



9 Ideas for Exercise and Fun With Your New Dog

Exercise is important for pets—it helps keep them healthy and provides positive mental and emotional benefits.

Since obesity—and the associated health risks of arthritis, diabetes, heart and lung problems, certain cancers, and more—is one of the most common health issues affecting pets in the US, exercise is more important now than ever! Staying active doesn't have to be a chore, though—it can be fun for both of you.

We have some suggestions below. But first, here are some important safety tips...

Safety Tips for Exercise

Some breeds, such as Australian Shepherds and Labrador Retrievers, have a lot of energy and need to stay active not only for their physical health, but also to avoid getting bored.

Other breeds, such as Pugs, can be natural couch potatoes who need some prodding to stay active.

And, dogs who are older, overweight, or have previous injuries may not be able to exercise as well as others.

So, always go at a pace that works best for your individual dog!

When planning for your activities, here are some things to consider...

- Avoid pushing them too far. Watch for signs of tiredness, such as excessive panting, slowing down, or not wanting to continue.
- Start slow and gradually work your way up to more exercise.
- Be mindful of the weather. Some dogs may need to avoid outdoor activities in extreme hot or cold temperatures. This is especially true for seniors, dogs with health conditions, or short-nosed breeds (like Pugs and Bulldogs).

With that in mind, you and your dog can have a perfectly safe and fun time staying active together!

Here are some ideas for what to do...

Outdoor Activities

1. Walking or Jogging

A walk is a good traditional form of exercise for dogs—and also functional, as it gives them a chance to go to the bathroom.

For some dogs, a walk around the neighborhood is more than enough to meet their needs. Others may enjoy long walks, walks on trails, or even jogging.

If your dog falls into the latter category, start slowly and work your way up to longer walks or jogs.



2. Swimming

If your dog likes swimming, this can be a good low-impact form of exercise—and lots of fun, too!

Always supervise your dog in the pool—not all dogs are natural swimmers, and even talented doggy paddlers can grow tired.

Also, be sure there's an easy way out of the pool, such as a ramp or stairs.

Indoor/Outdoor Activities

3. Fetch or Frisbee

Some dogs love to run and run and run... and you can help them use up that excess energy by throwing a ball, frisbee, or other toy.

They should bring it back so you can throw it again. This is a natural behavior for many dogs, but if your pup isn't catching on they may need a little training.

This activity can also be done indoors!

It may be a challenge with a large dog in a small space... But, for many small to medium dogs, they're perfectly happy to chase their toys across a room or down a hallway.

4. Tug-of-War

Whether you're inside or outside the home, plenty of dogs love a good game of tug!

A sturdy rope toy works well for this. Hold one end while your dog pulls on the other end.

It's a good form of resistance training—for both you and your pup.

5. Obstacles and Agility

Some dogs absolutely LOVE agility courses—the kind that have ramps and tunnels, like you may have seen on television.

Search online for some creative ideas on how to set up a course in your living room or backyard. You can use everyday objects like boxes, furniture, or hula hoops.

Indoor Activities

6. Do Laps Inside the Home

Some dogs will happily walk or run around the home, if you go with them!

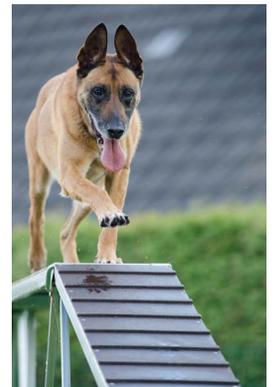
If your dog is physically able, a few laps up and down the stairs can also be a good option to tire out an energetic pup.

7. Play Games

Dogs are intelligent animals, and many of them can learn games such as hide-and-seek.

Start by hiding and then calling your pup to come find you—then, offer plenty of praise when they do. Over time, they'll start to enjoy the search.

On a similar note, a scavenger hunt—where you hide treats or toys in the home for your pup to find—is another fun and mentally stimulating option.



8. Use a Treadmill

Some dogs can be taught to walk on a treadmill, and it can keep them entertained if stuck indoors due to weather or other factors.

Help your dog get used to the sound first. Then, start them out on a very slow walking pace. Use praise or treats to provide motivation.

Always supervise to avoid risks such as paw injuries or collars getting caught in moving parts. And if the treadmill isn't something your dog likes, don't push them to use it.

If they do enjoy it, you can gradually increase to a moderate speed, or even consider getting them their own treadmill (dog treadmills are available!).

9. Doga

Dog yoga is now an option for your pup.

This gentle form of stretching, massage, and meditation can be soothing for pups, especially those who can't handle more strenuous exercise.

Local studio classes are available in some cities. And thankfully, classes are also available online. Search for 'doga' or 'dog yoga' on YouTube, and follow an instructor from the comfort of your own home.

Whatever activities you choose, remember, exercise also provides a special bonding experience for you and your pup.

To develop healthy long-term habits, it's best to make staying active a fun way of life—something that fits into your schedule and is enjoyable for both you and your dog

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