



What is 'normal' behaviour for dogs?

Molony & Kent (1997) defined pain in veterinary species as: "... an aversive sensory, [cognitive] and emotional experience...representing an awareness of the animal of damage, or threat of damage, to the integrity of its tissues..."

In this context 'emotion' would include fear, frustration and leading to stress and suffering. Following on from this pain is also described as a 'biobehavioural disease', where pain and behaviour have an interdependent effect on each other.

Behaviour has an important role in pain assessment, as clinicians and owners draw inferences from their observations of dogs' behaviour. Signs of pain may include obvious signs, such as lameness, or more subtle changes to a dog's 'normal behavioural pattern'.



Briagha, catching up with the news

Well, what is normal behaviour? All dogs are different, but this is a rough breakdown:

Sleeping	12 hrs (several spells, day and night).
Exercising	3 hrs.
Eating	2.5 hrs* (incl. scavenging and 'hunting').
Play	1.5 hrs.
Rest	1.5 hrs
Grooming	0.5 hrs
Social behaviours	3 hrs (time with the family).

* Of course, some dogs finish their food in 30 seconds. In this context 'eating' includes hunting for treats and so on.

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