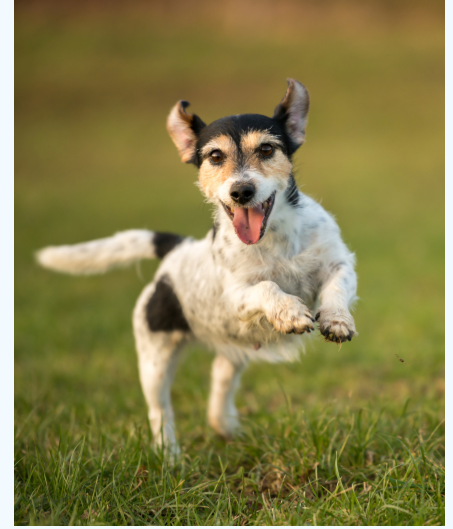


Regular exercise helps keep dogs fit and prevents obesity. Being overweight increases the risk of joint disease, cancers, and other health issues.

Exercise is also good for your dogs' **mental health!** Exercise:

- promotes the growth of brain cells, supporting memory
- releases brain chemicals that improve mood



How should I exercise my dogs?

- How you should exercise your dogs depends on their breeds, ages, energy level, and overall health.
- If a dog is overweight, older, has existing health issues (such as joint disease), or is brachycephalic (flat-faced), then you will want to modify your exercise plan accordingly.
- Your veterinarian can help you develop an exercise plan for your dogs.

What are the benefits of exercising my dogs?



- In addition to helping with weight maintenance, exercise can help your dogs feel calmer and more relaxed.
- Calmer dogs often leads to quieter kennels with less barking.
- Calmer dogs show fewer undesirable behaviors!
- Exercise can be a great time for you to socialize your dogs.

A great place to start...walking!

Walking is appropriate exercise for most dogs and also provides mental stimulation. A walk can be brisk or moderate, depending on the dog's needs.

A walk is a great time to get your dog used to wearing a collar with a lead. Being able to walk on lead helps prepare dogs for future homes! See our article, **Training your kennel dogs to wear collars and a lead**, for more information.



What about dogs who need more activity?

High-energy breeds, such as Border Collies, Australian Shepherds, Jack Russell Terriers and Belgian Malinois, may need more activity to keep them happy.



- **Jogging or hiking:** Take walking to the next level with a little more cardiovascular activity
- **Fetch:** Many dogs enjoy chasing and retrieving balls and frisbees
- **Agility:** Guide your dog through an obstacle course, providing physical and cognitive challenges
- **Swimming:** Not every dog enjoys swimming, but for those who do, it is excellent low-impact exercise
- **Play:** Well-managed play groups or play with other dogs can be both fun and promote fitness!

Safety first!

- Avoid exercising your dogs outside in extreme temperatures.
- Provide dogs with shade and water as needed when exercising.
- Supervise any dog playgroups carefully.
- Don't overexercise dogs - for example, puppies do better with short bursts of activity rather than repetitive impact on growing bones.
- Older dogs may have joint disease and may need frequent breaks and low-impact exercise.
- Brachycephalic dogs may overheat and have difficulty breathing when overexercised.