take things away. Use the Approach & Add game below, and speak to a qualified behaviourist if it doesn't improve within a couple of weeks.

If This Happens

"My dog only listens to one person." Have the other family members take over the Paychecks and one daily walk. Bonds grow from good experiences.

"My rescue won't take food from my hand." That's normal at first. Toss treats on the floor near you instead, and try again in a week.

"My dog follows me everywhere." Reward them for staying on their mat while you walk across the room and back. Build the distance slowly.

Practice Games

Game 1: Approach & Add

While your Rottie eats, walk past at a comfortable distance and drop a tasty extra (a piece of chicken or cheese) into or near the bowl. Then walk away. Do this a few times a meal for two weeks. Your dog learns that a person coming near their food means *more* food, not less.

Game 2: The Collar Grab Game

Gently touch your dog's collar, then give a treat. Next, hold the collar for one second and treat. Build to a gentle hold for three seconds. In an emergency, you'll be able to take hold of your dog without them ducking away.

Game 3: Follow the Leader

In the house or garden, walk around with treats in your pocket, changing direction often. Every time your Rottie catches up and walks beside you, say "yes!" and reward. Keep it light and playful for 2–3 minutes. It builds the habit of choosing to stay near you, without a lead.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Measure out daily food and use a third as Paychecks.
- ☐ Agree on the same cue words with everyone in the house.
- ☐ Do the Pet-Pause-Ask Test daily for two weeks.
- ☐ One touch, one treat: five handling reps a day.
- ☐ Play Approach & Add at every meal.



CHAPTER 3

The Rottie Teenager Phase

In this chapter, you'll learn why your sweet, obedient puppy suddenly seems to have forgotten everything, what is actually happening inside the adolescent Rottie brain, and the "Rewind Rule" that gets you through this phase without losing the progress you've made.

If your Rottie is somewhere between 6 months and 2 years old, this chapter will save your sanity.



The Rottie Teenager Phase

What Is Really Happening

Somewhere around 6 months, many Rottie owners notice a change. The puppy who sat beautifully now stares at you and walks off. Recall disappears at the park. Barking at strangers starts, or gets louder. Sleeves, shoes and cushions are suddenly under attack.

This is adolescence, and it's completely normal. Your Rottie's brain is rewiring. Hormones are changing. The part of the brain that controls impulses is still under construction, while the part that craves excitement and independence is running at full speed.

Rotties also go through a **second fear period** in adolescence. A dog who was confident at 4 months might suddenly bark at a bin bag, a statue or a man in a hat. This isn't a new personality. It's a phase, and how you handle it matters.

The Biggest Teenage Mistake

When training seems to "stop working," most owners do one of two things:

- **They get stricter:** more corrections, more frustration, more raised voices.
- **They give up:** "he knows it, he's just being stubborn," so they stop practising.

Both make adolescence longer. Harsh handling teaches a sensitive Rottie that you are unpredictable at the exact age they're forming their view of the world. Giving up lets bad habits set in like concrete.

The answer is in between: **go back a step, make it easy, and keep paying.**

The Method: The Rewind Rule

The Rewind Rule is simple: the moment a skill falls apart, you rewind it to the last stage where your dog was getting it right, and rebuild from there.

Step 1: Spot the Slip

Keep a quick note on your phone for one week. Write down every time a skill "fails": recall at the park, pulling on the lead, jumping on guests, ignoring "leave it". Most owners find it's just 3–4 skills, not "everything."

Step 2: Rewind Each Skill

For each skill on your list, go back to where it was easy.

- **Recall failing at the park?** Rewind to recall in the garden on a long line.
- **Pulling again?** Rewind to five-minute lead sessions in a quiet street.
- **Jumping on guests?** Rewind to practising with family members at the door.

Practise each skill at the easy level for 3–5 days, until your dog gets it right 8 out of 10 times. Then move up one small step.

Step 3: Pay More, Temporarily

Teenage Rotties are distracted. Your usual dry biscuit can't compete with a squirrel. For the next month, use higher-value rewards (small bits of chicken, cheese or sausage) for the skills on your list. You'll fade back to normal treats later.

Step 4: Manage the Gaps

While you rebuild, stop your dog from practising the bad habit. Use a long line at the park, a baby gate at the front door, and a house line (a light lead dragging indoors, only when supervised). Every time a habit is practised, it gets stronger. Management buys you time.



Handling the Second Fear Period

If your teenage Rottie suddenly becomes worried by something new:

1. **Don't force it.** Never drag your dog up to the scary thing.
2. **Add distance.** Move back until your dog can look at it without barking or freezing.
3. **Pair it with food.** Each time they look at it calmly, say "yes" and give a treat.
4. **Leave on a good note.** Two or three calm looks is enough for one day.

Most fear-period worries fade within a few weeks if you keep experiences positive and calm.

> **Watch for new guarding or growling.** Adolescence is when guarding of food, toys or people can first appear, and when barking at strangers can harden into reactivity. If you see stiffening, growling or lunging, act early with Chapters 10 and 11, and consider a qualified trainer or behaviourist.

If This Happens

"My dog listens at home but ignores me outside." That's a distance and distraction problem, not disobedience. Rewind to practising outside in quiet places at quiet times, and build up slowly.

"He's started humping, marking or squaring up to other dogs." Hormonal behaviour is common in adolescence. Interrupt

calmly, redirect, and talk to your vet about neutering timing for your individual dog; it's a decision that affects joint and behaviour development.

"Everything is going backwards." Look at your week: has routine slipped? Are walks longer and more exciting than before? Go back to the Three-Job Day from Chapter 1.



Practice Games

Game 1: The Two-Second Sit

Ask for a sit before *everything* good: the door opening, the lead going on, the ball being thrown, the food bowl going down. Wait for two seconds of stillness, then release with "OK!" Impulse control is the skill teenagers need most, and this builds it dozens of times a day.

Game 2: Restart the Name

Say your dog's name once in a cheerful voice. The moment they look at you, say "yes!" and reward. Practise 10 times a day in different rooms, then in the garden. A teenager who turns when you say their name is half-way to every other skill.

Game 3: Easy Wins Walk

Once a week, take a "boring" walk somewhere quiet. Reward every check-in, every loose lead moment and every calm look at the world. Easy walks remind your teen that working with you pays.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Track every "slip" for one week and list the 3–4 skills that need work.
- ☐ Rewind each skill to an easy level and rebuild over 3–5 days.
- ☐ Switch to higher-value treats for those skills for one month.
- ☐ Use a long line, gates and a house line to stop bad habits being practised.
- ☐ Ask for a Two-Second Sit before everything good.



Calm Daily Routines

In this chapter, you'll learn why a busy, exciting day makes your Rottweiler *more* restless, how much rest a Rottie actually needs, and the "Off-Switch Routine" that teaches your dog to settle on cue, at home, in cafés and when visitors come round.

This is the chapter most owners skip, and it's the one that changes the most.



Why Your Rottie Can't Switch Off

Adult dogs need around **16–18 hours of rest a day**. Puppies and teenagers need even more. Many Rotties get far less, because they're on duty: following you, checking the window, listening to the street.

A Rottie who doesn't rest enough doesn't get calmer. They get **over-tired**, and an over-tired Rottie looks a lot like a "hyper" one: mouthy, barky, pacing and quick to react.

So the goal isn't to wear your dog out. It's to build a day with clear patterns: **work time, play time and rest time**, and to teach your dog that rest is a skill.

A Rottie-Friendly Day

Here's a simple rhythm to adapt to your life:

- **Morning:** toilet break, a sniffy walk (30–45 minutes), breakfast as a Nose Job.
- **Mid-morning:** rest. Crate or bed in a quiet room.
- **Midday:** toilet break and a 5-minute training session.
- **Afternoon:** rest, then a calm chew on their mat.
- **Late afternoon:** walk or play session, plus a brain game.
- **Evening:** dinner, then the Off-Switch Routine while you relax.
- **Bedtime:** last toilet trip, then lights out in the same place every night.

Notice that rest blocks are planned, just like walks. If you don't plan rest, a Rottie won't take it.

The Method: The Off-Switch Routine

This routine teaches your Rottie one powerful idea: **"When I'm on my mat, nothing happens, so I may as well relax."** It takes about two weeks of short daily sessions.

Step 1: Choose the Mat (Day 1)

Pick a mat, bed or blanket that will become the "off switch." Use it only for this training to begin with. Put it somewhere quiet, away from windows and the front door.

Step 2: Pay for Stepping On (Days 1–2)

With treats ready, stand near the mat. The moment your dog steps on it, say "yes" and drop a treat *on the mat*. Toss a treat off the mat to reset, and repeat. Do 10 reps, twice a day. Don't ask for anything yet. Let your dog work it out.

Step 3: Pay for Lying Down (Days 3–5)

Now wait. When your dog steps on the mat, pause. Most Rotties will try a sit, then a down. When they lie down, reward between their front paws. Keep sessions to 3–5 minutes.

Step 4: Pay for Relaxing (Days 6–10)

Now you're rewarding *calm*, not just lying down. Look for:

- shifting onto one hip
- the head going down onto the paws
- a big sigh
- eyes softening or closing

Each time you see one, quietly place a treat between their paws. Say nothing; your voice can wake them up again. Slowly increase the time between treats: 5 seconds, 10, 20, a minute.

Step 5: Take It on the Road (Days 11–14+)

Now use the mat everywhere: while you cook, while you eat, in the garden, at a friend's house, at a quiet café. Bring the mat with you, put it down, and reward calm. The mat becomes a portable "relax" button.



If This Happens

"My dog keeps getting off the mat." You're moving too fast. Go back to rewarding more often, and put a long-lasting chew on the mat to help.

"My dog lies down but stares at me, waiting." That's normal at first. Start rewarding only when their eyes look away or their head goes down. Read a book or scroll your phone; looking away from them helps.

"My dog won't rest even in the crate." Cover the crate, play quiet background sound, and make sure the room is away from foot traffic. See Chapter 6.

"My dog is calm at home but wild everywhere else." Rest is a skill learned in easy places first. Practise the Off-Switch at home for two weeks before taking it out.

Practice Games

Game 1: Treats for Nothing

Keep a pot of treats in each room. Any time you catch your Rottie lying calmly, quietly walk over and place a treat between their paws, then walk away. Your dog learns that relaxing is the best way to earn rewards.

Game 2: Up and Down Switch

Play a short game of tug for 10 seconds, then stop and ask for a down on the mat. When they lie down, reward and wait

10 seconds. Then play again. Repeat 5 times. This teaches your Rottie to go from excited to calm quickly.

Game 3: The Lick Mat Wind-Down

After dinner, smear a little wet food or plain yoghurt on a lick mat and give it on the Off-Switch mat. Licking is naturally calming, and it builds a strong "mat = relax" link.



Your Action Plan

- ☐ Write out your Rottie's day with rest blocks planned in.
- ☐ Choose an Off-Switch mat and do two short sessions a day.
- ☐ Reward calm signs (sighs, head down, hip shift) with a quiet treat.
- ☐ Keep a pot of treats in each room for Treats for Nothing.
- ☐ After two weeks, use the mat somewhere new.



Stranger & Guest Reset

In this chapter, you'll learn why your Rottweiler reacts so strongly when someone comes to the door, how to keep visits safe and calm, and the "Visitor Plan" that turns the doorbell from an alarm into a cue to settle.

The goal isn't a Rottie who loves everyone. It's one who can stay calm and safe while guests are in your home.



Stranger & Guest Reset

Why Guests Are Hard

From your Rottie's point of view, a stranger walking into their home is exactly what they were bred to watch for. Add the noise of the doorbell, the excitement of the family and someone reaching out to stroke them, and it's easy to see why many Rotties bark, jump or even growl at visitors.

The good news: with a clear routine, most Rotties learn to relax with guests, even if they never become party animals.

The Rules for Guests

Before anyone visits, give them these simple rules:

- **Ignore the dog at first.** No talking to, looking at, or reaching for your Rottie.
- **Don't lean over** or try to stroke them.
- **Sit down soon after you arrive.** People standing and moving are more worrying.
- **Toss treats on the floor,** if you ask them to, away from themselves.
- **Let the dog come to you.** If they want to say hello, a short scratch on the chest is plenty.

The Method: The Visitor Plan

Step 1: Prepare Before the Bell (Every Visit)

Walk your dog before guests arrive and give them a brain game. Then, set them up in a quiet room, behind a baby gate, or in their crate with a long-lasting chew. Your Rottie should never be loose when the front door opens.

Step 2: Let Guests Settle First

Bring your guests in and let them sit down and get comfortable. Leave your dog in their safe space with the chew for 10–15 minutes while the excitement dies down.

Step 3: The Calm Introduction

When your dog is calm, bring them in on a lead and harness. Keep a comfortable distance. Each time your dog looks at the guest calmly, say "yes" and reward. If your dog wants to sniff the guest, let them for a few seconds, then call them away and reward.

Step 4: Settle on the Mat

Take your dog to their Off-Switch mat (Chapter 4), still on the lead. Give a chew and reward calm. Keep the visit short for your dog, and return them to their safe space before they get tired or worried.

Step 5: Watch the Danger Moments

The riskiest times are when a guest **stands up, moves suddenly, or leaves.** Before these moments, call your dog to you and reward, or put them back in their safe space.

Making the Doorbell Boring

Practise the "Doorbell Means Mat" game from Chapter 11 every day. Over time, the bell becomes a cue to run to the mat for treats instead of charging at the door.

> **Growling, staring or lunging at guests:** keep your dog fully separated during visits, and work with a qualified behaviourist. Never force your dog to "make friends." Forced greetings are one of the most common causes of bites to visitors.

If This Happens

"My dog is fine until the guest stands up." Very common. Move your dog to their safe space before guests stand or leave.

"My dog likes some people but not others." Treat every new person as a fresh start, and follow the Visitor Plan every time.

"The guest wants to stroke my dog." Thank them and say, "He's learning to be calm, so please ignore him for now." Friendship comes from calm, not contact.



Practice Games

Game 1: Knock Knock

Ask a family member to knock quietly on an inside door. Say "thank you" and toss treats onto your dog's mat. Repeat until your dog runs to the mat when they hear a knock.

Game 2: Treat Rain

When a familiar person visits, have them toss treats on the floor away from themselves without looking at your dog. Your dog learns that visitors make food fall from the sky, with no pressure to interact.

Game 3: Coat On, Coat Off

Practise with family members walking in and out of the front door, putting coats on and taking them off. Reward your dog for staying calm on their mat. This makes arrivals and departures less exciting.



Your Action Plan

- ☐ Set up a gate, crate or quiet room for every visit.
- ☐ Share the guest rules before people arrive.
- ☐ Practise Doorbell Means Mat daily.
- ☐ Use a lead for every introduction.
- ☐ Return your dog to their safe space before guests stand or leave.



Crate & Sleep Training

In this chapter, you'll learn how to turn the crate into your Rottie's favourite den rather than a punishment, why so many crate-trained dogs still cry at night, and the "Den Builder" plan that gets your dog sleeping soundly in about two weeks.

A Rottie who sleeps well is calmer, learns faster and copes better with everything else in this guide.



Crate & Sleep Training

Why a Crate Helps a Rottie

Rotties are watchers. In an open-plan house, many never fully switch off; they're always half-listening for the doorbell or for you getting up. A covered crate in a quiet spot gives them permission to stop guarding.

Used kindly, a crate is:

- a **safe den** where nobody disturbs them
- a **management tool** that stops chewing, toileting or counter-surfing when you can't supervise
- a **familiar bed** that travels with you to the vet, holidays or a friend's house

A crate should never be used as punishment, and adult dogs shouldn't be crated for more than about four hours at a time during the day.

Setting Up the Den

- **Size:** big enough for your Rottie to stand, turn around and lie flat on their side. Most adults need a large or extra-large crate. For a growing puppy, buy the adult size with a divider.
- **Cover:** drape a blanket over the top, back and sides. Leave the front open.
- **Bedding:** a comfy bed or vet bedding. If your dog shreds bedding, use a tough mat for now.
- **Location:** a quiet corner, away from the front door, windows and walkways. For the first weeks, puppies often settle better with the crate in or near your bedroom.

The Method: The Den Builder

Step 1: The Treasure Hunt (Days 1–3)

Leave the crate door open. Several times a day, secretly drop a few treats or a chew inside. Let your dog discover them on their own. Don't close the door. You're simply teaching: "good things appear in there."

Step 2: Meals in the Den (Days 2–7)

Feed every meal inside the crate. Start with the bowl just inside the door, then gradually push it to the back. Once your dog walks in happily, close the door while they eat, and open it as soon as they finish.

Step 3: Door Closed, You Nearby (Days 5–10)

Give a long-lasting chew or a stuffed food toy in the crate and close the door. Sit nearby, reading or watching TV. Open the door after 5 minutes, *before* your dog starts to fuss. Over several days, build up to 20–30 minutes with you in the room.

Step 4: Short Steps Away (Days 8–14)

With your dog busy with a chew, leave the room for 30 seconds, then come back. Build up slowly: 1 minute, 3, 5, 10. Come back calmly and only open the door when your dog is quiet.

Step 5: The Bedtime Routine (from Day 1)

Every night, follow the same steps: a calm evening, a last toilet trip, a small chew in the crate, lights down, and a quiet "goodnight." Puppies under about 4 months usually need a toilet trip in the night. Keep it boring: out, toilet, praise, straight back to bed.

Crate & Sleep Training

The Whining Question

When a dog whines in the crate, ask yourself: **what do they need?**

- **Toilet?** Puppies, or a dog who hasn't been out for a while, may genuinely need to go. Take them out on a lead, quietly, then straight back.
- **Uncomfortable?** Too hot, too cold, or the crate is too small.
- **Lonely or worried?** Move the crate closer to you for now, and go back a step in the Den Builder.
- **Demanding?** If all needs are met and your dog is testing whether whining opens the door, wait for a few seconds of quiet, *then* open it.

> **Crate panic:** if your Rottie drools heavily, bends the bars, injures themselves trying to escape, or panics even with you nearby, stop crate training. This is distress, not stubbornness. Use a puppy pen or a dog-proofed room instead, and speak to your vet. Your Home Alone Blueprint bonus has a gentle plan for dogs who struggle to be apart from you.

If This Happens

"My puppy cries at night." Put the crate next to your bed so they can hear you breathe. Rest your fingers near the door if needed. Move the crate out gradually over a couple of weeks if you want it elsewhere.

"My dog won't go in at all." Take the door off for a few days, or prop it open so it can't swing. Go back to treasure hunts.

"My dog wakes at 5am." Make sure the room is dark, cover the crate fully, and don't get up the instant they stir unless they truly need the toilet.

Practice Games

Game 1: Crate Dash

Toss a treat into the crate and say "bed!" in a happy voice. When your dog runs in, throw a second treat in. Call them out, then repeat. Five reps make a fun game, and a quick "bed!" is useful for life.

Game 2: Door Zen

With your dog in the crate, put your hand on the door to open it. If they push forward, close it gently. If they stay still, open it a little more. When the door is fully open and they're still waiting, release with "OK!" This teaches calm exits instead of explosions.

Game 3: Surprise Visitor

While your dog relaxes in the crate with the door open, walk past and drop a treat through the side. Walk off without a word. Your dog learns that staying in the crate is when the best surprises happen.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Set up a covered crate in a quiet spot.
- ☐ Do Treasure Hunts for three days with the door open.
- ☐ Feed every meal in the crate for two weeks.
- ☐ Build up closed-door time with you in the room.
- ☐ Start the same bedtime routine tonight.



Home Alone & Calm

In this chapter, you'll learn why Rottweilers are among the breeds most prone to struggling when left alone, how to tell boredom from true anxiety, and the "Little Exits" plan for building calm, confident time apart.

If your Rottie howls, chews the door frame or greets you like you've been away for a year, start here.



Why Rotties Find Being Alone Hard

Rottweilers were bred to work closely with their people all day, droving and guarding. Being close to their family is in their genes. That's what makes them loyal, and it's also why a Rottie left alone can feel like something has gone very wrong.

Many owners accidentally make it harder:

- the dog is with them every moment at weekends, then alone for 8 hours on Monday
- goodbyes are emotional and drawn out
- the keys, coat and bag always mean "they're leaving now"

Boredom or Worry?

It helps to know which problem you have. Set up a phone or pet camera and record the first 30 minutes after you leave.

- **Boredom:** your dog settles for a while, then gets into mischief later. They're relaxed when you return. They need more exercise, brain work and things to do.
- **Worry (separation distress):** pacing, panting, whining, howling or scratching at doors within the first few minutes. They may drool, have accidents, or not touch food left for them. They need a gradual plan.

Many Rotties are a mix of both.

The Method: Little Exits

The idea is simple: your dog only ever experiences absences they can cope with. Each success builds confidence for the next, slightly longer one.

Step 1: Independence at Home (Week 1)

Use your Off-Switch mat (Chapter 4). Ask your dog to settle, then take one step away and come back. Build to walking across the room, then into the next room for a few seconds. Reward calm staying.

Also use baby gates: let your dog be on the other side of a gate from you for short periods while they have a chew.

Step 2: Break the Departure Cues (Week 1–2)

Several times a day, pick up your keys, put on your shoes or your coat, then sit down and watch TV. Do this 5–10 times a day until these things stop causing your dog to follow you or get up.

Step 3: The First Real Exits (Week 2)

Give your dog a special food toy that they *only* get when you leave (a frozen stuffed rubber toy is ideal). Walk out of the front door, close it, and come straight back in after **10–30 seconds**. Come in calmly. Ignore your dog for a moment until they're calm, then say hello quietly.

Step 4: Build Up Slowly (Weeks 3–6)

Slowly increase the time, watching your camera:

- 30 seconds, then 1 minute, then 2, 5, 10 minutes

- then 15, 20, 30 minutes
- then 45 minutes, 1 hour and beyond

Only move up when your dog is calm at the current time. If they show signs of worry, go back to the last time that was easy.

Step 5: Mix It Up

Not every exit should be longer. Mix short and long absences: 5 minutes, 2 minutes, 15 minutes, 1 minute. This keeps your dog from bracing for a long absence every time you go.



While You're Training

During the weeks you're building this skill, try to avoid leaving your dog alone for longer than they can currently handle. A dog walker, a friend, doggy daycare, or taking your dog with you all help. One long, stressful day can undo weeks of progress.

> **Severe panic:** if your Rottie injures themselves, destroys doors or crates trying to escape, or is in obvious distress for the whole time you're gone, please speak to your vet. Some dogs need medical support alongside training, and that's okay. Your Home Alone Blueprint bonus has a detailed day-by-day plan.

If This Happens

"My dog won't touch the food toy when I leave." That's a sign of worry, not lack of interest. Your absences are too long. Go back to 10–30 seconds.

"My dog is fine for 20 minutes, then howls." Stay at 15 minutes for another week, then build up more slowly, in 2–3 minute steps.

"My dog destroys things only when I'm out." Check the camera. If it starts straight after you leave, it's worry; follow Little Exits. If it's much later, increase exercise and brain work before you go.

Practice Games

Game 1: Door Peekaboo

While your dog is on their mat with a chew, step behind a door and close it for 2 seconds. Open it and calmly reward if they stayed settled. Build to 10, 20, then 60 seconds.

Game 2: The Fake-Out

Pick up your keys and jingle them. Then put them down and sit on the sofa. Put your coat on, walk to the door, and take it off again. The goal is total boredom with your departure routine.

Game 3: Scatter and Go

As you leave, scatter a handful of kibble on the floor or in a snuffle mat. Your dog is busy sniffing as the door closes, so the first, hardest moments pass without noticing.



Your Action Plan

- ☐ Record your dog for 30 minutes after you leave to see what's going on.
- ☐ Practise independence on the mat and behind baby gates daily.
- ☐ Do 5–10 fake departures every day.
- ☐ Start Little Exits at 10–30 seconds with a special food toy.
- ☐ Arrange help so your dog isn't left longer than they can manage.



Focus & Recall Skills

In this chapter, you'll learn why your Rottie's recall works perfectly in the kitchen and disappears at the park, how to build a "Golden Recall" word that cuts through distractions, and the focus games that make you the most interesting thing in your dog's world.

A reliable recall isn't a party trick. One day, it could save your dog's life.



Why Recall Breaks Down

Most broken recalls have the same causes:

- **The word has been "poisoned."** Owners call their dog to end fun (leaving the park), for things the dog dislikes (baths, nail trims), or they call again and again while being ignored. The word comes to mean "ignore me."
- **The reward isn't worth it.** A Rottie chasing a scent or watching another dog has found something better than a biscuit.
- **Practice was too hard, too soon.** Recall was taught in the kitchen, then tested in a field full of dogs.

The fix is to start fresh and build the skill in layers, from easy to hard.

Focus Comes First

Recall is really a **focus** skill. A dog who checks in with you naturally is much easier to call back. Before you work on recall, spend a week building focus with the games at the end of this chapter. You'll notice the difference on walks almost straight away.

The Method: The Golden Recall

Step 1: Choose a Brand-New Word (Day 1)

Pick a word you've never used for recall: "Here!", "Close!", or a whistle (two short pips works well). This word is precious. You will only use it when you're sure your dog will come, and every single time it will be followed by something brilliant.

Step 2: Charge the Word (Days 1–3)

Inside the house, with your dog right next to you, say the word once, then immediately give a jackpot: 3–5 pieces of chicken, one after the other, with lots of praise. Do this 10 times a day for three days. You're not asking your dog to do anything yet. You're teaching: **"This word means amazing things."**

Step 3: Tiny Distances (Days 4–7)

Now say the word when your dog is a few steps away and looking at you. When they come, jackpot. Then try from across the room. Then from another room. If your dog doesn't come straight away, go back to an easier distance. Don't repeat the word.

Step 4: Outside on a Long Line (Weeks 2–3)

Clip a 10-metre long line to a harness (never a collar). In the garden or a quiet field, let your dog wander and sniff. When they're not too distracted, call once. If they come, jackpot and let them go back to sniffing. **Being called back to you should not mean the fun ends.**

If they don't come, gently reel in the line to guide them back, then reward anyway. Next time, call when they're less distracted.

Step 5: Add Distractions Slowly (Weeks 3–6)

Practise in places with a little more going on: a park at a quiet time, a field with dogs far away. Keep the long line on. Only drop it in safe, enclosed areas once your dog is coming back 9 out of 10 times.



Focus & Recall Skills

The Recall Rules

- **Call once.** If your dog ignores you, don't repeat the word. Make it easier next time.
- **Never call for bad things.** For baths, nail trims or leaving the park, go and get your dog instead.
- **Always pay.** Every recall gets a reward, forever. You don't stop paying your salary once you're good at your job.
- **Release them again.** Call, reward, then say "go play!" Most recalls should *not* end the fun.

> **Chasing and prey drive:** many Rotties have strong chase instincts. If your dog chases cyclists, joggers, wildlife or livestock, keep them on a long line in open spaces until their recall is rock solid, and always obey local rules about dogs near livestock.

If This Happens

"My dog comes halfway, then runs off." Move backwards as they come towards you. Running away from your dog triggers their chase instinct in your favour.

"My dog comes but won't let me grab the collar." Practise the Collar Grab Game from Chapter 2 every day.

"My dog only comes when I have food." Use food in training, but also reward with life rewards: "go sniff," a game of tug, or a throw of the ball.

Practice Games

Game 1: Ping-Pong Recall

Two people stand a few metres apart, each with treats. Take turns calling your dog with the new recall word, rewarding each time they arrive. Gradually move further apart, and then into different rooms. Five minutes of this is a great energy burner too.

Game 2: Hide and Seek

While your dog is distracted, hide behind a door or a tree in the garden. Call once. When they find you, celebrate with a jackpot. Rotties love this, and it teaches them to keep an eye on where you are.

Game 3: The Check-In Walk

On a walk, every time your dog chooses to look back at you, say "yes" and reward. Every time they come back to you without being called, give a jackpot. Within a week, many Rotties start checking in every minute or so, and that makes recall far easier.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Choose a brand-new recall word or whistle.
- ☐ Charge the word for three days: say it, then jackpot.
- ☐ Buy a 10-metre long line and a well-fitted harness.
- ☐ Practise Ping-Pong Recall and Hide and Seek this week.
- ☐ Stop using the recall word for anything your dog dislikes.



Leash & Walk Reset

In this chapter, you'll learn why a strong Rottweiler pulls even when they've walked on a lead hundreds of times, the right gear to use, and the "Loose Lead Rule" that turns walks into time together instead of a tug-of-war.

Lead walking is the skill owners most often give up on. With the right plan, it's also one of the most satisfying to fix.



Leash & Walk Reset

Why Rotties Pull

- **The world is exciting.** Smells, dogs, squirrels; your Rottie wants to get there now.
- **Pulling works.** Every time pulling gets them closer to where they want to go, it's rewarded.
- **We're slow.** A Rottie's natural trot is much faster than our walking pace.
- **Opposition reflex.** When pressure pulls back on a dog, they naturally lean forward into it, harder.

That's why yanking the lead back rarely helps. It turns walking into a pulling contest, and a Rottie is strong enough to win.

The Right Gear

- **A well-fitted harness with a front clip** on the chest. When your dog pulls, the front clip gently turns them towards you instead of giving them something to lean into.
- **A fixed lead, about 1.8–2 metres long.** Avoid retractable leads: they teach dogs that pulling makes the lead longer.
- **Small, soft treats** in a pouch you can reach quickly.
- **A long line (5–10 metres)** for sniffing and freedom on "decompression" walks.

Avoid choke chains, prong collars and slip leads for training. They can injure the neck and throat and often make Rotties more reactive.

The Method: The Loose Lead Rule

The rule is simple, and it never changes: **a loose lead means we go forward. A tight lead means we stop.** Every person who walks your dog must follow it.

Step 1: Find the Reward Zone (Days 1–3)

In the house or garden, decide which side you want your dog to walk on. Hold treats in that hand. Each time your dog is next to your leg, say "yes" and give a treat right by your leg. Take a step, reward. Two steps, reward. You're teaching your dog where the best place to be is.

Step 2: Red Light, Green Light (Days 3–7)

On a quiet street, walk forward. The moment the lead goes tight, stop and stand still. Don't pull back. Wait. The moment your dog lets the lead go slack (by turning, stepping back, or even just shifting their weight), say "yes" and walk on. At first you'll stop every few steps; that's normal. Practise for 5–10 minutes at a time.

Step 3: Turn and Go (Week 2)

If your dog pulls ahead, say "this way!" in a happy voice and turn around to walk the other direction. When they catch up and are next to you, reward. Changes of direction keep your dog thinking about where you are.

Step 4: Sniff as a Reward (Week 2–3)

Sniffing is your Rottie's favourite thing. Use it. After 10–20 steps of nice walking, say "go sniff!" and let them explore the verge for

a while. Then carry on. Your dog learns that walking nicely *earns* sniffing time.

Step 5: Add Distractions (Weeks 3–6)

Move to busier places slowly. If your dog can't take treats or keep the lead loose, you're too close to the distraction. Add distance, cross the road, or go back to quieter routes for a while.



Leash & Walk Reset

Two Kinds of Walks

Not every walk needs to be a training walk.

- **Training walks:** short (10–20 minutes), focused, using the Loose Lead Rule strictly.
- **Decompression walks:** on a long line in a field or quiet space, where your dog can sniff, explore and move freely, without pulling being an issue.

Mixing both stops your dog from feeling frustrated and gives them the freedom Rotties need.

If This Happens

"We stop so much we never get anywhere." That's normal for the first week. Keep training walks short, and use decompression walks for exercise.

"My dog lunges at other dogs." That's not just pulling. See Chapter 10 and your Loose-Leash Blueprint bonus.

"My dog walks well for me but pulls for my partner." Everyone has to follow the same rule. Teach the whole family Red Light, Green Light.

Practice Games

Game 1: Follow Me

In the garden, walk in random directions with your dog on a loose lead. Every time they choose to follow and stay by your side, reward. Keep it light and fun, with lots of changes of pace.

Game 2: The Treat Line

Drop a line of treats on the floor, one every big step. Walk your dog along it on a loose lead. They learn that staying near you means food keeps appearing.

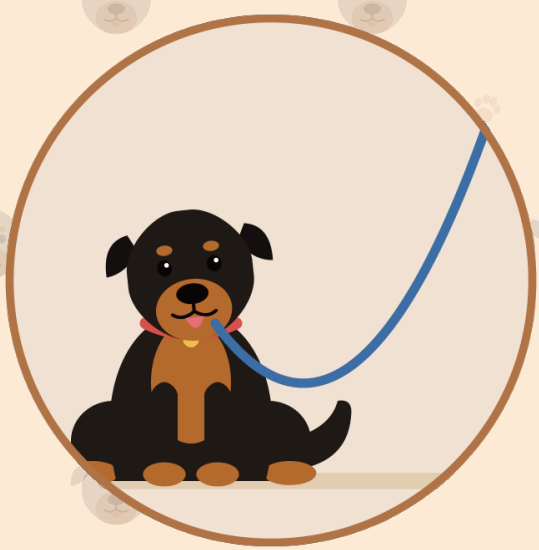
Game 3: Stop and Start

Walk five steps, then stop. Wait for a sit or a look at you, then reward and walk on. This teaches your Rottie to pay attention to your pace instead of setting their own.



Your Action Plan

- ☐ Get a front-clip harness and a 1.8–2 metre fixed lead.
- ☐ Practise the Reward Zone at home for three days.
- ☐ Use Red Light, Green Light on every training walk.
- ☐ Add "go sniff" as a reward for nice walking.
- ☐ Plan one decompression walk a week on a long line.



Socialization & Confidence

In this chapter, you'll learn what socialisation really means (hint: it isn't letting your dog meet every dog in the park), why confident Rotties are safer Rotties, and the "Watch From Afar" method for building a calm, confident dog at any age.



Socialization & Confidence

What Socialisation Is (and Isn't)

Socialisation means helping your dog have **calm, positive experiences** with the world: people, dogs, places, sounds, surfaces and handling. It isn't about how many things your dog meets. It's about how they *feel* when they meet them.

A puppy forced to say hello to every stranger may learn that people are overwhelming. A puppy who watches the world from a safe distance, with treats, learns that the world is predictable and safe.

The Puppy Window

Puppies are most open to new experiences until about **12–16 weeks**. During this time, short, positive experiences are incredibly valuable. But socialisation doesn't stop there. Teenage and adult Rotties keep needing calm, positive experiences throughout their lives.

Why It Matters for Rotties

Rotties are naturally reserved with strangers. A Rottie who hasn't had enough positive experiences can become fearful, and a fearful 45kg dog is a dog who may bark, lunge or bite to make scary things go away. Confidence is a safety skill.

The Method: Watch From Afar

Step 1: Make a Socialisation List

Write down things your dog will meet in their life: people of different ages and looks (hats, beards, high-vis jackets, wheelchairs), children, other dogs, cats, bikes, cars, buses, the vet's, grooming, different floors, stairs, lifts, umbrellas and loud noises.

Step 2: Start at a Distance

Take your dog somewhere they can see one thing from your list at a distance where they're relaxed. Sit together. Every time they look at it calmly, say "yes" and give a treat.

Step 3: Let Your Dog Choose

If your dog wants to move closer, let them, slowly. If they want to move away, let them. You're teaching your dog that they have choices and that you'll keep them safe.

Step 4: Keep It Short

Five to ten minutes is plenty. End on a good note, before your dog gets tired or worried.

Step 5: Tick It Off and Repeat

Tick things off your list as your dog becomes calm around them. Then visit them again every few weeks to keep the experience fresh.

Reading Your Dog's Body Language

Watch for signs your Rottie needs more space:

- lip licking or yawning when not tired
- turning the head away
- ears pinned back
- tail low or tucked
- freezing or a stiff body
- showing the whites of the eyes
- barking and backing away

If you see these, move further away and let your dog relax.

> **Dog parks:** busy off-lead dog parks are often too much for Rotties. Calm walks with one or two friendly, well-matched dogs are far more useful than chaotic group play.

If This Happens

"My dog is scared of men or people in hats." Add those people to your list and practise Watch From Afar with lots of distance.

"My dog wants to greet every dog." That's frustration in the making. Teach them that calmly watching other dogs pays more than greeting.

"My adult rescue is nervous of everything." Go slowly and keep experiences short. Consider a qualified behaviourist to help you plan.

Practice Games

Game 1: Bench Watching

Sit on a bench in a quiet park with your dog beside you. Reward calm looks at passing people, dogs and bikes. Leave before your dog gets restless.

Game 2: Surface Safari

Lay out different surfaces at home: a bath mat, a tray of crinkly paper, a wobbly cushion, a sheet of foil. Reward your dog for stepping on them. This builds confidence with new things.

Game 3: Sound Party

Play sounds like traffic, fireworks or thunder very quietly on your phone while your dog eats. Over many days, slowly increase the volume. Stop if your dog stops eating or looks worried.



Your Action Plan

- ☐ Write your dog's socialisation list.
- ☐ Practise Watch From Afar three times this week.
- ☐ Learn the signs your dog needs more space.
- ☐ Play Surface Safari at home.
- ☐ Start the Sound Party at a low volume.



Barking & Alert Control

In this chapter, you'll learn why Rottweilers bark at things you can't even hear, the difference between alert, demand and frustration barking, and the "Thank You Protocol" that teaches your dog to tell you once, then stand down.

You don't need a silent dog. You need one who stops when you ask.



Barking & Alert Control

Why Rotties Bark

Barking is part of a Rottie's job description. They were bred to notice anything unusual and raise the alarm. So when your dog barks at the postman, a car door or a leaf, they think they're doing exactly what they should.

There are three common types of barking:

- **Alert barking:** at noises, people passing, the doorbell. "Something's out there!"
- **Demand barking:** at you, for food, play or attention. "Do the thing!"
- **Frustration barking:** behind gates, in the car, on the lead when they can't get to something. "I can't reach it!"

Each needs a slightly different fix, but they all start with the same thing: **reduce how often your dog practises barking.**

Step Zero: Reduce the Triggers

Before training, cut down the number of times your dog barks each day:

- **Block the view.** Use frosted window film on the lower part of front windows, close blinds, or move the sofa your dog uses as a lookout.
- **Soften the sound.** Play quiet music or white noise near the front of the house.
- **Limit patrols.** Don't leave your Rottie in the garden alone to bark at the fence.
- **Meet needs first.** A dog with enough exercise, brain work and rest barks less.

The Method: The Thank You Protocol

This method acknowledges your dog's alert, then teaches them that you'll take it from here.

Step 1: Teach "Thank You" Without Barking (Days 1–3)

In a quiet room, say "thank you" in a calm, friendly voice, then toss a treat on the floor behind you. Your dog turns to get it. Repeat 10 times. You're teaching: "thank you" means "turn around, food is behind you."

Step 2: Add a Small Trigger (Days 4–7)

Have someone knock very quietly on a door. Before your dog barks more than once, say "thank you" and toss treats behind you. If they turn to the food, great. If not, make the knock quieter next time.

Step 3: Build Up to Real Life (Weeks 2–3)

Start using it for real alerts. When your dog barks at something, calmly walk over, look at what they're barking at (this tells them you've checked), say "thank you," and toss treats behind you or lead them away. Reward quiet.

Step 4: Add a Settle

Once your dog turns away reliably, ask them to go to their mat after "thank you." Reward the down and calm. Over time, this becomes: **one or two barks, a check-in with you, then back to the mat.**

Handling Demand Barking

If your dog barks *at you* to get something, the rule is simple: **barking never works.** Turn away, wait for a few seconds of quiet, then give what they wanted if it's appropriate. Be patient; it often gets worse before it gets better, because your dog tries harder before giving up.

Better still, teach them a polite way to ask, like sitting quietly, and reward that a lot.

Handling Frustration Barking

Frustration barking happens when your dog wants something they can't have, like getting to another dog. Increase distance, reward calm looks, and see Chapter 10 for a full plan for lead frustration and reactivity.

> **Never use bark collars.** Shock, spray or citronella collars may stop barking short-term, but they often increase fear and can turn alert barking into aggression towards the very thing your dog is worried about.

If This Happens

"My dog is too worked up to take treats." You're too close to the trigger or it's too intense. Block the view and practise at a lower level.

"My dog barks at every noise at night." Move their bed to a quieter room, use white noise, and make sure the crate is covered.

"My dog barks in the car." Cover their crate in the car, and practise short calm car trips with nothing exciting at the end.

Practice Games

Game 1: Doorbell Means Mat

Record your doorbell on your phone. Play it very quietly and toss a treat onto your dog's mat. Repeat until your dog runs to the mat when they hear it. Slowly turn up the volume over several days, then practise with a real ring.

Game 2: Quiet Pays

During calm moments, say "quiet" in a soft voice and give a treat while your dog is silent. You're labelling silence, so later you can ask for it.

Game 3: Window Watch

Sit with your dog near a window, a long way back. Each time a person or dog passes and your dog watches calmly, say "yes" and reward. If they bark, move further away. This builds calm watching instead of guarding.



Your Action Plan

- ☐ Block barking views with window film or blinds.
- ☐ Teach "thank you" in a quiet room this week.
- ☐ Practise Doorbell Means Mat daily.
- ☐ Never reward demand barking.
- ☐ Stop unsupervised garden patrols.



Defiance & Boundary Setting

In this chapter, you'll learn why Rottweilers sometimes seem to test the rules, why "dominance" and confrontation backfire with this breed, and the "Clear & Kind Boundaries" plan that teaches your Rottie the house rules without a fight.



Testing, Not Dominance

Rottweilers are thinkers. Sometimes they check whether a rule still applies: "Do I still have to wait at the door? Is the sofa really off limits today?" That isn't your dog trying to take over the household. It's a clever dog working out what pays.

Old-fashioned advice tells owners to "show the dog who's boss" with physical corrections, staring contests or pinning the dog down. With a strong, protective breed, that's dangerous. It can make a Rottweiler fearful or defensive, and it damages trust.

Clear, consistent rules, rewarded generously, work far better.

Why Rules Slip

- **Inconsistency:** the sofa is allowed on Sunday but not on Monday.
- **Different family rules:** one person lets the dog jump up; another doesn't.
- **Rules only enforced sometimes:** your Rottie learns that testing sometimes pays.
- **Too few rewards:** good behaviour is ignored, while bad behaviour gets attention.

The Method: Clear & Kind Boundaries

Step 1: Agree the House Rules (Day 1)

As a family, decide: Is the dog allowed on the sofa? In bedrooms? Upstairs? In the kitchen while you cook? Write the rules down and stick them on the fridge.

Step 2: Manage First (Days 1–30)

Make the rules easy to follow. Use gates to block rooms, close doors, and put a bed next to the sofa if the sofa is off limits.

Step 3: Teach What You Want (Days 1–14)

For every "don't," teach a "do":

- Don't jump on the sofa → lie on the bed beside it.
- Don't rush the door → sit and wait.
- Don't jump on people → four paws on the floor.
- Don't steal food → lie on the mat during meals.

Reward the "do" generously.

Step 4: "Say Please" (Daily)

Ask for a calm sit before good things: meals, walks, doors opening, toys and cuddles. Your Rottie learns that cooperation unlocks everything they want.

Step 5: Be Consistent, Every Time

Every person, every day. Consistency is the boundary.

Avoid Confrontations

- **Don't pull** things out of your Rottie's mouth. Use a trade.
- **Don't push or drag** them off furniture. Toss a treat on the floor and say "off."
- **Don't stare them down** or lean over them.
- **Don't punish growls.** A growl is a warning; listen to it.

> **If your Rottweiler growls when moved, guards objects or people, or snaps,** stop and get help from your vet and a qualified behaviourist. Pain can also cause grumpiness, so a health check is important.

If This Happens

"My Rottie ignores 'off' on the sofa." Block the sofa for now, and reward lying on their own bed.

"My Rottie only listens to one person." Everyone uses the same cues and rewards, and shares walks and training.

"My Rottie pushes through doors." Practise Door Zen several times a day.

Practice Games

Game 1: Off and On

Invite your Rottie onto a bed with "on," reward. Say "off" and toss a treat on the floor. Repeat. Use the same game for furniture if allowed.

Game 2: Door Zen

Put your hand on the door handle. If your Rottie moves forward, take your hand away. When they wait, open a little. Release with "OK!"

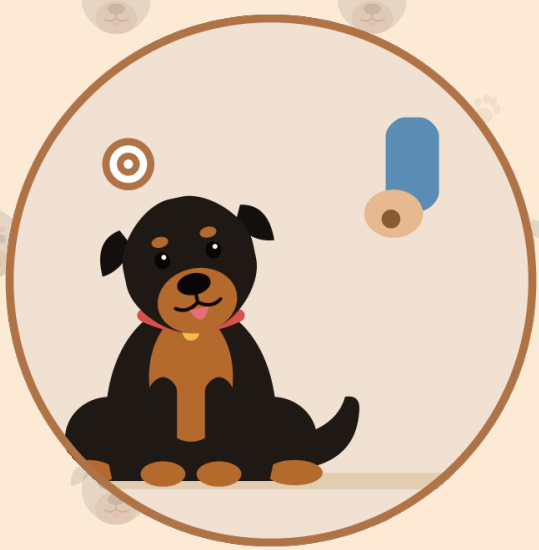
Game 3: The Trade

Swap anything your Rottie has for something better. Give it back if it's safe.



Your Action Plan

- ☐ Agree house rules as a family.
- ☐ Use gates and beds to make rules easy.
- ☐ Teach a "do" for every "don't."
- ☐ "Say please" before good things.
- ☐ Use trades, never confrontations.



Multi-Pet Harmony

In this chapter, you'll learn how to introduce your Rottweiler safely to other dogs, cats and children, how to stop herding and chasing, and the "Peacekeeper Rules" that help everyone in the house live together calmly.



Rotties and Other Pets

Many Rotties live happily with other dogs and cats. Their herding and guarding instincts can cause problems though: chasing, staring, "herding" other animals, or guarding food, toys or people.

Introducing a New Dog

1. **Meet on neutral ground,** like a quiet park, with both dogs on leads.
2. **Walk side by side** with plenty of space between them. Let them sniff the ground, not each other.
3. **Let them meet briefly** when both seem relaxed: a few seconds of sniffing, then call them apart.
4. **At home, use gates** so the dogs can see each other without full contact at first.
5. **Supervise all time together** for the first few weeks.

Introducing a Cat

1. **Give the cat a safe room** with food, water, litter and high places to hide.
2. **Swap scents** by swapping bedding between the animals for a few days.
3. **Let them see each other through a gate,** with your dog on a lead. Reward your dog for looking at the cat calmly, then looking away.
4. **Never allow chasing.** If your dog stares, stiffens or lunges, move further away.
5. **Go slowly.** Some introductions take weeks or months.

The Method: The Peacekeeper Rules

Rule 1: Separate Meals

Feed pets in separate rooms or crates. Pick up bowls once they're empty.

Rule 2: No Free-For-All Treasures

Pick up high-value chews and toys when pets are together. Give special chews only when pets are apart.

Rule 3: Safe Spaces

Every pet needs a place to escape, such as a gated room, a crate or high shelves for cats.

Rule 4: Break Up Play

Watch dog-dog play. Good play is bouncy and loose, with both dogs taking turns. Call your dog away every minute or two for a short break.

Rule 5: One-to-One Time

Give each pet their own time with you every day: walks, training and cuddles.

Rotties and Children

- **Always supervise.** Never leave young children alone with any dog.
- **Teach children the rules:** don't hug, climb on, or disturb a sleeping or eating dog.
- **Give your dog a child-free zone,** like a crate or gated room.
- **Watch for herding:** nipping at heels or circling running children. Calmly interrupt and redirect to a toy.

If This Happens

"My dog stares at the cat." Interrupt with the Name Game, reward looking away, and increase distance.

"My dogs fight over toys." Pick up toys when they're together and give toys separately.

"My dog herds the children." Give your dog a calm job, like a chew on the mat, when children are running around.

Practice Games

Game 1: Look at the Cat, Look at Me

With your dog on a lead and the cat at a safe distance, reward your dog for looking at the cat, then looking back at you.

Game 2: Take Turns

With two dogs, ask one dog for a sit while the other gets a treat. Then swap. This teaches patience around other pets.

Game 3: Mat Party

Teach each dog their own mat. Reward both dogs for staying on their mats at the same time. This creates calm in a busy household.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Feed pets separately.
- ☐ Pick up high-value chews when pets are together.
- ☐ Create safe spaces for every pet.
- ☐ Teach children the dog rules.
- ☐ Practise Look at the Cat, Look at Me.



Weight, Joint & Health Care

In this chapter, you'll learn why your Rottweiler's joints need protecting from puppyhood, how to keep your Rottie lean, and the health warning signs every Rottie owner should know. You'll also learn the simple "Weekly Health Check" that can catch problems early.

This chapter is general information, not veterinary advice. Always speak to your vet about your own dog.



The Rottweiler Coat

Rottweilers have a short double coat. They shed all year, and more heavily once or twice a year.

Coat care

- **Brush once or twice a week** with a rubber curry brush or bristle brush.
- **Bathe only when needed,** using a dog shampoo.
- **Check the skin** while brushing for lumps, redness or sore spots.

Joint Care

Rotties can be prone to joint problems, including hip and elbow dysplasia. You can't change genetics, but you can reduce the strain on growing joints:

- **Avoid long runs, repeated jumping and lots of stairs** while your puppy is growing. Ask your vet when it's safe to increase exercise.
- **Keep your dog lean.** Extra weight puts extra stress on joints throughout life.
- **Use rugs or runners** on slippery floors.
- **Watch for signs:** stiffness, limping, difficulty getting up, or reluctance to jump into the car. Any limping in a large dog should be checked promptly.

Weight Check

You should be able to feel your Rottie's ribs easily with light pressure, and see a waist when you look down from above. If you can't, talk to your vet about their weight.

Rottweiler Health Watch-List

- **Hips and elbows:** stiffness, limping or difficulty getting up.
- **Knee (cruciate) injuries:** sudden lameness in a back leg.
- **Limping in a large dog:** have it checked promptly. Bone problems, including bone cancer, can first show up as lameness.
- **Heart conditions:** fainting, coughing or tiring easily need a vet visit.
- **Bloat:** Rotties are deep-chested. A swollen belly with retching but nothing coming up is an emergency.
- **Weight gain:** extra weight strains joints and the heart.

> **If in doubt, call your vet.** You know your dog best. If something seems wrong, it's always better to get it checked early.

The Method: The Weekly Health Check

Once a week, spend five minutes checking your Rottie. Do it with treats, so it becomes a nice routine.

Step 1: Eyes and Ears

Eyes should be bright and clear. Ears should be clean, without redness, smell or lots of wax.

Step 2: Mouth

Lift the lips and look at the teeth and gums. Look for tartar, red gums or bad breath.

Step 3: Body

Run your hands all over your dog's body, feeling for lumps, bumps, sore spots or changes in weight.

Step 4: Paws and Nails

Check between the toes for grass seeds or cuts. Nails shouldn't click loudly on the floor.

Step 5: Movement

Watch your dog walk and trot. Look for limping, stiffness or changes in how they move.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Brush your Rottie 2–3 times this week.
- ☐ Do the rib and waist check.
- ☐ Learn the signs of bloat and keep your vet's emergency number handy.
- ☐ Start the Weekly Health Check.
- ☐ Book a vet check for any limping or weakness.



Reputation & Management

In this chapter, you'll learn how to protect your Rottweiler and everyone around them, why responsible ownership matters so much for this breed, and the "Breed Ambassador Plan" that helps change how people see Rotties, one calm walk at a time.



Judged Before They're Known

Rottweilers are often judged on sight. People cross the road, pull their children close, or assume your dog is aggressive. It's unfair, but it's real, and it means Rottie owners carry extra responsibility.

The good news: every calm, well-managed Rottweiler helps change people's minds.

Know the Rules

- **Local laws:** check the rules where you live about dogs in public, leads, muzzles and specific breeds.
- **Insurance:** check your home insurance and any rental agreement. Some insurers and landlords have rules about certain breeds. Many owners also consider third-party liability cover.
- **ID:** make sure your dog is microchipped and wears an ID tag as required.



The Method: The Breed Ambassador Plan

Step 1: Always in Control

Keep your Rottie on a lead in public, unless in a safe, enclosed space. Use a strong, well-fitted harness and a fixed lead.

Step 2: Give Others Space

Step aside on paths, let people pass, and keep your dog close in narrow spaces. Many people feel nervous around big dogs, even friendly ones.

Step 3: No Forced Greetings

Your Rottie doesn't need to greet everyone. If someone wants to say hello, only allow it if your dog is calm and comfortable, and keep it short.

Step 4: Muzzle Training (Positively)

A basket muzzle, trained with treats, is a useful safety tool for vet visits, emergencies and situations where it's required. Train it before you need it:

1. Show the muzzle, then treat. Repeat 10 times.
2. Reward your Rottie for sniffing or touching it.
3. Put treats inside; let them push their nose in.
4. Build up to a few seconds with their nose inside.
5. Fasten briefly, treat, remove.
6. Build up the time slowly over weeks.

Use the muzzle for good things too, like walks, so it never only means the vet.

Step 5: A Secure Home

- Secure fences and gates. Check regularly for gaps.
- Supervise garden time near passers-by.
- Keep your dog away from the front door when it's open.
- A sign asking visitors to ring before entering.

Step 6: Pick Up and Be Polite

Pick up after your dog every time, keep barking at home under control, and be friendly with neighbours. Small things add up to a good reputation.

Children and Rottweilers

Many Rotties are wonderful with their own family's children, but they're big and strong. Always supervise, never leave young children alone with any dog, and be extra careful with visiting children.

If This Happens

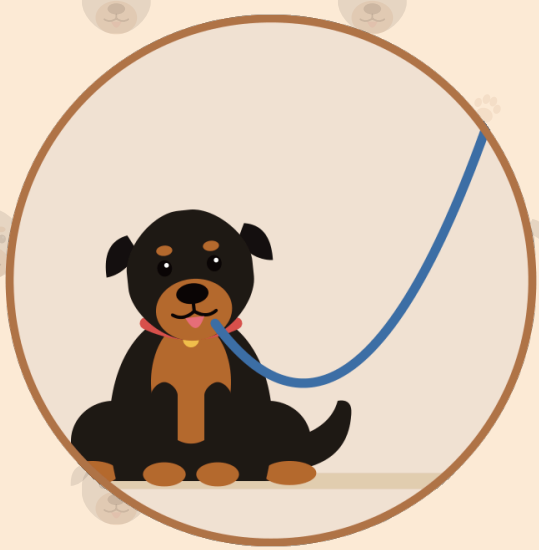
"People are rude about my dog." Smile, give them space, and keep walking. Your calm dog is the best answer.

"My Rottie barks at people on walks." Add distance and see Chapter 10 and your Stranger & Guest Reset bonus.

"My insurer asked about my dog's breed." Answer honestly and shop around for suitable cover.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Check local laws and your insurance.
- ☐ Start positive muzzle training.
- ☐ Check fences and gates.
- ☐ Keep your Rottie on a lead in public.
- ☐ Practise calm passing on walks.



Lifetime Care Plan

In this chapter, you'll learn how your Rottweiler's needs change from puppy to senior, what to plan for at each stage, and the small daily habits that help your dog stay healthy and happy for as long as possible.

Most Rottweilers live around 9–10 years. Good care helps you make the most of every one.



Lifetime Care Plan

Puppy (up to about 12–18 months)

- **Vet care:** vaccinations, parasite control and microchipping as advised by your vet.
- **Training:** focus on routine, crate training, socialisation and the basics in this guide.
- **Exercise:** short, gentle walks and play. Avoid long runs and repeated jumping while bones grow.
- **Food:** a good-quality large-breed puppy food, fed as your vet recommends.

Adult (about 1–7 years)

- **Vet care:** a yearly check-up, vaccinations and parasite control as advised.
- **Exercise:** daily walks, sniffing, training and brain games. Mix physical and mental exercise.
- **Weight:** keep your Rottie lean and fit.
- **Training:** keep practising skills. Rotties love to learn throughout their lives.

Senior (about 7+ years)

- **Vet care:** many vets recommend check-ups every 6 months for older dogs.
- **Comfort:** soft, supportive beds, rugs on slippery floors, and ramps for the car.
- **Exercise:** shorter, gentler walks, with lots of sniffing.
- **Brain work:** keep the mind active with easy games and puzzle feeders.
- **Watch for changes:** stiffness, weight loss, drinking more, confusion or changes in sleep.



Lifetime Care Plan

The Method: Your Rottie's Care Calendar

Daily

Walks, brain games, rest blocks, fresh water, and a quick look at how your dog is eating and moving.

Weekly

The Weekly Health Check (Chapter 14), brushing, and a nail check.

Monthly

Weigh your dog, and check flea, tick and worming treatments are up to date.

Yearly

Vet check-up, vaccinations as advised, and a review of food, exercise and training goals.

Keeping a Senior Rottie Happy

- **Short and often:** two or three short walks are kinder than one long one.
- **Sniff walks:** let your senior dog sniff as much as they like. It's great brain work.
- **New tricks:** teach easy tricks, like touching your hand or finding hidden treats.
- **Comfort first:** keep them warm, dry and comfortable.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Book your Rottie's next vet check-up.
- ☐ Set up your Care Calendar.
- ☐ Weigh your dog this month.
- ☐ Add rugs or runners to slippery floors.
- ☐ Plan how you'll keep your dog's brain busy at every age.



20 Popular Questions Answered

1. Why does my Rottie follow me everywhere? Rotties were bred to work closely with their people. Following you is natural. Build independence with the mat and baby gates (Chapters 4 and 7).

2. Why does my Rottie bark at nothing? They can hear and smell far more than you. Use the Thank You Protocol (Chapter 11).

3. When will my Rottie calm down? Many settle between 2 and 3 years old, but calm is a skill. Teach the Off-Switch Routine (Chapter 4).

4. How much exercise does a Rottie need? Most adults need 1–2 hours a day of mixed activity, including sniffing and brain work, not just running.

5. Why does my Rottie mouth and nip? Puppies explore with their mouths, and droving instincts can lead to nipping at heels. Redirect to toys and keep play calm.



20 Popular Questions Answered

6. Is it too late to train my adult Rottie? Never. Rotties learn quickly at any age. Start with the Three-Job Day (Chapter 1).

7. Why is my Rottie suddenly scared of things? Many go through a fear period in adolescence. Go slowly with Watch From Afar (Chapter 10).

8. Should my Rottie sleep in a crate? A covered crate in a quiet spot helps many Rotties rest. Follow the Den Builder (Chapter 6).

9. Why does my Rottie pull on the lead? Excitement and the opposition reflex. Use a front-clip harness and the Loose Lead Rule (Chapter 9).

10. Why does my Rottie bark at other dogs? Often fear or frustration. Use distance and Watch From Afar (Chapter 10), and see your Stranger & Guest Reset bonus.



20 Popular Questions Answered

11. How do I stop my Rottie jumping on guests? Use the Visitor Plan, with a lead or gate when guests arrive (Chapter 5).

12. Can Rotties live with cats? Many do, with slow, careful introductions (Chapter 13).

13. Are Rotties good with children? Many are, with supervision and clear rules. Always supervise, and give your dog a child-free space.

14. How often should I brush my Rottie? Once or twice a week, more during heavy shedding.

15. Do Rotties feel the heat? Their dark coats soak up heat. Walk early or late on warm days, and provide shade and water.



20 Popular Questions Answered

16. Why does my Rottie eat so fast? Use a slow feeder or a snuffle mat. Eating slowly may also help lower the risk of bloat.

17. What is bloat? A life-threatening emergency where the stomach swells and can twist. Learn the signs (Chapter 14) and go to a vet immediately if you suspect it.

18. Why does my Rottie chew everything? Teething, boredom or worry. Provide safe chews and more brain work.

19. Is my Rottie overweight? If you can't feel the ribs easily or see a waist, talk to your vet.

20. When should I see a behaviourist? If your dog growls, snaps, bites, panics when alone, or you're not seeing progress after several weeks.



A Final Word



Take a moment to look at your Rottweiler. Maybe they're watching the door, leaning against your legs, or asleep with one ear still listening for you.

Everything they do comes from a dog who was built to work, to watch and to protect the people they love. The barking, the following, the pulling, the over-the-top hellos: none of it is your dog trying to be difficult. It's a brilliant mind waiting for a clear job.

You don't have to fix everything at once. Pick one chapter. Follow the method. Play the games. Tick off the action plan. Then pick the next.

Small steps, done every day, build a calm, confident Rottie, and a bond that lasts a lifetime.