

EXERCISE!

[December 27, 2016](#) ·

Training Tip Tuesday – Exercise!

Did everyone enjoy their Christmas cookies? We sure did! But now we're looking ahead to New Years – and the Resolutions that go with it. Like many people; my resolutions have to do with health and fitness and my pups will be my training partners. Exercise plays a critical role in your pup's well-being, but there are some do's and don'ts!

Don't underestimate the value of the walk! Even if you have a huge backyard and space for your pup to run and play; take a few minutes every day and dust off that leash! Hook up and go for a power walk. It's a great opportunity to bond and spend time together and it gets you both out an about for some fresh air and cardio!

Pick exercises that are appropriate; consider your dog's age, weight, current condition level and any medical issues. When in doubt – consult your vet! Puppies should not be forced on long walks, or through strenuous exercise. The general rule of thumb is 5 minutes for every month of the pup's age (so a 4 month old puppy should walk no more than 20 minutes at a time) Young puppies have growth plates that won't close for quite some time; strenuous running or jumping can damage them. Old or obese dogs should also start slow.

Don't forget the warm-up! Just like us, dogs benefit from a little stretching and some warm up before exerting themselves. Don't just jump off the couch and go for a run!

Don't forget to workout the brain too! Work on some new tricks, play hide and seek, practice some obedience; anything to get that noggin rockin!

Use your environment- You don't need fancy tools and equipment. Nature provides a fantastic gym! On your next hike, find fallen trees to walk along, rocks to hop up on, guardrails to practice paws up, hills, swales, streams to cross- be creative! If you're up to it, join your dog for a few push-ups or squats!

While running around like a lunatic can certainly burn off some energy; focus on planned, constructive physical exertion. Having to go slow and pay attention will tire your pup out more than just a good case of the zoomies! We like cavaletti's for focus work; you can use pool noodles, broom handles – anything to make some rails on the ground. Measure from the ground to the top of your dog's shoulders – use this measurement for the spacing between the rails. (and adjust the spacing as needed) Start on leash, and just ask your dog to walk or trot through.. don't let them leap and bounce! They should be paying attention to their feet.

<https://youtu.be/nl02Vyb5rZk>