Appendix C: Pillar-by-Pillar Quick-Reference Checklists

These checklists are designed for quick daily, weekly, or monthly self-assessment by owners and as conversation starters during veterinary visits. They are not exhaustive but capture the core principles of each pillar as outlined in The Coerenza Approach. Use them to identify strengths and areas for growth. Check items regularly and discuss patterns with your veterinarian.

Pillar 1: Exercise Checklist

- My dog receives daily physical activity tailored to age, breed, size, and current health status (typically 30–90+ minutes depending on needs).
- Activities include variety: walks, play (fetch, tug), structured exercise (agility, swimming), and mental engagement during movement.
- I monitor for signs of appropriate exertion vs. overexertion (relaxed recovery, no limping, appropriate panting that resolves quickly).
- Exercise is adjusted for weather, age-related changes, orthopedic conditions, or recovery periods.
- I track trends in energy, mobility, weight, and behavior linked to activity levels.
- My dog has opportunities for both solo and interactive exercise that strengthen our bond.

Goal: Consistent, individualized movement that supports physical health, prevents obesity (currently affecting ~35% of dogs), and promotes calm, balanced behavior at home.

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Pillar 2: Enrichment Checklist

- My dog engages in daily mental stimulation through puzzle toys, treat-dispensing devices, or interactive feeding games.
- Training sessions (obedience, tricks, nose work, or agility) occur regularly and are positive, short, and rewarding.
- Social opportunities (playdates, dog park visits, training classes, or calm interactions with people) are provided appropriately for my dog's temperament.
- I rotate enrichment activities to prevent boredom and maintain novelty.
- I observe and address signs of under-stimulation (destructive chewing, excessive barking at nothing, pacing, shadow stalking, or anxiety).
- Enrichment is used proactively to support calm behavior during alone time or high-stress periods.

Goal: A curious, engaged mind that prevents boredom-driven behaviors. Only ~25% of owners currently provide regular structured enrichment—be part of the change.

Pillar 3: Environment Checklist

- My home provides safe, comfortable resting areas in quiet, family-connected locations (not isolated).
- Floors are non-slip or have runners/rugs in key areas to support confident movement (especially important for seniors or dogs with joint issues).
- Temperature, ventilation, and noise levels are managed for my dog's comfort; sudden loud sounds are minimized or desensitized where possible.
- My dog has safe visual access to the outside world (windows, secure yard) and opportunities for sensory exploration (different textures, safe smells).
- Hazards are secured (toxic plants, cords, medications, cleaning products) and the home is regularly "dog-proofed."
- The environment supports both rest and gentle activity; my dog has choices about where to be.

Goal: A home that speaks safety and belonging in the dog's language. Approximately 50% of owners have not fully adapted their environments—small changes yield profound trust.

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Pillar 4: Nutrition Checklist

- My dog eats a high-quality, complete, and balanced diet appropriate for age, breed, activity level, and any medical needs (evidence-based, not trend-driven).
- Portions are measured accurately; treats and extras are limited to <10% of daily caloric needs.
- Fresh, clean water is always available in multiple accessible locations.
- I monitor and record appetite, stool quality (consistency, color, frequency), coat condition, and energy stability.
- Any diet changes or supplements are made gradually and under veterinary guidance.
- I avoid unverified online trends or homemade diets without professional formulation and balance verification.

Goal: Optimal fuel for long-term health. Nutrition is one of the most confusing areas for owners—rely on your veterinarian and evidence, not marketing or anecdotes. ~15% of dogs experience nutritional imbalances from inconsistent choices.

Pillar 5: Responsibility (Role in the Family) Checklist

- My dog is a true, integrated member of the family—not just present, but included in daily life, routines, and emotional connections.
- Clear, consistent, positive rules and boundaries are maintained by all family members (no mixed messages).
- My dog has predictable daily rituals (greeting, mealtimes, walks, settling) that create security and belonging.
- I provide gentle "jobs" or ways for my dog to contribute (carrying items, alerting appropriately, participating in family activities).
- Training and interactions use positive, force-free methods that build trust and mutual respect.
- I actively nurture the human-animal bond through presence, play, touch, and shared experiences.

Goal: A dog who feels purposeful, secure, and deeply connected. In 97% of pet-owning households, dogs are considered family members—let's make that lived reality, not just sentiment. This pillar transforms behavior and deepens the bond more than any other single factor.

Tip: Bring these checklists to every veterinary appointment. They turn vague concerns into specific, actionable conversations and demonstrate your commitment to whole-dog care.

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