

Exercising Your Pet

All animals need exercise -- cats need to play, dogs need to run, even hamsters need to spin on their wheels. Here's what you can do to make sure your cat or dog gets enough exercise and reaps the rewards of this healthy habit.

Exercise for dogs

Although fenced yards provide a safe, handy place in which your dog can play and relax, every dog still deserves at least one walk a day outside the yard. Walks provide the following benefits.

Bonding time

Time together, especially active time, provides an opportunity for dog and guardian to interact and establish mutual communication and a strong bond of affection. Dogs on a walk also get to socialize with other dogs. This is especially beneficial for puppies, who learn the rules of canine social interaction from meeting older dogs.

Exercise

Most dogs won't run around a fenced yard enough to get the exercise they need. If you and your dog walk a mile or more a day, you'll both benefit by building strength and endurance, burning calories, breathing fresh air, and discovering what is new in the neighborhood.

Boredom

Yard-bound dogs get bored from lack of variety in their lives. Walk past a fenced yard and watch the resident dog race along the fence line, press its face through the links, bark, pant, whimper; and practically turn somersaults to get your attention. Imagine being able to see a park, alley, or vacant lot from your yard but never getting the chance to explore it. No wonder dogs get frustrated!