

Let dogs get used to duds

Generally speaking, small dogs and dogs with short hair do better with the transition from going *au naturel* to wearing pet apparel, according to Jennifer McCarthy, a Palm Beach, Fla.-based dog trainer, writer, TV personality and owner of K9 Rockstore.

But some breeds require an extra layer of protection, she said. The hairless Chinese Crested, which has no hair — except on its head, feet and tail — gets cold very easily so sweaters are helpful, she said. Greyhounds, too, are short on fur, and McCarthy said that shelters she has worked with in L.A. wouldn't give dogs to new homes unless the owners understood the importance of supplemental clothing.

"Some breeds will do very well with clothing, and others don't like it that much," she said. "The important thing is to introduce clothing slowly."

She suggested that an eager-to-be-in-style owner put a coat, T-shirt, hoody, sweater or boots on her dog for one minute, reward the pet, take off the clothing for one minute and reward the dog again. Gradually increase the time increments so that the dog can acclimate to the new sensation of wearing clothes.

"You want to get them used to clothing over time with treats," she added.

And yes, McCarthy said, you can always teach an old dog new tricks. Sometimes, it just takes more time.

Regardless of what style you envision for your dog, it pays to use common sense, according to Colleen Paige, a Seattle-based dog trainer, animal behaviorist, writer and founder of National Dog Day.

"If you feel cold, that doesn't mean that your dog is cold," she said. "Don't impose your own body temperature on your dog."

Likewise, take off the dog's clothes and collar when you leave it at home alone.

— Robin McMacken