

Wellness Care

Exercising Your Pet

Regular exercise is important to your pet's health because it burns calories, helps maintain muscle tone, and helps regulate metabolism (the rate at which calories are burned). It can also help your pet maintain a healthy weight, bring you and your pet closer together by sharing enjoyable activities, and stimulate your pet's mind, thereby preventing boredom and destructive behaviors. You can help your dog or cat become more active and stay fit by scheduling regular playtimes.

Consult us before beginning an exercise program for your pet!

Exercising Your Cat

Cats are notorious for preferring sleep to exercise. Here are some ideas to get your cat moving:

- Provide tissue paper, empty cardboard boxes, and paper bags to inspire play. We recommend supervising your cat while playing to discourage him or her from eating paper or cardboard.
- Provide fresh catnip.
- Encourage your cat to chase approved toys, sticks with attached feathers, balls, or flashlight pointers. **Note:** Never point

Low-Calorie Dog Treats

- Apple slices (with seeds removed)
- Banana slices
- Carrot slices or baby carrots
- Commercial dog treats (low-calorie or formulated for a smaller dog)
- Green beans
- Melon chunks
- Pear slices
- Popcorn (without butter or oil)
- Plain rice cake pieces



Regular exercise and playtimes together can be enjoyable for you and your pet.

- lights at an animal's or person's eyes.
- Provide a cat tree to inspire climbing.
- Provide scratching posts or pads.
- Encourage play with other pets (set up play dates with the pets of friends or relatives, or consider adopting another pet).
- Train your cat to do tricks for low-calorie or small treats. For example, train your cat to run to you from across the house or climb a cat tree when you shake the treat container. When you reward your cat, give him or her just one treat.
- Provide specially designed activity toys that require your cat to do some work to remove food or a treat.

Exercising Your Dog Needs and Precautions

Individual exercise needs for dogs vary based on breed or breed mix, age, and

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A Word About Treats and Toys

- If your dog has food allergies, talk to us about which treats are safe and appropriate.
- Do not feed your dog (or cat) grapes or raisins because they have reportedly caused kidney problems in pets.
- Choose cat toys carefully. Cats may try to eat string or small parts of toys, which can be dangerous to their health. Do not leave toys out for cats to play with unattended.

level of health. If your dog is a 6- to 18-month-old adolescent or a sporting, herding, hound, or terrier breed or mixed breed, his or her exercise requirements are likely to be high. However, strenuous exercise can cause problems in some dogs, especially those that are not fit or are very young or old. Take care to avoid overexerting your dog, especially in hot or humid weather. When starting a new exercise routine, go slowly for the first few weeks to give your dog a chance to adapt to it. You can increase activity intervals by 5 minutes every few days, but cut back if your dog seems tired or sore after exercising or is sore the next day. On hot or cold days, go easy or rest.

Get Moving

Various kinds of exercise can help satisfy your dog's instinctive urges to dig, herd, chew,

retrieve, and chase. Here are some good exercise options for most dogs:

- Walking or jogging
- Fetch
- Playing with other pets
- Running off leash (where allowed and safe)
- Swimming (great for arthritic dogs)
- Tricks for low-calorie treats

You can help your dog get plenty of exercise by scheduling regular playtimes and walks. For walks, work up to a brisk, 10- to 20-minute walk or jog once or twice a day. Start slowly at first, and reduce the time and/or pace if your dog seems tired or sore after exercising (or is

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sore the next day). If possible, carry water. If you don't have time to walk your dog, hire a dog walker. Consider adopting another pet so that your dog has a playmate that encourages activity. If you don't want to commit to a new pet, try scheduling regular visits with the pet of a friend or relative. Doggy day care centers can also help ensure that your dog gets plenty of exercise throughout the day.