

Canine Exercise

Croney Research Group



A photograph of two dogs playing in a body of water. On the left is a black dog, possibly a German Shepherd, looking towards the right. On the right is a brown and white dog, possibly a Weimaraner, holding a long, thin stick in its mouth. The water is splashing around them, creating a dynamic and energetic scene.

What is Exercise?

- Physical movement that improves or maintains health and wellness

Examples: playing, running, swimming, walking, exploring



Benefits of Exercise for Dogs

Daily exercise improves:

- **Physical health** by decreasing risk of disease (examples: obesity, diabetes, cancer, arthritis)
- **Behavioral health** by decreasing risk of behaviors related to fear, stress, aggression, and anxiety

Benefits of Dog Exercise for Caretakers

- Improved overall dog health
- Improved reproductive success
- Quieter kennels (increased resting, decreased barking)
- Decreased undesirable behaviors related to over-arousal, activity, anxiety, and fear

Six Exercise Tips

1

Include furnishings into kennel designs that promote physical activity such as ramps, steps, and platforms

Six Exercise Tips

2

House dogs in runs that encourage movement between indoor and outdoor space





Six Exercise Tips

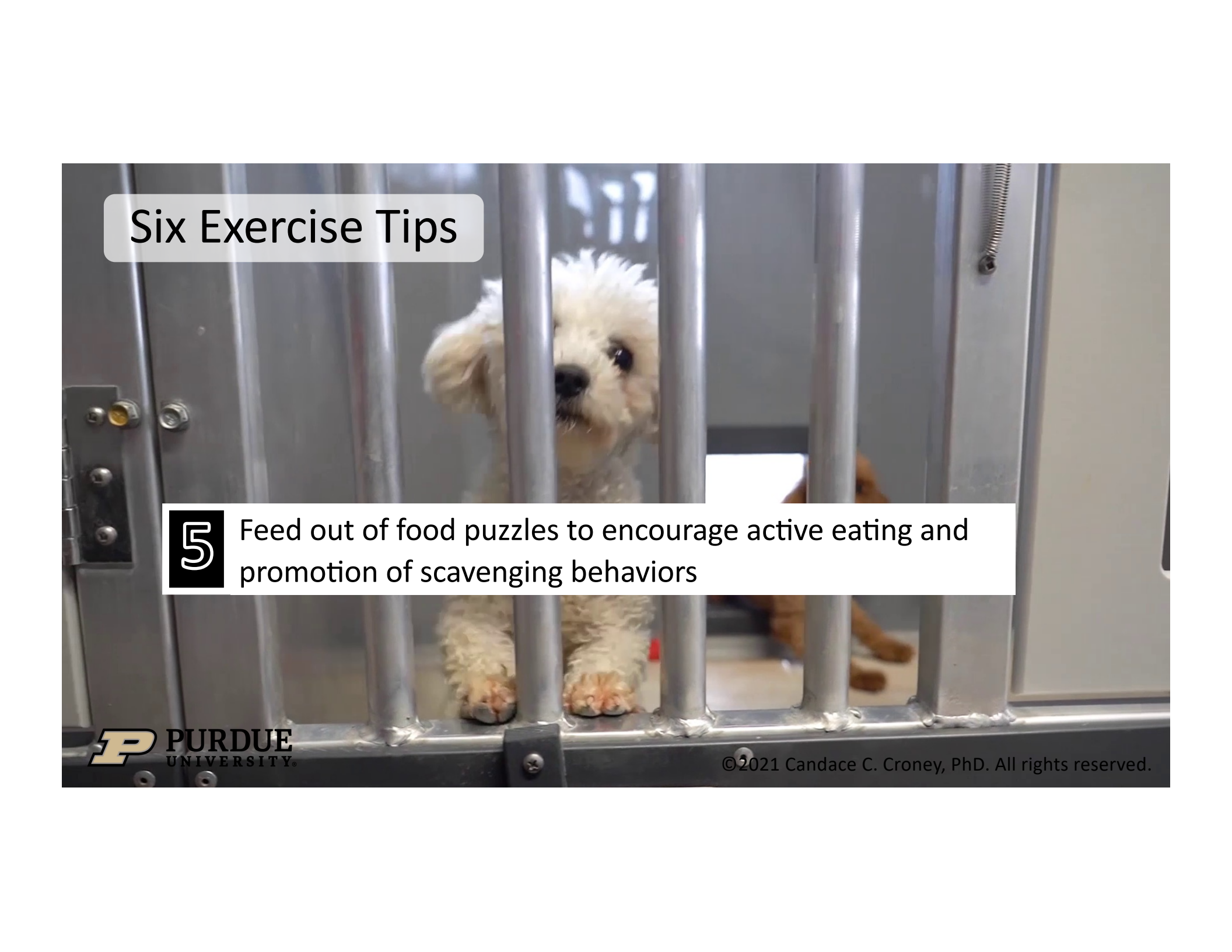
3

Build runs that are large enough to accommodate social housing so dogs will engage each other in activities

Six Exercise Tips

4


Provide play sessions that include both people and other dogs. Outdoor exercise yards also offer a change of environment with exposure to new smells, textures, and experiences as well as a larger space to run, climb, and play

A small, fluffy white dog is looking out from a metal cage. The dog's head and front paws are visible through the vertical bars. The background is slightly blurred, showing other parts of the cage and a glimpse of another dog.

Six Exercise Tips

5

Feed out of food puzzles to encourage active eating and promotion of scavenging behaviors



Six Exercise Tips

6

Offer regular training sessions (including leash walking) for each dog which allows them to move their body in different ways and engages their brains with problem solving



Individual Exercise Considerations

- Dogs require different amounts of exercise to maintain health
- Consider: age, size, energy level, health status, and breed

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Individual Exercise Considerations

Brachycephalic breeds cannot do too much at once: they can overheat and have difficulty breathing

Individual Exercise Considerations

Puppy exercise should be tailored to protect joint health and bone development

Individual Exercise Considerations



Older dogs may tire more readily and be more susceptible to joint pain



Environmental Exercise Considerations

- Temperature (too hot or too cold)
- Landscape (steep hills)
- Surface (pavement, sand, grass)

Exercise Safety Tips

- Dogs should never be forced to exercise
- Restrict the duration of exercise so dogs do not become overstimulated or stress their bodies
- Ensure that there are no dangerous items that could hurt the dogs during exercising (examples: sharp objects or too high access)
- Consult your attending veterinarian before starting an exercise program

A photograph of two golden retrievers playing on a grassy field. One dog is on the left, looking towards the right, and the other is on the right, looking towards the left. They are both wearing red collars. The background is a lush green lawn with some fallen leaves.

Exercise Safety Tips

- Carefully create and strictly supervise playgroups to avoid aggressive interactions that may create fear or result in injury
- Monitor the dog during exercise for physical and behavioral welfare
- Provide ample water to prevent dehydration and overheating
- Provide shaded areas to minimize overheating

For Maximum Benefits from Exercise, Avoid:

1. Assuming that moving within their run is enough physical activity
2. Giving free access to a play yard for exercise without monitoring and actively engaging them in physical activity
3. Offering only one type of exercise to all dogs every day. By providing a variety of types of exercise, these activities can be tailored to the individual dogs and maintain their interest by introducing novelty
4. Over-exercise (this can over-stimulate dogs or put strain on their bodies)

FAQ

More exercise is not always better

Exercise should never be forced. Too much exercise can be overstimulating and can put physical strain on the body. Tailor and monitor exercise plans to individual dogs keeping in mind factors such as age, size, health status, and breed.

A black and white dog is captured mid-jump, clearing a large, horizontal log in a wooded area. The dog's front legs are extended forward, and its back legs are pushing off the ground. The background is a soft-focus forest with trees and foliage.

Learn More:

- [Promoting the Welfare of Kennelled Dogs: Space Allocations and Exercise](#)
- [Does long-term tethering of dogs negatively impact their well-being?](#)



Authors:

Taylor Rezvani, PhD, Traci Shreyer, MA, Candace Croney, PhD

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