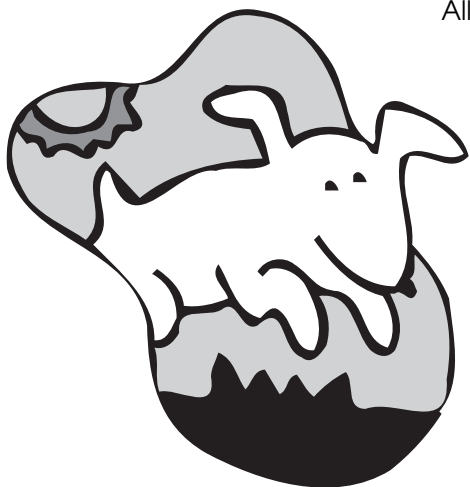


# EXERCISE and your Puppy



All puppies need to exercise. Usually a small amount of encouragement is all they need to be active. Playing ball or running freely with your puppy on grass is the recommended way to exercise.

The bigger the dog or the more active the breed, the more exercise a puppy needs. Most puppies and adult dogs too, are under exercised. Boredom and lack of exercise often lead to behavioral problems, including barking, digging and chewing. Dogs need to use their bodies and brains constructively. Good ways to exercise include fetch and frisbee, obedience class, daily visits to Muttland or other dog parks (be sure your puppy has completed its vaccination series), agility training or romps with other dogs. Doggy Day Care is a good option if your free time is limited.

Walking at a human pace is too slow to provide a good workout for a large, active dog. Don't think your Labrador retriever will be a happy, contented pet with a 20 minute stroll each day. If you can't provide vigorous daily exercise for your lab, springer, retriever or other active breed, you are asking for trouble.

Daily walks on concrete are not recommended for young puppies because you may create a problem with their skeletal development. Walking or playing on a concrete surface is tough on soft, young joints and can lead to early arthritis.

Once your puppy has reached the age of one year, you can begin to take him for walks on concrete sidewalks. Even then, build gradually. Begin with a one block walk and increase each week until you are walking the desired distance. Jogging is okay if the dog's bone structure has developed properly. Check with your veterinarian about your pet's hip development before you jog long distances with him.

Unfortunately, most puppies who have a keen play drive do not know enough to slow down or quit and therefore risk heat stroke during the summer season. Never over-exercise your puppy in extreme temperatures, be they hot or cold. If your puppy begins to slow down or lag behind you, it is usually an indication he is finished and needs to be taken home immediately.

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2082 Cheyenne Court, Grafton, WI 53024 • phone: 262-375-0130 • fax: 262-375-4196 • [www.bestfriendsvet.com](http://www.bestfriendsvet.com)

