

Exercise is a significant part of a dog's physical and mental well-being. Every dog has different exercise requirements depending on their energy level, age and size. Exercise helps to reduce stress and physically tire the dog.

All breeds of dogs were bred with an intended purpose in mind. In our current society many dogs have lost the opportunity to do these specific jobs but they still have the need to do something; therefore activities/exercise help fulfill this need.

A common and effective way of exercising your dog is by walking them. It allows them to experience many stimulus including smells. Dogs find using their noses to be very calming and relaxing. Walking with your dog on leash at a brisk pace can be good for both of you and your dog will view you as the leader, which has many relationship benefits. For some dogs, a walk with no other stimulation (e.g. dogs, toys, balls, etc) can result in a quiet and relaxed companion.

Many dogs enjoy fetch games with balls, Kongs, etc. These games can be fun for both people and dogs. Games of fetch and fast movement increase a dog's adrenaline but it is important to monitor your dog's energy level after fast games to note if there is an increase or decrease. Successful exercise is gauged by the way the dog responds to the activity and their reaction after it is over. If your dog cannot settle down after being exercised, he may be too stimulated. In which case, trying a long leash walk with your dog may be more suitable.

A mixture of different types of exercise is mentally stimulating for your dog. Taking your dog to different parks, playing with different dogs, playing ball and leash walks can vary the experiences. When you and your dog are at home you can do many fun games in the house that give a work out to your dog both mentally and physically.

### Canine Exercise Tips

1. **Fetch.** Toss a ball across the room or yard. Let your dog fetch. Remember, a 10 foot throw means 20 feet of running for Fido. If your dog does not drop it or bring it back to you, use a second similar toy and get them interested in the new toy and then throw that toy. At the beginning it is not necessary for your dog to drop the first toy. What is more important is that your dog does not learn to run away with the toy or not drop it for you.
2. **Ups & Downs.** Stand at the top of the stairs or a hill in a safe dog friendly area, gently toss a ball down and encourage your dog to retrieve it. Stop when your dog seems tired.
3. **High Jump.** All you need is a carton or overturned chair and some encouragement for your dog to leap over. Raise the height as your dog becomes more limber.
4. **Household chores** can be part of your daily exercise activity. For instance, when putting clothes into the washing machine, tell your dog to sit. If he gets up, tell him again. It is a great opportunity to work with your dog and as a bonus the laundry gets done at the same time.
5. **Use doors and gates.** Have your dog sit every time you open a door. Think of the number of times you open and shut a door during the day. If your dog responds to your command each time, the sit command will become proficient.

6. **Coming when called** is exercise too, especially if you have your dog running back and forth between people. When your dog does get to you, grab the collar prior to rewarding your dog. It is a good action for your dog to get used to since you may need to grab their collar in an emergency.
7. **By walking.** Walking around the perimeter of a 9 by 12 foot rug and stop before each piece of furniture in the room and have your dog sit, your dog will have walked 42 feet. He also learns not to race around the living room and to stay off the furniture. On walks outside ideally the leash is loose and you can use light standards as markers for a sit or another skill.
8. **Scenting.** Have your dog watch you put a treat in an empty M&M cylinder container. Throw the cylinder out in front of your dog and tell them to 'find it'. When your dog acknowledges the cylinder or picks it up tell them 'yes' and open the container to give them the treat. Add one empty M&M cylinder at a time to the floor while putting another treat in the same cylinder as used before. As your dog catches on to the game you can either place the container down in the pile while the dog watches or while your dog hides. You can have the pile of articles grow to whatever size you would like. Remember your dog's job is to find the container with the treats in it. If your dog indicates or brings back the wrong cylinder ignore them and point out the right cylinder and PRAISE.
9. **Name Toys.** Name your dog's different toys. For example, the stuffed critter can be called 'Critter' and a ball 'Ball'. Tell your dog to get 'Critter' while pointing at the critter. When your dog seems to understand toys' names, then ask him to 'Go Get Critter'. If he gets 'Critter' praise and play with your dog using the toy. If he gets the wrong toy ignore him and go get the right toy to play with him. Once your dog understands the game you can start hiding his toys to make the hunting experience more difficult and stimulating.
10. **Tricks.** Dog tricks are fun for people and dogs. There are several books and online resources for dog tricks.