

11 Simple & Fun Exercises to Keep Your Dog Fit

Key Takeaways:

- Dogs and puppies need different levels of exercise, and the amount needed varies by breed
- Fun warmup exercises like figure eights or “puppy pushups” help with your dog’s conditioning
- Use several outdoor exercises like fetch, hiking, swimming, and others to give variety to your dog
- Indoor exercises such as going up and downstairs, and tug are great rainy-day exercises
- Include games and activities like “hide and seek” for good mental stimulation
- Remember doggie safety tips when exercising and always talk to your vet if you have any concerns

There are many important details a [good dog parent](#) needs to know. Like us, dogs need exercise. It’s sometimes easy to forget dogs need exercise when you see your pup racing crazily through your house for no reason at all. Or when you look at a small dog’s tiny legs and think, “My dog really has to work hard to get from one place to another.”

When you make sure your dog has enough physical activity, you’re ensuring she has a healthy heart and will live a long, full life. If you exercise with your dog, not only will you benefit from the physical activity, but you’ll strengthen the bond between you and your dog. This article will outline some simple warmup exercises for your pooch, outdoor activities, indoor exercises, and safety tips.

How Much Exercise Does Your Dog Need?

The amount of [exercise your dog needs](#) depends on several factors. How old is your dog? What breed is your dog? How is her health? Let’s start with the age of your pup.

A puppy’s body is still developing, so a puppy does better with several short bursts of activity throughout the day. Has your puppy ever sped through the house like a crazy dog for no apparent reason and then flopped down for an immediate nap? If so, you have an idea of the kind of activity level and length your pup needs.

Because a puppy is still growing, long walks or runs may not be appropriate or advised until she’s older. Long walks are better for adult dogs in good health. This is where consulting with your vet comes into play. Your vet can examine your dog and let you know details of her physical condition and whether she can handle a long walk.

3 Simple Warmups to Get Your Pooch Ready for Exercise

Just like people, you don't want to just jump into heavy physical activity with your dog. The sudden change in activity could be harmful to joints and other parts of their bodies. Here are some simple activities to give your furry pal a [proper warmup](#) before the heavy stuff.

- **Puppy Push Ups** – This simple activity is a great way to work on your dog's commands while warming up. It involves getting your dog into a sitting position, then laying down. To start over, guide your dog back to a sitting position and run through the steps again. Want to add some complexity? Add a standing command to the fun, making this warmup a 3-step task.
- **Stretching** – Encourage your dog to stretch to keep her muscles limber and for cooling off after strenuous play. You can train her to do it on command, although you'll have to be observant and quick with your reflexes! Watch for your dog to stretch naturally after a nap or some other leisure activity. As soon as you see the stretch, use a command word (such as "stretch"). Then praise her and reward her with a treat.
- **Figure Eights** – These movements are great for increasing your dog's spinal flexibility. All you need are two upright objects, like two garbage cans or cones. Using a treat, lead your dog in a figure-eight pattern through the two objects.

As with any activity you do with your dog, keep the experience positive. Your pup will be more receptive to learning these new skills with plenty of positive reinforcement. Remember, your dog wants to please you and spend time with you, so keep the interactions fun and playful.

5 Outdoor Activities to Exercise Your Dog

The options for outdoor exercises come with the bonus of outside sniffing opportunities. When you give variety to your dog's [outdoor activity](#), it helps to stimulate her mind, as well. Try several of these exercises to see which ones your pup enjoys the most.

- **Walking** – The classic exercise technique for dogs. This activity gives your dog ample opportunity to sniff interesting smells while outside. Walks are stimulating both physically and mentally.
- **Running** – Many dogs find running exhilarating, but you'll want to consult with your veterinarian to determine how much running is appropriate for your dog's breed and age.
- **Swimming** – Not all dogs enjoy swimming. For dogs who do, swimming is a great low-impact way to get exercise. If your dog doesn't want to swim, don't push the issue.
- **Cycling** – Be extremely careful when cycling with your dog. If she gets spooked, she may inadvertently run toward your bike's tires and get hurt. Stick to designated bike paths rather than roads for safety.
- **Fetch** – This classic game can be varied by tossing the object up a hill, into water (providing your dog likes water), and using a variety of toys.

Remember to keep your dog's safety in mind. Exercising outside when it's extremely hot or extremely cold can be just as dangerous for dogs as for humans. Outside activities also mean encountering pests or allergens, so keep your pup up to date on inoculations and [flea and tick medications](#).

3 Fun Indoor Exercises for Rainy Days

If the weather doesn't cooperate with your outside plans, there are plenty of fun things you can do indoors with your dog. As with outdoor fun, try a variety of inside games to see what your dog prefers. Change up your routines to keep your dog mentally stimulated as dogs get bored easily.

- **Climbing the Stairs** – A few trips up and down your stairs can give your dog a nice little workout.
- **Hide and Seek** – This game is perfect for dogs who can't do intense physical activity. This one is also great for mental stimulation.
- **Tug** – When you play tug with your dog, you build the human/dog bond while providing a fun bit of exercise that doesn't rely on a lot of cardio.

Indoor exercises can serve as wonderful compliments to an outdoor exercise regimen. When playing with your dog indoors, be sure to move any breakables away from your activity area. Watch your dog for signs of fatigue, like excessive panting, and stop playing immediately.

Summing Up

Dogs need and benefit from exercise just like people. Like us, it's important to know your dog's physical limits. Schedule regular visits with your vet to make sure your dog is getting the right amount of activity without overdoing it. By taking the time to make sure your dog is physically fit, you'll be a [better pup parent](#) to your furry companion.

For publishing:

Page Title: 11 Simple & Fun Exercises to Keep Your Dog Fit

Meta Description: Your dog needs the right amount of exercise without excessive strain. This article gives you 11 simple activities to keep your dog in shape.

Permalink: exercises-for-your-dog

Keywords: dog exercises, exercises for your dog, fun activities for your dog