

Stop Motion Sickness: Helping Your Puppy or Dog Love the Car

Speaker Key

SG Susan Garrett

Transcript

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SG If you've ever had a dog or a puppy that has routinely got carsick when you've taken him for trips, you know how heartbreaking that can be. Well today, I've got some help for you because I've been documenting what I have been doing with my puppy who has been getting carsick since she was quite wee.

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Hi, I'm Susan Garrett. Welcome to Shaped by Dog. And if you're watching this on YouTube, go ahead and hit the like button right now. And also, if you are watching this on YouTube, or if you're listening to it, you are going to want to jump over to YouTube and [check out the live](#) I did this weekend. I was helping a friend with their brand new 12-week-old, well let's call it a Cockapoo or it could be a Cockadoodle, depending on the way you look at things.

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So, the live is called 'Help training your doodle', but it's actually just all about some really, really great information about puppies. In particular I give a demonstration. I trained the puppy and I helped introduce the puppy to my puppy This!. And as long as we are talking puppies, I would like to read. This is a letter that we got a completely unsolicited. It was posted in our Home School the Dog group. So, I want to share, this is particularly of interest to any of you who have children. So, Karla wrote "Hey, my six- and eight-year-old boys are helping train the puppy" —So, in Home School the Dog— "are helping and love it."

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Especially love this program because everything is in the format of games. The kids want to interact with the puppy constantly, and this gives them fun and rewarding things to do with her." Remember, these kids are six and eight years old.

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"They love playing ItsYerChoice and Hot Zone" —Those are two of our games in Home School the Dog — "with her and most recent favorite is the Muffin Tin game. The little one does just as good a job with her little brother as with her big brother. They see what I do and they're able to copy it." You know, kids like to copy their parents.

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"It's really pretty cool. I think it helps the puppy too, because she's learning that the same rules or choices or expectations or rewards apply with all of the people." —And that is a massive lesson for puppies and dogs to learn because a lot of times they learn to kind of push the kids around. —

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"The kids don't practice things perfectly, but she's a smart pup and I always keep an eye on things to step in if I need to clarify something that might be too confusing. Our goal is to have a really great, super chill and polite family dog rather than a sharp finely tuned competitor, so I think it's been really good all the way around."



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So appreciate this comment Karla. And I read it to you because any of you who have children of any age, who are trying to raise a family pet, that you don't have to get excited or get angry or get frustrated by. It's really important to try and get buy-in from the entire family. Now I recognize that maybe your spouse is too busy, or it doesn't always happen, but the kids absolutely love playing the games. Okay.

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At the end of the podcast, remind me, and I'm going to share for podcast listeners a way that you can make that happen for your kids. But let's talk carsickness. And so, if you have a dog that gets sick in the car, they may throw up. My puppy This! did. They may whine. Yes, she did. They may drool. And that drool is profuse. You may go "How the heck did that actually come out of a puppy?" Like, it's they foam.

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I can actually hear her bubbling. And when you open the mouth that she looks like she's a rabbit dog, she's got foam and bubbles and the drool coats her whole neck and down into her armpits. And she's standing in her crate. Her bed is completely saturated. How does that much liquid come out of a puppy? And, you know, the worst of it all, it's just so heartbreaking. And so, what I did early on when This! started, I just played around with the crates.

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My late husband, John, who you know, he was involved with dogs his entire life. And he used to tell me, "Susan, if a dog's upset in the car, just change what they're seeing." So, if they're in a wire crate, put them in a hard-shell crate so maybe they feel more comfortable like it's in a den. If they're in a hard-shell crate, try them in a wire crate. If they can see the road, maybe it's too much visual stimulation. Put them lower in the car where they can't see so much. And I'm taking it for granted. Your dogs are riding in a crate. Right.

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Please, please, please. All puppies, all dogs, it's just for their own safety. We all know seat belts work for us. Dog crates work for them too. And if you're wondering, traveling in a car, my particular dog creative choice is the [Gunner](#). Nothing like it, Cadillac of dog crates for traveling in a car or an airplane, but I digress.

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And so, with This! all I needed to do, I had a good friend of mine, John, built a little riser so that This! could look out the window while we were driving. And that seemed to take care of things, but then lockdown happened. And yeah, our city went into complete lockdown. Then this whole province were almost two months. And I just didn't take her anywhere because we were going to puppy gym classes and all of that just sort of stopped.

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And so, when about three weeks ago, I went to take her in the car again. Sure enough, she's a six-month-old puppy now. And the drool, I actually heard it before I saw it. I backed the car out of the garage. As soon as I stopped, I went and put it into forward motion. That change of motion. I could hear the bubbles like an ice.



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I stopped and I just opened the door and it's just so sad because her little ears go flat. She looks like an ear walk. They just go flat out to the side and then her eyes are all dilated. And what is that dog experiencing? Any of you who've ever had motion sickness, that's exactly what it is. So, whether you get, you've had, you've been seasick on a big boat or a big ship where— whether you've been car sick yourself, it's not just like feeling sick to your stomach. You're completely disoriented.

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I've had seasickness myself. You don't really know your equilibrium is off. And with puppies, what happens is, the inner ear is still forming. And so that's why, you know, people say, "Oh, just wait they'll outgrow it." And a lot of puppies will outgrow it, but some don't and I'm going to help you with those ones that don't seem to outgrow it.

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As the inner ear grows, they get better. So, having her get up and be able to look around, maybe that helped. I don't know, but I know it stopped pretty much immediately back when I was taking her in the car all the time and it came back, and it wasn't going anywhere this time. I tried different crates, it wasn't going to happen.

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And so, I did like I talked about in [episode number 66](#) when I was talking about counter conditioning resource guarding. When a dog is doing something they have no control of, you can say, "Oh, it's okay honey. Don't worry about it." It makes no difference in the world. I've tried turning on the radio, but you know what, if you're carsick none of that's going to help.

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But what happens is the dogs eventually associate the car. So just like with resource guarding, there's a conditioned emotional response. Now we were looking to change that with resource guarding when you see a dog that I want you to know good things are gonna happen. But what happens is if you're always carsick in a car, then as soon as you see the car you're going to start, you know, getting that queasy feeling.

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And when you get in the car, you're going to go, "Oh, I don't want to be here. Don't want to be here. Don't want to be here." And that is what happens to a lot of puppies who never outgrow that carsick feeling. And on top of that, a lot of times people don't really take their puppies places. They go to the vet to get what, a needle. They get back in the car. They don't go anywhere for a little while. They go to the vet to get what, a booster needle. And they get back in the car. They don't go anywhere. So not only am I feeling crappy, but every time I go somewhere, I get jabbed. Not saying that, you know, there's a lot of vets who are, who do such a phenomenal job, but if you're already feeling a little under the weather, that's not really going to help it.

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Okay. So, let me share with you what I did. I'm like, I need to change the C-E-R. I need to change the conditioned emotional response to her getting in a car first of all. And so, here's what I did for a week. I backed the car out of the garage, and I had it sitting in front of the house. And I needed to change the way she got in the car because I drive an SUV and it's a little high off the ground.



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I would always pick her up and try to put her in and she was, you know, a little bit unsure because she didn't want to be held up in the air and helped into a car. So, I became the canine booster seat. And so, what I would do is I open the car door and I sat on the little runner, the base of the car door in the car, I sat there. Kind of working on my squat form and I just encouraged her to jump on my lap and jump in the car. And we just did that for the first day. Just jump in the car and then I would encourage her to jump out of the car on my lap and jump, and I would just give her cookies for in and out, in and out.

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That was a fun game. She's like, "Okay, I can dig this." Now she's like, "Okay, I want to get in that car." So instead of being apprehensive about being picked up and put in the car, she's like, "I can do this on my own. This is fun." And so, for the first week I would have her jump on my canine booster seat, you know, the human canine's booster seat and she'd get in her crate, I close the crate, I go sit in the driver's seat, I wouldn't turn on the car and then I'd say, "Hey, let's go play Frisbee." And then I get her out really quickly, I'll let her jump out on my lap and then we just go play Frisbee on the lawn.

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So that happened for the first week. And at the end of the first week, then what I did is for the last day I turned the car on, and I just sat there listening to tunes, one tune, and then I'd get her out. And every time I get her out now, I check her chin. Is there any drool? Cause that's where it would happen first. No drool. I would carry on. And so, the beginning of the second week, I actually drove down the driveway to the building, which was you know, maybe a hundred meters. And then I get her out. We'd run to the building. We'd play fun games.

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Of course, I always checked her chin when I got her out. And we'd played fun games. And after playing fun games, we get back in the car, drive back up the driveway. I would just back, actually I turned it around before I got her in the first time, but then she could make a little circle and back up super slow driving up the driveway.

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So, I would drive her back up. We get out, play Frisbee. And I check her chin, after two days, all right. We're going to take, we're going to take it one step further. And I drove her to pick up the mail. So, our mailbox is about two kilometers away and I live in the country. So, we got there, and I just drove to the back of the building. They have a big field. I went to get her out and my heart sunk, the ears were flat, her eyes were glazed over. There wasn't really much drool, one or two drops. But I got her out and she's disoriented.

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Right. You can tell it's starting. And I thought, "Oh, I've pushed it too far. I should have done more up and down the driveway. Oh, no." And I drove to the mailbox really slow, taking corners really slow, but we played Frisbee in the field probably for 20 minutes. I walked around and played some Frisbee. Maybe it was like 10. Then we did the human canine booster seat. She got in the car, went home, played some Frisbee when I got home guess what? There was no new drool, and she didn't have flat ears. I was, I'm like, "okay, this is a good thing." And so, I just did short trips. Every time I went to take her to the building every day, we'd go in the car.



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So every day since there has been a short car ride. And for the last two weeks or the last week and a half, we've gone to places, like we went to PetSmart and walked around PetSmart and got to sniff all kinds of fun things. I've taken her to the grocery store where she actually got her first time "go to someplace, sit there" and I would give her cookies.

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Now that's something I didn't mention. Early on in this process when she gets in the car and I go to give her a cookie, a treat, she would not take it because she was anticipating what was about to happen. And she was getting upset. So, she wouldn't eat any cookies. And that's how I knew we were improving because she suddenly started to eat the cookies. Big celebration.

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All right. When I took her on this trip last week, was to the grocery store, which is probably about 5k away. So, I got her to the grocery store. I got out, I gave her a cookie, she took it. And that's like one of the great things about the Gunners is I can feed the cookies really super easy.

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And then I closed the door. I walked as if I was going to the grocery store and then I circled back behind a few cars, opened the car door, gave her cookie. She's still okay. She's still good. So, then I walked into the grocery store. I didn't buy, I just bought a couple of things like cilantro and avocados. Got back in the car, gave her a cookie. Still no drool. Yes. Got home, played some Frisbee, Boom Shakalaka! We are on a good path.

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So now every day I take her to the mailbox, or I take her into town. I'm building up to actually taking her into the city and walking her in the city. Now, before I did any of this at the very beginning before I actually even put her in the car to go anywhere, I would take her and Tater Salad and for probably two weeks before we took the car to the garage, we just fed them in the car, in their crates. Now you can say, "Well, why did you take Tater Salad? He wasn't carsick." No, but Tater Salad loves the car. So, he would happily jump in the car. And then we were how, I was, you know, borrowing confidence.

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So, "See, this dog loves it. You're going to love it too." So, before I actually worked on, I'm trying to build that C-E-R, so I don't want her to be feeling sick because I want her to eat her breakfast. So, the car wasn't taken out of the garage, nothing different. Just get in the car, eat breakfast, get out. And then I progressed to the cars outside now. So, the chance we might go somewhere and built up with the game of Frisbee.

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Now your dog might not like Frisbee. She just loves her Frisbee. It could be retrieving any toy or whatever your dog loves. The C-E-R creating a positive conditioned emotional response, because remember she had a not so positive conditioned emotional response. Building that positive one requires using things the dog loves, the dog goes cray-cray for, the dog goes, "This is the best thing ever!" And for her, it was just, you know, doing some rollers with a Frisbee. I mean, it's not like you know, having your sky off the back, off my back or anything, she just, she's crazy about her Frisbee. Okay. So, you build that conditioned emotional response.



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If you have a dog who sees the car and they go, "Oh, naynay, I'm not getting in here." It's going to take some time. You have to make a commitment to not take her anywhere. Or take your dog anywhere until you can, you get to the point where they go, "Wait, I want to go in the car." And then when they're in the car, they'll take the cookies. Then you know, you're on the right track.

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But observe your dog. You guys know what your dog normally is like. I knew what This! is normally like. And flat ears and big eyes and drool just pouring out of her, it was not my dog and Oh my gosh, it broke my heart. So, I put in some time, I changed it. I'm so happy. I got my puppy back. It's awesome.

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Okay. Remember, I talked about you guys who have kids. So, Home School the Dog, that's the program that Karla was writing about with her, how she's integrated and train your kids. And she's not the only one. We have so many homeschoolers who say they love, love, love training with their kids in the program.

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And actually, the same day we got this note, we got a note from a woman. I should have printed her comment out too. She's a professional dog trainer. She actually has certification as a professional dog trainer. And she said, "I would give up my profession if I knew everybody who owned a dog would enroll in Home School the Dog. That's how much I believe in the program." I was like, my mind was blown when I saw that one.

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So, here's what I'm going to do. If you have kids and you would like to get them involved in Home School the Dog program. Home School the Dog if you go to our website right now, I believe it's like \$300. So, what we will do is if you send my team a note, and again you're not going to see this on my Instagram or my TikTok or my Facebook.

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You're not going to see me talking about this anywhere, but this is for my podcast listeners. If you write my team and say, and with the subject line, 'My kids are gonna love this.' And if you don't have kids, you could pretend if you really just wanted to get your dog in Home School the Dog. You could, you could say 'My imaginary kids are gonna love this.'

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And what my team will do is they will give you a discount code. They will give you access to get Home School the Dog for, it's like a crazy discount. It's like more than 80% off the normal price, I think. Like it's ridiculous how that my team has a set up to it's actually something we do every once in a while, for special cases or for a celebration or something.

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But for podcast listeners, write that in the subject line, 'My kids will love this.' And we will give you a special link that will allow you to join Home School the Dog for it's ridiculous, I don't know what the real price is that, but it's like at least 80% off. Okay. Please, please, please if you are watching this on YouTube, and even if you're not come on over YouTube, I have got a new series planned.





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00:18:00

I shot it today. I'm going to be uploading it to YouTube in the future. Come to my YouTube channel, subscribe, hit the notification bell. And because with summer upcoming, I want my puppy to learn to love to swim but I also want my puppy to learn you need to come out of the water when I ask you to. So those are two things that I'm preparing something for you guys all to learn about on my YouTube channel.

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So, go on over, subscribe and hit the notification bell so that you will know when you have the series ready for you. That's it for today. I'll see you next time on Shaped by Dog.

Resources:

[YouTube Video: Let's Train Your Doodle with Susan Garrett Gunner](#)

[Crate Crash Test](#)

[Podcast Episode 66: Resource Guarding: Dog vs Dog Aggression](#)

Write to us at wag@dogsthat.com with the subject line "My Kids Are Going to Love This" for a special opportunity to join Home School the Dog.

[Susan Garrett's DogsThat YouTube Channel](#)



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About Susan

A world-leading educator of dog trainers, Susan is also one of the most successful agility competitors of the last three decades. She has won multiple Gold Medals at National or World Championship events with every dog she has ever owned over the past 30 years. Susan was one of the very first dog trainers to share knowledge online when she opened her "Clicker Dogs" website many years ago. Susan has helped hundreds of thousands of people enjoy a great relationship with their dogs through her workshops and keynote speaking around the world, award winning books, DVDs, magazine articles, blog posts, podcasts, free dog training and dog agility video series, and online dog training programs.



A natural teacher and an entertaining speaker, Susan is world renowned for her dog training knowledge and practical application of that knowledge. Her understanding of how to apply science-based learning principles to both competitive and family pet dog training has been pivotal in changing how dogs are trained.

Susan is now helping many thousands of dog owners in 82 countries have the best relationship possible with their dogs. The real joy for her comes from bringing confidence to dogs and their owner through playful interactions and relationship building games that are grounded firmly in the science of how animals learn.



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