



Alabama Veterinary Medical Association

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Protecting People, Pets and Livestock - Yesterday, Today and Always.

PRESS RELEASE

January is Walk Your Pet Month

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - The plan to exercise more frequently is always at the top of many New Year's resolution lists. The Alabama Veterinary Medical Association wants to remind you that this also applies to your pets. With pet obesity and diabetes becoming a growing problem in the veterinary profession, adequate exercise is necessary to keep your pet healthy and happy. The added benefit - it keeps you healthy, too.

Here are ten great reasons why walking your dog is beneficial:

1. Provides an outlet for their energy. Dogs build up a certain amount of energy every day that needs to be expended. If it doesn't happen through walking, it will often result in bad, destructive behavior or separation anxiety.
2. Walking aids greatly in training your dog. Draining energy results in a calmer, satisfied and more submissive dog who is much more likely to focus on you and your training. The walk itself should be a time of training. Done correctly, it can reinforce the bond between you and your dog and will help to establish you as the pack leader.
3. Fulfills his natural roaming and exploring instincts. In nature dogs walk as a pack and roam for miles every day searching for food and water. Even though your dog is not a wild dog, walking is still in their natural instinct. Dogs are working, thinking animals that need a purpose beyond just sitting or sleeping all day long. Walking provides a sense of direction and accomplishment.
4. Provides both physical and mental stimulation. Exploring their surroundings with their senses is also an instinctual activity for dogs. During the course of a walk your dog will be exposed to all sorts of smells, sights and sounds. This also acts as a mental workout for the brain.
5. Provides much needed social interaction. Socialization is an important part of any dog's life, especially in their early years. When walking you will most likely encounter other people, children and other dogs. This will help to build her confidence and social skills. Dogs who are not walked can become more fearful and shy, or might lack the necessary social skills to interact with people and other dogs.
6. Provides exposure to a wide variety of "worldly" things, creating a more confident and stable dog. A dog who is walked often will become more comfortable around all sorts of things such as bicycles, skateboards, traffic noises, loud trucks, mailmen, etc. Dogs without this exposure can become fearful, skittish and territorial, seeing every strange sound, vehicle or person as a threat.
7. If you own other dogs, walking them together will help them to bond with each other as a pack and prevent behavior problems between them.
8. Dogs are social beings that crave our attention - walking with them provides your attention and interaction with them.
9. Regular walking can lengthen and improve the quality of life for your dog.
10. And best of all... you will have a walking buddy and a reason yourself to get out, get moving, enjoy the fresh air and get yourself healthy and fit.

If the temperatures drop, remember your dog may need a sweater or coat. Even if the temps are a bit chilly, we all need our exercise and with proper protection from the cold there is no reason we can't get out and enjoy the health benefits of walking.

Founded in 1907, The Alabama Veterinary Medical Association is comprised of approximately 725 veterinarians from around the state, all committed to protecting People, Pets and Livestock - Yesterday, Today and Always.

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