

EXERCISING YOUR DOG



DAILY EXERCISE RECOMMENDED

Exercise is as important for your dog as it is for you. Young dogs and healthy adults alike need lots of it, and even senior pets need a regular daily workout to maintain their health. The type of exercise you choose depends on the age and fitness of your dog and your own lifestyle. Dogs are adaptable and are happy to play Frisbee in the park or take long walks in the neighborhood.

Exercise is one of the best ways to spend time with your pet. It's especially important for large breed, working, and active breed types. Dogs are wonderful athletes and most adapt to even strenuous exercise, provided they have had adequate opportunity to "train" and the environmental conditions are not too extreme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Daily exercise is recommended unless the weather is especially dangerous or a medical problem limits your dog's activity. If there is a medical problem, consult your veterinarian about exercise limitations. Keep in mind that obese dogs and those with heart and lung diseases may have a problem, and be sure to consult your vet before starting a new regime.

Be certain your dog has plenty of water available at all times, and provide a place to cool down out of the sun. When the temperature drops below freezing, exercise should be limited, unless your dog is really used to this weather. This will often vary with the breed and hair coat. If the wind picks up to more than 10 mph, be careful to prevent hypothermia or frostbite. If your dog is shivering, get him back indoors or in some form of warm shelter. If you live in an area that gets cold and icy, remember that road salt can burn your dog's feet. Don't forget: even in cold weather, an exercising dog needs plenty of water.

Almost all dogs, especially those with heart and lung problems and those with thick hair coats, are likely to have trouble with hot and humid conditions. It's better to exercise in the early morning or evening when the heat is less than 80 degrees and the humidity is less than 30 percent (avoid hot and humid conditions).