



When you take home a rescued dog you are committed to meeting all his needs. That includes his need for exercise. Lack of exercise can lead to obesity, heart disease and poor muscle tone. It can also lead to behavioral problems because your dog hasn't expended its excess energy and is bored. A dog who gets enough exercise is more likely to be calm while at home and tends not to be anxious when he's left on his own.

Keep your new dog/puppy on a lead until you know you have good off-lead control. This could take several weeks of training, but it will happen.

If you spend time exercising your dog you'll have a lot of fun together and improve your relationship with him.

Keep an eye on the weather - dogs don't sweat like we do and can suffer from heat stress in warm conditions. (See 'Heat Stress' - page 38)

How Much Exercise Does Your Dog Need?

Don't think for a minute that owning a big backyard will mean your dog will get enough exercise. Dogs tend not to exercise themselves and will lie around waiting for you to play with him. This means that you need to make the time to be active with him.

Different breeds and in fact different individual dogs have different exercise needs. Some dogs are happy with a walk every day. Others, especially the working breeds, need a lot more exercise and mental stimulation to be satisfied. Aim to give your dog at least one exercise session a day and target the type and amount of exercise to his individual needs.

Your dog is telling you he's had enough when he is panting heavily and no longer actively participating in the activity. He may no longer bring back a

ball or he may lie down under a shady tree during your run. Be watchful for these signals because over-exercising him when he's tired may lead to injury.

Mental Stimulation

Most dogs fortunately get enough physical exercise but we often forget to mentally challenge them. This can result in dogs finding their own things to keep themselves occupied resulting in unwanted, bad or naughty behaviour.

You can find information on line or books at your local library that will contain fun and stimulating ways to interact with your dog.

Consult a behaviourist to find out ways to keep your dog stimulated.

A dog is more likely to be relaxed and well behaved if they get sufficient mental and physical exercise.

Puppies

Your puppy is growing rapidly, so it's important that exercise is not strenuous or high impact as this can lead to problems both during growth and later in life. For most puppies exercise in the back yard and romping around with other pups and vaccinated dogs is adequate. Definitely do not make your young pup go for extended runs with you and try to avoid jumping, eg. up onto furniture, into/out of vehicles, over hurdles etc, until they're 12 months old (18 months for large breeds). Always remember to build your dog's fitness up gradually - they can be out of shape like us! Large and giant breed pups have special needs when it comes to exercise and this should be discussed with your vet.

